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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2006 Volume I: Stories around the World in Film

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## Women in World Cinema: Stories of Struggle and Resistance

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by Clary W. Carleton

Film offers a unique storytelling experience that students find tremendously engaging. Like quality literature, film can offer them a challenging text to decode. Ironically, while film is a communication tool that stimulates student engagement, film generally receives little critical study in the secondary classroom. As a multi-sensory technology, films contain countless, carefully selected visual and auditory details to be "read" by viewers, making these powerful texts worthy of serious examination. The focus of this unit will be on cinematic narratives that involve women struggling against cultural traditions within India, Africa, and Iran. Building on an initial study of literature from or about each region, this unit undertakes the critical analysis and comparison of their different film traditions. Using the films *Water* (Canada/India, 2005), *Finzan* (Mali, 1989), and *The Circle* (Iran, 2000), students will explore how stories reveal the diversity of global culture, address larger social issues, and uncover the universal aspects of human nature. Strategies will involve the identification and analysis of technical, aesthetic, and rhetorical choices made by filmmakers via critical viewing, reflective writing, and collaborative learning.

(Developed for World Literature, grades 9-12; recommended for World Literature, grades 9-12)

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