**The**

**Hollywood Studio System**

[](http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/noir_image/notrs.jpg)[](http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/40_image/third.jpg)1930-1948

[](http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/noir_image/gesture.jpg)[](http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/30_image/dust.jpg)

[](http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/%20http:/www.moderntimes.com/screwball/image/baby1.jpg)

**Hollywood Studio System 1930- 1948**

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**Resources**

<http://www.globalproducer.com/PAGES/INFO/Movie_Business/Film_Industry_Economics/Hollywood_Model/Hollywood_Model.htm> Best overall information- very relevant

<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1406> The Global media Giants

[www.cinematheque.bc.ca/education/pdfs/f\_h\_guide07.pdf](http://www.cinematheque.bc.ca/education/pdfs/f_h_guide07.pdf) worksheet to go with Global Media Giants

<http://www.fathom.com/course/10701053/session1.html> the studio system

<http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/1946.htm> the end of the studios

<http://www.filmsite.org/20sintro.html> the studios themselves

<http://slate.msn.com/id/2619/> The economics of the studios- mostly 2005, but great back info.

[www.gwu.edu/~elliott/news/lemondediplo.pdf](http://www.gwu.edu/~elliott/news/lemondediplo.pdf) the effects of the studio system

<http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/huac.htm> huac- the hunt for unamericans

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/blacklist.html> The Hollywood blacklist

<http://www.caslon.com.au/censorshipguide15.htm> Censorship from Hays to New Zealand- great link to ‘investigate an issue’

Wikipedia

The Cinema Book (Pam Cook)

Making Movies (James Monaco)

The History of Film

**Section 1: The Studio System** : An Overview

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Some have compared the Hollywood studio system to a factory, and it is useful to remember that studios were out to make money first and art second. Their product output in 1937 surged to over 500 feature films. By the 1980s, this figure dropped to an average of 100 films per year. During the Golden Age, the studios were remarkably consistent and stable enterprises, due in large part to long-term management heads--the infamous "movie moguls" who ruled their kingdoms with iron fists. At MGM, Warner Bros. and Columbia, the same fabled immigrant showmen ran their studios for decades. Power, then, was definitely situated with the studio heads.  The rise of the studio system also hinges on the treatment of stars, who were constructed and exploited to suit a studio's image and schedule. Actors and actresses were contract players bound up in seven-year contracts to a single studio, and the studio generally held all the options. Stars could be loaned out to other production companies at any time. Studios could also force bad roles on actors, and control the minutiae of stars' images with their mammoth in-house publicity departments.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | four stars American Film Institute | During the classical Hollywood era, each studio was renowned for a certain genre of film or a particular roster of stars. Spencer Tracy, Bing Crosby, Charlie Chaplin, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were some of the well-known performers that emerged during this period. In addition, the four actresses shown on left worked on such classics as Susan and God (1940), She Done Him Wrong (1933), Grand Hotel (1932) and Coquette (1929).  Top row, from left to right: Joan Crawford (MGM) and Mae West (Paramount). Bottom row, from left to right: Greta Garbo (MGM) and Mary Pickford (United Artists). |   Somewhat paradoxically, however, studios also had to cultivate flexibility and product differentiation, in addition to consistent, factory output. Studio heads realized that they couldn't make the same film over and over again with the same cast of stars and still expect to keep turning a profit. Examining how each production company tried to differentiate itself from the rest of the market has led to loose characterizations of individual studios' styles.  **Niche studio styles** MGM had the biggest cache of stars (Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford and Spencer Tracey, among others) and tended to put out a lot of all-star productions, such as *Grand Hotel* (1932). Paramount excelled in comedy, having Mae West, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby at their disposal. Warner Bros. developed a reputation for gritty social realism, ranging from gangster pictures, which were often based on newspaper headlines, to war pictures and Westerns. 20th Century Fox forged the musical and a great deal of prestige biographies, such as *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939).  RKO provided a haven for Orson Welles (*Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, etc.) and dance supernovas, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. RKO also created *King Kong* (1933). Columbia's major claim was director Frank Capra, including his masterpieces *It Happened One Night* (1934) and *Mr. Deeds Goes To Town* (1936), among others.  Universal thrilled and terrified audiences with the original *Frankenstein* (1931), *Dracula* (1931) and *The Wolf Man* (1941). United Artists, formed by silent greats Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, D.W. Griffith and Douglas Fairbanks, specialized in distributing productions.  **Early censorship** Despite the early proliferation of film production that occurred during the classical Hollywood period, studios were also challenged by growing governmental censorship efforts that aimed to limit audience-pleasing films filled with unnecessary sex and violence. The movies were born as a low form of entertainment, and early on certain groups decried the movies' capacity to lower morals. Stars' scandalous cavorting--most notably, Fatty Arbuckle's conviction for a kinky sex-related murder of a model in 1921--increasingly threatened the public's good graces towards the motion-picture industry. By 1922, it looked as if the studios faced imminent government intervention.  Rather than risk government intervention, the studios put William Hays, former Postmaster General of the United States, at the helm of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America organization (MPPDA), in the hopes of adequately self-censoring before the government intervened. The MPPDA also assembled a Production Code in 1930, a document that outlined, in excruciating detail, what could not be shown or said in movies.  The MPPDA's efforts didn't really work because there was no real means of enforcing the Production Code. Cinematic sex and violence continued to sell very well. So the early 1930s constitutes an amazingly steamy period, epitomized in actress Mae West's controversial lines that were filled with double entendres and sexual imagery: "I can make it happen when the shades go down," she purred. And audiences knew exactly what she was referring to by "it."  In 1934, the MPPDA put Joseph Breen in charge of the newly-renamed censorship body, the Production Code Administration (PCA). The PCA decided that films had to gain a seal signifying that they had met the moral guidelines outlined in the Code. Otherwise, a film could not be exhibited and the studio had to pay a $25,000 fine. This finally gave the Production Code the authority it previously lacked.  The PCA followed a script from first draft through production, and often Breen would butt heads with studios over a film's crossing the line from a moral perspective. The process generated a flurry of documents outlining what had to be cut out and why. These documents, now housed in various archives in Los Angeles, California, form a compelling social history of the attempt to develop movies that reflected the moral sentiments of the society.  Though this system ultimately broke down (the current rating system was adopted in 1968), the mesmerizing power of movies to both exhilarate and corrupt audiences remains a central American preoccupation. For example, Hollywood films are still criticized for the way in which they seduce underage viewers. |

**Section 2a: Organisation of the Studio System**

**From "Economic Control of the Motion Picture Industry", Mae Huettig (1944)**

**Task: Use the information to answer the following questions.**

*Hollywood "a large inverted pyramid, top-heavy with real estate and theaters, resting on a narrow base of the intangibles which constitute films."*

**The focus of the Motion Picture Industry was on exhibition, not production.**

Therefore the Organisational Structure depended on:

1. Hollywood run from New York by execs close to Wall St., publishing and Broadway.

2. Those in charge of exhibition knew what the public wanted.

3. Those in charge of distribution knew what those in charge of exhibition wanted.

4. Ultimate decision on making pictures laying with CEO who:

- determined A and B picture budgets

- how much to spend on prestige pics

- tentative production schedules

Only at this point did a Hollywood based production dept. enter the fray.

**Key factors:**

- The Majors, or the Big Five **owned** substantial theatre chains

- The Majors raised the cash to acquire these chains through the public sale of bonds and stocks pre-1929 taking on ***long term debt*** (reflected in presence of investment bankers, businessmen etc. on Motion Picture Company boards)

- Therefore

*"The production of films, essentially fluid and experimental as a process, is harnessed to a form of organisation which can rarely afford to be either experimental or speculative because of the regularity with which heavy fixed charges (debt) must be made." (Huettig)*

**How important was the ownership of theatres?**

Theatres were the method of exhibition- and of revenue gathering in box office receipts. The Majors owned Affiliated chains, which ranged from 200 – to 1500 theatres in size – accounting for 20% of total US cinemas.

HOWEVER – these cinemas accounted for 80% of 1st-run houses and the most profitable subsequent run houses (generally located in major metropolitan areas). So these theaters accounted for 50% - 80% of the Box Office in any given market.

Only in largest cities did majors’ theaters compete directly. Elsewhere they pooled their product for nationwide distribution. Thus one company’s hit benefited all theatres.

Thus Huettig concluded that production and distribution were only important to the extent they enabled the majors to maintain their favoured status in exhibition.

**How to account for the "Little Three" – Universal, Columbia and UA with very few theaters?**

A: No one studio had the capacity to produce sufficient films to fill its subsequent run theaters which needed up to 300 pics per annum. The little three filled this gap. Columbia and Universal mainly made B-pics for the low end of the market. UA was purely a distributor for "a small group of elite independent producer."

**Focus Questions**

How important was Wall Street to the industry?

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What were the CEO’s responsibilities?

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Why was exhibition more important to the Motion Picture Studios than production? (Who Financed it)

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Where did the Independent Producers fit in?

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**Graphing the Organisational Structure**

**The Owners**

Shareholders, Investors and financiers. These were often from the East Coast and were investing in order to make a profit.

**The Chief Executive Officer**

Makes the decisions about production schedules, budgets of A and B movies and prestige pics. The CEO was usually a large shareholder, or founder of the company, but was dependent on the financiers.

Head Of Production

Made the day to day decisions about the studio, determined individual film budgets and appointed producers.

**Exhibitors**

Box Office receipts show what films are popular (profitable)

**Distributors**

Deal directly with Exhibitors and have to provide a marketable deal.

**Section 2b: Studio Ownership**

**Read the following article and then complete the tasks.**

**Studio Ownership**

There were three tiers of studio ownership: The Big Five, The Little Three and the ‘Poverty Row’ independent producers. The importance of the studios was based on vertical integration- ownership of the production, distribution and exhibition of the movies.

By 1929, the film-making firms that had all three elements of vertical integration, and later ruled Hollywood were known as *The Big Five*. They produced more than 90 percent of the fiction films in America and distributed their films both nationally and internationally. Each studio somewhat differentiated its products from other studios.

**The Big Five**

The Big-Five studios had vast studios with elaborate sets for film production. They owned their own film-exhibiting theatres (about 50% of the seating capacity in the US in mostly *first-run* houses in major cities), as well as production and distribution facilities. They distributed their films to this network of studio-owned, first-run theaters (or movie palaces), mostly in urban areas, which charged high ticket prices and drew huge audiences. They required *blind* or *block bookings* of films, whereby theatre owners were required to rent a block of films (often cheaply-made, less-desirable *B-pictures*) in order for the studio to agree to distribute the one prestige *A-level picture* that the theatre owner wanted to exhibit. This technique set the terms for a film's release and patterns of exhibition and guaranteed success for the studio's productions. [Monopolistic studio control lasted twenty years until the late 1940s, when a federal decree (in *U.S. vs. Paramount*) ordered the studios to divest their theatres, similar to the rulings against the MPPC - the Edison Trust.]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The Big Five Studios** | **Logo** |
| 1. | **Warner Bros**. **Pictures**,incorporated in 1923 by Polish brothers (Jack, Harry, Albert, and Sam); the studio's first principal asset was Rin Tin Tin; became prominent by 1927 due to its introduction of talkies ([**The Jazz Singer (1927)**](http://www.filmsite.org/jazz.html)) and early 30s [*gangster films*](http://www.filmsite.org/crimefilms.html); it was known as the "Depression studio"; in the 40s, it specialized in *Bugs Bunny* animations and other cartoons | **warnerbros Warner Bros.** |
| 2. | Adolph Zukor's **Famous Players** (1912) and Jesse Lasky's **Feature Play** - merged in 1916 to form **Famous Players-Lasky** **Corporation**; it spent $1 million on United Studios' property (on Marathon Street) in 1926; the **Famous Players-Lasky Corporation** became **Paramount** studios in 1927, and was officially named **Paramount Pictures** in 1935; its greatest silent era stars were Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks; Golden Age stars included Mae West, W.C. Fields, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and director Cecil B. DeMille | **paramount2 Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount)** |
| 3. | **RKO (Radio-Keith-Orpheum) Pictures**, evolved from the **Mutual Film Corporation** (1912), was established in 1928 as a subsidiary of RCA; it was formed by **RCA**, **Keith-Orpheum Theaters**, and the **FBO Company** (Film Booker's Organization) - which was owned by Joseph P. Kennedy (who had already purchased what remained of **Mutual**); this was the smallest studio of the majors; kept financially afloat with top-grossing Astaire-Rogers [*musicals*](http://www.filmsite.org/musicalfilms.html) in the 30s, [**King Kong (1933)**](http://www.filmsite.org/kingk.html), and [**Citizen Kane (1941)**](http://www.filmsite.org/citi.html); at one time, RKO was acquired by eccentric millionaire Howard Hughes | **RKOstudios RKO** |
| 4. | **MGM**,first named **Metro-Goldwyn Pictures**, was ultimately formed in 1924 from the merger of three US film production companies: **Metro Pictures Corporation** (1916), **Goldwyn Pictures Corporation** (1917), and the **Louis B. Mayer Pictures Company** (1918); Irving Thalberg (nicknamed the 'boy wonder') was head of production at MGM from 1924 until his death in 1936; the famous MGM lion roar in the studio's opening logo was first recorded and viewed in a film in 1928; its greatest early successes were, [**The Wizard of Oz (1939)**](http://www.filmsite.org/wiza.html), as well as *Tarzan* films, *Tom and Jerry* cartoons, and stars such as Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, and Spencer Tracy | **mgmlogo Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer** |
| 5. | **Fox Film Corporation,** founded in 1912 by NY nickelodeon owner William Fox, was known for Fox Movietone newsreels; it later became **20th-Century Fox**, formed through merger of **20th Century Pictures Company** (founded in 1933 by Darryl Zanuck) and **Fox** in 1935; famous for Betty Grable musicals in the 40s | **20thcfox 20th-Century Fox** |

**The Minor Film Studios: The Little Three**

Three smaller, minor studios were dubbed **The Little Three**, because each of them lacked *one* of the three elements required in *vertical integration* - owning their own theaters:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The Little Three Studios** | **Logo** |
| 1. | **Universal Pictures**, (or Universal Film Manufacturing Co), founded by Carl Laemmle in 1912; formed from a merger of Laemmle's own IMP - **Independent Motion Picture Company** (founded in 1909) with **Bison 101**, the U. S. production facilities of French studio Éclair, Nestor Film Co., and several other film companies; its first successes were W.C. Fields and Abbott and Costello comedies, the *Flash Gordon* serial, and *Woody Woodpecker* cartoons | **universallogo Universal** |
| 2. | **United Artists**, formed in 1919 by movie industry icons Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., Charlie Chaplin, and director D.W. Griffith as an independent company to produce and distribute their films; United Artists utilized an 18-acre property owned by Pickford and Fairbanks, known as the Pickford-Fairbanks Studio, and later named **United Artists Studio** in the 1920s | **unitedart50 United Artists** |
| 3. | **Columbia Pictures**, originally the **C.B.C. Films Sales Company** in 1920 founded by brothers Jack and Harry Cohn, and Joseph Brandt, and officially named **Columbia** in 1924; their studios opened at the old location of **Christie-Nestor Studios**; established prominence with [**It Happened One Night (1934)**](http://www.filmsite.org/itha.html), Rita Hayworth films, [**Lost Horizon (1937)**](http://www.filmsite.org/losth.html), **The Jolson Story (1946)**, and *Batman* serials. | **columbiastudios Columbia** |

**"Poverty Row" Studios and Other Independents:**

Other studios or independents also existed in a shabby area in Hollywood dubbed **"Poverty Row"** (Sunset Blvd. and Gower Street) where cheap, independent pictures were made with low budgets, stock footage, and second-tier actors. It was the site of Harry and Jack Cohn's new business, the **C.B.C. Films Sales Company** (later becoming **Columbia Pictures**). Many of the films of the independents were either horror films, westerns, science-fiction, or thrillers:

* **Disney Studios** - specializing in animation; Walt and Roy Disney originally opened their first studio in 1923 in Los Angeles in the back of the Holly-Vermont Realty office, and called it **Disney Bros. Studio**; in a few years, they opened a new facility in downtown LA; in the late 30s, they relocated to a 51-acre lot in Burbank, and changed their name to **Walt Disney Productions**
* **the Monogram Picture Corporation** - **Rayart Pictures**, which had taken over the old **Selig Studio** in Echo Park in 1924, became **Monogram Pictures** in 1930; it was founded by W. Ray Johnston to make mostly inexpensive Westerns and series (Charlie Chan, the Bowery Boys, etc.)
* **Selznick International Pictures / David O. Selznick** - it was formed in 1935 and headed up by David O. Selznick (previously the head of production at **RKO**), the son of independent film producer Lewis J. Selznick, the founder of Selznick Pictures
* **Samuel Goldwyn Pictures** - headed up by independent film producer Samuel L. Goldwyn
* **20th Century Pictures** - formed in 1933 by Darryl Zanuck (head of production at **Warner Brothers**) with Joseph Schenck, brother of Nicholas Schenck, president of **Loew's, Inc**., the parent company of **MGM**; in 1935, the **Fox Film Corporation** merged with **20th Century Pictures** to become **20th Century-Fox**, with Zanuck as president
* **Republic Pictures** - founded in 1935 by the merger of smaller 'poverty row' studios:

**Tasks:**

**Write a definition for each of these terms:**

**Term Definition**

Big Five \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Little Three \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Poverty Row \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Vertical Integration \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Block Booking \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Production \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Distribution \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Exhibition \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Focus Questions:**

What were two main differences between the Big Five and the Little Three?

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Why was Block Booking bad for the exhibitors?

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How did the Independent Studios survive?

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Draw a graph that shows and explains the system of Studio Ownership.

**Section 2c: Financing**

**The Hollywood Studio System (1930 – 1949)**

**Read the article and complete the following tasks**

The Hollywood Studio System was the system that enabled the US film industry to dominate the world. It was an extremely effective system for producing large quantities of films for a mass audience. Its impact and methodology still has relevance today.

## Background:

Prior to 1908 the film industry was something of a free-for-all. Various people were developing and using film technology. In 1908 the MPPC (Motion Pictures Patents Company) was established. The MPPC was a coalition of the major production companies who were keen to control all aspects of the film industry as cinema was becoming hugely popular thus offering considerable profits. The MPPC allowed these companies to monopolise the industry.

This did not please the independent distributors who found their “share of the pie” had diminished.

As a result the film distributors began to relocate to Hollywood and move into film production. For the production of films Hollywood had certain advantages over the East Coast (where production had previously been based).

These included:

1. **low land prices**
2. **attractive climates (films were shot on uncovered sets)**
3. **disparate locations within a short distance**
4. **cheap labour**
5. **being far away from the MPPC.**

They also sued the MPPC under anti-trust laws (a US version of the monopolies and mergers commission) resulting in its dissolution in 1915.

Aided by the events of WW1, Hollywood was producing 90% of American films, exporting massively abroad, and it was the most important film industry in the world.

## Oligopoly:

An oligopoly is a situation where a market is completely dominated by a small number of companies limiting competition.

By 1930 8 studios dominated Hollywood:

**The Big 5 (majors):** MGM, Paramount, RKO, Fox, Warner Bros.

**The Little 3 (minors):** Columbia, United Artists and Universal.

The majors were **Vertically Integrated** meaning they exercised control over production, distribution and exhibition. The minors did not control exhibition but had access to the major’s circuit.

## Vertical Integration:

Vertical integration means that the major studios made, released and marketed their films, even owning the cinemas in which they were shown. Exhibition was the most profitable sector of the film industry – Pre TV and Video; box-office receipts were the source of income for recouping the money spent on making films. It made sense for the film studios to want all of those profits for themselves. They did not own all the cinemas in the US (approx. 16%) but the ones that they did own were the “first-run” cinemas that got the most popular films exclusively before their competitors (as a result they delivered 75% of all theatrical revenues).

The advantages of this system were that the majors controlled the money and power within the film industry.

## Block-booking:

A practise devised by Zukor at Paramount, meant that the film studios were able to force independent film exhibitors to buy the cheaper and less high quality films produced by the majors in order to get the high quality features they wanted. Films were booked in blocks rather than individually (this could even be done before the films were finished. “A” films (featuring major stars and decent production values) could only be booked along with cheaper “B” films – thus guaranteeing audiences for all of the studio’s output regardless of quality.

## The Contract System:

As part of this approach to filmmaking all staff involved with producing a film were signed to long-term, permanent contracts with the studios.

This included stars who were typically contracted to a studio for 7 years. The contracts were such that the star had no choice in the films that they had to make or how many (they would have to make several each year). Despite being crucial to the marketing of films (helping differentiate between what were often very similar films), stars had very little power. If they refused to do a film they would be suspended without pay and their contracts would then be extended (by 1 and half times the duration of the film’s production). Frequently stars would be lent out to other studios.

# Focus Tasks

# Give five reasons for the establishment of a movie industry in Hollywood.

# 1.

# 2

# 3

# 4

# 5

# Explain what an oligopoly is and at least one positve (good) and one negative (bad) effect.

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# Explain what block booking was.

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# Draw a ‘T’ chart with the positive and negative effects of block booking.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Positive | Negative |
|  |  |

# Why was the contract system good for the studios?

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**3a: Production Process**

**Read the article and complete the following tasks**

## Assembly Line Production:

In order to meet audience demand during this period each of the studios were producing on average one film per week. The production of this vast amount of films was achieved by the studios modelling themselves on factories.

Just as the production of a car was divided into discrete tasks (different people put the doors on to those that fit the windscreen) filmmaking was approached in the same way.

Everybody involved with making the film (other than the producer) were simply salaried staff, there to perform their function. Once this function was completed they would simply move onto the next project. So a director would be given a project only after a writing team had finished the screenplay, other personnel would be selected for him and once the film had been shot, the project would pass onto the editors.

The only person who saw the film through the complete process would be the associate producer who monitored shooting schedules, budgets, etc. for each of their films. As these men were focused on making money rather than creativity they were primarily concerned with ensuring that films ran to schedule and budget. These associate producers were answerable to the Head of production, who was responsible for making sure the studio made money.

As a result of these techniques studios became associated with particular styles of film – e.g. Paramount’s European style sophistication and lavish dramas or Warner Brother’s working class melodramas.

## Genre:

Genre served the purposes of the Hollywood Studio System for 2 reasons:

1. They offered financial guarantee (by guaranteeing the audience for the film). Because the films are formulaic, they could be recycled repeatedly, ensuring consistency. Studios could target, select and predict audiences on the basis of genre. Generic films could be pre-sold to a particular audience (along with the appopriate star) as audiences could be sure they would get the pleasure of the kind of characters, story-lines and outcomes they required.
2. They saved the studios money, as genre meant that the studios could re-use sets, props, costumes, story-lines, etc. repeatedly.

## Context:

The US underwent a series of traumas between 1929 and 1949 including – the Wall St. Crash, The Great Depression and WW2. Rather than these crises having a negative effect on the film industry, Hollywood flourished by offering escapism from the everyday problems people suffered. Also Hollywood enjoyed governmental support as an “essential industry”, disseminating propaganda during the war.

# Tasks:

# Draw a diagram explaining Assembly line production. Remember to include the various stages of the production process.

# What relationship did the writer, director and post production crew have with each other? Why?

# \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Who were the key personnel?

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# Why were genre films increasingly made in the 1930’s and 40’s?

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**Section 3.b: Key personnel and relationships.**

Now that you know who the key personnel are, summarise the relationship between the Executive Producer and the director.

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Explain why there may have been no contact between the writer, director and post production unit.

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What positive and negative outcomes can you see resulting from this approach?

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Using your notes so far, complete the diagram. Each box should have a job title and description, along with their responsibilities.

**The Owners**

Shareholders, Investors and financiers. These were often from the East Coast and were investing in order to make a profit.

**The Chief Executive Officer**

Makes the decisions about production schedules, budgets of A and B movies and prestige pics. The CEO was usually a large shareholder, or founder of the company, but was dependent on the financiers.

**Head Of Production**

Made the day to day decisions about the studio, determined individual film budgets and appointed producers.

**Exhibitors**

Box Office receipts show what films are popular (profitable)

**Distributors**

Deal directly with Exhibitors and have to provide a marketable deal.

# Appendix 3.1: The decline of the Hollywood Studio System.

By 1949 the HSS was in decline, a decline that ultimately ended the Studio System. This is not to say that the studios did not survive, indeed other than RKO all of the major studios remain major players within the film industry. Likewise, Hollywood’s dominance of the film industry remains unchallenged.

However the decline of the HSS was such that it transformed the industry to such extent that Hollywood, and the film industry generally, would never be as successful again.

There were a variety of interrelated factors that contributed to the studio system’s decline:

**1.         Divorcement**: In 1948 the US courts required the studios to divorce production, distribution from exhibition because the practice broke anti-trust laws. This brought an end to Vertical Integration, effectively ending the oligopoly of the studios – especially as the studios had abandoned block booking earlier in the decade.

2.         The huge demand for films in the 1940s meant that several **independent production** companies were able to establish themselves. Indeed the major studios were sub-contracting work to such companies. This meant there was at least some competition for the studios.

3.         **Stars began to seek greater independence** from the studios. In 1943 Olivia DeHavilland had taken Warner Bros. to court over her contract with them. This lead to fixed term contracts replacing the 7-year – unlimited contracts. This gave the hugely popular stars far more power to negotiate and also benefited the crew.

4.         The workforce also organised themselves far more effectively, forming **trade unions** whose demands drove up the cost of production, and help end unreasonable working practises.

5.         The worldwide **market for Hollywood films was limited** as other countries placed import tariffs on the studio’s products. At the same time audience’s interests in European Art Cinema enjoyed a revival.

6.         **Television competed with cinema** after 1948. During the 1950s TV became the dominant leisure pursuit.

7.         The popularity of television was partly based on wider social trends in the US. People were increasingly moving from urban areas to suburbia – affecting the popularity of the city centre cinemas. Also, people were buying their own houses rather than renting. When this happens the focus of people’s leisure interests changes – becoming increasingly home based (DIY and TV, not Cinema and eating out).

Increased costs of production, decreasing revenues (the result of audiences falling by half between 1946-56) and the closure of 4000 cinemas meant that there was no longer a guaranteed market for the films they produced. As such the assembly line system of production was no longer relevant.

**Section 4: Controls**

**Using what you already know about making movies in the Studio era, complete the chart below. Use the notes in the rest of this booklet to find information if you don’t remember.**

**Section 4a: Controls**

**Controls are factors that control the production of movies**

**Internal Controls**

Internal Controls include production processes, editorial policy, commercial considerations, codes and quality controls.

**External controls**

External controls include government and societal agencies, pressure groups, market demands, codes and industrial standards.

**Note:** For this section, it is important to know a little about American history. When Hitler invaded Poland and started World War 2, the U.S.A government did not want to get involved. However, a large number of Americans thought that it was important to stand up and fight Hitler as they believed he was a threat to democracy. Those that wanted to stay out of the war, and isolated were called **Isolationists**. Those that thought America should get involved and intervene (many Hollywood studio directors), were called **Interventionists**. It wasn’t until the bombing of Pearl Harbour, an American base that the Isolationists decided to join the war.

**Summary of Controls and Effects**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Internal controls** | **Definition** | **Effect** |
| A or B grade movie?  (Quality Control) |  | This influences budget  Casting ‘B’ or ‘A’ list stars |
| Assembly line process  (Production Process) |  | A common ‘vision’ isn’t shared  All films have a similar style  ‘Auteur’ non-existent |
| Contract system  (Commercial Consideration) |  | Casting depends on who is on contract.  Can mean bad casting |
| Block Booking  (Commercial consideration) |  | The need for a certain amount of ‘A’ and ‘B’ movies |
| Production Code  (Industry code of Practise.) |  | Means scripts have to be rewritten to get censor approval  Some subject matter isn’t dealt with, like abortion , or can only be shown if they are ‘punished’ like infidelity. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **External Controls** | **Definition** | **Effects** |
| Governmental “essential industry” status |  |  |
| Censorship |  |  |
| Genre appeal  (Market demands) |  |  |

**Section 4b: The Production Code – an internal control…**

**Read the article and complete the following tasks**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ever notice** that films of the 1930s and 40s   * meander around topics of sex? * hide violence behind foreground objects or within shadows? * never treat serious subjects dealt with in the best-regarded novels of the era?   In noticing these, you’ve seen instances where the Production Code Administration had their way against the wishes of filmmakers.  The Production Code Administration scuttled, weakened or diluted numerous scenes proposed by writers and directors of Hollywood films from 1934 to 1968. | | | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Are you ready to learn about the Production Code and the Production Code Administration of the Motion Picture Producers & Distributors of America?  When the Code went into effect in July 1934, all movies from the major studios appeared on screen preceded by an MPPDA “approved” logo like this one.  Just what the moviemakers had done to bring on this Code — and what they would continue to do even as the Code was bearing down on the less creative — is the subject that you now have the opportunity to delve into and enjoy. | The MPPDA logo (22250 bytes) | |
| The Production Code of the Motion Picture Industry (1930-1968) Movies from 1930 to 1968 were governed by a Production Code. Scenes that violated, challenged or stretched the limits of the Code are described.  (The dates above, 1930 to 1968, may be misleading because from 1930 to mid-1934, numerous movies were released without penalty or remedial action even though the movies did not conform to the requirements of the Production Code. | | |

|  |
| --- |
| The Production Code came into being because the owners of the major Hollywood movie studios sought to stave off the threat of a national government-run censorship operation.   They also wanted to assure concerned civic leaders throughout the United States that Hollywood would deliver only wholesome movies and thus that there was no further editing to be done by the state and local censorship boards that had sprung up during the decade preceding the Code.  The Studio Relations Committee was organized, in 1930, by the already-extant organization the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) and given the responsibility for the administration of industry self-censorship. The Studio Relations Committee was reconstituted as the Production Code Administration in 1934, after which it was more effective.  The Production Code was adopted March 31, 1930, although it would be modified over the years. |

# Production Code

# From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

The **Production Code** (also known as the **Hays Code**) was a set of guidelines governing the production of motion pictures. The [Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_Picture_Association_of_America) (MPPDA, later to become the Motion Picture Association of America or MPAA) adopted the code in [1930](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1930), began effectively enforcing it in [1934](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934), and abandoned it in [1967](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1967). The Production Code spelled out what was and was not considered morally acceptable in the production of [United States motion pictures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_the_United_States).

## Enforcement

As adopted in 1930, the code had no effective method of enforcement. A mechanism for enforcement was created in 1934. For the following twenty years or so, virtually all motion pictures produced in the United States adhered to the code.

The Production Code was not created or enforced by federal, state or city governments. In fact, the [Hollywood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hollywood) studios adopted the code in large part in the hopes of avoiding government censorship—preferring self-regulation to government regulation. Thus, adherence to the code was always mostly voluntary. In the mid-1950s, a few major producers began to openly challenge the Code. By the mid-1960s, Code enforcement had become virtually impossible. The Code was abandoned in 1967 and replaced, in [1968](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968), with the [MPAA film rating system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MPAA_film_rating_system).

## Before the Production Code

Before the adoption of the Production Code, many perceived motion pictures as being immoral and thought they promoted vice and glorified violence. Numerous local censorship boards had been established, and approximately 100 cities across the country had local censorship laws. Motion picture producers feared that the federal government might step in.

In the early [1920s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1920s), three major scandals had rocked Hollywood: the manslaughter trials of comedy star [Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatty_Arbuckle) (who was charged with being responsible for the death of actress [Virginia Rappe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Rappe) at a wild party), the murder of director [William Desmond Taylor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Desmond_Taylor) (and the revelations regarding his lifestyle), and the drug-related death of popular actor [Wallace Reid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wallace_Reid). These stories, which happened almost simultaneously, were sensationalized in the press, and grabbed headlines across the country. They seemed to confirm a perception that many had of Hollywood—that it was "Sin City".

Public outcry over perceived immorality, both in Hollywood and in the movies, led to the creation, in [1922](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1922), of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association (which became the Motion Picture Association of America in 1945). Intended to project a positive image of the movie industry, the association was headed by [Will H. Hays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_H._Hays), who had previously been [United States Postmaster General](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Postmaster_General) and the campaign manager for President [Warren G. Harding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_G._Harding). Hays pledged to impose a set of moral standards on the movies.

Hays spent eight years attempting to enforce a moral authority over Hollywood films, with little effect. The Hays office did issue a list of "Don'ts" and "Be Carefuls" in [1927](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1927), but film-makers continued to do pretty much what they wanted.

***1930 to 1934: the 'pre-Code' era***

With the advent of [talking pictures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talking_picture) in 1927, it was felt that a more formal written code was needed. The Production Code was written, and adopted on [March 31](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_31), [1930](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1930), but no provisions were made for effective enforcement. The period between 1930 and 1934 is often referred to as the 'pre-Code' era because, even though the Code existed, studios mostly ignored it.

This and future codes were often called the Hays Code due to its leadership. Although Hays' name is thus often associated with censorship, he was fairly mild-mannered and easily persuaded and manipulated.

## 1934 changes to the Code

The MPPDA responded to criticism of the racy and violent pre-Code films by strengthening the Code. An amendment to the Code, adopted on [June 13](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_13), [1934](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934), established the [Production Code Administration](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Production_Code_Administration&action=edit), and required all films to obtain a certificate of approval before being released. [Joseph I. Breen](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_I._Breen&action=edit) was appointed head of the new Production Code Administration. The Code was further fortified by the creation of the [Catholic Legion of Decency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Legion_of_Decency), which designated "indecent" films that Catholics should boycott.

Under Breen's leadership, enforcement of the Production Code became rigid and notorious. The Code prohibited any reference in a motion picture to [illicit drugs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcotics), [homosexuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality), [premarital sex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premarital_sex), [profanity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Profanity), [prostitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prostitution), and [white slavery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_slavery). Films could still be violent, and feature [heterosexual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heterosexual) romance. Smoking [cigarettes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cigarette) was still allowed and even encouraged. Films could not endorse [hatred of a racial or ethnic group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racial_hatred), but the Code also prohibited [interracial relationships](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interracial_relationship) or marriages. The power of Breen to change scripts and scenes angered many writers, directors, and Hollywood [moguls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_proprietor).

The first major instance of censorship under the Production Code involved the [1934](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934) film [*Tarzan and his Mate*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tarzan_and_his_Mate&action=edit), in which brief nude scenes involving a body double for actress [Maureen O'Sullivan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maureen_O%27Sullivan) were edited out of the master print of the film. Another famous case of enforcement, dramatized in the [2004](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004) [Martin Scorsese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Scorsese) film [*The Aviator*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Aviator), involved the [1943](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1943) [western](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_movie) [*The Outlaw*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Outlaw), produced by [Howard Hughes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Hughes). The movie was denied a certificate of approval and kept out of theaters for years, primarily because promotion for the film focused attention almost exclusively on [Jane Russell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Russell)'s breasts. Eventually Hughes was able to persuade Breen that the breasts did not violate the code and the film could be shown.

## Provisions of the Code

The Production Code spelled out specific restrictions on movie language and behavior, particularly [sex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex) and [crime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime)—though Hollywood developed ways to get around some of these restrictions and keep audiences coming back to the theaters. It prohibited nudity, suggestive dances, and the ridicule of [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion). It forbade the depiction of illegal drug use, [venereal disease](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venereal_disease), [childbirth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childbirth), and [pregnancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pregnancy) outside of marriage. The language section banned dozens of "offensive" words and phrases, leading to the shocked outcry from many moviegoers when the film [*Gone with the Wind*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gone_with_the_Wind_%28film%29) included the word "damn." Criminal activity could not be depicted on film in a way that led viewers to sympathize with criminals. Murder scenes had to be filmed in a way that would discourage imitations in real life, and brutal killings could not be shown in detail. The sanctity of [marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage) and the home had to be upheld. [Adultery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adultery) and illicit sex, although recognized as sometimes necessary to the plot, could not be explicit or justified and were not supposed to be presented as an attractive option.

## The 1950s and early 1960s

Hollywood worked within the confines of the Production Code until the late [1950s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1950s), by which time the "[Golden Age Of Hollywood](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Golden_Age_Of_Hollywood&action=edit)" had ended, and the movies were faced with very serious competitive threats.

[Vertical integration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertical_integration) in the movie industry had been found to violate [anti-trust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-trust) laws, and studios had been forced to give up ownership of theatres by the [Paramount Case](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=U.S._vs._Paramount_Pictures%2C_et_al.%2C&action=edit). The studios had no way to keep foreign films out, and the foreign films weren't bound by the Production Code. The anti-trust rulings also helped pave the way for independent art houses that would show films created by people such as [Andy Warhol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Warhol) and others working outside the studio system.

Finally, a boycott from the Catholic Legion of Decency no longer guaranteed a commercial failure, and thus the Code prohibitions began to vanish when Hollywood producers would ignore the Code and were still able to earn profits.

### ****Some of the rules from the production code…****

#### ****Crimes Against the Law****

#### shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

(a) The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.

(b)   Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.

(c)   Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.

(d)   Mercy killing shall never be made to seem right or permissable. (Added Later)

2.   Methods of crime should not be explicitly presented.

(a)   Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.

(b)   Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.

(c)   The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.

(d)   Methods of smuggling should not be presented.

3.   The illegal drug traffic must not be portrayed in such a way as to stimulate curiosity concerning the use of, or traffic in, such drugs; nor shall scenes be approved which show the use of illegal drugs, or their effects, in detail.

The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

**Sex**

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

1.   Adultery and illicit sex, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated or justified, or presented attractively.

2.   Scenes of passion

(a)   These should not be introduced except where they are definitely essential to the plot.

Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures are not to be shown.

  In general, passion should be treated in such manner as not to stimulate the lower and baser emotions.

3.   Seduction or rape

(a)   These should never be more than suggested, and then only when essential for the plot. They must never be shown by explicit method.

(b)   They are never the proper subject for comedy.

4.   Sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden.

5.   White slavery shall not be treated.

6.   Miscegenation (sex relationship between the white and black races) is forbidden.

7.   Sex hygiene and venereal diseases are not proper subjects for theatrical motion pictures.

8.   Scenes of actual childbirth, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.

9.   Children's sex organs are never to be exposed.

**Other…**

The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects should be guided always by the dictates of good taste and a proper regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

Pointed profanity (this includes God, Lord, Jesus, Christ—unless used reverently—Hell, S.O.B., damn, Gawd), or other profane or vulgar expressions, however used, is forbidden.

Pointed profanity and every other profane or vulgar expression, however used, is forbidden.

Complete nudity is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any licentious notice thereof by other characters in the pictures.

Undressing scenes should be avoided, and never used save where essential to the plot.

  Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.

Dancing costumes intended to permit undue exposure of indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passion are forbidden.

Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

#### No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.

Ministers of religion in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.

The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy.

**Tasks: Complete the timeline**

This shows the developments in the production code**.**

31-Mar-1930 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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13 –Jun-1934 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1934 First film to meet opposition was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1943 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1951 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Why was the code introduced?

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What was censored under the production code (Summarise)

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What impact did it have on the type of material that could become a film?

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What ,might be some problems for movie makers in using the production code?

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**Section 4c: Essential Industry Status- an External Control**

With the start of the 1940s, the war in Europe drew ever nearer to American shores. Try as it might to perpetuate the escapist fantasy of the 1930s, Hollywood grew ever more aware of the impending conflict. It became time for Hollywood to once again take up the propagandist role. A few propaganda films began to inch onto the screens, taking potshots at the old German nemisis. These early attempts invoked the wrath of congressional isolationists. On September 9, 1941, a battle began between the best talent in Hollywood and the U.S. Senate as isolationists sought to curb the interventionalist tone Hollywood had begun to take. The hearings adjourned after three weeks, but the debate about what role Hollywood should play in propaganda continued. In October of 1941, Senate Resolution 152 was enacted, calling for thorough and complete investigation of any film propaganda.

The debate ended on December 7, 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Following the Pearl Harbor attack, President Roosevelt cited Hollywood for its role during the wartime period, claiming that the motion picture was the most effective medium to inform the nation. By June of 1942, the [Office of War Information](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood3.html) had become the official guardian of the film industry, supervising the Hollywood propaganda machine. Studios churned out countless movies [glorifying the war](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood4.html), the men who served in it, and the [American homefront which supported them](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood5.html). At the same time, other films reminded the moviegoer of what the fighting was for: [the preservation of American culture and history](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood5.html). Hollywood stars set examples, [joined the services](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood7.html) and went on USO tours, [sold bonds, and promoted scrap drives](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood8.html). When World War II ended, the film industry could congratulate itself for a job well done. Hollywood went to war for the mobilization effort, and returned victorious.

Office of War Information

*For the benefit of both your studio and the Office of War Information it would be advisable to establish a routine procedure whereby our Hollywood office would recieve copies of studio treatments or synopses of all stories which you contemplate producing and of the finished scripts. This will enable us to make suggestions as to the war content of motion pictures at a stage when it is easy and inexpensive to make any changes which might be recommended.*

-Lowell Mellett (FDR presidential liaison to media) to studio heads, December 9, 1942 ([4](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywoodend.html))

The Office of War Information (OWI) was one of the numerous government bureaucracies created by the total mobilization effort of the Victory Program. On June 13, 1942, the White House announced the creation of the OWI and the appointment of its chief, Elmer Davis. OWI was to undertake campaigns to enhance public understanding of the war at home and abroad; to coordinate government information activities; and to handle liaison with the press, radio, and motion pictures. In effect, the OWI was charged with selling the war. The agency issued elaborate guidelines, divided into numerous categories, to insure conformity in every film. OWI asked film makers to consider the following seven questions before producing a movie:

 Will this picture help win the war?

 What war information problem does it seek to clarify, dramatize, or interpret?

 If it is an "escape" picture, will it harm the war effort by creating a false picture of America, her allies, or the world we live in?

 Does it merely use the war as the basis for a profitable picture, contributing nothing of real significance to the war effort and possibly lessening the effect of other pictures of more importance?

 Does it contribute something new to our understanding of the world conflict and the various forces involved, or has the subject already been adequately covered?

 When the picture reaches its maximum circulation on the screen, will it reflect conditions as they are and fill a need current at that time, or will it be out-dated?

 Does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have reason to say they were misled by propaganda? ([7](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywoodend.html))

This last question was, at first, a consideration of extreme importance for OWI. The agency, which was often classified as "liberal" by other branches of the government, started out with the intention of truthfully representing the war. Films like [*Casablanca*](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywoodfilm.html) genuinely attempted to inform the moviegoing audience of the causes of and reasons for the war. The OWI sought to avoid hate pictures, providing instead a balanced view. These good intentions quickly dissolved, though, as the OWI found it necessary to crack down on the motion picture industry. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hollywood turned out numerous anti-Japanese films, some of them quite racist. Particularly, the mid-summer 1942 [*Little Tokyo, U.S.A.*](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywoodfilm.html)*,*which dealt with the controversial subject of Japanese internment, caused the OWI to crack down on the artistic license of Hollywood. As the OWI became more regulatory, truthfulness gave way to the use of sentimental symbolism to manipulate opinion by denying or clouding relevant information. By the end of World War II, the OWI had a heavy hand in all production coming out of Hollywood.

The Battle Ground

A year of bad news IN 1942 left the American public fearing that, perhaps, "we could have lost that war, and were within inches of losing it..." ([6](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywoodend.html)) The grim atmosphere of 1942 caused the OWI to take "Will this picture help the war?" quite seriously. Every act seemed to carry great importance for the war. OWI decided that drastic measures were needed to bring Hollywood in line with the agency's propaganda program.

The tightened control of the motion picture industry resulted in an outpouring of films about war. Hollywood produced numerous battle films dealing directly with the conflict, in an effort to offset the ominous events following Pearl Harbor. These films offered the same theme: as in World War I, the Yanks were coming. The early battles were lost, but final victory would belong to America. Film after film pictured Americans routing their enemies and liberating enslaved nations. While many of these war films were turkeys, some represent World War II Hollywood at its best. Films like *Sahara, Bataan,* [*Flying Tigers*](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywoodfilm.html)*, Guadalcanal Diary,*and*Wake Island* represent not only the best of Hollywood's persuasive skills, but also classic cinema.

These films filled a void left by the depressing news from the fronts. Later, when the tides turned toward victory, the battle-film genre served to glorify American military spirit.

But what about the issues facing the home front? The fact that, by the final phase of World War II, less than one-third of all films were directly connected to the war indicates that Hollywood did not spend the entire war period shooting down Japanese planes and exploding Nazi tanks. Hollywood turned to different genres: the comedy, musical, and nostalgia films. However, these films served just as much propaganda purpose as did the battle films.

Morale Films:  
Courage, Comedy, and American Nostalgia

While American soldiers were off fighting the Axis powers in faraway places, civilians at home found their normal way of life completely altered. Consumer goods became limited as rationing went into effect: crude oil, rubber, butter, meat, canned goods, clothing and shoes were all in short supply. Unacustomed to such constraits, Americans chaffed under the restrictions of home front mobilization. The one place where the public could still spend its money freely was at the movies. The OWI recognized the discontent of the average American, and sought to counterbalance this mobilization effect with entertainment. OWI enlisted the help of Hollywood to bolster the morale of the American public. Hollywood responded with enthusiasm-if there was one subjrect Hollywood producers thought they knew, it was America. The Hollywood propaganda machine pured out countless morale films, in an effort to sustain spirits on the home front. Stuios produced upbeat stories with happy endings about people who were beautiful, witty, and successful, but not so far removed from a middle class norm as to make it difficult for audiences to identify with the actors. The films presented an idealized version of American society, glorifying the average citizen who made personal sacrifices for the war effort. Hollywood and the OWI found that they could use similar sacred and sentimental symbols in the propaganda effort. In fact, the most popular movies of World War 2 were usually musicals with up beat stories.

**Task: Complete the timeline for the Essential Industry Status**

09-Sept-1941 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Oct-1941, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

13-Jun 1942 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Why was the office of war information involved?

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Why might movie production have been considered an ‘essential industry’?

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What were the questions that the Office of War Information considered when examining

movies?

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Would a movie that showed the Japanese in a sympathetic manner have been made? Give

reasons.

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What types of movies were to be made?

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**Section 5: The Studio System in Action:**

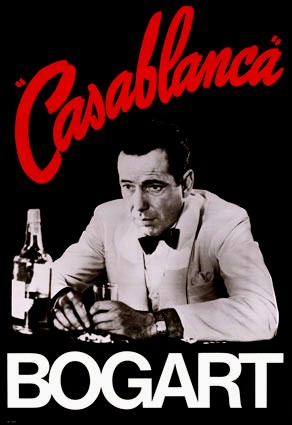
**Casablanca: A Case Study**

**USA, 1942**

Running time: 102 (or 82) minutes  
Black and white

*directed by* [**Michael Curtiz**](http://www.leninimports.com/curtiz.html)  
*written by* Philip G. Epstein, Howard Koch and Julius J. Epstein  
*based on the play* Everybody Comes to Rick's by Murray Burnett and Joan Alison  
*cinematogher*, Arthur Edeson  
*music by* Max Steiner  
*edited by* Owen Marks

*with:*  
[**Humphrey Bogart**](http://www.leninimports.com/humphrey_bogart.html) (Richard "Rick" Blaine)  
Ingrid Bergman (lisa Lund)  
Paul Henreid (Victor Laszlo)  
Claude Rains (Captain Louis Renault)  
Peter Lorre (Ugarte)  
[**Conrad Veidt**](http://www.leninimports.com/conrad_veidt.html) (Major Strasser)  
Sydney Greenstreet (Senor Ferrari)



**Section 5a:The Making of Casablanca**

**Read the article, view the documentary and answer the questions**

### It's *Almost* the Same Old Story: When the Legend Becomes Fact, Print the Truth

### [Niels Weisberg](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Contrbts.html#cntb13)

While we are waiting for the book about *Casablanca* in the BFI Film Classics Series, I would like to call attention to two not-so-recent books of the type *"the making of..."* Though the books in some ways are very alike - e.g. the organization of the material, with a chronological account of the making of the film from the original play (bought by Warner Bros) until the opening of the finished film, the later fate of the film, TV spin-offs, and a number of critics' analyses of the film - the two books complement each other rather nicely. Neither of the authors seems to know the other (or the other's project), and having drawn on the same sources, mainly the Warner Bros Archives at the University of Southern California, they inevitably overlap: the same story, the same anecdotes, and the same debunkable myths!

**The Script**

Among the many legends about *Casablanca* is the question of who wrote the script. In an article from 1973, screenwriter Howard Koch took credit for most of the script and was generally believed, but much of the raw material can be found in Murray Burnett & Joan Alison's play, *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, and that dozens of lines made the transition unchanged. Because of the **standard studio practice** of using multiple writers, four writers are responsible for the script: roughly speaking, Howard Koch's largest contribution (he was on the film for seven weeks) was in making the film more political and giving it weight and significance; the Epstein brothers (who worked for twelve weeks) gave the film its sparkling dialogue and wit, and, to further complicate things, besides the fact that several late drafts bear no writer credit, they rewrote each other's material, so "(w)ith delicate balance, Koch managed to hold down the gags while the Epsteins managed to cut the preaching"; [[1]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn1#fn1) and in between was Casey Robinson, Warner Bros' highest paid screenwriter, who took three weeks to straighten out the love story, changing the Ilsa character of the play from an American tramp into a romantic European heroine.

**Censorship and Casablanca**

Even - of all people - Joseph I. Breen, head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association, contributed *positively* to *Casablanca*. Regarding the scene in Rick's apartment in Casablanca, when Ilsa tries to get the exit visas, Breen suggested: "The present material seems to contain a suggestion of a sex affair which would be unacceptable if it came through in the finished picture. We believe this could possibly be corrected by replacing the fade out on page 135 with a dissolve, and shooting the succeeding scene without any sign of a bed or couch, or anything whatever suggestive of a sex affair."[[2]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn2#fn2)

Another persistent myth is that nobody knew how the film would end. Bergman said that when she asked the writers which man she would end up with, they answered that they had not decided yet. But Breen would never have allowed Ilsa to forsake her husband and stay with her lover, and due to the war (in mid-1942 the German armies were still victorious) Rick could never have been arrested or killed. The problem was simply how to make the ending work.

And when the shooting at the airport (on one of WB's stages) finished, there were still eleven days left, so Bergman knew exactly what Ilsa felt about the two men before she played several earlier scenes with Bogart and Henreid.

**Making The Movie**

*Casablanca* truly is "the most decisive exception to the auteur theory."because although Curtiz was the film’s director, Hal Wallis is conisered the film's true creator (if authorship is to be narrowed down to one person). Miller writes: "Of all the artists who helped create *Casablanca*, the one whose overall influence was the strongest was producer Hall Wallis."[[6]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn6#fn6) Harwitz writes: "Hal Wallis was the creative force behind *Casablanca*… It is impossible to read through the hundreds of memos Wallis sent and received without understanding how thoroughly he shaped the movie, from the quality of the lighting to the exact details of the costumes to his insistance on a live parrot outside the Blue Parrot Café."

Curtiz is portrayed in a poor light in the two books, especially in Harmetz's. He was respected much more for his professionalism than his artistic achievements (from 1927 to 1961 he directed 101 movies, sometimes five a year) but was apparently disliked or downright hated by most, except producers, who admired his workaholism, which he tried to force on everyone, sometimes causing actors and crew to stay on the set for seventeen hours a day. He had emigrated from Hungary in the late '20s, and even after thirty years in America, English was a foreign language to him. "He spoke five languages," says his stepson, "and I am told he spoke all of them equally bad."[[9]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn9#fn9)

One more brief delay was caused by Curtiz's mangled English. On the day he arrived to shoot the first Black Market scene, he informed the properties man, who already had assembled an impressive group of animals for the shot, that he needed a "poodle, a black poodle." The request seemed unusual, but the prop man was not about to argue with the temperamental director, so he set about finding the dog while everyone waited. As luck would have it, there was just such an animal available, and the man got it to the set within half an hour. "It's very nice, " said Curtiz, "but I want a poodle." When the poor technician tried to explain that that's what the dog was, Curtiz exploded: "I wanted a poodle in the street! A poodle of water! Not a goddamn dog!"[[10]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn10#fn10)

The other one goes: "Once, when viewing a marathon dance contest, John Barrymore reportedly turned to his date, who had just marvelled at the endurance of the contestants, and quipped, "That's nothing! Have you ever worked for Mike Curtiz?" [[11]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn11#fn11)

**Editing**

When editing the film, producer Hal Wallis fine-tuned the ending. He had four possibilities for the final line:[[3]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn3#fn3) 1) "Louis, I begin to see a reason for your sudden attack of patriotism. While you defend your country, you

also protect your investment."

2) "If you ever die a hero's death, Heaven protect the angels!"

3) "Louis, I might have known you'd mix your patriotism with a little larceny."

4) "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

Harmetz reproduces a memo to editor Owen Marks in which Wallis has narrowed the decision down to the last two choices, which he wants Owen to have Bogart speak - and the author of those lines was Wallis.[[4]](http://imv.au.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_14/section_1/artc9A.html" \l "fn4#fn4)

**The Government and Casablanca**

Though a print of the film was rushed to the American troops in North Africa, it was never shown. Robert Riskin, head of the motion-picture division of the overseas branch of the Office of War Information, withheld it "on the advice of several Frenchmen within our organization who feel that it was bound to create resentment on the part of the natives."

### Viewing: ‘You Must Remember This’

### (The Making of Casablanca)

**Take notes under the headings below.**

Head of Production: Wallis

Director: Curtiz

Relationships on set

The relationship between the ‘Big Five’

The contract system

Assembly Line Production

Censorship

Market demands

### Tasks:

### Relationships and Key Personnel.

### 1. Hal Wallis was the head of production at Warner Bros. He had a very hands-on approach to this production, and made decisions about who worked on the film, but went beyond this to changing dialogue and deciding on key scenes and events.

### There was conflict with the director, Michael Curtiz. In the readings you have been given, find an example of a conflict between Hal Wallis and Michael Curtiz. What was it, and what does that say about their relationship?

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### 2. Hal Wallis also chose the writers, but wasn’t above telling them what they should be writing. Give TWO examples of Hal Wallis’ involvement in the script.

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b) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Writing is a more collaborative effort than it sometimes seems. In Casablanca, the writers worked at the direction of Mr. Wallace and each contributed something to the plot. List the writers and their contribution to the story. If you can, list the special talent they bought to the studio.

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4. The contract system meant that studios were often using the stars they had available, but for Casablanca, the studios ‘swapped’ stars- who was swapped and what does this say about the relationship between the studios?

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5. Controls: Censorship.

The censor was concerned with the relationship between Ilsa and Rick.

* Who was he?
* What was his concern?
* What was his suggestion to fix it, and was it used?

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6. What does this tell you about the importance of the MPPDA?

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7. The War Office didn’t show Casablanca in one place. Where was it, and why?

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8. Who was the key force behind ‘Casablanca?’ What does this say about the auteur theory?

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### Section 5b

### Task: Key personnel and relationships in Casablanca

### Below is a model of key personnel and relationships for Casablanca. Complete the model. You should be adding in Who the person was, what they contributed to the story and any major communications issues involved in production.

**The Chief Executive Officer**

Name:

Role:

**Head of Production**

Composer

Writer No.1- The Epstein Brothers

Writer No.2-

Writer No. 3

Writer No. 1 Again…

Director

**Section 5c: Casablanca as Propaganda (impact of OWI)**

 Warner Brothers, released November 27, 1942.

[[](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/casbel.jpg)](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/casbel.jpg)*Casablanca* is one of the best films produced by the World War II Hollywood propaganda machine. One of the early war films, it represents the [Office of War Information's](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/hollywood3.html) (OWI) early intentions of truthfully representing the war and educating the moviegoer about the issues surrounding the conflict. The film addresses the intricacies of the Berlin-Vichy situation, and makes subtle references to Spain and Ethiopia. While the film often gets bogged down in it's attempts to accurately depict the war (did the average viewer truly understand the numerous allusions to the complicated issues of Ethiopia and Vichy France?), it is not lacking in propaganda. At the time *Casablanca* was made, the USA was not involved in World War II because they didn’t see what it had to do with them, and left Britain and her allies to fight Hitler alone. It wasn’t until the USA itself was attacked (Pearl Harbour) in 1943 that the USA joined the war effort. This was an unpopular move as Hitler was seen as a terrible threat to the USA.

*Casablanca* glorifies the heroism of the resistance movement. Many of the European countries invaded and occupied by Germany had a resistance movement to fight back- the most famous of which was the French Resistance Movement, which worked closely with Britain to rescue British pilots caught behind enemy lines and gather information about troop movements. In *Casablanca*, Humphrey Bogart stars as Rick, the tough, cynical owner of a glamerous nightclub in "neutral" Morocco, where thousands of refugees have fled Nazi brutality. Behind Bogart's cynical exterior is a man who used to care. Throughout the course of the film, Rick reveals that he has fought fascists in Ethiopia and Spain, and fled Paris in the face of German occupation (showing that he used to be involved in the war against fascism(Italy) and the Nazis (Germany). As the plot develops, Rick softens to the resistance cause once again, although he has asserted that he sticks his head out for no one. He eventually helps Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), the head of the Czechoslovakian resistance movement and the husband of Rick's former lover Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman), escape capture. Rick heroically sacrifices his chance to be reunited with Ilsa, giving Laszlo the two exit visas intended for Rick and Ilsa.

[[](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/casa2.jpg)](http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/st/~ksoroka/casa2.jpg)While the propaganda is much more subtle in *Casablanca* than in later war films, it is none the less prevelant. In one scene, the French refugees in Rick's bar sing "La Marseillaise" in defiance to the German soldiers singing "Horst Wessel". Rick's cynicism is due to broken love (not lack of political commitment), he stoicly forfeits a renewed chance at love, sacrificing his personal happiness for the resistance cause. The message is clear: resistance to the Axis powers is more important than personal happiness. In aiding the movement, Rick too becomes a hero. So shall the average citizen who puts the war effort ahead of his own interests.

In some ways, Casablanca is typical of war-time movies. It was considered unpatriotic by the Audience of the time to criticise the war effort. If you think of the Bush administration’s war on Afganistan and Iraq, and the deep divide between Pro and Anti war opinions today, you will understand how much a pro war message was the only possible market decision. The interesting thing about the War movies of WWII is that they do not idealise how hard this war will be, instead focusing on the need to fight evil- no matter what the personal sacrifice.

**Appendix 5.1: Timeline of ‘The Making of Casablanca’**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1940 | Burnett, collaborating with a friend, Joan Alison, used his Vienna experience as the basis for a play, *Everybody Comes to Rick's*. |
| December | Wallis had received the suggestion from script-reader Stephen Karnot: "A box-office nautral -- for Bogart, Cagney, or Raft in out-of-the-usual roles." And from fellow producer Jerry Wald: "This story should make a good vehicle for either Raft or Bogart.". |
| December 27, 1941 | Irene Lee, head of Warner Bros. story department, with Hal Wallis' approval, purchased *Everybody Comes to Rick's* for $20,000. |
| January, 1942 | A press release is issued, and Ronald Reagan is starring in the picture. |
| February 14, 1942 | Hal Wallis told casting director Steve Trilling that Bogart would star in *Casablanca* |
| February, 1942 | Wallis discussed the play with two of the studio's top writers, the Epstein twins, Julius and Phil |
| April | Epsteins gave Wallis the first third of the movie, Wallis immediately turned around and gave it to another writer, Howard Koch, for his suggestions, while having the Epsteins continue to work on Part II. |
| April 22 | Around this time, Ingrid Bergman is told that she has the role of Ilsa. |
|  | Michael Curtiz is named director. His movies were ‘brought in on time, they rarely went over budget, and they almost always made money." |
| May 20, 1942 | Robinson(screenwriter) sent Wallis seven pages of notes. They began: "Again, as before, my impression about CASABLANCA is that the melodrama is well done, the humor excellent, but the love story deficient." |
| May 25, 1942 | Production of Casablanca commenced |
| July 6, 1942 | In a memo to Curtiz, Wallis expresses his frustration about the ending as “It was practically impossible to write a convincing scene between the two people in which Rick could sell Ilsa on the idea of leaving without him.” |
|  | Problems between Curtiz and Wallis regarding changes made during filming. |
| July 22, 1942 | last day of regular shooting |
|  | When editing the film, producer Hal Wallis fine-tuned the ending, and wrote the final line. |
|  | Composer Max Steiner tries to change the theme song, but can’t because Ingrid Bergman couldn’t re-film the scenes |
| 1942 | The film opened in one New York theatre on Thanksgiving Day |
| 1943. | general release January, |

**Section 6: The Assessment**

The examination has two **essay** questions, which require you to show both your understanding of the industry and how it functioned.

The marking criteria distinguishes between ‘Describe’, ‘Explain’ and ‘Analyse’. Check out the difference in your handouts.

**Your Assessment is to write TWO essay answers, each 600 words long. You will have two class periods on essay writing and planning of this essay.**

**Media Industry: The Hollywood Studio System 1930-1948**

**Probable Questions:**

**Question One:**

**Analyse how the media industry is organised and controlled.**

**Organisation**

The Studio Organisation: The Big Five, the Little Three and Poverty Row…

The system and its role in controlling the industry

e.g. Vertical Integration; Block Booking …

**Controls**

Internal Controls- mention as many as you can remember, but focus on censorship.

External Controls- Government Essential Industry and market demands (Genre)

Use Casablanca for examples to support what you are saying.

**Question Two**

**Analyse the roles and relationships of THREE key personnel within your specific media industry.**

Explain that the production process was ran like an assembly line, with each stage supposed to be independent, but that this didn’t always work in practise.

**The Studio Head**

* Who he was, what he did and his responsibilities.

**The Head of Production**

* Who he was, what he did and his responsibilities.
* Mention Hal Wallis and his extraordinary involvement in ‘Casablanca’ and his conflict with the director. This shows that the Head of Production could be extremely involved in some films.

**The Director**

- Who he was, what he did and his responsibilities.

**The Chief Censor**

- Who he was, what he did and his responsibilities. Mention his direct interference with ‘Casablanca’ to show his power- he said ‘make sure there’s no suggestion that they went to bed together.’

REMEMBER- Write what the role was supposed to be- a ‘job description’, and then use Casablanca to show the differences between the model and the ‘real world.’ You can talk about the personalities involved if you feel comfortable doing so.

Remember that ‘ANALYSE’ means to show that you have THOUGHT about the theory (How it should work), the application (How it does work) and developed some ideas about the differences. An evaluation (how well does it work) of the process itself may be useful.

GOOD LUCK!!!

# Appendix 5.1 The Studio System and Casablanca

# Whenever people think of Casablanca, they think of it as being a ‘great’ movie- a classic, but it never was intended to be anything special at all- it was a complete coincidence, really. When ‘Casablanca’ was made, it was made as one small movie in several hundred. The studio that made it cast every member in it, not because they were suitable, but because they were available in the week that ‘Casablanca’ started shooting.

Casablanca is commonly voted one of the greatest movies of all time, due to it’s timeless tale of lost love, growing war and ‘beautiful’ friendships.

In the film, Casablanca is a place in Morocco, part of unoccupied France, where refugees frantically try to escape the Nazi threat, and opportunists seek to profit from their despair. Lucily for the producers, a few days before the release of the film, in 1942, the Allied forces had landed in Casablanca, ensuring a hit movie. The movie went on to get an Oscar for best picture in 1943.

That great movies came from the studio system was a miracle, but they did come. As the studios aimed to produce 52 movies a year (a new movie every week) by making movies like a production line, profit, not artistic integrity was their aim. The veteran screenwriter Julius Epstein said ‘It was not called the motion picture industry for nothing. It was like working at belts in a factory.’ The studios assigned the ‘B’ grade movies to house directors (under long term contracts) who were to make films quickly, cheaply and with little outside resources.

This affected Casablanca as the script wasn’t finished when production started. Ingrid Bergman wasn’t sure who Ilsa would end up with, and Michael Curtiz, the director told her to ‘play it in between’ Rick and Lazlo. Even the ending had to be changed, as after test screening, it didn’t work. This led to the addition of the immortal line Rick says to Captain Renault, “ Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”

The censorship system that ruled had even altered the dialogue of the film. Improper sexual comment was not permitted, along with some of the humour . One censored line was a woman who was to have said: "It used to take a villa at Cannes, or at the very least, a string of pearls. Now all I ask is an exit visa."

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**Appendix 5.2: Casablanca (1942) from Johnny Web (abbreviated text)**

**The film**

"You must remember this ..."

I have read innumerable books about the mood of America during World War 2. But when you really come down to it, it doesn't matter how much education you have, how much you've thought about this matter, or how interested you are. In your heart, you know how America viewed itself at the time if you've seen Casablanca.

Casablanca's Rick Blaine was more than a character. He was America. He speaks to us now across the generations, because our self-image has not changed so dramatically, and Rick is that mythological view which we Americans hold of ourselves. On the outside we are reluctant to fight, cynical, tough, uninvolved, fiercely individualistic, and not a little bit bitter. On the inside we are capable of great sacrifice, compassionate, idealistic, and savage when aroused. As Americans see ourselves, we feel free to make fun of lunatic Frenchmen with their prissy, artificial manners, but if they need us, we're there.

Is that accurate? Probably not, but that's immaterial. It's how we saw ourselves then, and how we see ourselves still, right or wrong.

Because it taps so deeply into the American male mythos, Casablanca is probably the "favorite" of more American men than any other film, and it is as popular with film scholars as it is with average viewers. It was popular in its own time as well. It won the best picture Oscar and, unlike many "great" pictures, was a solid box-office success. It had the third-highest box office total of all the Warner Brothers movies made during wartime, grossing six million dollars. To put that into modern perspective, 25 million people saw the film it an era when the population of the country was much smaller, making it the equivalent of a $200 million blockbuster in today's dollars.

It is also possible to argue that this film is not just a popular entertainment, but is at or near the summit of cinema's artistic achievements, given Tolstoy's definition of art as "deep, creative communication of feelings," yet it was never intended to be art at all. At the time it was viewed as "just another movie" (Lauren Bacall's words) made under the old studio system, created simply to make

a buck. Unlike most enduring works, it was a group project, with no single passionate visionary behind it.

You might wonder, "What about the director?", but such a thought is generated by inappropriately projecting today's moviemaking process into the past. Directors simply weren't as important in those days. Mike Curtiz was a solid director, but he was just a studio employee on a weekly salary, and was considered a hired hand. Directors were held in such low esteem by the studios that Curtiz's entire paycheck was once withheld because he made $27 in personal phone calls on the Warner telephones. He was assigned to direct the Casablanca script because his schedule happened to be clear when William Wyler turned the project down. Even after the project got under way, Curtiz had minimal control by today's standards. He didn't even get to choose the key members of his crew. He hated the man who was assigned to be his sound editor, but had to accept him anyway. He asked for one editor, and was assigned another. He used the cinematographer the studio told him to use. The cinematographer and editor were chosen, like Curtiz, simply because they happened to be free the week Casablanca started shooting.

Curtiz had no input on the script either. That would have been unthinkable in those days. He never even saw the script until shortly before it was time to start filming. At Warner Brothers, directors directed and writers wrote, and they both reported to the producer. It was producer Hal Wallis who controlled the writing teams and held final script approval. He began by buying an unproduced stage play. Three weeks after Pearl Harbor, Wallis authorized Irene Lee, head of Warner's story department, to pay $20,000 for the rights to Everybody Comes to Rick's. That play might have stayed on the Warner back burner if America had stayed officially neutral, but the bombs falling on Hawaii meant that the overseas war was now America's war, and that fact gave the project a new urgency. What had been an exotic tale of foreign intrigue now seemed to Wallis like a stirring example of how America could do the right thing when necessary.

That obscure play was only the beginning. It was rewritten innumerable times, eventually involving seven different writers. The final Casablanca script was the result of an unlikely serendipity - it was a thoroughbred horse somehow designed by a committee. Of course, every major character who ended up in the movie was already in the stage play, and every major plot development had already been present. There was even a black pianist who played "As Time Goes By." The true genius, however, was in the refinement. In the stage version, Ilsa was a sophisticated but emasculating American slut (named Lois) who lost Rick when she cheated on him casually, and then later cheated on Victor with Rick. That amorality wasn't going to fly in the Hollywood of the 1940s. The character of Rick Blaine in the play had been a self-pitying lawyer who screwed up his marriage by cheating on his wife. That obviously wasn't Bogart's screen persona, but Bogart had been cast before the first word of the film script had been written, so the first team of studio writers, twin brothers Julius and Phil Epstein, rewrote the character to suit Bogie. Julius said, "Once we knew Bogart was going to play the role ... we tried to make him as cynical as possible." They did a helluva job. What really makes Casablanca work perfectly is the Epstein's dark comedy, which gives us permission to accept the film's sentimentality, and keeps the attitudes timeless. The bantering between caustic Rick Blaine and the garrulous, shallow, womanizing, but somehow loveable French Vichy administrator still seems brilliant today.

Rick's love for Ilsa is hidden beneath a veil of cynicism and some very real pain:

When it comes to understanding the America of wartime, some people come to libraries to learn from books. Some people come to the last remaining elders who remember those days.

But everybody comes to Rick's.

And, of course, the most famous exchange between Louis and Rick, Louis's words after Rick has gunned down Major Strasser:

Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.