

The 1960s and 1970s

The 60s and 70s were a rough time for the theater industry. Television was stealing audiences away, and cinema was no longer the only form of media available. Film companies scrambled to find new reasons for audiences to pay to go to the movies, and as social and cultural upheaval rocked America, the industry tried to embody the new challenges on film.

This week, you need to watch Coppola's original Godfather. Not only is this film well made in terms of writing and visuals, it is also tied into 2 other issues of its time. The Godfather set a standard that we still return to and reference today. Watch it (it's pretty lengthy – I suggest popcorn if it's your kind of movie, coffee if it isn't your kind of movie) and answer the following 3 questions.

- 1.) Okay, two weeks ago, we talked about the beginnings of the film industry and the Jewish moguls creating a vision of America. Last week, you watched Stagecoach last week and we talked about the idea of "Being an American." Here we go again. *The Godfather* is also about being an American and the American dream...but it's a different vision. Look at the *themes* and the *technical aspects* of the film and answer the following 2 questions:
 - a. What does "American" mean in the Godfather? What is the standard of "good"?
 - b. How does Coppola create character through VISUAL images (not dialogue)? Pick one scene or sequence and tell me what it tells you about a character.
- 2.) The Godfather is an epic. It has a lot of different plots woven into one film. How does the film maker help you keep the plots straight? What devices are used for *coherence* - keeping the plot clear in the viewer's mind?
- 3.) Next class, we're going to begin talking about genre. Look up the word if you don't know what it means, then answer the following questions:
 - a. What genre is this film? How do you know? What kind of audience(s) is it targeting?
 - b. What did this film influence? Where have you seen references made to it?

Now, your other two choices....they're kind of at completely opposite ends of the film spectrum from each other. Weird enough, however, I can ask you exactly the same questions, no matter which film you watched:

- 1.) This film deals with a social issue or problem.
 - a. What is the issue?
 - b. What does the film say about it (what's the point)?
 - c. Why did the film maker choose a realistic or unrealistic setting to talk about the issue?
- 2.) This film can be seen as teaching a lesson (whether positive or negative).
 - a. What is the lesson?
 - b. What cinematic elements support the theme/lesson, showing it to the viewer? Pick one scene from the film that shows what you're talking about and prove to me that it shows the lesson.