The first step in this assignment is to review the list of suggested films (which will be emailed to each student in the class) that deal with Asian culture and choose SIX - TWO from India, South and Southeast Asia, TWO from China and Korea, and TWO from Japan - that you would be interested in watching and writing a review about. (A student may also choose a film not on the list and discuss it with me so that I can consider whether it is a suitable choice for the assignment.) Each student must submit a PRIORITIZED list of choices no later than the beginning of class Thursday, January 31. Any student who does not submit this list by this date will not have a film to review. I will review these choices and each student will be assigned ONE particular film to review. DVDs will be available for check-out from my office during my office hours. Once these assignments are made, each student will be expected to watch the movie and to compose a three- to four-page (a minimum of 900 words) critical review that addresses the central question of “How would a student in this class benefit by watching this film - what would a student gain?”

Writing the Review

A report summarizes the contents of a piece, but a review is somewhat different. A report is often an objective, informative summary of the contents of the work (like a book or a movie), but a review should be persuasive and include an engaged critical analysis of the work. A review should consider the work’s purpose, its construction, and its content, and should comment on the strengths and weakness of each of these areas. Ideally your review is an attempt to help someone to see the work as you see it. For this assignment you must be intent on answering that question “How would a student in this class benefit by watching this film - what would a student gain?” and explain the reasons behind your claims and conclusion to your reader. The motivation behind this should be to effectively persuade your reader to watch (or not watch) this movie.

A good first step in writing the review is to give your reader some idea of what the movie is about. The trick is to provide this in as short a space as possible and still be informative - the majority of your paper should not be a plot summary or a detailed retelling of the story. You should then consider why a student might want to watch this particular movie by explaining how helpful and informative you find it to be and how it relates to our studies. This should be the focus of your review. One way of doing this is to compare how much you knew about the topic before you watched the movie and what you know afterward. But do not just discuss what you have learned by offering a report; consider how the film helped you learn by critically thinking about and commenting on how the information is presented in the film. Your goal here is to determine whether the film would prove to be a valuable educational resource and to explain why you would (or would not) recommend it to someone who is interested in knowing more about this particular topic.

When considering all this, you need to be able to explain why. It is not enough to write that you enjoyed watching the movie, or that you found it interesting, or that it rates a “thumbs up” or a “thumbs down” or a certain number of stars. Whatever position you take, you need to be able to support it. You must include details from the film that help to illustrate and support your points, so take notes as you watch the movie. As a reviewer, you should work to offer your reader information about the movie, not just about you and your view(s) of it.

The review can be broken into several concise paragraphs. These guidelines should help you to write a well-developed, organized, three- to four-page paper:
• **The title**: Although this might not be the first part that you write, be sure to give your paper an engaging title, something other than “Film Review.” And this should be your original title and not just the title of the film.

• **Introductory paragraph**: this should be well planned. Use a “hook” at the beginning of your paper - something that catches your reader’s attention. This might be a vivid description of something about the movie that caught your attention and brought you into it. Here, you are bringing your reading into your review. You might also offer your overall impression of the movie. And remember that the most important part of your introduction is your thesis statement, which is a brief (typically one sentence) statement that clearly defines the main idea and purpose of your paper and states your main points. Since you are also making a persuasive argument in your paper, your thesis should also clearly define the core of your argument (your claim). This thesis will be the thread that runs through your paper and ties it all together.

• **One or two paragraphs of summary**: these should provide an overview of the movie. You cannot offer an extensive report of the movie in your paper and your paper should not be a lengthy discussion of the plot, but you should focus on providing the most important details. You might summarize the story and you should include important information about the movie, like the title of the movie, the main characters and the performing actors, and the setting(s). That way, your reader can gain a basic understanding of what the movie is about.

• **A few paragraphs**: discussing your points of focus. In these paragraphs you can discuss what was good (what worked) and what was not-so-good (what did not work). Remember, you need to provide your reader with an understanding of the movie and provide a critical analysis of it, not just offer your opinions. So be specific and refer to moments in the movie itself when you are addressing whether or not the film would be a good choice for a student in this class.

• **A concluding paragraph**: remind your reader of your main points and briefly restate your position. Reflect on what you gained from your viewing experience and what others might gain. And just like the “hook” in your introduction, you want to close with a comment or a question that will leave a lasting impression on your reader, perhaps a recommendation that addresses the question “What is it good for?”

• **Review your paper**: as the author, you are responsible for carefully proofreading your paper. Be sure that you submit a final draft, not a rough draft, of your paper.

**Important information to include at the end of your review (on a separate page):**

- Title of the movie reviewed
- Date when the movie was reviewed
- Rating (G, PG, PG-13, R, NR)
- Type of movie (Comedy, Drama, Action/Adventure, Science Fiction, Documentary, etc.)
- Year of release
- Key people involved in the movie, like the director and actors

(You might find the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) useful for finding this info.)

These are some suggested questions that you might want to consider when writing about a film:

- What is the significance of the title? Does it provide a clue to the “meaning” of the film?
- What information does the film provide about the person/artifact/event/culture and how does it provide it?
- How is the plot constructed? Does the story make sense? Is there a particularly vivid moment or scene that stands out because of its significance in the plot or its artistry?
- How do the main characters develop during the course of the film? Describe their personalities and consider how they are presented (you might look at names, speech, actions, costumes, makeup, and narration). Are the characters realistic or caricatured?
- What is the function of the setting and decor (location, sets, props, costumes)? How do these contribute to the mood of the film?
• For those more familiar with the artistry of film: are there particular cinematic elements (camera movement, angles, distance, how shots are framed, lighting, elements of the soundtrack (dialogue, music, sound effects), editing or transitions) that are apparent throughout the film, or in a particular scene? Describe them (to the best of your ability) and consider their importance.
• Is the film educational as well as entertaining? As far as knowledge, what would one gain by watching this movie? As far as pleasure, why might one enjoy watching it?

Some points to consider while writing and to double-check when reviewing your paper
(from A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers by Erika Lindemann)

Subject, Audience, Purpose
• What is the most important part of what I want to say about my subject/topic?
• Who is the audience for this paper? What would my reader want to know about the subject? What does my reader already know about it?
• Why do I think the subject is worth writing about? Will my reader think the paper was worth reading?
• What verb explains what I am trying to do in this paper (tell a story, compare X and Y, describe Z)?
• Does my first paragraph answer questions 1-4? If not, why not?

Organization and paragraphing
• What is the thesis? Is it stated clearly (in a sentence) or implied appropriately? Is it focused? Did I avoid blatant thesis markers such as, "In this essay I will..."?
• How many specific points do I make about my subject?
• How many paragraphs did I use to discuss each point?
• Why did I discuss my points in this order? Should the order be changed?
• Did I overlap or repeat any points? Did I leave points out or add some that aren’t relevant to the main idea?
• How did I get from one point to the next? What signposts, like transitional words or phrases, did I give the reader?
• What is this paragraph supposed to do? How does it relate to the paragraph before and after it?
• What is the main point of the paragraph? Is there a clear topic sentence in this paragraph? Will my reader have trouble finding it?
• How many sentences did it take to develop the topic idea? Can I incorporate better examples, reasons, or details?
• How well does the paragraph hold together? When I read the paragraph out loud, does it flow smoothly?
• How does my paper end? Did I keep the promises I made to my reader at the beginning of my paper? Did I develop and fulfill my thesis?

Sentences
• Can my reader “see” what I am saying? Do the details explain or even enlarge the meaning of the ideas rather than just repeat the ideas?
• What words could I substitute for “people,” “things,” “this/that,” “aspect,” etc., to make what I am saying more clear? Use a dictionary and a thesaurus to help you vary the language you use in your paper.
• Is this sentence “fat”? Are there any words that are unnecessary?
• Is this sentence “thin”? Are there any words that would improve what I am trying to say?
• Are the sentences different lengths and types?
• Can I combine this sentence with another one?
• Which sentences in my paper do I like the most? The least?
• Can I add adjectives and adverbs or find a more active verb?
• Did I check grammar, spelling and punctuation? What kinds of grammar or punctuation problems did I have in my last paper?
Some points to double-check before submitting your paper

- The purpose of this assignment is to address the central question of “What could a student in this class gain by watching this movie?” Be sure that you have clearly and directly addressed this question as you review your paper.
- Your paper must have a strong introduction with a clear and focused thesis statement that addresses the assignment, a body that develops your thesis, transitions between ideas and paragraphs, and a solid conclusion.
- Pay attention to recommendations that spell-check and grammar-check provide and make the necessary corrections. Carefully proofread what you have typed and check for spelling and grammatical errors. Papers that are poorly written or that have numerous typographical errors will likely receive a lower grade.
- You do not need to use any outside sources besides the movie. However, if you choose to use outside sources, they MUST be properly cited (in MLA or APA style). Failure to cite your sources is considered plagiarism (literary theft) and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and, potentially, for the course.
- Your paper must be a minimum of 900 words (three- to four-pages) and must include an accurate word count. Any paper that does not meet this minimum length requirement will automatically receive an “F”.
- The paper must
  - be typed and double-spaced
  - use standard margins (1” top and bottom, 1” or 1.25” left and right),
  - use an 11- or 12-point font that is easy to read (Times New Roman, Arial, Courier, or similar font). DO NOT use a font that is fancy or difficult to read.
- Please DO NOT use a cover page and be sure to include the following information in the upper left-hand corner of the first page:
  - Your Name,
  - Course Number and Section,
  - Instructor’s Name,
  - Date, and
  - a Total Word Count (no less than 900 words)
- Please DO NOT include any artwork in your paper.
- Please staple your paper in the upper left-hand corner and please DO NOT submit it in any type of binder or folder.

Evaluation

This paper should illustrate college-level writing and will be evaluated on the quality of writing (style and technique), the originality of thought, sound reasoning and logic, organization, clarity, and appropriate content. Each student required to complete and submit a satisfactory (at least a “C” or better) paper and the quality of the paper will affect the evaluation. The paper is worth 20% of the final course grade.

A=Excellent: to earn an A, a student must do truly excellent work. This includes showing initiative in going beyond minimal requirements and seeking a deeper understanding of the subject. The work is well-crafted, carefully done, and practically error-free. It shows strong evidence of critical thinking, initiative, creativity, and thoughtful analysis.

B=Above Average: like an A student, a student earning a B grade goes beyond mere mastery of material and produces high-quality work. The work shows above-average effort with few serious errors (in spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax, and thought), and shows some signs of critical thinking, initiative, creativity, and thoughtful analysis.

C=Average: this grade indicates satisfactory work. The student has fulfilled the essential requirements for the assignment and the quality of work is average. The work contains several errors (in spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax, and thought) and shows only a few signs of critical thinking, initiative, creativity and thoughtful analysis.
D=Below Average: this grade indicates poor but minimally acceptable work and is assigned to work that is minimally passing, with the student fulfilling only the most basic requirements. Understanding of the material is barely evident and the student does not directly and clearly respond to the assignment given. The student shows few signs of critical thinking, initiative, creativity, or thoughtful analysis.

F=Unsatisfactory: this is a failing grade and is an indication that the student has not mastered even the basics or has greatly ignored or neglected the requirements of the assignment. The work shows signs of carelessness and misperceptions, the quality of the work is poor, and it either does not address the assignment or does not reflect that the student has an adequate grasp of the material. This grade is also assigned in any instance of plagiarism or cheating. Note: Any student who submits an unsatisfactory review will be required to go to the Writing Center, rewrite and resubmit the paper so that it is satisfactory (the highest grade that a revised paper can earn is a “C”) within a week after grades are returned; any student who chooses not to do so will receive a zero (0) for the paper.

Students are encouraged to use the resources and assistance available at the Writing Center in the Academic Success Center (BACA 207). For more information, visit the HCC-Brandon Campus Writing Center webpage @ http://www.hccfl.edu/br/student-services/writing-center.aspx

Each student has the option of submitting a draft paper for feedback as long as the paper is turned in no later than the beginning of class on Thursday, March 21.

Completed final papers are due in class no later than the beginning of class on Tuesday, April 9. ABSOLUTELY NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. If you do not submit a final paper by this date, you will receive a zero (0) “F” for this assignment.

If you have ANY questions regarding this assignment, you will need to ask me before submitting your paper! Reasons like (although not limited to) “I didn’t understand” should not be used as a defense or a response to receiving a grade lower than you expected.