

## PLS 4350 - Corruption Movie/Documentary Review

During this course, all undergraduate students will be asked to write a paper that reviews a movie or documentary of your choice that discusses corruption in some form. It is your responsibility to access any of the movies or documentaries below (streaming services or rental, etc.). The paper should be no more than 5 double-spaced pages.

The paper should include:

- A title page that includes your name and the film that you selected (APA Format<sup>1</sup>). This does not count towards your five pages.
- Summarize: Write a short summary of the film (2-4 paragraphs). Why was this film created? Does the film make an argument or have a point of view?
- Application: How do the concepts in the film apply to our study of corruption? (Remember: Some of the films are solely focused on corruption while others delve into other topics – it is important that you focus on the corruption elements of the film). Cite at least four readings from the syllabus and any other relevant citations that help situate the film into our course content. For example, you can apply Graycar's TASP typology to specific issues that are covered in the film. Or perhaps you can identify and explain principal-agent dilemmas that are present in the film. Many of the films deal with the role of the press (either as a central theme or a key player in exposing corruption).
- Critique: Assess the veracity of the claims. Discuss whether the filmmakers have an agenda or have used evidence selectively. Look for reviews of the film (Disclaimer: This will be easier to find with more recent films and more partisan films). You can find archived film reviews on the library's website (Factiva Database).
- Reflection: Do the filmmakers present a solution for the specific type of corruption in your film? Is the solution compelling or are they underdeveloped? Would you recommend any reforms or solutions?

### **Approved films:**<sup>2</sup>

The following list includes movies and documentaries that would qualify for a report. You are welcome to find and suggest others. I've included a link to the IMDB to give you more specific information. Some of the movies are more partisan in nature, while others deal with business or regulatory issues. *It is important that you offer a fair summary and critique of the film regardless of your personal point of view.* I've included the IMDB link to avoid any confusion with similar titles. Many of the films below are available on streaming sites.

- Dark Money - [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6633182/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_2?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_2](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6633182/?ref_=nv_sr_2?ref_=nv_sr_2)

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<sup>1</sup> Purdue OWL has an excellent overview of APA format.

<sup>2</sup> **Contact me for approval if you are interested in reviewing a film that is not on the list.**

- The Panama Papers  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8951058/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8951058/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- All the President's Men  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074119/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074119/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- The Post - [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6294822/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6294822/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- 13th - [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5895028/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_8?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_8](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5895028/?ref_=nv_sr_8?ref_=nv_sr_8)
- The Big Short - [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1596363/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1596363/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- Waiting for Superman -  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1566648/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1566648/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- Page One: Inside the New York Times -  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1787777/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_4](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1787777/?ref_=fn_al_tt_4)
- The Mueller Investigation from *PBS Newshour* - <https://www.pbs.org/video/mueller-investigation-mw2cf1/>
- Food, Inc. - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1286537/>
- Dirty Wars - [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2532528/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_2?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_2](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2532528/?ref_=nv_sr_2?ref_=nv_sr_2)
- The China Hustle -  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7215388/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7215388/?ref_=nv_sr_1?ref_=nv_sr_1)
- The Somali Project -  
[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2817230/plotsummary?ref\\_=tt\\_ov\\_pl](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2817230/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl)
- Requiem for the American Dream - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3270538/>

Tips for writing an excellent paper:

- Look at film reviews in newspapers to see how writers effectively summarize a film in a concise format.
- Watch the entire film before writing your essay, you do not have much space so extract three or four main ideas.
- Keep a notepad nearby and jot down segments of the film (and the time frame) that stand out or might be especially applicable.
- Revise your work to avoid careless grammatical errors and typos. Have a peer read your essay.
- Find something that is interesting to you. More than likely your essay will come effortlessly if you are responding to something that you care about. Moreover, you will enjoy looking up other sources to cite in your article.
- Pay attention to the rubric on the next page when you write (note that the application section is worth the most points).

## Rubric - Point Breakdown

Professionalism	15 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Superior mechanics</li><li>- No use of slang</li><li>- No typos</li><li>- Format is correct</li><li>- Clear topic sentences</li></ul>	
Transitions	5 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Essay has a comfortable flow, topic changes are completed with effective transitions.</li></ul>	
Summary	20 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides a clear summary of the film to the point that someone who hasn't seen the film can still get the gist of it.</li><li>- Includes a background of the policies or individuals under scrutiny.</li></ul>	
Application	30 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Essay makes clear connections to information that has been covered in the class.</li><li>- Cites <u>four</u> sources from the syllabus.</li><li>- Cites additional relevant articles or background information.</li></ul>	
Critique	20 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Scrutinizes claims from the film</li><li>- Cites sources from alternate points of view</li><li>- Provides thoughtful critique and counterpoints when relevant.</li></ul>	
Reflection	10 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assessment of filmmakers' conclusions and recommendations.</li><li>- Provides at least one <u>specific</u> recommendation or solutions based on course material.</li></ul>	

**Total:**

**100 points**