



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

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

---

## From Africa to America: The Untold Story

Guide for Curriculum Unit 06.01.09, published September 2006

by Beverly Rice-Hooper

Hollywood filmmakers have depicted the African-American race with such degradation that in order to reclaim the minds of young African-Americans the true story must be told. I have chosen four films and four novels to give students a direct view of where the African-American race has been to help them understand where they need to go. The films are: *Sankofa*, by Ethiopian Haile Gerima, *Amistad* directed by Steven Spielberg, *Hotel Rwanda* by filmmaker Terry George, and *Beloved*, screenplay by Akosua Busia a prince from Ghana. Companion novels are: *Kindred*, by Octavia Butler, *Mutiny on the Amistad*, by Howard Jones, *Hotel Rwanda*, (*Bringing the True Story of and African Hero to Film*), and *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison. These authors and filmmakers are diverse in race and gender; they produced their works under quite different circumstances.

We will highlight the differences in visual styles of the filmmakers and writing styles of the authors as each takes up themes of oppression and the quest for liberation. Slavery and the impact of African history on the U.S. today must be understood by students so they can appreciate their past and the struggle, pain, and sacrifices, of others.

(Developed for English and Language Arts, grades 9-12; recommended for English and Language Arts, grades 6-12)

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)