

“Salvador” an Oliver Stone film (LRC code 2419)

Characters/themes:

Richard Boyle (James Woods) -US reporter

“Major Max” is the historical Col. Roberto D’Aubusson (“Major Bob”, as his US counterparts call him.)

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Kelley is the historical Ambassador White.

“Fourteen Families” the landowning elite of El Salvador

FMLN- the “guerrillas” that have set out to bring down the U.S. supported military dictatorship (stands for Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation)

U.S. Col. Bentley Hyde- American military “advisor”

Jack, US-AID officer (United States Agency for International Development, it’s based out of the State Department. One of its mandates is explaining American policy to the rest of the world.)

Liberation Theology- the movement within the Catholic Church, 1960’s forward, that argued that the church should identify with the poor (not ally itself with the rich and perpetuate the “status quo”) and join them in their struggle to achieve social justice.

Exemplified by Salvadoran Archbishop Arnulfo Romero. (See also film: “Romero”, [3701])

Themes the film explores and that you will **thoughtfully respond to in writing**.

1. The sources and repercussions of class conflict. Given the Salvadoran (and Guatemalan, and Mexican, and Cuban...) context, what do make of Mao Tse-Tung’s dictum: “If historical debts are left unpaid, the anger of the masses will not be appeased”?

2. The role and consequences of the military in politics (formal and informal involvement).

3. The role of journalism and the ways journalists represent and misrepresent events. ? I.e. peasant rebellions or “outside agitators”? Then, what are the consequences of getting the stories right, or getting them wrong?

4. “Communism” and the influence of the Cold War (the role of the U.S. in this part of the world)

5. The role of the church. Specifically, Archbishop Romero, the Jesuit priests, and the nuns who had embraced Liberation Theology.

6. Given what you know about El Salvador at the end of the 19th century and the 20th century, in what ways was Walter Lafeber right when he said that in nations like this one “Revolutions are Inevitable”?