



ALL OF ME

GRADES 7-12 CLASSROOM GUIDE

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TEACHING THE FILM:

All of Me is a documentary film about a group of women who prepare food for migrant workers on a dangerous and illegal journey from Central America, through Mexico and into the United States. A class screening of the film may complement a social studies or Spanish language curriculum. Taught in conjunction with this guide, the film will encourage students to think critically about poverty, opportunity, immigration and what it means to work in service of human rights. Discussion questions and supplemental materials facilitate further research into related topics such as women's empowerment, Latino culture, and the meaning of charity.

All SFFS Youth Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFS Youth Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials.

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USING THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to flexibly support educators in preparing for and following up on a class screening of **All of Me**. Support

materials are intended to facilitate group discussion, individual and collaborative creative exercise, subject-based learning and access to resources for further investigation of material. Educators are encouraged to adapt and abridge the content as necessary to meet their unique learning objectives and circumstances.

ABOUT THE FILM

For 20 years they have been at the ready, these women, perched dangerously close to the railroad tracks, awaiting the Beast. That is the train that daily carries hundreds of hopeful or desperate or impossibly naive Central American migrants through Mexico toward the US border. As it approaches the town of Guadalupe (La Patrona), near Córdoba, young men know to hang off the sides, arms outstretched, to grab at bags filled with rice, beans, tuna. Their smiles and thumbs-ups are the women's reward as the Beast speeds by, hurtling its human cargo to an uncertain fate. "Las Patronas" have become celebrities of a sort, but Arturo González Villaseñor's immersive documentary makes them human again. Here, they tell their stories, reluctantly at first, then eloquently and finally magnetically. They speak of misery and forbearance and sometimes of startling transformation. Like so many rural towns, La Patrona is a matriarchy by default, a story individuated as each woman explores the perils and rewards of the activist project this impoverished community has collectively undertaken. "Our future depends on these migrants," one Patrona says. But I couldn't help thinking that our future depends on such women, facing down the beast, one day at a time.

Arturo Gonzalez Villaseñor (USA, 2014)
90 minutes, In Spanish with English Subtitles
Grades 7-12

Recommended Subject Areas:

- Latin American Studies
- Political Science
- Spanish
- Social Studies
- Women's Studies
- World Affairs

Key concepts / buzzwords:

- Activism
- Charity
- Civil Rights
- Compassion
- Food
- Kindness
- Human Rights
- Immigration
- Latino Culture
- Racism
- Women's Rights
- Worker's Rights



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRE-VIEWING TOPICS AND DISCUSSION:

All of Me tells a moving story about a group of women who dedicate their lives to feeding an endless stream of migrant workers on a pilgrimage from Central America to the United States. Before viewing the film, you may wish to engage students in a discussion about recent current events surrounding immigration from Honduras, Guatemala and other Central American countries to the United States.

- Why are there so many people who are willing to risk everything to come illegally into the United States?
- What hope and promise exist for workers and their families if they can successfully complete the journey?
- What are the risks and dangers of illegal immigration?
- What historical and current events in these workers' home countries have made life challenging enough that they are willing to risk everything?

Students should keep these questions in mind while watching the film.

POST-VIEWING DISCUSSION:

Characters and Story

- 1) Who are the women cooking the food?
 - What are their lives like?
 - What are their hopes and dreams?
 - What experiences have brought these women to where they are today?

- Did you like these women?
 - Where do you think their kindness comes from?
- 2) Who are the people on the train?
 - Where are they coming from?
 - What do you know about their backgrounds and their stories before they boarded the train?
 - Why are they going north across the border?
 - What do you think life is like for those who make it across?

- 3) What stories did you hear from the women in the cooking group and the people on the train?

- Did any of these stories move you?
 - Which of the characters did you relate to?
 - What do the women have in common with the migrants on the train, and what differences exist among them?
 - Did you feel empathy for any of these characters?

- 4) Lorena, one of the women in the group, tells a story about Cristobal Tambriz, a young man who was caught under the train and lost his foot.

- What was your reaction to this story?
- What did you learn about Cristobal: what did he come from and what is his background?
- Was the act of helping someone in need helpful also to Lorena and the other women?
- What effect do kindness and generosity have on the person who is helping someone else?

DID YOU FEEL
 EMPATHY FOR
 ANY OF THESE
 CHARACTERS?

Context

- 1) Do you think it's fair to work from Sunday to Sunday and not be able to make ends meet?
 - What laws protect workers in the United States from a situation in which they work without rest and are paid very little?



- What values do labor laws represent?
- Will these protective laws apply to the immigrants who are arriving on the train?
- If they will not be protected like documented American workers, then why are people still coming on the train?
- Who employs undocumented workers and why?

2) Why do these women work so hard to feed the migrants every day when they themselves make almost no money?

- How does it make these women feel when they give food and water to people in need?
- How is their charitable work connected to their spirituality, their beliefs and a larger sense of purpose?
- What is the meaning of service in this context?
- What does it mean to work for charity?

3) Why is it important that the women know immigration law?

- Why do they talk with the Ministry of Migrants even though they are in many ways on opposite sides?
- What actions do these women take to advocate on behalf of the migrant workers?
- How does their legal expertise help them in service of their cause?

4) What examples of poverty do you see in **All of Me**?

- What challenges and limitations has poverty created in the lives of the characters in the film?

- How does poverty shape the circumstances of the film, e.g. why do you think people are riding the train?
- Were you surprised to see that these women are so generous when they themselves have so little?
- Why do they continue to give?

5) Near the end of the film, one of the women says “Young people have to keep their eyes open because our whole future depends on them.”

- What do you think she means by that?
- How are the women in the cooking group training a younger generation?
- What have you learned from watching this film that you can apply to your own life?

Style and Message: Reading the Film for Media Literacy

1) How did you feel after watching **All of Me**?

- Did you enjoy this film?
- What do you think is the central theme or message in **All of Me**?
- If you were to take away one lesson or memory from the film, what is it?

2) There are moments in the movie when you hear the filmmaker talking from behind the camera.

- What do you think it was like for him to spend time with these women and to capture the footage?
- How did his knowledge of the Spanish language help him to connect and collaborate with the characters in the film?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WORK FOR CHARITY?



- Do you think this would have been the same film if the director didn't speak Spanish?
 - Why is it important for us to learn multiple languages?
- 3) Do you think that this was a story worth telling?
- What made this story meaningful and important?
 - Can you think of any stories that you would be inspired to tell in a documentary film format?
 - If you were going to make your own documentary film, what would it be about?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Journaling Activity

Reflect on the film.

- Why is it important to watch films like **All of Me**?
- What did you learn from watching **All of Me**?
- How is hearing a personal story or watching a film different than learning facts or statistics about immigration to the United States?

Service Activity

2) Engage in an act of community service.

- After school or on a weekend, volunteer at your local soup kitchen.
- Talk with the volunteers and the visitors about how it feels and what it means to volunteer in service of your community.
- Ask your family and friends about their experiences volunteering or helping other people.
- Write a short report about your experience.

IF YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE YOUR OWN
 DOCUMENTARY FILM, WHAT WOULD IT BE ABOUT?



MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES

SCREENING WITH MEANING

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive.

Analysis of a media message—or any piece of mass media content—can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

- (1) Medium: the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
- (2) Author: the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
- (3) Content: the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
- (4) Audience: the target audience to whom it is delivered
- (5) Purpose: the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

CORE CONCEPTS OF MEDIA ANALYSIS

MEDIUM	<p>All Media Is Constructed.</p> <p>How is the message delivered and in what format? What technologies are used to present the message? What visual and auditory elements are used? What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?</p>
AUTHOR	<p>All Media Is Constructed by Someone.</p> <p>Who is delivering the message? Who originally constructed the message? What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?</p>
CONTENT	<p>All Media Is A Language.</p> <p>What is the subject of the media message? What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content? What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response? To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?</p>
AUDIENCE	<p>All Media Messages Reach an Audience.</p> <p>Who receives the message? For whom is the message intended? What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message? What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message? How might others perceive this message differently? Why?</p>
PURPOSE	<p>All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.</p> <p>Why was the message constructed? Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How? To what extent does the message achieve its purpose? What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?</p>



THE NON-FICTION FILM WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?

A documentary is a film whose goal is to capture truth, fact or reality as seen through the lens of the camera. But there are many kinds of documentaries, and not everyone's idea of truth is the same. The Scottish filmmaker John Grierson coined the term "documentary" in 1926 to describe American filmmaker Robert Flaherty's romanticized culture studies, but nonfiction filmmaking dates back to the earliest motion picture reels.

The definition of documentary expanded as filmmakers experimented with technology and the goals of nonfiction. Avant-garde documentarians, like Dziga Vertov in the 1920s, believed that the mechanical eye of the camera gave a truer image of reality than the human eye and pointed his lens at newly industrialized cities. Leni Reifenstahl's propaganda films from Nazi Germany used the nonfiction form to convey a political message, a slanted truth. The international cinema vérité or observational movements of the 1960s attempted to remove authorship from the documentary. The observational filmmaker hovered like a "fly on the wall" watching the world without commentary. Modern documentaries often seek to raise awareness about a social, environmental or political issue, guiding their audiences toward civic participation and activism.

While watching a documentary, it is important to remember the core concepts of media analysis: who made the film, for what audience and why? The nonfiction format can be deceptively subjective, as all filmmaking involves an inherent selection process: in the images that are shot, the music and narration that accompanies them and, most significantly, the way in which they are all edited together. Media literacy means always analyzing a documentary for its message and authorial intent.

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE DOCUMENTARY

- 1895** The Lumiere brothers developed the first motion picture film reels, capturing brief, unedited clips of life around them called "actualities" (e.g., *Train Arriving at the Station*)
- 1900-1920** Travelogue or "Scenic" films became popular, showcasing exoticised images from around the globe.
- 1926** John Grierson coined the term "documentary" to describe Robert Flaherty's romantic nonfiction film, *Moana*.
- 1929** Dziga Vertov, with the Soviet Kino-Pravda movement, released the experimental nonfiction film, *Man With a Movie Camera*.
- 1935** Leni Reifenstahl released *Triumph of the Will*, the infamous propaganda film that chronicled the 1934 Nazi Party Congress.
- 1939** John Grierson collaborated with the Canadian government to form the National Film Board of Canada, with the initial goal of creating Allied propaganda in support of the war.
- 1960s** The cinema vérité movement began in Europe, shortly followed by "direct cinema" in the U.S. Portable cameras and sync sound allowed filmmakers to capture intimate footage with minimal intervention.
- 1968** The Argentine film, *La Hora de los Hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces)* opened the door to the activist cinema of the 1970s, which used film as a tool to counter capitalist and neo-colonial politics in Latin America.
- 1988** The US Congress mandated that the US government support the creation of independent non-commercial media, and the Independent Television Service (ITVS) was founded.
- 2000s** The widespread use of digital cameras and editing software made the documentary medium vastly more affordable to independent and amateur filmmakers. Video sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo allowed amateur filmmakers to broadcast their work.
- PRESENT DAY** The term "documentary" has come to encompass a wide range of nonfiction cinema. Contemporary filmmakers continue to push the boundaries of truth in film and to explore new avenues and applications for the medium.



THE MAKING OF A DOCUMENTARY

Idea, Issue, Story.

Even though they are nonfiction films, most modern documentaries structure their content around a traditional story arc, with a beginning, middle and end, as well as characters, and a conclusion, theme or thesis to impart to the audience. Documentary filmmakers begin their projects with an idea or an issue that they wish to explore more deeply. Through research and planning, they develop a comprehensive plan before they begin shooting.

The Production Process.

To capture candid moments on film, modern documentary makers often leave the camera running, collecting far more footage than the final film requires. They may do this during interviews or in observational-style encounters with their subjects. To get increased access and an observational aesthetic, documentary makers often use handheld cameras and natural light, rather than staging a more formal filming environment.

Post-Production and the Documentary.

Because a documentary film relies upon candid footage, a large part of the film's construction occurs in the editing room, where you work with what you've captured. A documentary editor will sift through long interviews just to find a few phrases that will summarize the film's message. To emphasize important points and build the story, some documentaries use a voiceover, an interview or a scripted narrative that brings candid footage together into a coherent statement. An original score can work alongside the voiceover to unify the footage and shape the mood of the film. Audiences often underestimate

the power of sound to generate an emotional response. Many documentaries also use charts, graphs and historical footage to add context and emphasize key points.

Distribution.

Once a film is completed, the filmmaker needs to help it find its audience. Many documentaries are made independently on small budgets, but what's the point of all your work if no one hears your message? Some documentaries will be released in theaters around the country or get programmed on public or cable TV channels, but most documentary filmmakers will start by submitting their work to film festivals, in hopes of attracting distributors for the theater and television markets. Filmmakers may also make their films available online and use social media to reach their target audience.



SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Teaching Immigration

Immigration Policy Center Lesson Plans <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/category/lesson-plans/middle-school-lesson-plans>

PBS: Understanding Immigration Reform: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/lesson-plan-immigration-reform-understanding-the-issue-from-different-points-of-view/

PBS: The New Americans: http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/foreducators_index.html

The New York Times: Pathways to America: http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/21/pathways-to-america-teaching-about-immigration-changes/?_r=0

Teaching Community Service

Youth Activism Project: <http://youthactivismproject.org/>

Do Something: <https://www.dosomething.org/>

Edutopia: How to Use Service Learning to Engage Kids: <http://www.edutopia.org/service-learning-fowler-how-to>

University of Washington: What is Service Learning: <http://www.washington.edu/teaching/teaching-resources/engaging-students-in-learning/service-learning/>