

APPENDIX A

Fiction Appendix



12 Monkeys

Terry Gilliam, director (1995)

A disease has wiped mankind off the face of the earth, and only a handful of B-list actors are managing to survive in a soundstage that looks like a psychotic interior designer went nuts with chain-link fencing. Bruce Willis travels back in time to pull out his own teeth. Brad Pitt is all too convincing in the part of a raving lunatic, and the world still ends.

collective action (Chapter 2); *tragedy of the commons* (Chapter 4)



Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Joss Whedon, creator (Marvel Television, 2013)

I say this series is surprisingly good, but any of the Whedonites out there would be aghast that I would dare imply that a show he runs wouldn't embody awesomeness, drama, humor, and some surprising plot twists as this comic book special ops team struggles to keep the world safe as they are betrayed, shot at, and occasionally accosted by Norse gods.



Alexander

Oliver Stone, director (Warner Bros., 2004)

Alexander is a labored and surprisingly boring attempt at a sweeping epic film. The historical accounts of Alexander are actually far more interesting. While the film tries to spin some personal and mommy

issues, Alexander actually had daddy issues. He was the son of a rather unpleasant king after all. The key political point revolves around his failure to establish a line of succession and institutionalize the empire he conquered.

the executive (Chapter 6); *empire building* (Chapter 12)



Alice in Wonderland

Lewis Carroll, author (1865) [film adaptations: Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson, directors (1951); Tim Burton, director (2010)]

Sorry, kids, but this is one of those where you have to read the book. The Disney version is cute and all, but it leaves out all the hints and teases at the odd stuff that was floating through Carroll's brain. The Tim Burton adaptation gets the weird, as you would expect, but really twists the story and fails miserably on the point of choosing to be a hero. Alice really didn't get much of a choice, Tim. Anyway, in the book, there is some serious social commentary hidden in this journey through an imaginary and quite insane world.

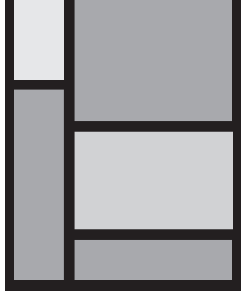
utopia (Chapter 1); *mediated reality* (Chapter 11)



All Quiet on the Western Front

Erich Maria Remarque, author (1929)

This novel is part of the social, political, academic, and artistic reaction to World War I that I talk about in Chapter 12. Even



though it sounds like this guy might be French, he was actually a German who moved to the United States and married a very pretty movie star. Good job, mate. The idea behind this story—finding humanity in the enemy—is often imitated, though never with the finesse or impact of the original.

alliances (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2)



All the King's Men

Robert Penn Warren, author (1946)

After Hurricane Katrina, picking on Louisiana has gone out of style, but this book will help students understand why the Bayou State has always been in the satiric crosshairs. If anything, the reality of the corruption and insanity is understated here, and students might wish to refer to *A Confederacy of Dunces* for a better insight into the raw comic material available in those swamps. Actually, *The Water Boy* isn't that far off either.

realism (Chapter 1, Chapter 12); *institutions* (Chapter 5); *presidency* (Chapter 6); *Arrow's theorem* (Chapter 10)



All the President's Men

Alan Pakula, director (1976)

This is the film for understanding Watergate.

government (Chapter 2); *power* (Chapter 2); *cockroach theory of politics* (Chapter 11)



American Chopper

Hank Capshaw, creator and co-executive producer (2003–)

You don't know what American Chopper is? Get a life, and start watching some TV.

institutions (Chapter 5)



Animal Farm

George Orwell, author (1945)

Some animals are more equal than others. There is no line that better captures the way that institutions and ideologies can be twisted to serve the interests of leadership.

institutions (Chapter 5)



Apocalypse Now

Francis Ford Coppola, director (1979)

Speaking of New Orleans, flying into the city is eerily similar to the opening scene of this Vietnam War movie. When the 737 drops down low over the swamp on approach, the only thing that is missing is the “Flight of the Valkyries” blaring in the background. With all the refineries out by the airport, it even smells like napalm when you disembark.

alliances (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2)



The Avengers

Joss Whedon, director (2012)

I'm just gonna talk about the film here. I don't want to scare anyone off with the serious geek it takes to delve in to the comics. Joss, take a bow. And if any of you don't know who Joss Whedon is, you may not be suited for this textbook.

idealism (Chapter 1, Chapter 12)



Barking Death Squirrels

Douglas A. Van Belle, author (2010)

Included here, for no good reason, *Barking Death Squirrels* actually addresses several salient political issues, such as the question,

“Why don’t the French have a word for Surrendermonkey?” Oh, and there is stuff on idealism in practice, the security dilemma, and alliances/conflict.

idealism (Chapter 1, Chapter 12); *security* (Chapter 2); *alliances* (Chapter 2, Chapter 12)



Batman

Bob Kane and Bill Finger, character creators; William Dozier, series creator (1966–1968)

Production values? We don’t need no stinking production values. That may not have been the motto of the 1960’s TV version of *Batman*, but it probably should have been. It was such a horrible show that even a six-year-old could spot the continuity flaws, and the lines they wrote for Adam West were so cheesy that mice would rush the screen whenever he spoke. Still, it was probably the first real multimedia phenomena, going from comic book, to TV, to film, to Saturday morning cartoon, and the merchandising . . . there are a lot of old Batman lunch boxes out there.

idealism (Chapter 1, Chapter 12)



Boston Legal

David E. Kelley, creator (2004–2009)

Denny Crane is William Shatner’s best character, best role, best performance ever, and I am one of those old geeks who loves the original *Star Trek*. Not to be overlooked is the way that Denny Crane uses his supposedly failing mind to evade the restrictions of social and political structures—insanity as a source of power.

power (Chapter 2); *law in action* (Chapter 9)



Brave New World

Aldous Huxley, author (1932)

This is a must-read for any kind of examination of the modern take on utopian thought. Written during the hedonistic excesses of the economic boom that preceded the Great Depression, it makes some serious statements about the hollowness of the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure. It can also be read as a very precognizant anticipation of the 1960s and the social politics surrounding the hippies.

utopia (Chapter 1)



Braveheart

Mel Gibson, director (1995)

Think what you want of Mel Gibson and his recent issues with divorce, drunken anti-Semitic tirades, and all that kind of stuff; the princess in this one was very pretty and that’s what really matters. There is also a bunch of stuff about diplomacy and the executive as an institution as Mel runs around killing Englishmen. The film is also notable for including every Scotsman who has ever appeared on screen except for Billy Connolly.

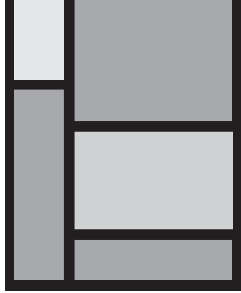
executive (Chapter 6); *diplomacy* (Chapter 12)



Brazil

Terry Gilliam, director (1985)

Warning: if you ever have the opportunity to see the four-hour director’s cut of this film, pass. I am a devoted fan of Gilliam, but this is one of those instances where some interference in the creative process by the studio executives saved the film and actually made it great. I seriously wish that someone



had done the same with Peter Jackson's take on *King Kong*. Seriously, Peter, cut thirty minutes, and you would have the best movie in years. What? Oh, the plot of Brazil . . . um . . . well, the infallible bureaucracy makes a mistake, and a guy gets caught up in the chaos, sort of. Seriously, you just gotta trust me and watch it.

bureaucracy (Chapter 6, Chapter 8)



Broadcast News

James L. Brooks, director (1987)

This is a pretty good one for getting a feel for the dynamic of the newsroom and how that might influence what does and does not end up on the TV during dinner.

dramatic imperative (Chapter 11); *mediated reality* (Chapter 11); *mutual exploitation model* (Chapter 11)



Bro'Town

The Naked Samoans, creators (2004)

Good luck finding this in North America, and it really is too bad. It provides a great twist on the British-style, intellectual slapstick that made *Monty Python* such a hit, and it adds a touch of New Zealand's innocent, slightly naive take on social responsibility to give it just that bit more than the laugh. One of its most interesting serious questions concerns the nature of satire in the relationship between minorities and dominant groups in a society. When a minority culture inserts itself into the mainstream through self-satire, does that help or hinder its acceptance as a meaningful part of the whole?

culture (Chapter 14)



A Bug's Life

James Lassiter, director (1998)

Call me naive, but I suspect that if a kid ever actually encountered a bright blue ant that talked, hysteria would ensue. The grasshoppers are supposed to be bad, though the thought of Dennis Leary as a ladybug is actually the scary part. Kids are supposed to learn that they should team up with circus freaks to form a street gang.

alliances (Chapter 2); *collective action* (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2)



Caddyshack

Harold Ramis, director (1980)

I have no real reason for including this movie in the textbook other than it is the funniest movie that students might have never seen. Best golf movie ever.

cockroach theory of bureaucracy (Chapter 8)



Cannery Row

John Steinbeck, author (1945)

This is one of those books that misses the target—not its target, my target. It is an excellent social and political commentary on life in hard times—a pretty good book even if it counts as literature—but it doesn't quite tell us enough about the collapse of the anchovy fishery to really drive the tragedy of the commons story home.

tragedy of the commons (Chapter 4)



Capricorn One

Peter Hyams, director (1978)

This movie provides a classic example of what is meant by the term *mediated reality*.

How do you really know what is and is not real if you haven't experienced it yourself?

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Casino Royale

Martin Campbell, director (2006)

This is a James Bond flick that spends a boring half hour setting up a cliché, there's always a better hand at the table, poker scene. Cut that half hour out, and this is one awesome action flick. The key here is the setup of the economic foundations of politics as the bad guy is trying to manipulate the stock market in a very, very naughty way—not like Bernie Maddoff or anything.

political economy (Chapter 4)



Castle

Andrew W. Marlowe, creator (ABC, 2009)

The only thing better than Nathan Fillion in a TV series is Nathan Fillion in a Joss Whedon TV series. Seriously Fox TV executives, what kind of drugs were you on when you cancelled *Firefly*? But this show is pretty good. In addition to the detective and cop stuff, there is a nice bureaucratic politics undercurrent to this one as Rick Castle is the fly that the mayor shoved into the police bureaucratic machine.

bureaucracy (Chapter 8); *all kinds of law stuff* (Chapter 9)



Catch-22

Joseph Heller, author (1985)

This is one of those rare stories where either the book or the movie works. The story attempts to capture the irrationality of

war but also can be interpreted in terms of power and the structure of society.

security dilemma (Chapter 2)



A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens, author (1843)

First, the Timmy in this story is not the Timmy from South Park. Second, maybe he should have been. This tale really could have used a bit of Cartman's eloquence and grace. Enough already—rampant unchecked capitalism is miserable—we get it.

laissez-faire capitalism (Chapter 4)



A Christmas Story

Bob Clark, director (1983)

The NRA was widely rumored to have bank-rolled this seemingly charming tale of Christmas wishes. All Ralphie wants from the jolly fat man is a Red Ryder BB gun—but it seems everyone is saying no—and he has to deal with a bully who really needs shooting.

forceful control (Chapter 3); *preference falsification* (Chapter 3); *safety valve* (Chapter 3)

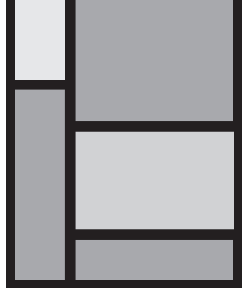


A Clockwork Orange

Stanley Kubrick, director (1971)

This is one seriously disturbing movie. From the choreographed rape scene to the brutal murders, it is supposed to make us question where we draw the line between the needs of society and the rights of criminals, but the biggest questions it raises usually center around the exact formulation of the drugs Stanley must have been on when he made it.

personal nature of politics (Introduction)



Cryptonomicon

Neal Stephenson, author (1999)

A story about secrecy, information, cryptology and politics, it is referenced in Chapter 3 right about in the whole panopticon thing, but it is also clearly relevant to international politics, secret politics, and media and politics. It follows to parallel stories, two generations apart, about cryptology in World War II and in the late 1990s.

panopticon (Chapter 3); *media and politics* (Chapter 11); *conspiracies and secret politics* (Chapter 13)



The Dark Knight

Christopher Nolan, director (2008)

Will the real Batman please stand up? The original comic book Batman was a tortured soul who treaded a narrow path between heroic and criminal, and with *The Dark Knight*, the world finally got to see him on film. It's perhaps the best Batman movie to date.



The Dark Knight Rises

Christopher Nolan, director (2012)

If this movie stood alone, it would have won accolades, but it didn't stand alone and it will always suffer in comparison to *The Dark Knight*. Even though we all know it should have been Kate Beckinsale playing Catwoman, that doesn't really matter. Not even the vampire who taught us all the true meaning of women kicking ass in skin-tight leather could have matched Heath Ledger's Joker from *The Dark Knight*.



Dick

Andrew Fleming, director (1999)

This satiric version of the Watergate story puts forth the novel idea that the scandal was all caused by the bubble-headed blondes who Nixon hired to walk the presidential dog. It should not be taken seriously—unless, of course, you are a die-hard Nixon supporter.

authority (Chapter 2); *government* (Chapter 2); *hierarchy* (Chapter 2)



The Dispossessed

Ursula K. Le Guin, author (1974)

This book might just be the best literary take on socialism ever. It's a must-read for anyone who thinks they might be either a socialist or a capitalist.

capitalism (Chapter 4); *socialism* (Chapter 4); *utopia* (Chapter 1)



Do the Right Thing

Spike Lee, director (1989)

Who would have thought delivering pizza could be this troublesome? Sal's Pizzeria is the central location in Spike Lee's graphic portrayal of racial tension in Brooklyn, New York.

safety valve (Chapter 3)



Dollhouse

Joss Whedon, creator (2009)

Well . . . it survived for most of the first half of its first season. The idea was cool. Downloading personalities into pretty bodies for secret agenting all about and stuff is cool. And even if Eliza Dushku can't act to save her life, she does have a certain . . . um . . . screen presence. This is one of the few times that Joss Whedon has

failed to spin enough of his magic to turn something into the kind of classic series he's famous for, like *Firefly* or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

experiential reality (Chapter 1, Chapter 11)



Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb

Stanley Kubrick, director (1964)

Kubrick's twisted mind really works to perfection in this prototype of the "war as accident" story line, and it is unquestionably Peter Seller's best performance ever.

causes of war (Chapter 12)



Eagle Eye

D. J. Caruso, director (2008)

Some might say that this is yet another incarnation of Orwell's Big Brother from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; they're wrong. It is more of a Frankenstein's monster kind of story, where the creation escapes the control of its master. The plot is a little predictable, and it does choose action over nuance, but it is a nice twist on the surveillance theme.

panopticon (Chapter 3)



Earth

David Brin, author (1991)

This is the best population and ecological collapse novel ever written. David Brin manages to capture the meta struggle of humanity to survive on a worn out Earth and still bring the individual drama to the fore. The crazy lady as bad guy isn't bad.

tragedy of the commons (Chapter 4)



Earth Abides

George R. Stewart, author (1949)

Earth Abides is an interesting twist on the postapocalyptic story, where there are just a few survivors of a plague and they struggle to remodel themselves into a tribe. It's an excellent story on the institutionalization of political actions and the beginning of political structures.

political structure (Chapter 6)



Enchanted

Kevin Lima (2007)

Enchanted is a satirical take on the ridiculous idealism and utopianism of Disney films, done by Disney.

utopia (Chapter 1); *idealism* (Chapter 1, Chapter 12)



Ender's series

Orson Scott Card, author (1977)

Originally appearing as a short story in the August 1977 issue of *Analog*, I'll leave it to the true geeks in the class to debate if the expansion into first a novel and then a series of novels was brilliant or tragic. The end of childhood and exploitation of innocence themes of the short story were powerful, but they get lost in the novel's and the series' focus on the nature of humanity, construction of the other, essence of souls, religion, and the meaning of life.

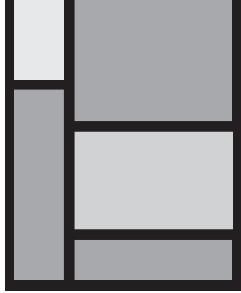
causes of war (Chapter 12); *culture* (Chapter 14)



The Fairly OddParents

Butch Hartman, creator (2001–)

Is there anyone better than Cosmo? We don't think so. This ranks right up there as



one of the top cartoons of all time. Subversive, fun, twisted, but still innocent enough to let little kids watch—it is great.

utopia (Chapter 1)



Field of Dreams

Phil Alden Robinson, director (1989)

I say more than enough about this one in the text. Try reading Chapter 2.

ideology (Chapter 1); *utopia* (Chapter 1)



Fletch

Michael Ritchie, director (1985)

This is the best movie ever for one-liners. It seems that every line Chevy Chase has is a one-liner. I use its depiction of newsroom dynamics as an excuse for putting it in this textbook.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



The Flintstones

Joseph Barbera and William Hanna, creators (1960–1966)

The modern Stone Age drama with the Flintstones and their neighbors the Rubble clan. Fred and Wilma, Barney and Betty—all you needed was a bridge night. I have always been kind of surprised that the kids didn't get their own series: *Pebbles and Bamm-Bamm Got Married*.

power (Chapter 2)



The Forever War

Joe Haldeman, author (1974)

This is a classic, award-winning science fiction novel. I reference it as a wrong example of the causes of war, but as the

characters skip forward through time and we see not only the way society changes but also the way normalcy changes, it has a lot to offer for that dreaded term paper about politics in fiction.

causes of war (Chapter 12)



Forrest Gump

Robert Zemeckis, director (1994)

Stupid is as stupid does. This movie probably has the oddest spin-off of any feature film ever, the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company restaurant. Today's students probably do not realize that one of the big talking points about the film was the way the special effects people managed to insert Forrest into real archival footage. Everyone was wondering if we would ever again know what was real.

politics (Chapter 1); *government* (Chapter 2); *the other* (Chapter 2)



The Front

Martin Ritt, director (1976)

It is a question as to whether this or the original *Manchurian Candidate* is the best film about McCarthyism. Both tell us something extremely relevant in the post-9/11 era. Just replace communists with terrorists and the parallels are scary.

communism (Chapter 1)



Full Metal Jacket

Stanley Kubrick, director (1987)

This straight-up war flick really gives a solid kick to the “horribleness of being a soldier” story line.

alliances (Chapter 2); *security dilemma* (Chapter 2)

**Gilligan's Island**

Sherwood Schwartz, creator (1964–1967)

In the original *Lost*, seven men and women, including the hapless Gilligan, are stranded on an island after their boat is lost in a tropical storm. The real question is this: if the professor can build a satellite receiving station out of coconuts and a car out of bamboo, why can't he just build a boat?

alliances (Chapter 2); *anarchy* (Chapter 2)

**Game of Thrones**

George R. R. Martin, author (1996)

If I need to point out the politics in *Game of Thrones*, then you really need to read the books and give yourself a fighting chance of seeing something other than the nudity and blood in the show.

naughty bits (Chapter 14)

**Gil Hamilton Series**

Larry Niven, creator

In this collection of short stories, Gil Hamilton is a detective working in a far future of extreme resource scarcity and overpopulation. By looking at it from the angle of the crimes that arise in that context, Larry Niven provides a uniquely personal perspective on these increasingly salient global challenges.

tragedy of the commons (Chapter 4)

**Girl Named Rabies**

Douglas A. Van Belle, author (2010)

A man gets stuck waiting on standby, for 600 years, and wakes up in a bizarre bureaucratic utopia. A girl named Rabies,

after mugging him, becomes his guide to this wonky bit of the future.

utopia (Chapter 1); *bureaucracy* (Chapter 8)

**Gladiator**

Ridley Scott, director (2000)

I'm not sure if this is a great film or a horrible one. I suspect the latter. I suspect that too much cinematic spectacle and not enough meat in the story line will make it one of those films that vanishes from the collective consciousness by the end of the decade. It's a must-see if you have a leather and bondage fetish.

authority (Chapter 2); *leadership* (Chapter 3)

**Grantville Gazette (1632)**

Eric Flint, author (2000)

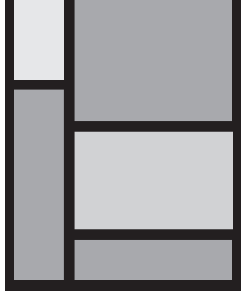
The book *1632* and the series of novels that follow are perhaps the best, explicitly political novels out there. I know; it's a bit tough to take the whole idea of a West Virginia town being transported back to the middle of the Thirty Years' War. In fact, many of you probably find it difficult to take the whole idea of West Virginia, but push past that and just explore the politics. Flint did an awesome job researching these novels and gives a very accessible take on everything from democracy, to land tenure laws, to diplomacy, to capitalistic politics.

everything (whole book)

**Great Expectations**

Charles Dickens, author (1861)

In the grand tradition of British comedy, Dickens has to be the humorist I understand



the least. A boy grows up to fall in love with a cruel woman and then loses everything. I just don't get the joke. Dark humor still needs to be funny. Try *Shaun of the Dead* instead.

laissez-faire capitalism (Chapter 4)



The Green Hornet

Michel Gondry, director (2011)

Crap film. Comics have some geek appeal.

ideals versus reality (Chapter 1)



Green Lantern

Martin Campbell, director (2011)

See Green Hornet and double the crap part.

ideals versus reality (Chapter 1)



The Guns of Navarone

J. Lee Thompson, director (1961)

It's a great flick but not much use in talking about the causes of war.

security (Chapter 2)



The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Douglas Adams, author (1979)

This is the first book in a four- or five-novel trilogy that ruthlessly skewers government and all things related to social propriety. Adams originally wrote this as a radio play, adapted it for television, and eventually packaged it into a book. It provides the perfect case study for the differences in story construction and the nature of comedy for these different mediums. Students should be aware that the movie sucked in comparison

to the earlier versions, and I refuse to acknowledge its existence even though I think Zooey Deschanel is very pretty.

institutions (Chapter 5)



Home Improvement

Matt Williams, Carmen Finestra, and David MacFadzean, creators (1991–1999)

Incompetent to the extreme, Tim Taylor is the host of a cable TV tool show. The plot of half the episodes can be summed up by the fact that he has his own coffee mug at the emergency room. This is one of those sitcoms that is actually good. The writing is good. The characters are good. The performances are good. And it has something of a soul to it, with Wilson and the family angle and everything. The reruns of this will be floating around for a very long time.

structures (Chapter 5)



House of Cards

Beau Willimon, producer (2013–)

Frank Underwood is a scheming, soulless bastard who will do anything for power—murder, bribery, manipulation, rape, you name it, he'll do it. Plenty of examples of legislative politics are in the show, but perhaps it is better understood as an analogy for the politics of a royal court than as an example of democracy.

bastardness (Chapter 4)



The Hunt for Red October

John McTiernan, director (1990)

This is another great flick, but I use it as an example of how socialism and communism

are misrepresented in terms of the Cold War, which really isn't what the film is about at all.

socialism (Chapter 4)



Iron Man

Jon Favreau, director (2008)

Believe it or not, I still haven't gotten around to watching *Iron Man 2* or *Iron Man 3* yet. I have had the Blu-Rays sitting on my shelf forever, and I guess I really am just that lazy. Now, to be fair, the Rugby World Cup was on right when I got the first disc, and then it was summer, and then the Super 15 Rugby season started up, and when you're watching seven rugby matches a weekend, there isn't that much time for watching movies, unless they have a lot of nudity in them. Speaking of *Game of Thrones*. . .

ideal versus real (Chapter 1)



It's A Wonderful Life

Frank Capra, director (1946)

Yeah, it's a classic. Whatever.

institutions (Chapter 5); *structures* (Chapter 5)



The Jackal's Waltz

Douglas A. Van Belle, author (2008)

Another of those surprisingly relevant bits of self-promotion, the ceremonial hunt at the center of *The Jackal's Waltz* is a metaphor (that might be an analogy) for diplomacy in a predatory universe that is probably an analogy (but might be a metaphor) for anarchy.

anarchy (Chapter 2); *authority* (Chapter 2); *diplomacy* (Chapter 12)



Jackass: The Movie

Jeff Tremaine, director (2002)

Take stupid people off the television, and give them a movie deal. Whoever came up with this idea should really be shot—and as soon as we finish rounding up the reality TV people, Mr. Knoxville and company are our first priority.

politics (Chapter 1)



Jerry Maguire

Cameron Crowe, director (1996)

Tom Cruise plays a sports agent who loses it all for being foolish enough to say something when he realizes that he actually believes in something. "You had me at 'hello'" is now officially the most oversatirized film line ever.

power (Chapter 2)



The Jetsons

Joseph Barbera and Oscar Dufau, creators (1962–1988)

The theme music is supposed to be exactly the same as *The Flintstones*, but I'm not sure if I believe that.

power (Chapter 2)



Judge Joe Brown

Peter Brennan, creator (1998–2013)

This is a bad version of *Judge Judy*, if that is possible.

civil law (Chapter 9)

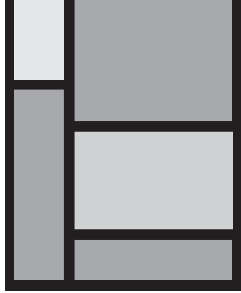


Judge Judy

Peter Brennan, creator (1996–)

Bad. It's worse than reality TV.

civil law (Chapter 9)



Julius Caesar

That Shakespeare dude

The play is hard to understand; there's lots of stabbing in one part.

monarchy (Chapter 5)



The King and I

Walter Lang, director (1956)

It's a musical, so I hate it. The king of Siam hits on his kid's teacher or nanny or something like that—sort of like *The Sound of Music* with dancing instead of singing, and without the Nazis. There was actually a king of Siam, but Siam was bought out by a shaving cream manufacturer and renamed Burma. Now it's Myanmar; no one is really sure why.

monarchy (Chapter 5)



L.A. Law

Steven Bochco and Terry Louise Fisher, creators (1986–1994)

This used to be the prime-time soap opera to watch. They never, ever let the lawyering part get in the way of the melodrama.

power (Chapter 2); *dispute resolution* (Chapter 9);
going rate (Chapter 9); *law in action* (Chapter 9)



The Lathe of Heaven

Ursula K. Le Guin (1971) [TV adaptation:
David Loxton and Fred Barzyk, creators
(1980)]

Forget the TV show, read the book. It isn't that long, and it is pretty good. Ask yourself questions about the power of social structures when you do. Actually, even

though I mention this in terms of mediated reality in the text, it is probably a better example of the subjectivity of utopias. Wait, I do mention it in the utopia chapter. Somebody should have caught that before I wrote this part. Why is there never an editor around when you need one?

utopia (Chapter 1); *mediated reality* (Chapter 11)



Law and Order (and spin-offs)

Dick Wolf, creator (1990–)

This must be the most ripped-off and spun-off TV series ever. It is also a fantasy. It is just not possible to have that long of a run of sexy female district attorneys and handsome male cops replacing the sexy and handsome ones who quit or die.

power (Chapter 2); *common law* (Chapter 9);
criminal law (Chapter 9); *going rate* (Chapter 9);
original jurisdiction (Chapter 9)



Lawnmower Man

Brett Leonard, director (1992)

Um, a stupid guy gets an upgrade and is hooked to a computer or something. This thing makes *Inception* look downright straightforward. It's one of those all seeing menace kinds of things, so I mention it with the panopticon stuff.

panopticon (Chapter 3)



Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right

Al Franken, author (2003)

This is a satirical jab at Fox News.

news (Chapter 11)



The Life of Brian

Terry Jones, director (1979)

This is Monty Python's second best film. It beats out *The Meaning of Life* by just a smidge. There actually is a fair bit of political story in here as the characters are caught up in a political struggle against the Roman Empire.

ideology (Chapter 1)



The Lion King

Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, directors (1994)

This is Disney's remake of Hamlet.

authority and hierarchy (Chapter 3); *hereditary monarchies* (Chapter 6)



Logan's Run

Michael Anderson, director (1976)

This film is another one of those "be careful what you wish for" stories. Yes, everybody is young and beautiful, but that is because they are killed on their thirtieth birthday.

utopia (Chapter 1); *bureaucracy* (Chapter 8)



Lord of the Flies

William Golding, author (1963)

Your high school English teacher probably told you this story was about the fragility of civilized society or about the animal in people and the descent into savagery. We say it is about the dynamics of anarchy. Who are you going to believe? Remember, your grade depends on your answer.

anarchy (Chapter 2); *group identity* (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2)



Lost

Jeffrey Lieber, creator (2004–2010)

How far can you twist and spindle a plot before it falls apart?

anarchy (Chapter 2); *authority* (Chapter 2)



Lucifer's Hammer

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, authors (1977)

The comet hitting the earth was just the beginning. The real story is about the struggle to survive in an anarchic environment.

anarchy (Chapter 2); *group identity* (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2)



Mad Max

George Miller, director (1979)

This is a classic Australian film, which tells you everything you need to know about Australia. The stunts are amazing, so amazing that you will actually be surprised to learn that none of the stuntmen died while making this film, but it is the violence that sets this apart as an iconic film. It isn't all that gory, but it feels very, very real, and if you don't find yourself cringing and curling your toes, you might want to consider having yourself committed before you turn into a serial killer. All those directors of all those lame and bloody horror flicks could learn a thing or two from George Miller.

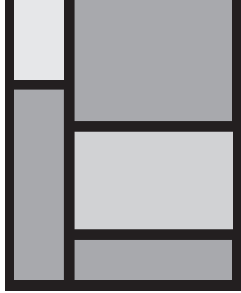
anarchy (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2)



Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior

George Miller, director (1981)

Americans know this one as *The Road Warrior*, and most do not know it was a sequel. It is one of the best Aussie films ever



made. I realize that isn't saying much, but it is a great flick, and the Aussie part should not be discounted too hastily. When Hollywood tried to make a *Mad Max 3*, they really stuffed it up. This is a seriously good story about anarchy and the search for security.

alliances (Chapter 2); *anarchy* (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2); *tragedy of the commons* (Chapter 4)



Mad Max 3: Beyond Thunderdome

George Miller, George Ogilvie, directors (1985)

Sucks.

anarchy (Chapter 2); *security* (Chapter 2); *crap on the screen* (Chapter 2)



Mars Trilogy (Red Mars; Green Mars; Blue Mars)

Kim Stanley Robinson, author (1993; 1994; 1996)

Ecopolitics writ large—very, very large. One big, long story spans a bajillion pages of this trilogy as humankind terraforms Mars while the ecosystem of the earth collapses. The *Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, and *Blue Mars* series has a lot to offer for that paper you are being forced to write on the politics in a novel. Try environmentalism, socialism, self-determination, terrorism, the role of technology in society, or the changing conceptualization of humanity, for a few themes.

anarchy (Chapter 2); *equality* (Chapter 3); *tragedy of the commons* (Chapter 4)



The Mary Tyler Moore Show

James L. Brooks and Allan Burns, creators (1970–1977)

This is another one of the newsroom television shows that have fallen out of favor—in

fact, it was the first one. It is also the one with the least to say about the dynamics of the newsroom and might be better used as an example of a feminist statement about the empowerment of women in a male-dominated society.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



M*A*S*H

Robert Altman, creator (1972–1983)

This is possibly the best comedy/drama ever made: 'nuff said.

security (Chapter 2)



The Matrix series

Andy and Larry Wachowski, directors (1999)

The Matrix films provide the object lesson that no matter how successful the first film was, some directors should not be given free rein on the sequels. The first movie is the perfect mediated reality, “how do you know what is real” kind of flick. The second two wallow so self-indulgently in Christian, Greek, and even Egyptian mythology that there is little worth watching.

Plato (chapter 1); *mediated reality* (Chapter 11)



Max Headroom

Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton, directors (1985)

This is a dystopic, surreal, and very, very, very, very 1980s take on media and politics. In a world that is entirely defined by massive TV networks competing for ratings, Max is the computer-generated alter ego of investigative reporter Edison Carter. Max Headroom offers absolute proof that

almost everything you think is new about the way media influences politics isn't new at all.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Monty Python and the Holy Grail

Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, directors (1975)

This is the funniest film ever made, bar none—the best work by the best comedy team ever.

institutions (Chapter 5)



Moon over Parador

Paul Mazursky, director (1988)

Little-known actor Jack Noah is working on location in the dictatorship of Parador at the time the dictator dies. He is made an offer he cannot refuse—run the country. This is one of those pretty good films that tends to get lost in the mix and overlooked when it comes to scheduling old flicks on cable.

legitimacy (Chapter 3); *revolution* (Chapter 3)



The Mouse That Roared

Jack Arnold, director (1959)

It's a classic. Rent it and watch it.

world systems theory (Chapter 12)



Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol

Abe Levitow, director (1962)

It's a cartoon version of *A Christmas Carol*, fully bastardized by the UPA animation studio. Don't watch it unless you're seven years old.

experiential reality (Chapter 1)



Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Frank Capra, director (1939)

This actually could be a film about unnatural fetishes and obsessions: monuments, monuments, monuments—enough already.

idealism (Chapter 1, Chapter 12); *institutions* (Chapter 5); *bicameral legislature* (Chapter 7); *filibuster* (Chapter 7)



Mulan

Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook, directors (1998)

This is supposed to be a “girls can be heroes, too” kind of story, but that benevolently feminist moralizing just does not work, and not even Eddie Murphy can save this rather lame Disney film. If you want a Disney film with a strong female lead struggling successfully against a male-dominated society, try *Beauty and the Beast*.

the other (Chapter 2)



Murphy Brown

Diane English, creator (1988–1998)

This is a comedy series about the newsroom. The dynamics of the news as a business are hidden beneath the comedic insanity of the quirky collection of characters, but it is there and surfaces now and again.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)

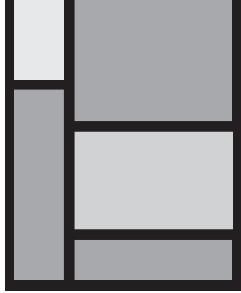


National Treasure

Jon Turteltaub, director (2004)

I forget why I mentioned this, and I'm too lazy to go back through the book and figure out what chapter it was in and why.

for some reason (somewhere probably)



National Treasure 2: Book of Secrets

Jon Turteltaub, director (2007)

I'm even less sure about why this one is in here and even lazier now than I was a few minutes ago.

maybe for some reason (somewhere probably)



The Net

Irwin Winkler, director (1995)

The Net is one of the first real attempts to take a serious shot at the Internet as panopticon story. It's not the best but gets a mention for being the first.

panopticon (Chapter 3)



Network

Sidney Lumet, director (1976)

This is probably the best film about the newsroom.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Nineteen Eighty-Four (1984)

George Orwell, author (1949) [film adaptation: Michael Radford, director (1984)]

Nineteen Eighty-Four takes a lighthearted romp through the cheery little nightmare of life under the unblinking gaze of Big Brother. Government is everywhere, watching everything and everyone, and it is a crime to think the wrong thoughts.

utopia (Chapter 1); *atomization* (Chapter 3); *government control of individuals* (Chapter 3); *panopticon* (Chapter 3); *peer policing* (Chapter 3); *preference falsification* (Chapter 3); *self-policing* (Chapter 3); *bureaucracy* (Chapter 8)



Nixon

Oliver Stone, director (1995)

This film got a lot of attention when it came out, but *All the President's Men* is probably a better film and is certainly a more accurate one.

politics (Chapter 1); *hierarchy* (Chapter 2); *power* (Chapter 2)



Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens (1838)

Again, I don't get the joke. What is so funny about starving orphans and clouds of coal smoke so thick that they block the sun?

laissez-faire capitalism (Chapter 4)



Omega Man

Boris Sagal, director (1971)

Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet, and as such, it has been abused to the point of despair as a symbol of the last or the end. Give it a rest, people. The last healthy man on Earth is trying to find a cure for the plague that's turning everyone into zombies. It gets an extra point or two for zombies.

tragedy of the commons (Chapter 4)



Once Were Warriors

Lee Tamahori, director (1994)

This movie depicts the struggle of trying to live when you are caught between a traditional society of warriors and the demands of a modern, Western European society. On the lighter side, the director was arrested, in drag, on a street corner.

cultural ownership (Chapter 14); *political culture* (Chapter 14)



The Paper

Ron Howard, director (1994)

This movie is a seriously good depiction of the business imperatives and structural dynamics of the newsroom.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Peanuts

Charles M. Schulz, creator

Snoopy—widely regarded as the most famous dog in history—and his owner Charlie Brown first appeared in print in 1950. This cartoon continues to be featured in print, television, and movies sixty-four years later.

security (Chapter 2)



The People's Court

Stu Billett, creator (1981)

How many synonyms for wretched are there in the thesaurus? Not enough.

civil law (Chapter 9)



The Phantom Menace

George Lucas (Steven Spielberg is totally glad he didn't direct this.) (1999)

Legislative politics is made even less interesting than it actually is.

legislatures (Chapter 7)



The Postman

David Brin, author (1985)

Yeah, I know there was a film. Read the book. It's a pretty good depiction of the unpleasantness of anarchy but could also

be shoehorned into the news chapter as a commentary on the communicative needs of society and the place given to the messenger.

anarchy (Chapter 2)



Popeye

E. C. Segar, director (1956–1963)

The original Popeye appeared in a 1933 cartoon but made it onto television for a seven-year stint. The often graphically depicted brutal violence is argued to be one of the inspirations for the Itchy and Scratchy characters on *The Simpsons*.

security (Chapter 2)



The Practice

David E. Kelley, creator (1997–2004)

This show that came before *Boston Legal* offers probably the best peek at the unpleasant side of the law. Most of the drama was angst over the fact that these defense attorneys were far too committed to winning at all costs, and they were far better at it than they wanted to be. It lasted two years longer than it should have, but the Alan Shore character—who moved to *Boston Legal*—was brought in for part of the last season and made the extra forty episodes worthwhile.

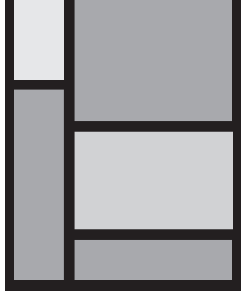
power (Chapter 2); *common law* (Chapter 9); *criminal law* (Chapter 9)



The Probability Broach

L. Neil Smith, author (1981)

A hidden gem, underappreciated—there are a lot of ways of describing this book. It uses that well-worn and often-abused



“parallel worlds” plot device, but it more than makes up for that by providing what may be the closest thing to a workable anarchic political environment that has yet been dreamt up. And for the record, Neil is an unabashed libertarian anarchist with a website and everything.

utopia (Chapter 1); *anarchy* (Chapter 2); *hierarchy* (Chapter 2)



Quantum of Solace

Marc Forster, director (2008)

I needed a movie for the Q section of the appendix so I shoved this into the political economy chapter. It fits, because the bad guy is trying to set up a monopoly on a communal good, but still.

filler (Appendix A)



Raiders of the Lost Ark

Steven Spielberg, director (1981)

Raiders of the Lost Ark is the quintessential action film, combining good visual effects with a story line that is more than strong enough to carry them. With the Nazis and World War II elements in the story line, there is probably a lot that could be said about the politics of war, power, and such, but we don’t ever get around to that in the text.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Rainbows End

Vernor Vinge, author (2006)

Vernor pronounces the e on the end of his last name, and note that the lack of an apostrophe in the title is not a typo. This is a full-on, frontal assault on the information

politics thing. This is worth a relaxed, contemplative read; Vernor gets my vote for the best living science fiction author out there—after me, of course.

panopticon (Chapter 3)



River Queen

Vincent Ward, director (2005)

Supposedly, this film was cursed. It did suffer from more than its share of production problems, but it is also a cinematic treat. *River Queen* won some awards but none of the big ones. In addition to the cultural bit I use it for in Chapter 14, it could also be used to discuss the politics of war, colonization, and race.

cultural ownership (Chapter 14); *political culture* (Chapter 14)



Roger and Me

Michael Moore, director (1989)

This is the documentary that thrust Michael Moore—who has sometimes been called the attack dog on the liberal side of the fence—into the limelight. Unabashedly political, this film would be interesting to talk about in the text box on politically effective protest. Michael is clearly protesting.

politics (Chapter 1)



Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot and Other Observations

Al Franken (1996)

This is Al’s take on the attack, attack, attack political strategies of the Republicans in the 1980s and early 1990s. Al is far funnier when he’s satirizing himself than when

he's hitting conservatives. Even though he does an excellent job of satirizing the beast that grew out of Newt's electoral strategy and the hypocrisy of Newt himself, there is just a little bit too much real feeling in this to get more than a chuckle as you read.

elections (Chapter 10)



Saw

James Wan, director (2004)

Saw is, perhaps, the perfect starting point for discussing how lazy the horror genre has become. The iconic moment, cutting off the leg to escape, was stolen from *Mad Max*, and there really isn't all that much more it has to offer. Horror used to be scary because of the struggle inherent in the drive to survive an inhuman threat, not because you cringe at the thought of having to cut your leg off or rip your eyeball out. If you want to cringe at eyeballs getting ripped out, watch *Against the Fall of Night* instead. The fact that the woman *volunteers* to be blinded by having crows peck out her eyes really makes the religious power aspect, and its abuse, horrifying.

A writer's laziness (Chapters 1–15, plus Introduction and Appendices)



Saving Private Ryan

Steven Spielberg, director (1998)

Saving Private Ryan is another “horrors of war” flick. In fact, the extended opening scene is probably the best horrors of war example there is, and if my description of World War I did not faze you, imagine that it was worse than Normandy.

group identity (Chapter 2)



The Scorpion King

Chuck Russell, director (2002)

Winning the throne through battle, it is used as a counterexample of the institutionalization of the executive.

kings (Chapter 6)



Secret Honor

Robert Altman, director (1984)

This film depicts a Nixon supporter's version of the Watergate scandal. The most telling point about it is that nobody remembers it, and it is almost impossible to find a copy of it. Did it really exist?

politics (Chapter 1); *power* (Chapter 2); *presidency* (Chapter 6)



Sex and the City

Darren Star, creator (1998–2004)

I suppose there might be something to say about the shock value of the naughty bits on screen, and there is the novelty of seeing a group of reasonably pretty women who are a bit too old obsess about sex as much as men do, but this has got to go in the category of shows that got very tiring very fast.

cognitive frameworks (Chapter 11)

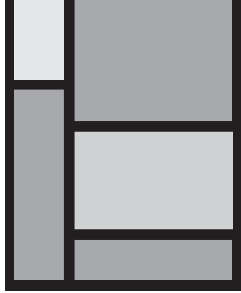


Shortland Street

Created by Patricia Morrison (TVNZ, 1992)

This New Zealand soap opera serves as a warning for what happens when you forget the pretty part of soap operas being all about pretty people who can't act.

newsworthiness (Chapter 11)



The Simpsons

Matt Groening, creator (1989–)

The longest running cartoon ever, maybe the longest running series ever, *The Simpsons* covers it all. From ecology to racism, pick a political topic and you can probably find an episode with something relevant to say.

politics (Chapter 1)



Snow Crash

Neal Stephenson, author (1992)

Another panopticon story, *Snow Crash* is also a utopia story. It depicts the increasing irrelevance of physical location and physical boundaries as information driven societies lead to topical groupings of people over the physical. It probably overplays that, as people have a countervailing interest in expanding the reach of their physical security, but that is what utopian fiction does, push those kinds of things to the extreme.

security (Chapter 2); *panopticon* (Chapter 3)



Soylent Green

Richard Fleischer, director (1973)

Tastes like chicken.

tragedy of the commons (Chapter 4)



The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie

Stephen Hillenburg, director (2004)

You know, I really didn't want to refer to the movie. I was talking about the cartoon series when I mentioned SpongeBob. The movie really wasn't all that good. If you want

to see the very best of SpongeBob, you have to see the imagination box episode.

power (Chapter 2); *laissez-faire capitalism* (Chapter 4)



Star Trek

Gene Roddenberry, creator (1966–1969)

Despite all my self-deprecating jokes about being a *Star Trek* geek and all, this really was one of the most influential shows of the twentieth century. You could pick just about any theme in this book and find that one of the original *Star Trek* episodes has something to offer. The first show to put a black woman in a position of responsibility and command, it tackled the social issues of its time and pulled no punches.

utopia (Chapter 2); *federal system* (Chapter 5)



Star Trek: Insurrection

Jonathan Frakes, director (1998)

While this may not be the best movie in the world, or even the best of the *Star Trek* movies, it does have an interesting take on the socialist commune as an idyllic utopia.

group identity (Chapter 2); *socialism* (Chapter 4)



Star Wars

George Lucas, director (1977)

This is the movie to end all movies. A lot of people got caught up with the spectacle created with the special effects, but we would argue that it was the heroic story line—the humble farm boy following his heroic instinct and rescuing the princess—that made this movie such a phenomenon. The parallels with Christian religious beliefs were made

obvious by the fact that Luke wears very Jesus-like clothes. The clash of the realist and the idealist hit all of the right chords with an American society that was in the depths of one of the worst economic and political times since the Great Depression.

realism (Chapter 1); *idealism* (Chapter 1, Chapter 12)

 **Star Wars, the other five episodes**
George Lucas, director (1983–2005)


I can forgive George for not stopping with the first one, which was actually the fourth episode, and *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* were both okay, except for the Ewoks. But those three prequels were wretched. I didn't even watch the third one until it came out on cable. Seriously, George, legislative intrigue is pretty seriously boring. What made you think you could make it exciting?

realism (Chapter 1); *idealism* (Chapter 1, Chapter 12)

 **State of Play**
Kevin Macdonald, director (2009)

It's a crime flick. Investigations, murder . . . yawn.

mediated reality (Chapter 11); *mutual exploitation model* (Chapter 11)

 **Survivor**
Charlie Parsons, creator (CBS, 2000–)

Surprisingly, these are not the people to blame for the reality TV pandemic. The Norwegians—or maybe it was the Swedes—came up with the idea. Just to be safe, we should just forbid anyone north

of Munich from ever making a TV show ever again.

alliances (Chapter 2); *group identity* (Chapter 2); *Arrow's theorem* (Chapter 10)

 **Team America: World Police**
Trey Parker and Matt Stone, directors (2004)


This is a “love it or hate it” kind of movie. It either causes laughter that threatens bladder control or bores you to tears. I tend to like the more subversive and subtle parts of Trey and Matt's humor, like the way they turned the *South Park* movie into a satire of a Disney cartoon version of *Le Miserables*. This one was just too much crass “in your face” slapstick. The one funny part was the Film Actors Guild, but there just wasn't enough of that kind of fun in it.

socialism (Chapter 4)

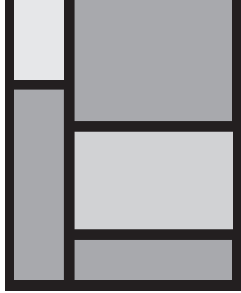
 **This Is Spinal Tap**
Rob Reiner, director (1984)

This documentary on the world's loudest band is the unchallenged best example of the mockumentary. It has some of the best one-liners ever.

not really relevant at all (whole book)

 **Thrice Upon a Time**
James P. Hogan, author (1980)

Geek factor 5 if you recognize this one. . . James P. Hogan wrote some really interesting stuff in the 1980s and commanded a big swath of the bookstore shelves during his time, but for all that success, he just didn't manage the staying power that you would expect. He's still writing books, but they can be hard to find beyond the pages



of Amazon.com. *Thrice Upon a Time* was his try at an ecological time travel thriller, seriously. It actually is pretty interesting and could be said to presage the current and growing problem with dead zones in the ocean from fertilizer pollution.

ecopolitics (Chapter 4)



The Time Machine

H.G. Wells, author (1895)

Another of the firstest ever science fiction books, this story is notable for introducing the idea that war could destroy civilization.

war (Chapter 12)



To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee, author (1960)

This is another one of those “must-read-even-though-it-counts-as-literature” kinds of books. There’s plenty of discussion of it in the text, so back off.

politics (Chapter 1); *institutions* (Chapter 5); *dispute resolution* (Chapter 9); *law in action* (Chapter 9); *law in books* (Chapter 9); *natural law* (Chapter 9); *positivist jurisprudence* (Chapter 9)



Top Gear

Andy Wilman, producer (1977–])

Three blokes and a cyborg spend an hour every week screwing around with cars and behaving like jackasses. It’s TV at its finest.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Tora! Tora! Tora!

Richard Fleischer and Kinji Fukasaku, directors (1970)

This story of Pearl Harbor is not much use here as it doesn’t really tell us a great deal

about the politics surrounding war, but it may be the best of the World War II movies.

conceptual frameworks (Chapter 1); *security* (Chapter 2)



A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

Betty Smith, author (1943) [film adaptation: Elia Kazan, director (1945)]

Ah, yes. Professors really like assigning this one, so beware and be warned. If you really like sucking up to the teacher, choose this book for your writing assignment. That said, for such a dreary story line filled with human misery, it is not that intolerable to read. The standard plot summary is that that the Nolans manage to enjoy life, despite . . . (insert unpleasantness of life here) . . . but something touchy-feely about family might be better. Oh, and tell the professor that you cried while reading it. The professors who assign this one are always real big on that touchy-feely empathy stuff.

realism (Chapter 1); *idealism* (Chapter 1, Chapter 12); *laissez-faire capitalism* (Chapter 4)



The Untouchables

Brian De Palma, director (1987)

This is a movie that uses the “Good cop versus bad mobster” theme. The gritty old realist teaches the idealist to cope with the reality of fighting crime in gangland Chicago.

realism (Chapter 1); *idealism* (Chapter 1, Chapter 12)



Utopia

Thomas More, author (1515)

The original *Utopia* turns out to be a horrible and miserable place. The book is worth

a read if only to drive home the point that utopias are subjective.

utopia (Chapter 1, Chapter 2)



Wag the Dog

Barry Levinson, director (1997)

This movie is an unconvincing attempt to tell a horror story about the mediated reality of politics. There are a lot of ways this could have been done well, but there are just too many holes in the idea that a president could create an entirely imaginary war. In the end, the viewer feels beaten about the head by the heavy-handed moralizing in the story.

legitimacy (Chapter 3); *framing* (Chapter 11); *mediated reality* (Chapter 11); *spin* (Chapter 11)



War Games

John Badham, director (1983)

A computer goes nuts and takes over the U.S. nuclear launch system in a classic example of the “war as accident” story line with a teenage kid saving the day.

causes of war (Chapter 12)



War of the Worlds

H.G. Wells, author (1897)

One of the most firstest science fiction novels ever, *War of the Worlds* is amazingly prescient in the way it portrays the war fighting of a society that is far more technologically advanced than nineteenth-century Britain. It might also be considered to be an allegory to the wars of colonization that Britain had been fighting for over a century. For me, the resolution of the

story sounds a lot like the British experience with malaria and other tropical diseases.

causes of war (Chapter 12)



Watchmen

Zack Snyder, director (2009)

Give me my three hours back, damn you!

ideal versus real (Chapter 1)



Welcome to Night Vale

Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor, creators (2012)

This unholy beast of a podcast was probably created by a mad scientist crossing Garrison Keilor’s *Prairie Home Companion* with Rod Serling’s *Twilight Zone*. It is weirdness embodied, which is cool.

democracy (Chapter 5, Chapter 10)



The West Wing

Aaron Sorkin, creator (1999–2006)

One of those realistic political dramas, this series provided a reasonably not-outlandish depiction of what life in the White House might really be like. The drama is a bit overdone, and the sinisteress of the political confrontations is a bit over the top, but still, it’s better than most.

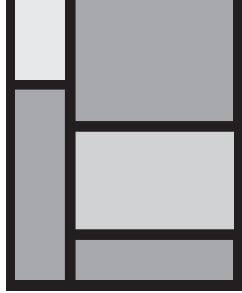
politics (Chapter 1); *institutions* (Chapter 5); *presidency* (Chapter 6)



Whale Rider

Niki Caro, director (2002)

This is one of the best examples of the cultural emphasis of the New Zealand film industry. There are numerous political themes that could be examined from the



story, ranging from the clash of modern versus traditional cultures to the role of leadership. However, we recommend the *Bro'Town* satire of it where Jeff the Maori plays the Keisha Castle-Hughes part and has to save his Iwi from developers.

cultural ownership (Chapter 14); *political culture* (Chapter 14)



What About Bob?

Frank Oz, director (1991)

I had no good reason for including this in the book.

gridlock (Chapter 7)



White Nights

Taylor Hackford, director (1985)

White Nights provides an excellent representation of the Soviets as the “Evil Empire” fictional depiction of socialism and communism. An emergency landing puts a former Russian ballet star back in the hands of the big, bad communists, and he has to dance or die. Okay, it’s not quite that extreme, but they do hold him prisoner and just generally are not very nice to him, and it takes the sacrifice of a friend to help him escape back to freedom. Just remember that socialism is an economic term that is conceptually distinct from evil dictatorships.

socialism (Chapter 4)



Why Not Me?

Al Franken, author (1999)

Franken pulls off this pseudo-autobiography perfectly, and by portraying himself as

an idiot rather than attacking the real idiots playing politics out there, it takes the partisan edge off. That makes it, perhaps, the funniest political satire ever written.

Arrow's theorem (Chapter 10)



The Wizard of Oz

L. Frank Baum, author (1900)

Published as a children’s book, many would argue that it is infused with political commentary. Does the yellow brick road represent the gold standard for currency? Is the wizard really U.S. president Benjamin Harrison, who won the election largely on the basis of economic promises that bordered on the promise of miracles, then implemented radical economic policies that failed miserably and cost the Republicans dearly in the 1890 midterm elections and 1892 presidential election?

flying monkeys (Chapter 3)



WKRP in Cincinnati

Hugh Wilson, creator (1978–1982)

This is another media as a business show with Les Nessman as the intrepid anchorman who pronounces Chihuahua—Chee-hooah-hooah.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



Woman on the Edge of Time

Marge Piercy, author (1976)

This is another one of those books that professors really like assigning. The story is littered with lots of complex ways to

discuss power relationships and structural violence and to question the nature of reality. Basically, you are never sure if the woman committed to the asylum is insane or gifted as she struggles against the constraints the structures of society place upon her.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



World War Z

Max Brooks, author (2006)

Written as if it was a scholarly or historical documentation of the stories people told about the fight against the zombie apocalypse, this novel was wholly unsuited for adaptation into a film. So the film tells a totally different story in a totally different way. That upset Max, but somebody really should have told him that it was going to have to be like that because it was pretty obvious to anyone who has ever worked in the film industry.

mediated reality (Chapter 11)



X-Files

Chris Carter, creator (1993–2002)

Here is the ultimate alien conspiracy theory series. In addition to what it says about cognitive frameworks and the interpretation of incoming information, it could be used to discuss the role of secrecy in democratic governance, technology, and myth.

cognitive frameworks (Chapter 11)



Zombies From Mars

Douglas A. Van Belle, author (2009)

This is one of the best examples of zombies as bureaucracy that I have ever written about someone trapped on a space ship.

bureaucracy (Chapter 8)



Zoolander

Ben Stiller, director (2001)

Awesomeness. This is satire in its highest form.

idealism (Chapter 1, Chapter 2)