



EXPOSE. ENGAGE. INSPIRE.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OVERVIEW & FAQ

REACT to FILM's Middle & High School Education Program provides curricula for a full year or semester-long **media literacy** and **civic engagement elective course**. The course is built around social-issue based documentary films, action campaigns, and thorough lessons on bias and media studies. At schools across the country, the educational program exposes students to film as a way of learning about a social issue, engages them in a critical conversation, and inspires them to take tangible action within their communities.

The hosting school provides an instructor who can work collaboratively with the REACT to FILM team to gear the curriculum to fit within its school culture. REACT to FILM is best suited as a **credit-bearing elective course**, to ensure that both the instructor and students respond to our social-issue focused **curriculum** with the rigor it requires.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why film?

Students (and most adults too!) are so immersed in visual media all the time. We are in an era where media literacy - thinking critically about what we consume and learning how to dissect and understand the messages coming to us - is a critically important skill to have. Furthermore, young people nearly universally love watching shows and movies, so film offers a way to engage students intellectually and socially in a media platform that they are already really excited about.

Why civic engagement?

In order for students to be well equipped to be global citizens of the 21st century they need to be engaged in dialogue about current social issues and thinking about how they can be part of the solution to the problems that affect their communities. Students are already talking about gender roles, gun violence, race relations, environmental degradation; it is our role as educators to make pedagogy relevant and challenging and to incubate those conversations in the classroom. Our curricular materials equip students with the civics toolkit to participate effectively in their democracy, to think creatively about solutions and to articulate their opinions on matters of civic importance.

How is the curriculum structured? What are some of the components of the curriculum?

Our curriculum is flexible in terms of space and time allotted, but the structure remains constant throughout all of the REACT to FILM units. First students learn about film elements and bias, and then they examine each of our films in the following ways:

1. Understanding the Issue
2. Active Viewing
3. Events, Concepts, and Terms
3. Reaction Activities
4. Classroom to Community
5. Critical Thinking Essays
6. Action Steps

Are there forms of assessment built into the curriculum?

In addition to the outlined components, each of the film units contains multiple forms of assessment, both formal and informal. We also provide grading rubrics for different assessments.

How does the course build upon skills learned in each successive film?

As students move their way through the course, the units are strategically designed to build upon one another, requiring students to use their newly attained skill-set to analyze each film and examine the issues surrounding the topic of the film. What makes REACT to FILM unique is that as each unit progresses, students are tasked with more responsibility for guiding discussions and for taking the lead in forming their reactions to each film, through writing and through a variety of interactive tasks.

Who will teach this class?

This course will be taught by one or more teachers from your school. English, Social Studies, and Film or Media teachers are most frequently appointed to the role. During the initial training, this teacher or group of teachers would work with the REACT to FILM staff to help map out the film sequence for the semester and plan initial classroom orientation activities. If you do not have staff available, and do have the budget to hire an external teacher, RtF may be able to find and train a teacher for you on a case-by-case basis.

How does this help improve students' social skills?

Students have so many opportunities to speak during the course, either with a partner, with a small group, or to the whole class. Communication skills are built through the various exercises and students often report a boost in confidence after having taken the REACT to FILM course.

How does this course lend itself to English Language Learners, students with Individualized Educational Plans, and students who struggle academically?

This course gives students who may feel lost or inadequate in other settings, the chance to feel confident. By utilizing film as the key content for each unit, students who are visual and auditory learners, and who have an aptitude for understanding electronic media, will have a chance to contribute more meaningfully in the classroom in ways they hadn't had previously. Through REACT to FILM, those students are able to grasp the content, and feel a valued member of the class during activities, discussions, and assignments that follow.

Is there a college connection?

Yes! REACT to FILM's College Action Network spans about three-dozen campuses across the country. REACT to FILM student chapter leaders host screenings of social issue-based documentaries on their campuses. REACT to FILM will help schedule visits to the classroom from a college student mentor and/or class trips to the campus to attend and participate in events. Also, when high school students graduate the REACT to FILM course and attend college, they will have the opportunity to join or start a chapter.

Is training provided?

Yes! REACT to FILM conducts an initial training in-person or via webinar to familiarize teachers with the components of the curriculum and also answer any questions teachers might have regarding implementation. Additionally, REACT to FILM provides an online platform for collaboration where a variety of REACT to FILM schools can discuss best practices, and share ideas. The REACT to FILM education team is also available to assist at any time during the semester to answer questions or provide support when needed. If your school would like additional Professional Development from REACT to FILM, we can discuss an add-on that would provide more frequent hands-on support to the teachers throughout the year.

What is RTF 2.0?

REACT to FILM 2.0: Filmmaking for Social Change is a production course designed to empower students to take theory to action. In this course, students work in small groups to research, plan, shoot, edit, produce and distribute their own short documentaries about a social issue of their choice. RTF 2.0 will take students' understanding a step further by showing them how to create their own documentary films, with a strategic objective of using that film for civic engagement. RTF's core Media Impact and Social Empowerment 1.0 course is a pre-requisite to RTF 2.0.

Which schools are currently participating in REACT to FILM?

We have over 30 school partners, and are currently reaching NY, NJ, PA, CT, IL, DC, TX, WI, and CA. We work primarily with public schools and are split roughly 50/50 between public charters and traditional public schools. We are open to collaborating with independent schools as well. Some of our schools include Democracy Prep, Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School, Achievement First Hartford High School, Humanities Prep, Schurz High School, and Perspectives Leadership Academy.

What are the steps to sign up?

1. Schedule a call or meeting with REACT to FILM to express your interest and determine logistics.
2. REACT to FILM will send you a contract to sign and return.
3. We will square away billing.
4. You will connect REACT to FILM to the teacher(s) who will be teaching the course, so that we can schedule PD and determine course layout.
5. We will ship DVDs and share electronic course resources.

Contact Info

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