

WRITING A FILM COMMENTARY FOR THE JMCT

Who doesn't love to watch a great movie? Beyond pure pleasure, the silver screen provides a great resource for the student of Conflict Transformation, Negotiation, Mediation, and Facilitation. Writing film reviews can help you obtain a better grasp of how conflict transformation is played out by different people in different scenarios. Conflict transformation is a process of transforming relationships and moving conflict towards positive win-win outcomes, often with the help of mediators outside the organization. All processes are concerned with changing the behavior of one or all parties involved.

Leaders, trainers, and instructors often use scenes from films to drive home a learning objective. When you watch movies with a critical eye, you may often see the opportunity to use a portion of a movie as a case study for leadership, negotiation, or conflict resolution. If you find yourself reflecting on how a certain movie or scene from a movie reflects events in life, please feel free to share those thoughts in the Journal of Military Conflict Transformation!

Your film commentary should be 750-1500 words. For the purposes of the journal, your commentary will not need to appraise the quality of the acting of the characters. Your focus is on how the film or a portion of it could add to the negotiation student's learning experience. Below are some guidelines for writing your film commentary.

1. Watch the film at least twice.

You have watched a movie and believe there are at least parts of it that would apply to learning about Conflict Transformation, Negotiation, Mediation, and Facilitation. You now need to view the film again, but this time, take notes! While you are watching the film with a critical eye toward negotiations write down your thoughts and reactions. Do you see an opportunity for a case study, or to reinforce a learning objective?

2. Express your opinions and support your criticism.

For the JMCT, it doesn't matter if the movie was an academy award winner or a low-grade movie. Did the actors successfully portray some aspect of conflict transformation, negotiation, mediation, or facilitation? Your opinions are an important aspect of your review but be sure to back up your thoughts with specifics.

3. Consider your audience.

More than likely, your audience will be students and instructors of conflict transformation, negotiation, mediation, and facilitation. Keep your audience in mind as you decide what elements of the movie to highlight. Some movies that are based on real-life events can enrich understanding and provide an example for problem-solving. Still, fiction can also provide the same types of elements that can increase learning and serve as a platform for discussion in a classroom.

4. Be descriptive.

The point of a film review is to encourage people to view a movie. In this case, you are sharing a learning tool. Be sure to describe how you feel the film can contribute to teaching others about the art of negotiation and how you would use the film in your classroom. You will want to

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provide a description of the characters involved in the film and describe the portion of the film that is relevant to the learning opportunity.

5. Highlights, surprises, and credits.

You will need to give the readers some idea of the plot of the film to understand your position for using it as a learning tool. Still, you may not want to spoil the outcome for the reader just in case they have not yet watched the film. Use your voice and make sure your review will grab the attention of readers. Do give credit to the work, including the director.

Once you have written your film commentary, please submit it to the Editor, Journal of Military Conflict Transformation by emailing jmct@au.af.edu

Thank you!