American Dream

TASK: write a c.500-word evaluation of **one** film/TV show and **one** book (can be fiction or non-fiction)

**Film and TV**

**The Great Gatsby (2013)** - Provides a look into the Roaring Twenties, exploring themes of wealth, excess, and the American Dream.

**Selma (2014)** - Focuses on the 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights marches led by Martin Luther King Jr., highlighting the Civil Rights Movement.

**Hidden Figures (2016)** - Tells the story of African-American female mathematicians who worked at NASA during the Space Race in the 1960s, highlighting issues of race and gender.

**13th (2016)** - A documentary exploring the intersection of race, justice, and mass incarceration in the United States, tracing the history from the 13th Amendment to the present day.

**All the President's Men (1976)** - Follows the investigative journalism of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein as they uncover the Watergate scandal, providing insight into political corruption in the 1970s.

**Malcolm X (1992)** - Biographical film about the life of civil rights leader Malcolm X, covering his transformation from petty criminal to influential activist.

**Good Night, and Good Luck (2005)** - Chronicles journalist Edward R. Murrow's stand against Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist witch hunts in the 1950s, focusing on media and political climate.

**The Butler (2013)** – Loosely based on the real story of an African-American butler serving at the White House, the film provides an overview of 8 different presidential administrations’ attitude to civil rights.

**Milk (2008)** - Biographical film about Harvey Milk, the first openly gay person elected to public office in California, exploring LGBT rights and activism in the 1970s.

**American Graffiti (1973)** - Offers a nostalgic look at teenage life in the early 1960s, capturing the culture and music of the era

**Fiction**

**To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee - A classic novel that explores racial injustice in the American South during the 1930s, through the eyes of Scout Finch, a young girl whose father defends a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman.

**The Grapes of Wrath** by John Steinbeck - Set during the Great Depression, this novel follows the Joad family as they migrate from Oklahoma to California in search of a better life, highlighting the struggles of migrant workers and economic hardship.

**The Great Gatsby** by F. Scott Fitzgerald - A portrayal of the Jazz Age in the 1920s, focusing on themes of wealth, excess, and the American Dream through the eyes of narrator Nick Carraway and the mysterious Jay Gatsby.

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry** by Mildred D. Taylor - Set in Mississippi during the Great Depression, this novel follows the Logan family, African-American landowners facing racism and injustice, as seen through the eyes of their daughter Cassie

**Advise and Consent** by Allen Drury - A political novel that delves into the behind-the-scenes maneuverings of U.S. Senators during the confirmation process of a controversial Secretary of State nominee. It offers insights into political intrigue and power struggles in Washington, D.C. during the Cold War era

**The Catcher in the Rye** by J.D. Salinger - A classic novel that explores the disillusionment and angst of teenage protagonist Holden Caulfield in post-World War II America, addressing themes of identity, alienation, and societal expectations.

**The Joy Luck Club** by Amy Tan - A novel that follows the lives of four Chinese-American immigrant families in San Francisco who start a club called the Joy Luck Club. Through their stories, it explores themes of cultural identity, generational conflict, and the immigrant experience.

**Non-Fiction**

**"A People's History of the United States" by Howard Zinn** - This book offers a different perspective on American history, focusing on the experiences of ordinary people, marginalized groups, and social movements throughout the 20th century.

**"Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement" by Ann Bausum** - Focuses on the Freedom Rides of 1961, telling the stories of activists who challenged segregation and contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.

**"The Feminine Mystique" by Betty Friedan** - A seminal work of feminist literature that critiques the traditional roles of women in American society and helped spark the second-wave feminist movement in the 1960s.

**"The Great Depression: A Diary" by Benjamin Roth, edited by James Ledbetter** - A collection of diary entries from a lawyer who lived through the Great Depression, offering a firsthand account of its impact on everyday Americans.

**This list is not exhaustive! In terms of popular culture, this is probably one of the most well-resourced topics you could hope to study, so if you would like to find your own, then please do!**