Dear Educators,

Thank you for engaging your students in Milwaukee Film's Education Screening of *The Youth Governor*. This is an exciting opportunity for students and educators to engage with a film that highlights the election and campaigns of young leaders in a mock government while our own state and local communities are entrenched in a tumultuous election season for real government offices. While this film focuses on the YMCA's Youth in Government program in California, it confronts universal questions and issues about elections and campaigns in general.

In choosing to attend the screening, you have already made a commitment to exploring young people’s role in government and politics in our community, state, and country and it is my hope that the following activities will allow you to navigate and facilitate deep thinking for your students on not only those issues but others as well.

As a Social Studies educator, I felt excitement seeing high school students enthusiastically engage in this extensive mock government while I awaited the familiar mudslinging and ugliness of our very real political landscape. As you will see in the film, we have so much to hope for as these young people navigate challenging situations with grace and confidence beyond their years. Their commitment to not only this program, but to crossing the aisle and working together even when it seems impossible is inspiring.

The activities here are designed with an entry-level approach in mind – regardless of grade level, you can tailor these activities to best suit the needs of your students who you know best. You can choose to engage in one, some, or all of the activities provided depending on your time constraints. You can build off of them and explore deeply as well, particularly in regards to the campaign speech writing and campaign art activities.

You can send evidence of the work you did to integrate the film into your classroom electronically or by mail. This could include: links to online content, Google Drive folders, scanned material, photocopied or original student work concerning the film/film-going experience or even your own anecdotal, narrative accounts. **We should receive this evidence of your integration of the film into your classroom by December 31, 2022.** All of what you send us will help us write and fulfill the grants that allow us to bring these films to you and your students at such a low cost. We may also post some of the best work on our website (with students’ first names and school only) later in the year (if you would prefer we not share your students’ work publicly, please let us know).

**There is an Essay Contest in this packet!** Submit writing from your students in response to the standard prompt we offer here by Friday, December 31, 2022 for consideration. A panel of judges will select the best essay and a runner-up in each grade range to receive a bookstore gift certificate as a prize. See the Essay Contest handout in this packet for more details.
Send student work or evidence via email to marielle@mkefilm.org or by mail to:

Milwaukee Film
Attn: Marielle Allschwang, Education Manager
1037 W. McKinley Ave, Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Our screening of The Youth Governor with post-screening discussion additionally fulfill the following Common Core ELA Literacy Standards for Speaking and Listening: SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.6, SL.11-12.1, SL.11-12.2, SL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.6. We’ve also included the following National Core Standards for Media Arts: Re7.1.I, Re7.1.II, Re8.1.I, Re8.1.II, Cn10.1.I, Cn10.1.II, Cn11.1.I.

This film may highlight a mock government with mock candidates and mock elections, but make no mistake, the young candidates highlighted here and the thousands of other young people involved in this program and others like it, are real. They are real leaders, debating real issues, and doing the real work of figuring out how to make an impact in a democracy that oftentimes dims their voices and discounts their opinions.

A note to educators prior to the screening, there are two situations in the documentary that mention sexual assault (not a specific incident, but university policies related to it) and anti-Semitism (again, it is general but is targeted at a specific student candidate). They are appropriate for high school aged viewers, but educators should be aware.

My hope is for students to think about how and why young people get involved in programs such as Youth in Government, to learn about how our own government's elections and campaigns are conducted, and learn about how young people are always doing the important work of shaping their world and making change.

Heather Hanson
Social Studies Teacher, South Milwaukee High School
Milwaukee Film Curriculum Writer
The Youth Governor | Curriculum At-A-Glance

The order provided here is the recommended order for the activities provided in this packet. Activities were designed for a 45-50 minute class period.

**What Is a Documentary? (3 parts: Before, During, and After Screening)**

Students will learn about the genre of documentary film by sharing their experiences with non-fiction media, attending the screening of *The Youth Governor*, and analyzing what categorizes it as a documentary film. Students are asked to respond to questions about the content and purpose of the documentary. The goal of this work is for students to gain more familiarity with how documentary films are built so they can have a more structured and meaningful viewing experience.

*Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts: R.9-10.1, R11-12.1, R.11-12.2, R.9-10.3, R.11-12.3, R.9-10.6, R.11-12.6, W.9-10.9, W.11-12.9, SL.9-10.1a/c, SL.11-12.1a/c*

*National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Cn.11.1.I, MA:Re.7.1.I, MA:Re.8.1.1, MA:Re.9.1.1.HS.III*

**Interview with a Filmmaker (2 parts: Before or After Screening)**

Students will gain a deeper understanding of the time and effort that went into making *The Youth Governor* by actively reading an interview with the filmmakers, Jaron and Matthew Halmy, and responding to questions. This activity is designed to be done prior to viewing the documentary but could also be done afterward.


*National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Cn.11.1.I, MA:Re.7.1.I, MA:Re.8.1.1, MA:Re.9.1.1.HS.III*

**Platform for Change: Crafting Your Own Campaign Speech (3 Parts: After Screening)**

Throughout the documentary, we witness our six student candidates give short stump speeches, but also longer, more in-depth campaign speeches to the various parties and caucuses. In this activity, students will draft and deliver a campaign speech as if they were running for the position of Youth Governor in Wisconsin. This activity will provide students the ability to identify social and political issues that matter to them, engage in formal writing for a purpose of persuasion, and hone their public speaking skills.


*National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Cn10.1.I, MA:Pr4.1.I*

**Young Activists (3 Parts: Before or After Screening)**

Young people have always been leaders and, as is stated early on the documentary, “democracy must be learned by every new generation.” In this three part activity, students will be introduced to some youth leaders and activists through the nonprofit arts organization *Americans Who Tell the Truth*, conduct their own research on a chosen youth leader/activist, and create a Google Slideshow.
on that individual. In the final portion of the activity, students will share out their presentations with the class. This activity is designed to be completed before or after the screening.


_National Core Media Arts Standards: MA:Cn.10.1, MA:Cr1.1.1, MA:Cr3.1.1, MA:Pr4.1.1, MA:Pr5.1.1, MA:Re8.1.1, MA:Cn11.1.1_

**Visual Impact: Campaign Art (2 Parts: After Screening)**

Throughout the documentary, we see campaign posters for various candidates and parties. In this activity, students will create a campaign poster for a political candidate. _Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts: R.9-10.4, R.11-12.4, W.9-10.6, W.11-12.6, SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, L.9-10.1, L.11-12.1, L.9-10.6, L.11-12.6_

Teacher Background for *What Is a Documentary?*

Students will learn about the genre of documentary film by sharing their experiences with non-fiction media, attending the screening of *The Youth Governor*, and analyzing what categorizes it as a documentary film. Students are asked to respond to questions about the content and purpose of the documentary. The goal of this work is for students to gain more familiarity with how documentary films are built so they can have a more structured and meaningful viewing experience.

These activities are designed to be completed before, during (if possible), and after the screening, and first in the sequence of curriculum activities, to expose students to conventions in documentary film.

The goal of What is a Documentary? is to create a working definition of what a documentary is through exploring the students' own experiences with media, and their subsequent experience viewing and analyzing *The Youth Governor*. The basic progression of conversation topics is: 1) Based on your experience thus far, what makes a documentary film? 2) After viewing the documentary at the Oriental Theatre or in your classroom, how has the film met, challenged, or changed your preconceptions of documentary films? What surprised you? What inspired you?

**Duration:**

- two class periods
What is a Documentary?

This activity is broken into multiple sections. You will be watching a documentary, The Youth Governor, at the Oriental Theatre or in your classroom. Be sure to complete the appropriate task before, during, and after the viewings as indicated. Be prepared to discuss your analysis with your classmates.

Part One - Before viewing:

What do you already know about documentary films?

What documentary films have you seen?

What made the film(s) documentary films (how did you know, what elements did it have)?

Part Two - During or after viewing:

Documentaries often aim to engage viewers through emotional and/or persuasive means. A filmmaker makes a series of choices to tell a story, i.e. who they interview, what events and information to include and to omit, what footage they will show, musical choices, etc.

What story are Jaron and Matthew Halmy (directors) telling viewers? What choices did they make that help inform your ideas?
Does this documentary seem more informational rather than persuasive? In what ways?

How do you feel as you watch the film?

The film introduces us to multiple student candidates at the beginning of the campaign and narrows its focus on the three final student candidates as they make their way to the final election. In thinking about the original six student candidates (Bayo Collins, Tate Oien, Solomon Kim, Alex Goldbeck, Aidan Blain, and Piper Samuels):

- Which student candidate do you connect with most? Why?
- Which student candidate do you struggle to connect with? Why?
- Does the film portray each of the student candidates fairly?

The film threads together multiple stories of the student candidates and their campaigns, as well as some aspects of their personal lives. How do the filmmakers weave these threads together into a cohesive narrative? Are they successful?
Part Three - After viewing:

What is/are the central message(s) of this documentary? Be specific. Use examples from the documentary (text) to support your choice.

Consider the goals of the filmmaker and discuss whether or not they achieved them:
- Was the film successful in leaving out politics and focusing on the election process/campaigns?
- There are over 4,000 delegates that participate in California’s Youth in Government program. Do you agree with the Halmy brothers’ decision to focus on the Youth Governor race over other positions or people?

With the various narratives woven together throughout the documentary, writing a succinct and clear synopsis can be challenging. Take on that challenge by writing your own brief (2-3 sentence) synopsis of the film.

If you could ask the filmmakers, Jaron and Matthew Halmy, a question(s), what would it be and why would you ask it?

What is a story you believe needs to be told through a documentary film? How would you tell it?
Teacher Background for Interview with a Filmmaker

In order for students to gain a deeper understanding of the time and effort that went into making *The Youth Governor*, they will actively read an interview with the filmmakers, Jaron and Matthew Halmy, and respond to questions. This activity is designed to be done prior to viewing the documentary but could also be done afterward. The activity is broken into two parts.

**Teacher Resources:**

- Computer, internet, projector/screen or smartboard if you intend to read together as a class
- Chromebooks, Ipads, laptops that can enable the links to the interview or hard copies that are printed out for student use
- Link to interview: [https://moveablefest.com/jaron-matthew-halmy-youth-governor/](https://moveablefest.com/jaron-matthew-halmy-youth-governor/) (and provided in activity)

**Duration:**

- One class period

Have students actively read the interview and then answer the provided questions. You may choose to have students write formally or informally, discuss in small groups or as a whole class.
Interview with the Filmmaker

NAME: ________________________________

You will be reading an interview with the filmmakers of The Youth Governor, Jaron and Matthew Halmy. Complete the questions after you read the interview and be prepared to discuss your analysis with your classmates.

LINK: Moveable Feast Interview with Jaron and Matthew Halmy

| Jaron & Matthew Halmy on Capturing an Age of Enlightenment in “The Youth Governor” |
| By Steven Saito of The Moveable Feast, August 24th, 2022 |

- What is the connection between the Halmy brothers and student candidate Piper Samuels? Why did they believe this was key to the success of their documentary?

- Identify the program that the documentary centers around. How were Matthew and Jaron Halmy involved in this program?

- When did Jaron and Matthew first come around to the idea of a documentary about Youth in Government? Why did it take so long to complete the project?

- Jaron and Matt talk about the challenges of making a 90-minute documentary, what were some of the challenges they identified?

- Each of the brothers has a different background/profession that enabled them to work well as a team. What did each of them bring to the filmmaking experience?

- Even though the documentary is about youth in government, it does not contain an overt political message. How important was that to the filmmakers? Why was it important to them?
Teacher Background for *Platform for Change: Creating Your Own Campaign Speech*

Throughout the documentary, we witness our six student candidates give short stump speeches, but also longer, more in depth campaign speeches to the various parties and caucuses. In each of our three final student candidates, we see young people who are confident and skilled in their oratorical skills. We also meet members of each candidate’s campaign who help in writing speeches, advising on issues, and providing feedback on their candidate’s delivery.

In this activity, students will draft and deliver a campaign speech as if they were running for the position of Youth Governor in Wisconsin. This activity will provide students the ability to identify social and political issues that matter to them, engage in formal writing for a purpose of persuasion, and hone their public speaking skills.

Some students may express anxiety around public speaking. You as the classroom teacher that knows them best can decide if they should deliver the speech live to their classmate or if they can make a video and share their speech through that platform. Again, you know your students best and what activities will stretch them in positive ways and which will cause undue stress.

This activity is designed to completed after viewing the documentary and is broken into three parts. In the part one, students will outline key components of a campaign speech. In part two, they will write out their speech and practice delivering it. In the final part three, they will deliver their speech to their classmates.

**Teacher Resources:**

- Computer, internet, projector/screen or smartboard

**Duration:**

- Two to four class periods depending upon depth
Platform for Change: Crafting Your Own Campaign Speech

NAME: __________________________

Each of the student candidates in the film must craft a campaign message that will resonate with as many of the 4,000 student delegates as possible. In doing so, each candidate had to identify issues that were important to them/their party, write speeches to deliver to their party & other parties, then deliver those speeches confidently and with enthusiasm. In this activity, you will assume the role of a candidate running for Youth Governor of Wisconsin. You will identify issues that are important to you, your community, and your state and then craft a brief campaign speech. You will then deliver the speech to your classmates.

**Part One:** As a candidate for The Youth Governor of your state, you will want to clearly inform your fellow student voters about a few things: who you are and where you come from, what you stand for, what you have done, and what you want to do. Use this graphic organizer to help you outline these components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who Are You &amp; Where Do You Come From?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include information like your name, but also important components of your identity that shape you – city/town you live in, your family, your gender/race/socioeconomic status, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What Do You Stand For?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is where you make known where you stand on two or three big social/political issues. For example, whether you are a candidate who supports lowering taxes, curbing climate change, criminal justice reform, protecting reproductive rights, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What Have You Done?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is where you talk about the traits you possess and experiences you’ve had that make you the right person for the job. Although you likely do not have experience in government – that’s okay! Talk about your leadership skills, if you’re a good communicator, hard worker, etc. No time for humble brags here, lay out why you are the BEST person for the job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What Do You Want to Do?</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is where you will go back to those 2-3 things you stand for and get specific. For example, if you stated that a goal is to curb climate change, here’s where you’d tell folks how you’d do that, i.e. banning one-use plastic bags in retail stores.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Closing Statement</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One line summing up who you are &amp; to vote for you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Two: Now that you have created an outline for a campaign speech, take those components and put them into a written speech. Write it out word-for-word as you would deliver it, but then practice saying it out loud. A lot. You can do this in your room, in the mirror, etc. Practice so that you feel as comfortable as possible when delivering it.

Part Three: It’s showtime! Time to actually deliver your speech to your classmates and convince them that a vote for you is a WIN! A few pointers to help you prepare for this moment:

- As stated above – practice, practice, practice. You should feel very comfortable giving your speech because you know it so well!

- Try the best you can to sound like you are having a conversation with the audience. The last thing you want is to sound flat, boring, or uninterested. You want to appear relaxed and excited to speak with voters.

- Show enthusiasm and use not only voice inflection, but also facial expressions and body language to convey a message of confidence and ease.

- If you make a mistake, own it and move on! Political candidates are constantly giving speeches to different groups of people in multiple places in a given day during a campaign, mistakes are bound to happen. How you handle them will let the audience know how you deal with setbacks (even small ones!).
Teacher Background for Young Activists

*The Youth Governor* mostly focuses its lens on the campaign and election process, steering clear of the political platforms and standpoints of the candidates, except to highlight progressive Piper Samuels’ challenging candidacy for the conservative Trout Party, and the leak of Bayo Collins’ video that revealed him siding with a controversial proposal from then-Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. The Halmy Brothers chose to omit most politics intentionally because they felt it would detract from the goal of highlighting the Youth in Government program as a whole. However, it is clear, through these inclusions and in other clips, that these student candidates do indeed have political viewpoints and are likely active in their communities outside of their involvement in the Youth in Government program.

Young people have always been leaders and as is stated early on the documentary, “democracy must be learned by every new generation.” In this three part activity, students will be introduced to some youth leaders and activists through the nonprofit arts organization Americans Who Tell the Truth, conduct their own research on a chosen youth leader/activist, and create a Google Slideshow on that individual. In the final portion of the activity, students will share out their presentations with the class. This activity is designed to be completed before or after the screening.

When using the Americans Who Tell the Truth website, teachers should use the portrait gallery search feature which will narrow the portraits and biographies to Young Activists. This will be linked properly in the lesson for students as well as here: [Americans Who Tell the Truth – Young Activists](https://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/young-activists)

**Teacher Resources:**

- Computer, internet, projector/screen or smartboard
- Chromebooks/laptops

**Duration:**

- Three class periods
Young population have always been leaders and, as is stated early on in the documentary, “democracy must be learned by every new generation”. Frequently, our textbooks and curricula leave out the important work that young people have been doing, and continue to do, to make great social and political change in our communities and the larger world. In this activity, you will be selecting a young activist to research, creating a Google Slideshow about them, and sharing out with your class.

**Part One:** Robert Shetterly is an artist who has created portraits of over 250 American truth-tellers—many of whom are or were young activists. Look through the gallery of Young Activists on the Americans Who Tell the Truth website and select a Young Activist you are interested in learning more about and reporting out on.

*Americans Who Tell the Truth – Young Activists Gallery*

**Part Two:** After selecting a young activist from the gallery, create a Google Slideshow that contains the following:

- Title slide with the name of the young activist, your name, class
- Four slides with information about your Young Activist
  - Basic information – name, where they live, etc.
  - Accomplishments – identify the social/political issues they stood up for, how they impacted others and made change, etc.
  - Key Quotes – the AWTTT portraits include a key quote from each Young Activist
  - The Portrait of your Young Activist and other photographs, speeches, and multimedia that make your slideshow visually captivating

**Part Three:** After creating your Google Slideshow, you will share your presentation with your class. Be prepared to discuss your Young Activist in a formal manner and answer questions your classmates may have.
Teacher Background for **Visual Impact: Campaign Art**

Throughout the documentary, we see campaign posters for various candidates and parties. Campaign art can be a powerful way to communicate messages about a candidate or issue. While campaign art for a specific candidate rarely convinces an individual to vote for a candidate, it is frequently used to energize a movement and generate enthusiasm around a candidate within a political party. Most notably in recent history is Shepard Fairey’s poster of then presidential candidate Barack Obama. His work used various techniques and color schemes rooted in the Soviet Socialist Realism style while coming off as fresh and youthful. While the poster would go on to be adopted as the official image of the Obama ‘08 campaign, it is important to note that Fairey’s work, like so many other artists whose work is adopted and used by political campaigns, began as a grassroots street art project.

In this activity, students will use Adobe Creative Cloud Express, another digital design program, or even poster paper and markers/paint/etc. to create a campaign poster for a political candidate. If a digital design program such as Adobe is available to create the posters with, it is highly recommended as students can create much more sophisticated posters with that technology; however, if your school does not have access to a digital design program, they can still engage and create with tried-and-true analog tools of poster paper, markers, etc.

When students are deciding what political candidate to highlight in their poster, they should be encouraged to choose someone they believe in, first and foremost. You as the instructor can choose to limit choices to current political candidates, expand it to anyone who has run for political office, or go even bigger and allow students to create a campaign poster for anyone they would want to run. It is up to you as the teacher to decide the parameters that best suit your students and your learning goals.

This is a two-part activity where students will be introduced to some examples of campaign art and then the creation portion. In part one, you will engage in a VTS activity by displaying the campaign art and asking the three key VTS questions:

- What’s going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

Here are a few techniques to enable the best outcome for students: When using the three basic questions listed above, teachers should allow students to answer freely, without saying “you’re right” or “that’s it.” After asking “what do you see that makes you say that”, paraphrase what students have observed and use phrases like “it looks like” and “it could be” to encourage more than one idea.

**Teacher Resources:**
- Internet access
- Projector/LCD/Digital TV Screen
- Adobe Creative Cloud Express or other digital design program

**Duration:** Three to four class periods
Visual Impact: Campaign Art

Throughout the documentary, we see campaign posters for various candidates and parties. Campaign art can be a powerful way to communicate messages about a candidate or issue. Most notably in recent history is Shepard Fairey’s poster of then-presidential candidate Barack Obama. In this activity, you will create a campaign poster for a political candidate. Your instructor will provide you with more details on possible candidates.

Part One: In order to understand how powerful campaign art can be, we will engage in a visual thinking strategy (VTS) activity of some famous campaign artwork:

- Shepard Fairey’s 2008 Obama Hope Poster
- Shirley Chisolm Campaign Poster
- Reagan/Bush 1980 Campaign Button
- Dewey Presidential Poster

VTS Questions:

- What’s going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

Part Two: Create your own campaign poster for a candidate using Adobe Creative Cloud Express, another digital design program, or posterboard and markers/paint. Another resource for inspiration is Amplifier, a nonprofit design lab where artists and activists can create change through visual storytelling.
2022 ESSAY CONTEST

For a sixth year, Milwaukee Film is hosting an Essay Contest in conjunction with our Education Screenings. A judging panel will select the best essay and a runner-up from essays submitted in response to each screening’s standard, provided essay prompt. Winners and runners-up will receive an award in the form of a certificate and a gift card to a local bookstore. Submissions will be read anonymously, with name and school information removed from each essay prior to distribution to judges. Judges will assess each essay using a rubric informed by the Common Core State Standards for writing appropriate to the grade band into which the writing falls.

Submission Details:

- You may elect to send all of your students' work or just a selection.
- For each submission, attach a completed and signed release slip (a set of these forms is attached).
- Mail all submissions to:

  Milwaukee Film attn: Essay Contest
  1037 W. McKinley Ave #200
  Milwaukee, WI 53205

- **Submissions must be postmarked by December 31, 2022**
- Teachers of winning entries will be notified by February 28th, 2023 and we will coordinate a date/time to present the award to the student. Due to anticipated volume, we unfortunately cannot inform all submissions' teachers.

Essay Prompt—Grades 9-12:

In the film, *The Youth Governor*, high school students campaign for elected positions in a mock state government. Throughout the film we see how social media plays a central role in the candidates' campaigns—whether in the leaking of one candidate's controversial video, a viral meme created in response to another candidate’s unpopular response to a seemingly innocent question, or the use of an anonymous app to share concerning misogynistic and anti-Semitic messages about one of the candidates.

Write an essay that explores how social media impacted the campaigns of the candidates and the election cycle in *The Youth Governor*. Then analyze how social media impacts our actual campaigns and elections in the United States, including those happening in their state and communities right now.

Your essay should be a minimum of five paragraphs and include specific examples from the film.

 ASSERT! Feel free to do preparatory work in your classroom to help students do their best writing on this topic. For example, you might use activities at the front of this packet to jog students' memories of the film they saw. After students have completed a first draft, feel free to have them workshop their writing and revise/edit their work accordingly. Submissions may be handwritten or typed, depending on your resources.
MILWAUKEE FILM ESSAY CONTEST RELEASE FORM

Include a completed copy of this slip with each submission for the 2022 Essay Contest. Please type or print legibly.

Student Full Name ____________________________________________________________

Teacher Full Name ____________________________________________________________

Teacher Email ________________________________________________________________

Teacher Phone Number _________________________________________________________

School Name _________________________________________________________________

I hereby authorize the above named child’s writing to be submitted for consideration in the Milwaukee Film 2022 Essay Contest:

Parent/Guardian Signature __________________________ Date ______________

Parent/Guardian Full Name (printed) _____________________________________________