

2-4-2019

Kanopy Curates Black History Month Film List

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MONDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2019

Kanopy Curates Black History Month Film List

By Maureen Schlangen

With the University Libraries' subscription to Kanopy, an on-demand streaming video service for public libraries and educational institutions, people at UD have access to a large collection of films, independent productions and documentaries. In honor of Black History Month, Kanopy has curated [a list of 69 works](#) that highlight African-American art, history, intellectual contributions and current events.

The following is a sampling of titles in the collection, which spans more than 50 years. To view these or other films on Kanopy, sign in at <https://udayton.kanopy.com/> with your University credentials.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CINEMA

Moonlight (2016): Winner of an Oscar for Best Picture, *Moonlight* is a moving and transcendent look at three defining chapters in the life of Chiron, a young man growing up in Miami. His epic journey to adulthood as a shy outsider dealing with difficult circumstances is guided by support, empathy and love from the most unexpected places.

Personal Problems, Part 1 (1980): This ensemble drama, conceived and produced entirely by African-American artists, is the result of a collaboration between writer Ishmael Reed and filmmaker Bill Gunn, who wrote and directed the underground classic *Ganja & Hess* and wrote the screenplay for Hal Ashby's *The Landlord*. Originally intended to air on public television in 1980, it went unseen for many years; the original tapes have been carefully restored by Kino Lorber, and the film is now available in its full-length version for the first time in decades.

Ganja & Hess (1973): Flirting with the conventions of blaxploitation and the horror cinema, this revolutionary

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independent film is a highly stylized and utterly original treatise on sex, religion, and African-American identity. Duane Jones stars as anthropologist Hess Green, who is stabbed with an ancient ceremonial dagger by his unstable assistant, endowing him with the blessing of immortality and the curse of an unquenchable thirst for blood. When the assistant's beautiful and outspoken wife Ganja (Marlene Clark) comes searching for her vanished husband, she and Hess form an unexpected partnership. Together, they explore just how much power there is in the blood. This edition represents the original release, restored by the Museum of Modern Art with support from the Film Foundation.

HISTORY

Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (2017): Black colleges and universities are a haven for black intellectuals, artists and revolutionaries and have educated the architects of freedom movements and cultivated leaders in every field. This PBS documentary examines the impact these institutions have had on American history, culture, and national identity.

I Am Not Your Negro: James Baldwin and Race in America (2016): This Oscar-nominated documentary narrated by Samuel L. Jackson explores the peril America faces from institutionalized racism. In 1979, James Baldwin wrote a letter to his literary agent describing his next project, *Remember This House*. The book was to be a revolutionary, personal account of the lives and assassinations of three of his close friends — Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. At the time of Baldwin's death in 1987, he left behind only 30 completed pages of his manuscript. In this new documentary, filmmaker Raoul Peck envisions the book James Baldwin never finished. The result is a radical, up-to-the-minute examination of race in America, using Baldwin's original words and flood of rich archival material.

Freedom Summer (2014): In the hot and deadly summer of 1964, the nation could not turn away from Mississippi. This PBS *American Experience* documentary details the 10 memorable weeks known as Freedom Summer, in which more than 700 student volunteers joined with organizers and local African-Americans in a historic effort to shatter the foundations of white supremacy in one of the nation's most segregated states — even in the face of intimidation, physical violence and death.

MAJOR FIGURES

King: A Filmed Record Part 1 (Video 1 of playlist "King: A Filmed Record ... Montgomery To Memphis") (1970): Constructed from a wealth of archival footage, this monumental documentary follows Martin Luther King Jr. from 1955 to 1968 in his rise from regional activist to world-renowned leader of the civil rights movement. Rare footage of King's speeches, protests and arrests are interspersed with scenes of other high-profile supporters and opponents of the cause, punctuated by heartfelt testimonials by some of Hollywood's biggest stars.

Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise (2017): Distinctly referred to as "a redwood tree, with deep roots in American culture," Maya Angelou (1928-2014) led a prolific life. As a singer, dancer, activist, poet and writer, she inspired generations with lyrical modern African-American thought that pushed boundaries. Best known for her autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, she gave people the freedom to think about their history in a way they never had before.

Anita: Speaking Truth to Power (2013): Against a backdrop of sex, politics and race, *Anita* reveals the intimate story of a woman who spoke truth to power. An entire country watched as Anita Hill sat before a Senate committee of 14 white men and with a clear, unwavering voice recounted the repeated acts of sexual harassment she had endured while working with U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. Hill's graphic testimony was a turning point for gender equality in the United States and ignited a political

firestorm about sexual harassment and power in the workplace that resonates still today.

CURRENT EVENTS

Milwaukee 53206: America's Mass Incarceration

Crisis (2016): The United States has the most prisoners of any nation in the world both in raw numbers and by percentage of the population. These numbers are further compounded within Milwaukee's mostly African-American 53206 ZIP code, where 62 percent of adult men have spent time in prison. Through the intimate stories of three residents, this film examines how decades of poverty, unemployment and a lack of opportunity have contributed to the crisis of mass incarceration. Winner of Best Documentary at the Urbanworld Film Festival and the Media for a Just Society Award of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

America After Charleston (2015): This PBS town hall meeting, moderated by Gwen Ifill, explores issues around race relations that came to the fore during the tense few months following a white gunman's massacre of nine African-American parishioners in Charleston, South Carolina, and the removal of the Confederate flag from the state capitol grounds that followed.

Quest: An Intimate Portrait of an American Family (2017): This *New York Times* Critics' Pick is a moving portrait of the Rainey family in North Philadelphia. Beginning at the dawn of the Obama presidency, Christopher "Quest" Rainey and his wife, Christine's "Ma Quest," raise a family while nurturing a community of hip-hop artists in their home music studio. It's a safe space where all are welcome, but this creative sanctuary can't always shield them from the strife that grips their neighborhood.

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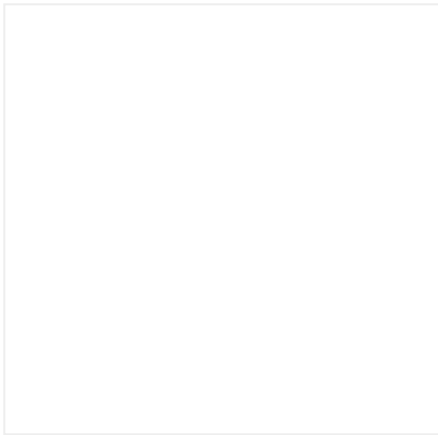
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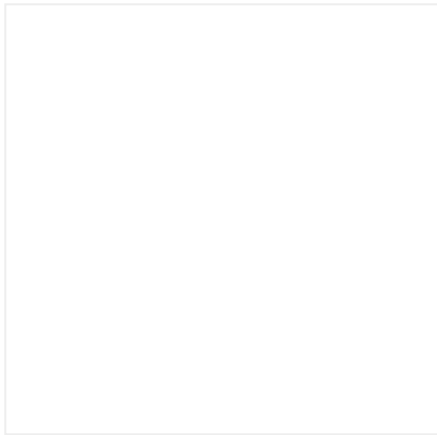
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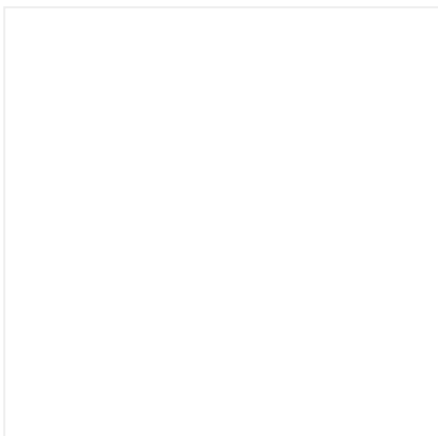
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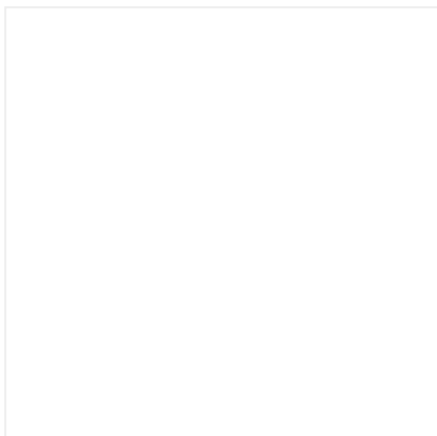
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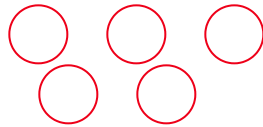
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