



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2015 Volume IV: Using Film in the Classroom/How to Read a Film

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## **Film Analysis and Contemporary Issues: The Surveillance State**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 15.04.04, published September 2015  
by Eric W. Maroney

This curriculum unit makes use film to build and enhance students' analytical reading and writing skills. Throughout the unit, students will identify and analyze the cinematic tools and choices a director employs to create meaning. This analysis will mirror the same close reading skills described in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which are the same practices students engage in when deconstructing traditional literature or written text. . Film replaces written text providing an alternative medium for students to engage with. This substitution is intended to remove the barrier of decoding; thus, allowing students access to complex texts and ideas. Thematically, the unit explores the ethics of surveillance. Students will examine *The Conversation* (1974), *Eagle Eye* (2008) and *Citizenfour* (2014) to consider the ideologies these texts produce regarding surveillance and the evolution of surveillance technology. Students will explore the ways viewers are encouraged or discouraged to identify with particular characters and consider the way this spectator identification constructs the messaged agenda of the film. At the culmination of the unit, students will write a comparative analysis on two of the texts studied throughout the unit.

(Developed for English IV, grade 12; recommended for English and Civics, grades 9-12)

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