



Ca' Foscari  
University  
of Venice

International Office

# FILM PASSPORT PROJECT



**A journey around the  
world through cinema**

# Introduction

Dear all (especially film buffs!),

This project is a child of the COVID-19 pandemic. It came about because we have been missing things we took for granted before: the opportunity to gather and get to know one another within the university community, learning about one another's backgrounds, cultures and histories. Before the pandemic, our office organized various events and activities to facilitate encounters and exchange – for example, the Foreign-Language Aperitifs – but at the moment, such initiatives are not possible. However, in our contact with international students at the university, we came to understand how much this kind of contact was desired and needed, so we set about trying to find another way.

The Film Passport Project is part of our office's attempt to respond to this by providing a means of safely allowing members of our university community to communicate with one another – to speak, to be heard and to listen. In order to create it, we asked our students to propose a film that their peers could watch in order to learn more about their cultural worlds and specificities at a time when actual travel is not an option, encouraging them to contextualize their proposals by telling us also about themselves and the reasoning that led to their choice of film.

This booklet offers a first selection of the proposals we have been receiving. Think of it as a passport, full of opportunities for cultural exploration and enrichment, that provides you not only with destinations, but also with knowledgeable guides willing to take you by the hand and show you the places and peoples they know most intimately.

Given its nature, the project's realisation and success depended entirely on students' willingness to participate, and when we began working on it, we had no idea what form it would ultimately take. In fact, we actually didn't know if it would come together at all. But come together it did, and we are inspired and moved by the result. We hope you will find it as wonderful as we do.

We would love for this initial selection to be just the beginning, and are planning to issue future editions over the coming months. So please, if you have not yet done so, send us your own proposal by filling out this [Google Form](#). Everyone else wants to hear from you!

To those who contributed to the project by sending us a film proposal, we thank you for sharing your thoughts and perspectives with all of us. And for those who will read this booklet and take up some or all of its suggestions, we sincerely hope you enjoy doing so as much as we have!

Sending our best,

**The Outreach and Recruitment Unit team**  
global.engagement@unive.it

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# Keteke Keteke

**Director:**

Peter Sedufia

**Year of production:**

2017

**Production country:**

Ghana

**Language(s):**

English, Akan

**Film runtime:**

98 min

**Genre(s):**

Comedy, Drama, Romance

**Student guide**

Victor Sefazdi

**Field of study**

Economics and Management

**Level of study**

Master's degree

**Plot**

A couple is blessed with a pregnancy, a sign of a fruitful marriage in Ghanaian culture. The mother, Atswei, is determined to deliver the baby with her mother in her village. But it's the 1980s, and a train is the most reliable means of transportation to get back to her town. The couple miss this train, and are plunged into an adventure of their own, something they didn't sign up for, yet they express their undying love for each other in bittersweet ways. They get tired and are famished, but they find welcome at the shrine of a priest with a table already set in their honour. Atswei is uncomfortable, but Boi, her husband, sees the gesture as an answer to their prayer. Will the couple and their unborn child be safe?

**I chose this film because...**

*Keteke* is an authentic Ghanaian film which I really enjoyed seeing. It deviates from the "Hollywood"-style films which have been the "standard of excellence" for Ghanaian films for a while. It illuminates the cinematic elegance of rural Ghana, projects her great traditions and echoes her great music to the world. The movie offers a great glimpse of family essence in the Ghanaian culture. I appreciate the fact that the film highlights the significance of childbirth and the role of mothers as nurturers, which is why many Ghanaian women feel most comfortable birthing children while with their mothers, especially when it's their first time. I enjoyed the theme of the determined love portrayed (and exploited) by Boi and Atswei, even though they were faced with one of the most difficult adversities of their lives. Love indeed conquers all. Although the movie setting is 1980s Ghana, it goes ahead to highlight the infrastructural deficit currently prevalent in the Ghanaian transportation narrative. The railway sector, an important means of transportation and engine of growth has been neglected over the years and very little attempt has been made by leadership at its restoration. *Keteke* takes a serious look at Ghana's worsening rail system and gives a human face to the plight of Ghanaians whose lives depend on its use. The movie has a comic twist but would give leaders a lot to think about in tackling the issues of maternal mortality, which has been prevalent in rural Ghana, while also taking a critical look at trains as an essential means of transportation in my beloved country, Ghana.

**Let me introduce myself**

I am a Ghanaian, an International Management student at Ca' Foscari University and a film lover. I enjoy authentic themes that tell a compelling story with a social impact. I grew up at Banana Inn, a community in Accra, and was exposed to a myriad of sociocultural dynamics. My mother, a semi-literate petty trader, was a great force in my upbringing and shaped my educational journey as a child. To her, quality education was to be my way out of a community where people often struggled to make it beyond high school. My experience through life has made me want to be the change I envision everywhere I find myself.



**GHANA** — AFRICA



# Los Colores de la Montaña

## The Colors of the Mountain

**Director:**

Carlos César Arbeláez

**Year of production:**

2010

**Production country:**

Colombia, Panama

**Language(s):**

Spanish

**Film runtime:**

90 min

**Genre(s):**

Drama

**Student guide**

Santiago

**Field of study**

Languages and Cultures

**Level of study**

Master's degree

**Plot**

Manuel has the dream of becoming a goalkeeper. He trains every day with his old ball in the countryside. One day, his father gives him a new ball, but an accident causes the ball to end up in a minefield. As signs of the Colombian armed conflict begin to appear, Manuel and his friends start an adventure to recover the lost ball.

**I chose this film because...**

We could explain Colombian history through two main defining elements: violence and the uniqueness of its geography. The first one is a constant element that has taken different forms – guerrilla warfare, paramilitary activities, narcotraffic, violence carried out by the government – and affected many generations of Colombians. The second element, Colombia's landscape, possesses a unique and largely unexplored beauty that can only be explained by the fortune of its bountiful natural resources and its geographical position. What happens when you entangle these two elements and present it through the innocence of a group of kids? You get a film like this one. Although the film may appear to be the simple story of three kids who just want to play soccer, the film's meaning is more profound. In my opinion, the story works to show the impact of the Colombian conflict on the everyday life of its inhabitants and how a simple action like playing soccer can be affected when violence surrounds you. Additionally, the beautiful photography of the film that captures the uniqueness of the Andes Mountains enhances the perfect scenery. In conclusion, this film conveys the complexity of Colombian violence without showing direct violence, viewing things instead through the eyes of innocent kids who only want to rescue a lost ball.

**Let me introduce myself**

I am a historian from Medellín, Colombia. I have been carrying out a master's degree in Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari since 2019. My areas of research are related to the relationship between cinema and literature over the course of Colombian history. Additionally, I love cinema and its particular ways of telling stories.



COLOMBIA — AMERICA





# 7 Días en La Habana

## 7 Days in Havana

### Directors:

Benicio del Toro, Pablo Trapero,  
Julio Medem, Elia Suleiman,  
Gaspar Noé, Juan Carlos Tabío,  
Laurent Cantet

### Year of production:

2012

### Production country:

France, Cuba, Spain

### Language(s):

Spanish, English, Serbian

### Film runtime:

129 min

### Genre(s):

Drama



CUBA — AMERICA



### Student guide

Chanel

### Field of study

International Studies and Globalization

### Level of study

Master's degree

### Plot

This film presents the fascinating city of Havana through the lenses of 7 very different directors. Each chapter represents one day of the week, from Monday through Sunday, showing how the lives of the film's protagonists play out. The difficult everyday reality portrayed by the film may seem extraordinary, or even surreal, to non-Cubans, but the story of the protagonists' struggle to survive is very real. The different threads of the protagonists' stories are interconnected by little details, although you have to pay careful attention to see them.

### I chose this film because...

Although this film has not been critically celebrated, I find it shows the complex reality of Cuba's capital in a very real way. The reality it presents is made up of people, friendships, music, dancing, pleasures and traditions, but also of suffering, something you see in the American cars from the 1950s and the old Soviet Ladas, the abandoned palaces, the lack of eggs and building materials. But the film shows how none of this can impede the determined spirit of the city's residents, who are always ready to manage things with a smile. Everywhere you go in Havana, you hear music, see people dancing, and smiles abound. But this is not to say that the film traffics in touristy clichés; it is rich with sad and troubling moments, such as the experience of so many Cuban families that have watched their children forced to leave the island for the unknown. Since the film is a collective exercise, each director interprets different aspects of the local context, intermingling passion, comedy and sadness, music and art, religiosity and corruption. Religion, in fact, is another important aspect of Cuban culture, especially the Santería, which can be both festive and disquietening. A few of the chapters sometimes seem a bit disjointed from the others, but I feel that the film's generally provides a suggestive visualization of the many conflictual aspects of Cuban society very well.

### Let me introduce myself

I was born in Havana, Cuba. For family reasons, in 2003 I moved to Italy, where I have lived ever since.





# Tko Pjeva Zlo Ne Misli

## One Song a Day Takes Mischief Away

**Director:**  
Krešimir Golik

**Year of production:**  
1970

**Production country:**  
Yugoslavia, Croatia

**Language(s):**  
Croatian

**Film runtime:**  
85 min

**Genre(s):**  
Comedy, Drama, Musical

**Student guide**  
Zrinka

**Field of study**  
Languages and Cultures

**Level of study**  
Master's degree

### Plot

A married woman named Ana meets an elegant man named Mr. Fulir, who tries to woo her. They first meet in Samobor, a neighbouring town of Zagreb, where lots of Zagreb's citizens go to relax. In the past, there was a special train connecting Zagreb and Samobor called the Samobor ek (this train line unfortunately not longer exists). Mr. Fulir takes photos of Ana, telling her how beautiful she is. Later Mr. Fulir comes to Ana's family home in Zagreb to show her the photos, at which point he tries to seduce her. From the beginning, Ana's husband Franjo feels that Mr. Fulir is a suitable catch for Ana's spinster sister Mina, and obviously sees the danger that Mr. Fulir represents to his own marriage. The film goes on to trace what occurs after these people's paths have crossed.

### I chose this film because...

This movie showcases the old, traditional way of life in my hometown of Zagreb, and it is the most popular Croatian movie ever. It shows some characteristics of old Zagreb, such as the courtesy between people, the way people enjoyed their leisure time, and the most favourite activity among all Croatians now – going to a bar or a café (in which usually you can have some liquor, too), those places where you encounter everyone and find out everything, including every rumour (this is also true for neighbouring courtyards, as we shall see in the movie). It is a comedy, so I am sure you will have fun watching it. I should point out, too, that the official translation of the title is “One Song a Day Takes Mischief Away”, but the real meaning of the original Croatian title is “He who sings doesn't mean anything bad by it”.

### Let me introduce myself

My name is Zrinka (it is a pretty new Croatian name), my surname is Tomašić. I am a Croatian from Zagreb. My family has lived in Zagreb for generations. I am proudly a *purger*. The word *purger* comes from the German word *Burg*, meaning fortress or city, so *purger* means a citizen of Zagreb. *Purgers* think of themselves as hereditary citizens of Zagreb whose families have lived there for generations.



**CROATIA — EUROPE**





# Il Divo Il Divo

**Director:**

Paolo Sorrentino

**Year of production:**

2008

**Production country:**

Italy, France

**Language(s):**

Italian, English

**Film runtime:**

110 min

**Genre(s):**

Biography, Drama

**Student guide**

Marco

**Field of study**

Arts and Humanities

**Level of study**

Master's degree

**Plot**

The movie narrates the story of Giulio Andreotti, who was Prime Minister of Italy several times. He is shown as being able to maintain power over the years without ever suffering the consequences of his actions, such as being in direct contact with the mafia.

**I chose this film because...**

The film shows Italy's distortions, such as the fact that people like Andreotti can stay in government for so long supported by a considerable section of the population. The links between politics and the mafia have also been clearly established. The story scared and angered me for showing the frightening reality of my country. It also made me reflect on the subject of power and on how the worst crimes are committed behind the motivation of ensuring good. Andreotti is a part of Italian history, whether we like it or not, and the population has always voted unaware or voluntarily ignoring its crimes. It also made it clear to me how those willing to tell the inconvenient truth, like the journalist Pecorelli or the magistrate Falcone. However, Andreotti is not presented as a monster, but as a person who believes he is doing good. He is convinced that he is acting for the good of the country and that he has had those "dangerous" people killed to ensure peace and a future for the people. His ideas are expressed through his inner monologue, which particularly struck me. Everyone should see this film, which is not boring and tells about a part of Italy that most people prefer to ignore.

**Let me introduce myself**

I love the art of cinema and I watch a lot of movies. I really enjoy films such as "Il Divo" that have a deep meaning but at the same time don't bore the viewer. I think that watching meaningful films can be a great way to make a person mature. I also read a lot of books regarding cinema and talk about films with other people with the same passion.



ITALY — EUROPE







# Медена земја Honeyland

**Directors:**

Tamara Kotevska, Ljubomir Stefanov

**Year of production:**

2019

**Production country:**

Republic of North Macedonia

**Language(s):**

Turkish, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, Bosnian

**Film runtime:**

87 min

**Genre(s):**

Documentary, Drama

**Student film guide**

Marija

**Field of study**

Economics and Management

**Level of study**

Bachelor's degree

**Plot**

*Honeyland* documents the life of Hatidže Muratova, a Macedonian beekeeper of Turkish descent who lives in the village of Bekirlija in the municipality of Lozovo. She is one of the last keepers of wild bees in Europe. Due to its location on a secluded mountain, the village has no access to electricity or running water. Hatidže lives with her entirely dependent 85-year-old, partly blind and bedridden mother, and the film explores the dynamics that develop between Hatidže and some new neighbours, who may threaten her livelihood.

**I chose this film because...**

Watching this film was among my proudest moments as a Macedonian. Not only did it get nominated for two Oscars (which is still regarded as the peak in movie-making), but it also swept through the awards season with many awards under its belt. It depicts an entirely different perspective of the culture, looking at the rural life of a self-reliant woman. Not only is it a powerful story about family and tradition, but it is also a story of perseverance, which is very symbolic and representative of Macedonian culture. It also depicts diversity within the country, touching upon other crucial topics, thereby resonating with domestic and international viewers. Wherever you're from, this story touches your heart.

**Let me introduce myself**

I was born and raised in the capital city of Macedonia, Skopje. So were my parents, and in part their parents before them. Even though I've set myself up to live abroad (due to underlying conditions within the country), Skopje will always be a part of my identity. The city moves on its own timeline, beats in its own way. Representative of the country makeup as a whole, but seemingly a hybrid world of its own. It's grown me into a friendly, resourceful, persistent, and fast paced person. No matter how far away I am, I will always be a girl from Skopje.



REPUBLIC OF NORTH  
MACEDONIA — EUROPE





# ՆՈՒՆ ԳՈԼՆԻՐ

## The Color of Pomegranates

**Director:**

Sergei Parajanov

**Year of production:**

1969

**Production country:**

Soviet Union

**Language(s):**

Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian

**Film runtime:**

79 min

**Genre(s):**

Biography, Drama, History

**Student guide**

Agnessa

**Field of study**

Economics and Management

**Level of study**

Bachelor's degree

**Plot**

In this 78-minute poetic "drama", the director, Sergei Parajanov, depicts the life of famous Armenian poet Sayat-Nova. Parajanov's film falls in the genres of biography and arthouse, and differs from other films produced during the same period in the Soviet Union. Many cinema critics state that that its style is Magical Surrealism.

**I chose this film because...**

It is hard to imagine how a non-Armenian will be able to understand fully this abstract film without having an idea of Armenian culture, but it's worth giving it a try. Although this film being a biography about the life of an 18th-century *ashugh* (Armenian poet-singer, like a mediaeval minstrel in France), we don't have the opportunity to hear any dialogue. We do hear quotes from Sayat-Nova's poems, such as "We were searching for a place of refuge for our love". The film is divided into 8 parts, starting from the poet's childhood, continuing with his youth and ending with his death. The film has mostly a visual context, which can be interpreted philosophically. At the beginning of the film, we see two objects: pomegranates and an ancient Armenian dagger. The juicy red pomegranates symbolise blood and life, the dagger, death. Moreover, the colour red in Armenia is very symboli, as we can see in national costumes called taraz, in Armenian carpets and also in Armenian spiritual history. In the film, the artistic and spiritual life of Sayat-Nova is depicted in such objects as open books. What is an open book? A symbol. A symbol of knowledge, an important attribute for a writer and a reminder of the importance of the Word. Parajanov's masterpiece, full of colours and wisdom, is based on chapters that reflect upon love, death, and wisdom, accompanied by "velvety" Armenian music. This film is ideal for those who love to analyse metaphors and search for answers.


**Let me introduce myself**

My name is Agnes. I am Armenian. I was born in Saint Petersburg (the so-called Northern Venice) and was brought up in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. My mother tongue is Armenian, but I also speak Russian (as Armenia was part of the former USSR), English, Italian and French. My cultural background consists of: Armenian food, jazz and an endless love for my homeland.



ARMENIA — EUROPE / ASIA





# Москва слезам не верит

## Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears

**Director:**  
Vladimir Menshov

**Year of production:**  
1980

**Production country:**  
Soviet Union

**Language(s):**  
Russian

**Film runtime:**  
150 min

**Genre(s):**  
Comedy, Drama, Romance

**Student guide**  
Yana

**Field of study**  
International Studies and Globalization

**Level of study**  
Master's degree

### Plot

In the late 1950s, three young women come to Moscow from small towns to study and ... search for happiness. Each has her own hopes and illusions, and experiences successes and difficulties. Fast forward to twenty years later, and each has encountered a different fate.

### I chose this film because...

In Russia we have a strange tradition (I would truly wager that all Russian families do this): every year during the Christmas holidays we watch Soviet films about Russia, and *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* is one of them. In 1981 it won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, an outstanding success of Soviet cinema. It became a symbol of the 1980s: three young provincial women go to Moscow to build a career and find true love, something that was not that easy. I wonder if many Russian girls see themselves in the main characters and that this is why the film remains popular today. *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* brilliantly depicts the counterpart to the American Dream, the so-called "Soviet dream" of Late Socialism. American President Donald Reagan is said to have watched it at least eight times before meeting Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 in order to better understand the Russian soul. In fact, the scenes and their details depict the habits and peculiarities of ordinary Russians at that time, but they also expose the flaws of the social system and the public order of the USSR. There are no episodic roles: everyone is a protagonist. One of my Italian friends who was studying Russian gave the best description of this film after watching it in the original language: "I have never seen Russian comedies before, but I would never have imagined they were so sad."

### Let me introduce myself

I am a master-degree student of Comparative International Relations at Ca' Foscari, and as you might have already understood, I am Russian. Once I moved to Moscow from another Russian city to study. I lived in a dormitory with two other girls, just as the main characters. Probably, that is the reason why I do like this film. But another reason why I recommend this film to foreigners, who want to know more about Russian culture, is that the film really makes you feel like you're in Russia. To be honest, I am pretty proud of being Russian and I feel bad about other people being biased about my country or judging us by politics. This film will make you understand that we are simple people with our simple dreams in search of happiness.



**RUSSIA** — EUROPE / ASIA



# Aile Arasında Among Families

**Director:**  
Ozan Açıktan

**Year of production:**  
2017

**Production country:**  
Turkey

**Language(s):**  
Turkish

**Film runtime:**  
124 min

**Genre(s):**  
Comedy

**Student guide**  
Gizem

**Field of study**  
Languages and Cultures

**Level of study**  
Master's degree

## Plot

The relationships of Fikret and Solmaz with their respective partners end and then the two meet each other. Solmaz's daughter wants to get married. Fikret receives a proposal to take the role of the father during the ceremony. The wedding, which was expected to be held in a private way between the two families, turns into a huge ceremony.

## I chose this film because...

This movie demonstrates both the comical and emotional aspects of modern Turkish culture in general but also the differences between the two completely different sets of customs of two different families. Since Turkey is a big country, there are lots of differences between the inhabitants of the nation's various cities, and in the film, this creates misunderstandings, funny moments, but also, most importantly, understanding and finding a common ground by embracing each other's differences. As seen in the movie, even the family structures vary between cultures of the same country. One may define a family as a unit of a married couple and their children, while for the other it can be a group of people who share the same perspective and lifestyle, regardless of whether they are married, unmarried, queer or straight. I chose this movie for this very reason. Non-Turks may tend to think of Turkish culture as a strict Islamic one, but in reality it still reflects the incredibly wide range of customs and culture that it inherited from the Empire. Turks can have a variety of different appearances and they can live in a variety of different ways, just as the characters in this movie showcase. I enjoyed seeing these aspects in the movie and I hope you also enjoy seeing modern Turkey probably from a different perspective, which is the perspective of modern Turkish youth.

## Let me introduce myself

I am a 24 year-old Turkish woman. Since my parents are from different cities of Turkey and I was born and raised in another, our family brings together a variety of different cultures of our country, and that is why I love every art form that demonstrates this aspect about my country.



**TURKEY** — EUROPE / ASIA





# 地久天长 So Long My Son

**Director:**

Wang Xiaoshuai

**Year of production:**

2019

**Production country:**

China

**Language(s):**

Chinese

**Film runtime:**

185 min

**Genre(s):**

Drama

**Student guide**

Francesca Lin Feng

**Field of study**

Languages and Cultures

**Level of study**

Master's degree

**Plot**

This is the dramatic story of a Chinese family that take place over the last 30 years in contemporary China. They live through a series of significant moments of Chinese history and personal dramas. They escape to South China, trying to forget the painful past, but their life is hard... After many years they finally gain a reconciliation with the past and the present.

**I chose this film because...**

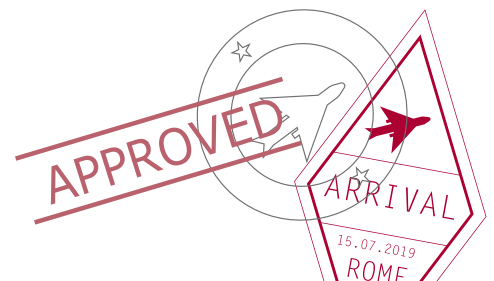
The film tells about the story of normal people against the background of huge social changes in China. We can see how their lives are influenced by historical and political events. The time frame of this film is long, and over the thirty years it spans, great changes take place in China. The narration in relation to this long time frame lets a non-Chinese audience get familiar with contemporary Chinese history and understand what has made the modern Chinese society. The plot also lets the audience enter the stories of people who are far away from them and living a very different life. This film is about the little people: the main characters are like thousands of contemporary Chinese who experience a similar fate because of a shared historical background. In addition to its Chinese features, the film is also very human: it tells the story of a small family, the complicated relationship between parents and their son, their physical and mental escape from a painful past, and finally their reconciliation. I was lucky to see the film's premiere at the Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin, and even non-Chinese viewers in the audience with me who had no idea of the historical context cried through the story. The film won two Silver Bear awards, and it is worth watching for those who love high-quality dramatic films.

**Let me introduce myself**

I'm an Italian-born-and-raised Chinese girl. I have received a mainly Western education, for I studied only a few years of elementary school in China. Nevertheless, I've always wanted to discover my Chinese roots and to know more about this country. I would like to find the balance between the Chinese part of me and the Western one, and let people know more about China beyond prejudice and stereotypes.



CHINA — ASIA





# Dangal Dangal

**Director:**  
Nitesh Tiwar

**Year of production:**  
2016

**Production country:**  
India

**Language(s):**  
Hindi, English

**Film runtime:**  
161 min

**Genre(s):**  
Action, Biography, Drama

**Student guide**  
Vandana

**Field of study**  
International Studies and Globalization

**Level of study**  
Master's degree

## Plot

Mahavir Singh Phogat dreamt of being a professional wrestler and winning a gold medal for India but was forced to stop. Sad that he is unable to win an award for his nation, he pledges that his unborn son will, as it is common to believe that one's son is the pride of the family and that the sport of wrestling is a strongly masculine activity. After ending up with four daughters and no sons, he temporarily gives up on his dream, until he discovers the potential in his daughters. The film follows the obstacles and successes of his eldest girl, Geeta, who went on to win the world gold medal in wrestling several years later.

## I chose this film because...

"Dangal" is a Hindi term for a wrestling competition. Based on the life of former wrestler Mahavir Singh Phogat, *Dangal* is the story of a father who fights against his society's norms to raise his daughters Geeta and Babita as tough, medal-winning wrestlers. Wrestling as a sport was not perceived to be for women in their village. The story unfolds in the 1990s, when women were restricted to household work and most of them were married off as early as 14 years of age. Geeta won gold in the 55kg weight category in wrestling, while Babita bagged silver in the 51kg category. His training and encouragement of them is a story that many, including me, find inspiring. *Dangal* features wrestling matches that are authentic and real peppered with humour and some powerful father-daughter moments. I believe the film makes a strong feminist statement about girls being the equal of boys, if not better, in an activity in which they've never been seen participating, let alone being accepted. In one part of the film, we can see girls from the same town being trained to wrestle by Mahavir, showing that the success of the two women helped to broaden the mindsets of the people in their small village.

## Let me introduce myself

I'm a student of Global Development and Entrepreneurship. I come from India, a country that has 26 official languages and celebrates different customs and traditions. India is the country where cinema has been one of the most dominant and distinguishing features of the subcontinent's popular culture. I grew up watching cinema of different genres. To me, the role of movies is to facilitate cultural contact by erasing geographical boundaries and thereby influence ethnic group's identity.



INDIA — ASIA



# Jodayi Nader az Simin A Separation

**Director:**  
Asghar Farhadi

**Year of production:**  
2011

**Production country:**  
Iran, France, Australia

**Language(s):**  
Persian

**Film runtime:**  
123 min

**Genre(s):**  
Drama, Thriller



IRAN — ASIA

**Student guide**  
Maryam

**Field of study**  
Science and Technology

**Level of study**  
Master's degree

## Plot

Nader and Simin are a married couple with a daughter. Nader's father suffers from Alzheimer's and needs constant care, so Nader and his family take care of him. But the couple has to face a difficult decision: emigrate to another country in order to provide a better life for their daughter, or look after a father whose disease doesn't even allow him to recognize them anymore.

## I chose this film because...

Family is very important in Iranian culture. I think this is cleverly portrayed in one of the best scenes of the movie: Simin says "But he doesn't even know you anymore!", and Nader responds "No, but I know him," and both are correct. The movie takes place in modern-day Iran, where the secular-minded couple is forced to live under Islamic rules. However, the movie is not about Islam in particular. It is more about the inflexible application of the letter of the law which can happen under any rule or in any religion. In my opinion, this movie portrays very well the injustice that still exists in today's Iran toward people based on their religion, gender, social class, level of education, wealth, and so on. In this movie, you can clearly see intersectionality, and you realize how different parts of a person's life such as religion, gender, etc., come together to shape different modes of discrimination or situations of privilege. The movie is also very interesting from another point of view. Iran is one of the countries that have a significant number of immigrants leaving the country every year. The number of Iranian refugees is also significant, even though there is no war happening in the country. This movie gives insight into the issue, helping to show why middle-class, secular-minded, well-educated people can find themselves deciding to leave their home country permanently.

## Let me introduce myself

I'm from Iran, and I live in the capital city of the country, Tehran. I come from a not very traditional or religious family. From a young age I was encouraged to be independent and to decide for myself regardless of social or cultural pressures, and to face the consequences of my decisions as well. I have many friends from many countries and I was raised to be globally aware. I care about issues happening around the world and at the very least I try to educate myself about them.

APPROVED



# 小孩不笨 I Not Stupid

**Director:**  
Jack Neo

**Year of production:**  
2002

**Production country:**  
Singapore

**Language(s):**  
English, Mandarin, Hokkien

**Film runtime:**  
105 min

**Genre(s):**  
Comedy, Drama

**Student guide**  
Pooja

**Field of study**  
International Studies and Globalization

**Level of study**  
Bachelor's degree

## Plot

The film's storyline revolves around the lives and families of three Singaporean Primary 6 students sitting their PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination), a national exam that is taken by all 12-year-olds and whose results have a very huge impact on the rest of one's educational life in Singapore.

## I chose this film because...

The film offers satirical criticism of the Singaporean education system and social attitudes in Singapore and also touches on other issues, including Chinese self-loathing (wherein Singaporean companies regard Western expatriates as inherently superior to local workers), the use of Singlish (mix of English and other languages only used in Singapore and Malaysia), and the differences between the fortunes of those who speak English and those who don't. I personally went through the education system in Singapore and this sheds a very good light on the stress that the education system has on children and parents both in Singapore.

## Let me introduce myself

I am an international student from Singapore and I am a first year student in Philosophy, International and Economic studies. I am actually of Nepalese origin, and therefore I am a part of a very small minority in Singapore. I am an adult student returning to school after working as an airline stewardess for 4 years. I fell in love with Italy while flying and decided to pursue my degree here. I am very fortunate to be in a beautiful city like Venice.



**SINGAPORE — ASIA**







# Kano Kano

**Director:**

Chih-Hsiang Ma (as Umin Boya)

**Year of production:**

2014

**Production country:**

Taiwan (R.O.C)

**Language(s):**

Japanese, Min Nan

**Film runtime:**

185 min

**Genre(s):**

Biography, Drama, History

**Student guide**

Hsinyi

**Field of study**

Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage

**Level of study**

Master's degree

**Plot**

Under Japanese rule, an underdog high school baseball team from Taiwan wins a rare opportunity to represent the colony in the 1931 empire-wide tournament. Comprised of Taiwanese, aboriginals and Japanese players, team "Kanō" integrates the ethnically mixed roster, making this its unique strength and allowing it to thrive in the elite sports league.

**I chose this film because...**

Kano is adapted from a true story and for me it represents a soul-searching journey that many of my generation are still on even now as we seek to shape our own identity. A basic understanding of my nation's history is needed before watching this film: Taiwan was ceded to imperial Japan in 1895 after imperial China lost the war, beginning a 50-year-long period of Japanese colonial rule. In many aspects of its society, the Taiwanese Han people were treated as second-class citizens and tribal aboriginals even worse. In this context, imagine how significant it was to assemble a multiracial baseball team at that time. It's impressive to see how the team breaks down cultural and racial barriers and eventually fights united in this battle. Despite the moments of disrespect the players endure, kindness and humanity were still to be found: their Japanese coach viewed the students as his own children and saw the potential and strength in their souls. In short, this movie reflects the true values of Taiwan, which are deeply influenced by its multi-ethnic background, but not only this. Being Taiwanese doesn't depend on ethnicity, but on the strength found in unity. We are diverse and we may have hurt each other in the past, but we are able to forgive, to respect one another and step forward. Today, nearly 90 years later, baseball remains our national sport. The story of Kano is the pride and joy of Taiwan. And I hope this story will continue to inspire people in search of their identity.

**Let me introduce myself**

I was born and grew up in Taipei. I have a bachelor's degree in Applied Chinese Language and Culture from National Taiwan Normal University. It has been 6 years since I moved to Italy for work and now I am a student of the master's programme in arts management (EGart).



**TAIWAN (R.O.C) — ASIA**

