

## To Parents of Students in Understanding Film:

I'd like to share some information with you about *Understanding Film*, a course offered as an elective through the English department. The website is [araratfilm.org](http://araratfilm.org).

This course provides an introduction to the art of the film. The shared focus is on viewing/ discussing films and making short films using digital cameras and their MacBooks. Students may borrow digital video cameras from the school and edit their films on their laptops; they are also welcome to use their own equipment.

We watch most of the films during class, so attendance is crucial. Absent students are expected to view the parts of a film they missed in class. Occasionally students may be asked to watch a film on their own or come to an evening or after school viewing. Copies of most of the films are available as DVDs in the Mt. Ararat Learning Commons, for students to study them or to make up what they missed while absent. On occasion, they may be expected to rent a film from a local video store or stream from Netflix/Amazon, etc., in order to watch it for a project.

### Selection of films:

The selection of films for the course varies from semester to semester. One aim of the class is to expand students' awareness of the art of film by showing them a wide variety: important films from cinema history; films by noted directors; award-winning films; foreign films. Often we will watch films grouped around a theme (such as how films portray women), a genre (such as film noir), or a director (such as the films of Wes Anderson).

Some of these films have an R rating. As an example, for a study of film noir, the class in some years has studied Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (rated R), a highly praised "neo noir," which won 54 awards when it came out in 2002. We feel that these films are appropriate for a high school film course, but we do want parents to be aware that such films can be included in the course (see reverse for other examples), especially since some students in the class are under 17. We will need your permission for your student to take the course and view them.

**Please check the appropriate box, sign, and return this letter so that your student may take part in Understanding Film.** If you have questions, please phone me at 729-2951 or email [krilll@link75.org](mailto:krilll@link75.org)

Sincerely,



Leonard Commet Krill, English Dept, Mt. Ararat High School, Topsham ME 04086

☐

I give permission for my student \_\_\_\_\_ to view the films selected for Understanding Film, including those that are rated R.

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I **do not** give permission for my student \_\_\_\_\_ to view the films selected for Understanding Film; this course is inappropriate for him or her and he or she should be rescheduled.

student name / class color-period \_\_\_\_\_

(your signature & relationship to student) \_\_\_\_\_

*2001: A Space Odyssey*  
*A Beautiful Mind*  
*A Bug's Life*  
*Almost Famous*  
*Amelie*  
*American Beauty*  
*American Hustle*  
*Anatomy of a Murder*  
*Annie Hall*  
*Apocalypse Now*  
*Babies*  
*Beasts of the Southern Wild*  
*Big Lebowski*  
*Big Night*  
*Blade Runner*  
*Bonnie and Clyde*  
*Botany of Desire*  
*Bowling for Columbine*  
*Boyhood*  
*Bullets Over Broadway*  
*Casablanca*  
*Cast Away*  
*Citizen Kane*  
*City of Lost Children*  
*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*  
*Clueless*  
*Contact*  
*Dances with Wolves*  
*Do the Right Thing*  
*Double Indemnity*  
*Dr. Strangelove*  
*Ex Machina*  
*Fargo*  
*Ghost Dog*  
*Ghost World*  
*Girl, Interrupted*  
*Goranson Farm*  
*Grand Budapest Hotel*  
*Harlan County, U.S.A.*  
*High Fidelity*  
*High Noon*  
*Hugo*  
*Hunger Games*  
*Juno*  
*Kumaré*  
*L.A. Confidential*  
*Life by Lobster*  
*Lone Star*  
*Ma Vie En Rose*  
*Mad Max: Fury Road*  
*Memento*  
*Modern Times*

*Moonrise Kingdom*  
*Notorious*  
*O Brother, Where Art Thou*  
*Once*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*  
*Pan's Labyrinth*  
*Paprika*  
*Paris, J'taime*  
*Platoon*  
*Psycho*  
*Pulp Fiction*  
*Raging Bull*  
*Raiders of the Lost Ark*  
*Rebel Without a Cause*  
*Rope*  
*Run, Lola, Run*  
*Seven Samurai*  
*Shadow of a Doubt*  
*Shakespeare in Love*  
*She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*  
*Some Like It Hot*  
*Spellbound*  
*Stranger on a Train*  
*Strictly Ballroom*  
*Tampopo*  
*Taxi Driver*  
*The Apartment*  
*The Big Sleep*  
*The Deer Hunter*  
*The Godfather*  
*The Graduate*  
*The Maltese Falcon*  
*The Shawshank Redemption*  
*Triplets of Belleville*  
*Trouble in Paradise*  
*Unforgiven*  
*Vertigo*  
*Waking Life*  
*Walkabout*  
*What's Eating Gilbert Grape*  
*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*  
*You Can Count on Me*

NOTE; These are films that have been shown or considered for Understanding Film class in past years. The list varies from year to year.