Summary of *Glory*

In the first feature film to bring to life the role of African American soldiers in the American Civil War, *Glory* showcases the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and the bravery and courage by its soldiers. The 54th Massachusetts was an all-black regiment that fought for the Union during the Civil War. The regiment came about after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation and it was formed in March of 1863. Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts appointed Captain Robert Gould Shaw to be Colonel of the new regiment.

On May 28, 1863 the 54th Massachusetts, also known as “The Glory Brigade”, leaves Boston to fight for the Union. Initially the regiment was only known as a labor unit, performing mainly labor intensive work and seeing little action in battle, if any. On July 16, 1863 the 54th would see battle on James Island in South Carolina. Two days later on July 18, the 54th Massachusetts would lead one of the most daring assaults on Fort Wagner. The 54th Massachusetts gained wide acclaim after taking the bold and courageous step to being the first unit to lead that day’s charge. The 54th fought admirably but the result was unfavorable as Union troops would eventually retreat back to their trenches safely away from Fort Wagner.

The 54th Massachusetts suffered heavy losses in the assault on Fort Wagner losing over half the brigade, and although the assault was considered futile by many, the valor displayed by the 54th resulted in an increased enlistment and mobilization of African American troops in the Civil War. As word of their bravery spread, Congress authorized the raising of black troops throughout the Union and over 180,000 volunteered. President Abraham Lincoln credited these men of color with helping turn the tide of the war in favor of the Union.

The film takes place from September 1862 to July 1863. Various scene locations are featured throughout the film from as far north as Massachusetts to as far south as Georgia. Various battle locations also take place throughout the film but the major battle takes place in South Carolina at Fort Wagner.

The film is both fictional and non-fictional in its accounts and the story is told from Colonel Shaw’s point-of-view. Matthew Broderick portrays Colonel Shaw in the film and many of Broderick’s personal reflections and letters that he writes and reads throughout the film are actual letters that Colonel Shaw wrote during the Civil War.

*Glory & AIME*

This movie guide will follow Gavriel Salomon’s theory of AIME (Amount of Invested Mental Energy) to assist professors in the selection of short scenes throughout the film for the purpose of facilitating active discussion among the class and creating enhanced activities to help students learn from the film. By selecting certain scenes, professors will assist in guiding students through the discussions and activities to allow students the opportunity to learn important concepts from the film. Professors
will direct students in what to look and listen for while watching the selected scenes. This will help students to comprehend and retrieve the information from the segments of the film. It also allows students to process the information since they are only given a few minutes of each selected scene, rather than the entire film. Students then reflect on the scene and process that information through the discussions and activities in class. Research suggests students who are cued to the film in this way will be able to give more attention, recall more information, and comprehend more of the information from the film.

**Glory’s Impact**

One of the main ways in which we see the impact of *Glory’s* story today is through the African American men and women who have powerful positions within our nation. One man who has shown true leadership for the United States is former Secretary of State, Colin Powell. Powell’s story is remarkable in the fact that he rose through military ranks and received numerous awards in route to becoming the first Secretary of State from African American descent. He is the highest ranking African American government official in the history of the United States. Prior to that position he was the highest ranking person of African American descent in the military. Powell’s leadership paved the way for other African Americans when he was succeeded by Condoleezza Rice who became the first African American woman as the Secretary of State, and only the second woman to ever hold the position along with Madeleine Albright. What makes this story so remarkable is the fact that none of this would have likely been possible without the brave men of the 54th Massachusetts and the other African American regiments. These men lead the way for future African Americans to hold powerful positions within the military and the government. Connections can certainly be made on the impact of the 54th Massachusetts and how these men created an opportunity for future African Americans to lead our nation. It is important to give your students the chance to respect and admire the men of the 54th Massachusetts and the sacrifices they were willing to make in order to improve the lives of all African Americans, both then and now.

Activity: Before screening different clips of *Glory*, have your students research Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice and any other prominent African Americans. Instruct students to find the history of these different individuals and develop conclusions on how these men and women rose to power. You may want to pose some of these questions to your students:

- How did these individuals rise to power?
- What prior decisions in U.S. history concerning African Americans gave these individuals a chance to hold these types of positions?
- What impact do you think these individuals have/had on all future African Americans in the U.S.?

After viewing the selected clips from the film, you may want to address some of these questions to make connections in our history:
-What impact do you think the 54th Massachusetts had on creating an opportunity for African Americans to lead in our nation?

-In your opinion, what legacy did the 54th Massachusetts leave for all of us and how did these men earn your respect?

**Character Summary**

**Colonel Robert Gould Shaw**

The son of a wealthy and prominent abolitionist family, Robert Gould Shaw was born in Boston, Massachusetts on October 10, 1837. Shaw once attended Harvard University before withdrawing to work for a family member. In May of 1861 Shaw would join the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry as a Second Lieutenant. Eventually he would rise to the rank of Captain. Shaw was eventually appointed by Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew to lead the first African American Regiment in March of 1863. This Regiment was known as the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and Shaw would be promoted from Major to Colonel in less than one month’s time. Shaw would continue to lead the 54th Massachusetts until his death at Fort Wagner, SC on July 18, 1863.

**Private Trip**

One of the main characters in the film, Private Trip comes from Tennessee as a runaway slave to fight for the Union. Trip has no family and he views the 54th Massachussetts as his only family. Toward the beginning of the film we see Trip as a man who is filled with arrogance and hatred as he constantly looks for ways to view negative aspects of any situation. Eventually Trip becomes humble as he realizes the men that make up the 54th are all he has, and he sees them as being his family. When asked by Colonel Shaw if he would take the honor to carry the Regimental Colors, Trip denies the opportunity telling Colonel Shaw that he is not fighting this war for him. Later in the film we see Pvt. Trip honoring Colonel Shaw’s wishes after Shaw falls with the flag barer after taking fatal gunshot wounds at Fort Wagner. Trip’s heroics of running to take up the flag raises troop moral and as a result, the 54th charges to break inside the walls of Fort Wagner. It was only fitting to see Trip fall beside his leader, Colonel Shaw.

**Sergeant Major John Rawlins**

Viewed by the men of the 54th Massachusetts as a leader, Sergeant Major John Rawlins sets the tone of the regiment as being a group of men who gain respect by showing respect. From very early on in the film we see Rawlins as an older man who is respected by his peers.
After joining the 54th as a regular infantryman, Rawlins is designated as the soldier responsible for reporting to Colonel Shaw to discuss how the men of the regiment are doing. After the regiment leaves Boston to move south, Rawlins is called up by Major Forbes and Colonel Shaw to be named Sergeant Major.

**Corporal Thomas Searles**

The childhood friend of Colonel Shaw, Thomas is a well-educated young man from Boston, MA. Articulate and well versed in modern theologies of the time period, we initially see Thomas as a man who has little knowledge of manual labor or military toughness. However, when Thomas hears of Shaw’s appointment to lead the first African American regiment, Thomas declares himself as the first volunteer. Very quickly Thomas is forced to learn the dividing lines between the ranks within the military as Colonel Shaw forces both himself and Major Forbes to essentially cut their friendly ties from Thomas since he is an enlisted man. This is a hard adjustment for Thomas as he does not understand the meaning for the treatment he is receiving at times. Thomas is considered by Sergeant Major Mulcahy, a drill instructor, to be the worst soldier in the regiment. We constantly see Mulcahy challenging Thomas in an attempt to make him a better soldier by forcing him to be tougher and stronger. Thomas’ toughness is shown at the battle on James Island where he takes a gunshot wound to the shoulder. Instead of taking the option of being shipped home to heal from his wounds, Thomas elects to stay with the regiment to continue fighting. In time, we see more of his inner strength and leadership displayed in the charge on Fort Wagner when he volunteers to carry the regiment’s colors if the flag bearer falls in battle. Later we see Thomas as one of the first soldier’s to break inside the walls of Fort Wagner.

**Private Jupiter Sharts**

A former slave from South Carolina, Sharts is a man with an obvious speech impediment and we can also see that he is illiterate. Although his education may be limited, Sharts is a man with a very warm heart and we can see this in the relationships he forms with his fellow soldiers and how he treats his peers. Sharts takes the opportunity to learn how to read by working with Thomas to better his reading skills. We also see that Sharts excels in sharp shooting.

**Major Cabot Forbes**

A longtime friend of Colonel Shaw, Forbes follows Shaw from the 2nd Massachusetts to the 54th after Shaw is named to lead the first all African American regiment. Forbes is humbled by the fact that Shaw has asked him to join him as an acting officer in the newly formed regiment. After realizing how Shaw runs the newly formed regiment, Forbes has a hard time coming to terms with some of Shaw’s decisions involving the treatment of soldiers.
He was against the fact that Thomas was being treated as what he viewed unfairly and he opposed the whipping that Trip would receive as a result of being caught away from camp. Forbes eventually confronts Shaw about his treatment of the soldiers and eventually both friends see eye to eye. Forbes is a man who is admired and well-respected by the regiment.

Relating *Glory* to College Freshmen

*Glory* can relate to incoming college freshmen through the simple fact that freshmen students benefit when they can come to the point of accepting all different races and genders as equal people. One of the main things we hope for students to learn is to be tolerant of all people and to appreciate people for who they are. We all have so much to learn from each other and being a freshman in college is a great time in any student’s life. This time is a perfect opportunity to foster new relationships while gaining an appreciation of different people and their way of life.

Topics to Relate

We will take the approach of relating events dealing with diversity, racism, and history, while looking at this film. *Glory* certainly has a lot to offer to viewers when you look at topics surrounding diversity and racism during the civil war. There are also important connections that can be made with this time period in our history. We will look at different scenes throughout the film to make connections with each of these topics in hopes of learning more about the film and this important era in our nation’s history.

*Note: Scene numbers are selected by the chapter numbers on the DVD. Preferred play-times are listed in parenthesis beside the chapter titles.

Diversity

One of the major topics surrounding this film is diversity. Throughout various scenes in the film, situations concerning diversity are very evident and important to the film. It is important to also be able to connect these issues with topics concerning diversity with college freshmen.

Scene 4: The Shaw Party (9:40-14:38)

Activity: Before viewing this scene, break students into groups of about four or five students per group. Inform students to pay attention to the discussions taking place within this scene and try to have them set their minds to the time period they are watching. Also inform them to think about this scene in terms of diversity and having both white and black soldiers fighting for the Union. Have students watch this scene featuring a party at the Shaw house. The party features many delegates and high ranking officials from the Boston area as well as Frederick Douglas. Make sure students pay particular attention to the point where we first here about the raising of an all-black regiment.

Post Viewing: After students watch this scene, ask students if they thought African American regiments already existed in the Union. Let them discuss this issue amongst their groups. Facilitate a discussion
with all of the class and the importance of having African-American soldiers fighting for the Union. Another thing to point out after watching this scene is the common misconception of the 54th Massachusetts being the first all-black regiment fighting in the civil war. It is documented that the Union secretly organized black regiments prior to the 54th. Ask students to have their groups write down what they feel is the historical significance of having organized black regiments fighting in the Civil War.

**Racism & Equality**

One thing that is certainly evident in this film is racism and the struggle for the men of the 54th Massachusetts to gain equal rights as soldiers as well as the acceptance of their fellow white soldiers. Through different scenes in this film students can learn what it took for the men of the 54th to be accepted by their peers and the courage and dedication it took to do so.

**Scene 6: Readville Camp (17:17-17:50)**

Activity: This is a perfect scene for personal reflection. Have students work alone during this scene and instruct them to imagine as if they were one of the African-American soldiers marching into the Readville Camp just after enlisting in the 54th. Instruct the students to pay particular attention to the language used during this scene. You may want to turn the captioning on during this scene to hear the background comments made by the white Union soldiers. Let the scene play for about a minute.

Post Viewing: After students watch this scene have them write down their reflection on a piece of paper. You may want them to write how they would have felt if they would have been the soldiers marching into the camp. After adequate time for personal reflection, call on students to address their feelings to the entire class.

- Before you viewed this scene, did you think of racism as just a Southern issue? Why or Why not?
- Why do you think the black soldiers did not say something back to the white soldiers and do you think you would have had that same restraint?
- Do you believe all soldiers deserve equal treatment
in the military? (after students respond you may want to address current issues surrounding gays and lesbians in the military and ask students their feelings about this issue. *This could be highly controversial at this point so you may want to address this issue briefly if you do choose to introduce this topic*)

**Scene 10: Bayonet Practice (43:45-52:23)**

Activity: Break the students into small groups to watch this scene. This scene shows Col. Shaw at a Christmas dinner with fellow white officers and a conversation with the quartermaster responsible for making orders for soldier equipment such as clothing, shoes, etc. We notice the quartermaster is reluctant to supply the 54th with supplies and he makes this known to Col. Shaw. Although Shaw is obviously agitated, he delays the issue. The next morning we see that Private Trip has apparently deserted the regiment and is caught and punished before the entire regiment. That evening Rawlins tells Shaw that Trip went off to find shoes since he desperately needed them. Realizing that he made a mistake, Shaw questions Rawlins to find out that most of the regiment is suffering from inadequate footwear. Shaw then goes back to the quartermaster and demands proper shoes and equipment for his soldiers.

Post Viewing: After students view this scene, ask the class to respond to the quartermaster’s actions of holding out equipment from the 54th. Also ask the class to respond to the following questions:

- Did they know or think if this type of unequal treatment existed within the Union army?
- What do you think was expected of the African-American soldiers since they were not given proper equipment?
- In your opinion, what would it take for the 54th Massachusetts and other black regiments to gain the respect of their fellow white soldiers and the rest of the Union?

**Scene 12: Payday (53:10-56:35)**

Activity: Play this scene for students showing the 54th receiving their pay. Once again we see the unequal treatment of African-American soldiers when they were expected to take $10 per month instead of the standard $13 month. Shaw informs the men that they are receiving lower pay due to being a colored regiment. He instructs them to fall-out to receive pay. Instantly we see Private Trip in-
structing other black soldiers to not give in to receive pay, and he tells them to “tare up” their pay sheet. After the entire regiment begins yelling in protest of the decreased pay, Colonel Shaw takes it upon himself to inform the entire regiment that if they will take no pay, neither will the officers. Instantly we see the African-American soldiers smiling and cheering for the colonel. They are a more unified regiment as a result of this act than any other before. It was a moment where Shaw’s actions stated that they were all in this together and everyone was equal.

Post Viewing: Ask the class to reflect on this scene and how significant it was to the overall movie. You may want to instruct students to write their comments on a sheet of paper. Next, allow students to respond to the scene and create a discussion on how important this act was through the eyes of the regiment. Here are a few questions to help in the discussion process:

-What do you feel was the overall message from Colonel Shaw when he tore his pay sheet in front of the rest of the regiment and stated that the officers would take no pay as a result of the regiment refusing to take pay?

-Why do you think the black soldiers were still viewed as being different and how was the decreased pay an insult to these soldiers?

Finally, inform the students that this was actually a true event but it took place differently than from the movie. The true account of this story is that Colonel Shaw was the person responsible for leading the protest against the different pay rates. Feel free to ask the students why they think the writers and director chose to have the scene portrayed differently than that of the actual historical event.

Scene 17: Dear Father (1.10:15-1.12:04)

Activity: Have the students watch this short scene where a white Union regiment is passing by the 54th, who are doing manual labor while the white regiment marches off to battle. This scene involves a dispute erupts between the men in the regiments and Major Forbes and Sgt. Major John Rawlins settled the conflict.

Post Viewing: Ask the class to reflect on the scene for a few minutes by writing down what they felt was the most important point of that scene. Follow this by asking these questions:

-Why do you think the men in the white regiment disregarded the black regiment as being equal, in particular the comments that were made toward Sgt. Major John Rawlins?

-Why do you think Rawlins protected the white man and decided to not have Forbes bring him up on charges after he made a racial comment? How
would you have reacted to the situation if you were Rawlins?

-What do you feel the men of the 54th Massachusetts will have to do in order to gain the respect of the white men in other regiments?

Next, skip forward to Scene 23: We are Ready (1.36:04-1.38:30) and play this short clip. After viewing this scene, ask students these questions:

-What do you think made the white soldier cheer for the 54th as they passed by when he said “Give em’ hell 54th”?

-What was the ultimate sacrifice that the 54th was going to have to make in order to earn the respect they deserved?

-If you were a soldier in the 54th marching through the cheering white soldiers, how would you feel during this important moment?

Scene 27: Fort Wall (1.48:13-1.54:45)

Activity: Play this scene for students. This is an important scene where we see Colonel Shaw fall with his men as they charge inside Fort Wagner. We also see the aftermath of the charge the next morning when hundreds of soldiers from the 54th are dumped in a large mass grave near the fort. Colonel Shaw is also buried with his men and this is very important to the story of Glory.
Post Viewing: After students watch this scene, have them respond to these questions in a class discussion:

-What did it say about Colonel Shaw when he was willing to lay down his life as he charged up Fort Wagner’s walls in an attempt to lead his men to victory?

-After you saw the response from Shaw’s men after he fell, what impact do you think he had on his regiment?

-Finally, in the closing scenes we see Shaw as he is thrown into a grave with his men. It is highly unusual for officers to be buried in a common grave with their soldiers, especially soldiers of color. It was common for the bodies of officers to be returned to their respected armies so that they might receive a proper burial, but this was not the case for Shaw as the Confederates wanted him to be buried with his men out of disrespect for Shaw taking the opportunity to lead colored soldiers. What do you think it says about Shaw’s personality and his fight for equality, that he would be buried with his men in a common grave?

-Do you think, if given the option, Shaw would have wanted to be buried away from his men? Why or why not?

-What does the closing image of Shaw lying beside his men say about equality and equal treatment of all?

-What does equality mean to you and how do you believe the men of the 54th Massachusetts earned respect and equality?

**History**

When Glory was unveiled to the world it was widely acclaimed for its historical relevance and the fact that most of the film is true, and based on true events. The film follows the letters of Colonel Robert Shaw and many of the events he writes about were displayed in the film. It is important for students to learn about the history of the United States so they can appreciate where their country has come from and the strides we have made as people. It also gives us another chance to really appreciate and value the men of the 54th Massachusetts and the gains they
made for all African-Americans.

Scene 4: The Shaw Party  (10:59-12:36)

Activity: Have students watch this part of Scene 4 again (the students watched this during the Diversity section earlier). Students will notice Frederick Douglass and the comments he makes about black soldiers fighting in the military.

Post Viewing: Open the class up to discussion and questions by presenting a few facts.

- It is well-known that Frederick Douglass had two sons who fought as a part of the 54th Massachusetts. The sons were Lewis Douglass and Charles Douglass.

- Lewis Douglass was the first Sergeant Major of the 54th Massachusetts.

- Charles Douglass was an infantryman in the 54th Massachusetts.

- Frederick Douglass fought for equal rights of African-Americans and African-American soldiers. He also lobbied to President Lincoln for equal pay of black soldiers in the military.

- Frederick Douglass was a primary recruiter for the 54th Massachusetts and his son, Frederick Douglass Jr., would eventually recruit soldiers for the 54th as well.
Now pose these questions for your students:

- With Douglass and his family being so much a part of what the 54th was trying to accomplish, why do you think he and his sons did not receive more time in the film itself and why do you think the writers and director chose not to mention anything about his sons during the film?

- Just by what you see from this film, what is your overall impression of Frederick Douglass and his impact on the Union during the Civil War?

Now ask your students to take some time in the library or on the Internet to research information about Frederick Douglass during the Civil War period. Tell your students to bring this information back to the class to share with other students. After your students have shared their information with each other, ask students to reflect on Douglass’ impact within the Union and see if their opinion of Douglass’ impact has changed from what they first thought.

**Scene 12: Payday** (53:10-56:35)

Activity: During this scene we notice that the men were expected to take a lesser amount of pay than that of white soldiers. This is well documented in history books that this was true. Originally, when the 54th was put together, the recruitment posters even said that black soldiers would receive $13 per month, the standard pay for soldiers at the time. During this scene we find out that the regiment is receiving less pay due to the fact they are colored soldiers. They are expected to take $10 per month. Allow your students to watch this scene.

Post Viewing: Ask these questions to your students:

- What would it mean to you if you would receive less pay simply because of the color of your skin?
- Why do you believe the men would rather take no pay at all than take the $10 per month? What do you believe the difference in pay meant to the soldiers themselves?
- When the soldiers decided to do this and you realized that the regiment was taking no pay, how did your attitude and perception change about the 54th Massachusetts and its men?
History is different from the movie in the fact that it was Col. Shaw who insisted that everyone not receive pay due to the difference in wages. He felt strongly that the men should receive equal amount of pay.

-What does this say about Col. Shaw that he was willing to also not receive pay because of his soldiers being discriminated against?

-What message do you think he was trying to send to his men by refusing to take pay?

**Congressional Medal of Honor**

One important aspect of the 54th Massachusetts that the film did not address concerns a soldier by the name of William Harvey Carney. Carney would become the first African American to ever receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroics and bravery displayed in the charge against Fort Wagner. Carney received the medal for refusing to let the American flag fall to the ground after a fellow soldier was killed by a gunshot wound. Unfortunately Carney would certainly suffer for his efforts as he took at least three gunshot wounds to different parts of his body. Eventually as the Union would retreat Carney would follow with the flag in hand back to camp and he was quoted as saying “boys, I only did my duty. The flag never touched the ground.” The entire regiment rallied around Carney’s bravery and the fact that he simply did not let the flag touch the ground. It would be almost 40 years until Carney would receive his Medal of Honor on May 23, 1900.

Before reading this information to your students, have them research William Harvey Carney and ask them to see what information they come up with after performing both a library search and an Internet search. After they do this, pose these questions:

-What did you find out about William Harvey Carney and why was he so important?

-How did his actions represent and symbolize the 54th Massachusetts and in what ways?

-In your opinion, what is the historical significance of an African American soldier receiving the Medal of Honor?

**Military Desegregation**

Following the Civil War a series of amendments were passed beginning with the 13th Amendment which prohibited slavery. The 14th followed soon after granting citizenship to everyone born in the United States. The 15th Amendment guaranteed the right to vote regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. These three amendments allowed African Americans to participate in the political process following the Civil War, however it was met with much resistance, especially...
in southern states where racial prejudice continued for many years. In 1896 racial desegregation was dealt a blow in the Supreme Court ruling on Plessy v. Ferguson that did not require facilities to be racially integrated as long as they were equal. This separate but equal doctrine held for over fifty years and it was a step backward for racial equality. In 1948 President Harry Truman signed into effect Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948 establishing equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This was a big victory for racial desegregation and another victory would soon come with the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education that decided separate public schools for black and white students was inherently unequal and that this treatment was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. This case overturned Plessy v. Ferguson and paved the way for the civil rights movement.

Activity: Have your students research military desegregation after the Civil War and see what type of information they come up with. After you have some discussion among the class about their information, pose these questions:

- Why do you think it took so long for racial desegregation in the military following the Civil War?
- Why do you think it took so long for the Supreme Court to overturn Plessy v. Ferguson?
- Does racial desegregation still exist and if so, where do you see it today?
- How do you try to promote racial equality and why is it so important?

Media Literacy & Glory

With Media Literacy one of our main goals is to deconstruct any medium and look for ways to question what we view, what we see, and what we read. It allows us to critically analyze messages that are often taken at face value without properly looking more deeply into the root of the message and the goal behind it. Media Literacy encourages the participant to pose thoughtful questions in hopes of learning more about how to analyze and evaluate messages in the media. We will use Media Literacy to help students gain insight into a few scenes and the goals behind those scenes, and what the director is actually trying to simulate when these scenes are played before the audience. During these exercises you are encouraged to question your students and really get them to the point where they want to ask questions. It is during this time that we are able to learn more about Media Literacy as well as the film itself.

Scene 5: Recruits (14:40-16:45)

Activity: Allow your students to watch this scene. In this scene we see Shaw riding on his horse as he first introduces himself to the new recruits of the 54th Massachusetts. One of the big things to pay attention to in this scene is Shaw’s position relative to that of the new African American soldiers.

Post Viewing: After your students watch this scene, allow them to respond to these questions:
Why do you think Col. Shaw was seated on his horse during his first encounter with the new regiment?

-The new recruits are standing on the ground while Col. Shaw is on his horse looking down at them. What does it mean to you to see the African American soldiers below Col. Shaw as he introduces himself? What does this say about power?

-What does the image of an officer on a horse mean to you and how did you develop your opinion of this representation?

Why do you believe the director chose shooting this particular scene in this manner? Do you feel it was merely coincidence or did the director stage this scene?

After your students answer these questions, you may want to play the scene again to specifically point-out the point-of-view of the cameras and how power is displayed in this scene.

Scene 10: Bayonet Practice (43:45-52:23)

Activity: Your students may have watched this scene earlier but it has some important media literacy points. During this scene the quartermaster informs Shaw at a Christmas dinner that he is unable to give supplies to the 54th Massachusetts due to the fact that they will not be fighting soon.

Post Viewing: Allow your students to watch this scene and then discuss these questions:

-At the Christmas dinner when Shaw tells the quartermaster what his regiment needs, we see the expression on the quartermaster’s face change. Obviously he is uneasy about the situation and he gives an excuse as to why the 54th cannot receive equipment at this time. Now the camera switches back to Shaw and we can see an angry look on his face. Just from what you have witnessed during this brief conversation, describe the feelings of Shaw and what he is most likely thinking. There is a lot we can tell from body language and we can read into this by the expressions on Shaw’s face.

-When Shaw is leaving the table he stands up and the camera tilts up to show Shaw standing over the table and looking down at the quartermaster. What does
this scene say about power and who has it? How do you know and where did you come up with your conclusion?

Now let the scene play past the whipping of Private Trip. It will then show a scene where Rawlins and Shaw discuss how the regiment needs shoes. Next, we see a scene where Shaw is marching with a few of his men to a building. Before he goes inside his men turn around and cross their arms, obviously with a look as if they are not going to allow anyone to go into the building that Shaw just entered.

-What do you draw from the image of the men with their arms crossed and a stern look on their face?

-Inside of the building Shaw is irate with the quartermaster and shows his disgust by throwing things around and yelling at the quartermaster. The camera points down to the quartermaster looking down at him and giving us the impression that he is weak toward Shaw. On the other hand, the camera is looking up at Shaw and it gives us the impression that he has the power. Shaw’s language also gives us this impression when he says “Now, where would that power come from”.

-What did you draw from this scene with Shaw and the quartermaster?

-What gave you the sense that Shaw was powerful during this scene and the quartermaster was very vulnerable? How did you know and explain how you came to this conclusion.

-Shaw looking down at the quartermaster

-Shaw approaching the quartermaster with his men

-The quartermaster frightened by Shaw

-Rawlins and others guarding Shaw's entrance

-The camera angle is from a low angle shot looking up at Shaw and his men marching to the building. What conclusions do you draw from this scene about the men just by the camera angle?
-Why do you think Shaw felt he had to do this in order to get equipment for his men?

-Do you see Shaw as having more respect from his men since he was willing to do this?

Your Favorite Scene

Take this time to allow students to reflect on their favorite scene in the film. Have students write down their favorite scene and why they thought it was important. After students finish writing, have students read their examples to the rest of the class. You may want to go back in the film and play those selected scenes to create a discussion.
Suggested Books & Videos


“Lay This Laurel”. Author: Richard Benson.


“Undying Glory: The Story of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment”. Author: Clinton Cox.
References


