

Movies with Psychological Themes

Some of these movies are R rated. You are responsible for checking and then getting your parent's permission.

I compiled this list over the years from various sources. I have put an * in front of those I have seen and therefore recommend. Some are upsetting. "Clockwork Orange," for example, I found too violent and upsetting to watch again. Those I haven't seen have been recommended by other students or simply sound good. I would appreciate suggestions for additions. Older movies are in black and white. This list would benefit from editing, but I ran out of time. Many were nominated for or won Oscars, but that is not always noted.

***12 Angry Men** –PG 13 1957 (Henry Fonda, among others) Group decision making. Jury deliberating murder case. Excellent but slow by today's standards. "... focuses on the lonely one-man battles of a protagonist whose ethics alienate him from the rest of jaded society." "Still, it's Lumet's claustrophobic direction--all sweaty close-ups and cramped compositions within a one-room setting--that really transforms this contrived story into an explosive and compelling nail-biter."

***2001: A Space Odyssey**, - G- 1968 mankind, evolution, human nature, computers, intelligence, space travel. "When Stanley Kubrick recruited Arthur C. Clarke to collaborate on "the proverbial intelligent science fiction film," it's a safe bet neither the maverick auteur nor the great science fiction writer knew they would virtually redefine the parameters of the cinema experience. A daring experiment in unconventional narrative inspired by Clarke's short story "The Sentinel," 2001 is a visual tone poem (barely 40 minutes of dialogue in a 139-minute film) that charts a phenomenal history of human evolution." Dated, but very good

***A Beautiful Mind** – PG-13 -2001 the story of John Nash and his schizophrenia. Although not completely true to his life, all agree it presents schizophrenia well. It won four Oscars for 2001. " *A Beautiful Mind* manages to twist enough pathos out of John Nash's incredible life story to redeem an at-times goofy portrayal of schizophrenia. Russell Crowe tackles the role with characteristic fervor, playing the Nobel prize-winning mathematician from his days at Princeton, where he developed a groundbreaking economic theory, to his meteoric rise to the cover of *Forbes* magazine and an MIT professorship, and on through to his eventual dismissal due to schizophrenic delusions."

***A Clockwork Orange** -R-1972- is excellent for demonstrating conditioning principles, Radical Behaviorism-Very Violent and upsetting. "...are disturbing in their display of sheer nihilism." Stanley Kubrick's striking visual interpretation of Anthony Burgess's famous novel is a masterpiece. Malcolm McDowell delivers a clever, tongue-in-cheek performance as Alex, the leader of a quartet of droogs, a vicious group of young hoodlums who spend their nights stealing cars, fighting rival gangs, breaking into people's homes, and raping women."*

***American Beauty** -R- 1999- mid-life crisis, family, gays, sexuality -Best Picture Oscar (and others) 1999, " Spacey is Lester Burnham, a harried Everyman whose midlife awakening is the spine of the story, and his very first lines hook us with their teasing fatalism", "generic lines and keep us off balance, winking seamlessly from dark, scabrous comedy to deeply moving drama. The Burnham family joins the cinematic short list of great dysfunctional American families, as Lester is pitted against his manic, materialistic realtor wife, Carolyn (Annette Bening, making the most of a mostly unsympathetic role) and his sullen, contemptuous teenaged daughter, Jane (Thora Birch, utterly convincing in her edgy balance of self-absorption and wistful longing). Into their lives come two catalytic outsiders."*

An Angel At My Table" –R - 1990 the life story of Janet Frame, a writer from New Zealand. The film traces her personal development and evolution as a writer from early childhood to adulthood, and documents her struggles to overcome a series of personal (erroneously

diagnosed as psychotic, subjected to shock treatments) and family (two sisters died in drowning accidents) tragedies. It doesn't lay out the life story in a neat package with a beginning, middle, and end. Rather, it consists of a series of vignettes upon which the students must impose a storyline or "script." - about 3 hours.

And the Band Played On PG-13, 1993 (HBO)- "Story of the discovery of the AIDS virus. From the early days in 1978 when numerous San Francisco gays began dying from unknown causes ..." "A superior, made-for-cable film, this Home Box Office adaptation of Randy Shilts's chronicle detailing the emergence of AIDS in America and the fight against bureaucracy and society for a cure is a taut, outrageous, and affecting true-life drama."*

***Any Given Sunday** – R – 1999- football, coaching, performance, groups "*Any Given Sunday*, Oliver Stone's salute-cum-exposé of pro football, belabors some pretty obvious points for nigh onto three hours; but between the frenetic editing, the pounding rap-music beats, and several flashy performances, it's certainly never dull."*

***As Good as it Gets** – PG-13-1997- obsessive compulsive disorder Best Actor and Best Actress Oscars, "For all of its conventional plotting about an obsessive-compulsive curmudgeon (Jack Nicholson) who improves his personality at the urging of his gay neighbor (Greg Kinnear) and a waitress (Helen Hunt) who inspires his best behavior, this is one of the sharpest Hollywood comedies of the 1990s."*

***A Trip to Bountiful** –PG- 1986 a gentle movie - incredible for aging and growing older, ""The Trip To Bountiful" is one of the best films released in 1985. It explores an elderly woman held "captive" by her daughter-in-law who treats her like a child. As her heart condition worsens, her yearning to return to her long-lost town, Bountiful, becomes stronger. Throughout her journey, she feels increasing peace and harmony with nature and within herself. Many twists and turns occur throughout her vacation that keeps the audience interested."* Oscar for Best Actress

***Awakenings** -PG-13 - 1990 It's about a neurologist who discovers that giving a dopamine agonist to some catatonic patients brings them out of their catatonic state. Robin Williams stars as the neurologist Oliver Sacks. (The movie is based on Sacks' book of the same title.) - hope and despair in finding treatments for mental illness, psychobiology.

***Away from Her** (2007) PG-13 "I'm going," says a lovely, understated Julie Christie, in a heart-wrenching moment of recognition that Alzheimer's is slowly descending on her. "But I'm not gone." *Away from Her*, ..allows two themes--the growth of love, and the limits of the mind--to intertwine, uplift, fall, and rise again, throughout its arc. Oscar Nomination - Best Actress

***Being John Malkovich** -R-1999 While too many movies suffer the fate of creative bankruptcy, *Being John Malkovich* is a refreshing study in contrast, so bracingly original... dares to ponder the existential dilemma of a forlorn puppeteer (John Cusack) who discovers a metaphysical portal into the brain of actor John Malkovich.

***Bowling for Columbine** -R-2002 Michael Moore's scathing look at American society. He focuses especially on our violent solution and the marketing of fear. In places it is a little uneven, but is very thought provoking. Oscar for best documentary of 2002.

Boys Don't Cry-R- 1999 deals with extreme homophobia, cross-dressing, lesbianism, " When Brandon Teena, a young man with an infectious, aw-shucks grin and an angelic face that's all angles, wanders into Falls City, Nebraska, he takes to the town like it's a second skin. In little time he's fallen in with a gang of goofy if temperamental redneck boys, found himself a girlfriend, and befriended enough people to form something of a small family. In fact, it's the best time Brandon's ever had. However, there are shadows looming over Brandon's life: a court date for grand theft auto, a checkered criminal record, and a seemingly innocuous speeding ticket that could prove to be his undoing. Why? Because as it turns out, Brandon Teena is

actually Teena Brandon, a woman masquerading as a man" Horrible, violent outcome. Based on a true story. Well done.

Boyz 'N the Hood –R- 1991 - groups, gangs, racial tension, " Tre Styles, a teenager growing up in South Central Los Angeles. His father, Furious (Fishburne), is divorced and living away from Tre and his mother (Basset), but he's still involved in Tre's upbringing, teaching him the values of right and wrong and responsibility. Meanwhile, Tre's childhood buddies Ricky (Morris Chestnut) and Doughboy (Ice Cube) are living their lives in terms of the epidemic of violence and poverty that has plagued their neighborhood."

***Breakfast Club, The** -R-1985- teen classic adolescence and rebellion- Forced to spend a Saturday detention in school, five disparate high school kids find that they have more in common than they ever realized.

***Burnt by the Sun** R 1994 Russian with English subtitles. 1994 Oscar Best Foreign Film. "Russian filmmaker Nikita Mikhalkov is also the star of this tragic 1994 drama about the last happy season in the life of a Bolshevik hero's family. The year is 1936, and Stalin's purges are in full swing. Despite his reputation and revolutionary record, Sergei Kotov (Mikhalkov) seems to be on the dictator's hit list, as indicated by the insulting arrival of his wife's former lover, an agent of government police. Mikhalkov treats all this as a matter of personal and political intrigue dropping like rotting fruit in the middle of a sunny and loving period for the Kotov clan. The director ingeniously understates the mounting threat until one begins to realize that the Kotovs are only geographically distant from the long, bloody reach of Stalin. By the time we do realize it, the shock of change is almost unbearable. A very fine movie all around, though Mikhalkov's touches of magic realism (particularly the presence of a golden orb that keeps popping into the action) are distracting and a subject of controversy among viewers. --Tom Keog" *Amazon.com*

***Clean Shaven**-Unrated- 1995. What is it like to be schizophrenic? A dark, unsettling film. " A story of a schizophrenic man's desperate search for his young daughter." "Sometimes it is rather difficult to watch it, because of the breathtaking atmosphere, and some scenes are really gory. But it is one of the only films where you really get INTO the head of a schizophrenic, and it's frightening."

***The Counterfeiters** 2007 R A deft blend of suspense and docudrama, Stefan Ruzowitzky's sixth feature focuses on history's largest counterfeiting operation. Before World War II breaks out, Salomon Sorowitsch a Russian-born Jew, lives the good life in Berlin. He forges documents, like passports and banknotes, ... when he's sent to Mauthausen concentration camp. ...Reich officials decide to deploy imprisoned printers, craftsmen, and bank officials to counterfeit foreign currency, he and his colleagues receive preferential treatment, the threat of execution hangs over their heads at all times. First, they master the pound; then they tackle the American dollar. subtitled.

***Crash** R 2005, "The movie deals with racial and ethnic struggles in southern California, ... 'Crash' is a great movie. ... it's so many different stories that weave in and out of each other. There are cops Graham and Ria (Don Cheadle and Jennifer Esposito). There's the district attorney and his wife (Brendan Fraser and Sandra Bullock). There are criminals (Ludacris and Larenz Tate). There are some more cops (Matt Dillon and Ryan Phillippe). There's a TV director and his wife (Terrence Dashon Howard and Thandie Newton). And there's a locksmith and a shop owner (Michael Pena and Shaun Toub). And they've all got problems it didn't really bring us to any conclusions. It merely showcases the problem, and leaves it up to us"- <http://www.empiremovies.com/reviews/reviews.php?id=659>

***David and Lisa** Unrated 1962- two teens in a mental institution struggling, black and white. "This film is absolutely beautiful in every sense. It is the story of two teenagers, David and Lisa, who are both in a home for mentally ill teens. David is obsessed with clocks and has a fear of

being physically touched while Lisa can only speak in rhyme. The film covers the powerful bond that develops between David and Lisa."

***Dead Poet's Society** –PG 1989- Adolescence, James Marcia, Erikson, et. al. Robin Williams stars as an English teacher who doesn't fit into the conservative prep school where he teaches, but whose charisma and love of poetry inspires several boys to revive a secret society with a bohemian bent. The script is well meaning but a little trite, though director Peter Weir (The Truman Show) adds layers of emotional depth in scenes of conflict between the kids and adults.

***Dear Frankie** PG-13 2005 "This touching and humorous movie has earned the raves of critics and won the hearts of audiences everywhere! To spare the feelings of her fatherless boy, Lizzie ...secretly authors letters from his "father" that detail seafaring adventures from around the world. But she cannot maintain this illusion forever. Torn between exposing the truth and protecting her son, Lizzie gets more than anyone bargained for when she hires a handsome stranger ... to play the role of a lifetime! Winner at both the Heartland Film Festival and the Seattle International Film Festival, this entertaining motion picture is sure to touch your heart." Amazon.com (?)

The Devil and Daniel Johnston (2005): "Daniel Johnston, manic-depressive genius singer/songwriter/artist is revealed in this portrait of madness, creativity and love. Troubling story but superb documentary technique."

***The Diving Bell and the Butterfly** 2008 PG-13

At the age of 43, Elle France editor Jean-Dominique Bauby (Amalric) suffers a stroke that paralyzes his entire body, save his left eye. Using that eye to blink out his memoir one letter at a time, Bauby describes the aspects of his interior world, from the psychological torment of being trapped inside his body, to imagined stories from lands he only visits in his mind. Based on the non-fiction book. French with subtitles.

***Do the Right Thing** –R-1989 racial tensions, cities, integration, "Spike Lee's incendiary look at race relations in America, circa 1989, is so colorful and exuberant for its first three-quarters that you can almost forget the terrible confrontation that the movie inexorably builds toward. Do the Right Thing is a joyful, tumultuous masterpiece--maybe the best film ever made about race in America, revealing racial prejudices and stereotypes in all their guises and demonstrating how a deadly riot can erupt out of a series of small misunderstandings."

***Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind** (2004): R " couple (Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet) undergo a procedure to erase each other from their memories when their relationship turns sour, but it is only through the process of loss that they discover what they had to begin with." Won an Oscar.

Fight Club -1999 R " How much can you know about yourself if you've never been in a fight?... An office employee and a soap salesman build a global organization to help vent male aggression. " " All films take a certain suspension of disbelief. *Fight Club* takes perhaps more than others, but if you're willing to let yourself get caught up in the anarchy, this film, based on the novel by Chuck Palahniuk, is a modern-day morality play warning of the decay of society. Edward Norton is the unnamed protagonist, a man going through life on cruise control, feeling nothing. To fill his hours, he begins attending support groups and 12-step meetings." "... is not for the faint of heart; the violence is no holds barred. But the film is captivating and beautifully shot, with some thought-provoking ideas. Pitt and Norton are an unbeatable duo, and the film has some surprisingly humorous moments. The film leaves you with a sense of profound discomfort and a desire to see it again, if for no other reason than to just to take it all in."

***Finding Neverland** PG 2004 "Sweetness that doesn't turn saccharine is hard to find these days; *Finding Neverland* hits the mark. ... Johnny Depp applies his genius for sly whimsy in his portrayal of playwright J. M. Barrie, who finds inspiration for his greatest creation from four

lively boys, the sons of widow Sylvia Llewelyn Davies (Kate Winslet, ...). Though the friendship threatens his already dwindling marriage, Barrie spends endless hours with the boys, pretending to be pirates or Indians--and gradually the elements of *Peter Pan* take shape in his mind. The relationship between Barrie and the Llewelyn Davies family sparks both an imagined world and a quiet rebellion against the stuffy forces of respectability, This gentle silliness could have turned to treacle, but Depp and Winslet--along with newcomer Freddie Highmore as one of the boys--keep their feet on the earth while their eyes gaze into their dreams." Amazon.com.

***Fried Green Tomatoes** -PG-13-1991 (menopause, inter-generational friendships), " Kathy Bates stars as an unhappy wife trying to get her husband's attention in this amusing and moving 1991 screen adaptation of Fannie Flagg's novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*. After befriending a lonely old woman (Jessica Tandy), Bates hears the story of a lifelong friendship between two other women (Mary Stuart Masterson and Mary-Louise Parker, seen in flashback) who once ran a cafe in town against many personal odds. The tale inspires Bates to take further command over her life"

***Good Will Hunting** R-1997 is also good "One of the best films of the 1990s, this is one of those rare box office mega-hits that deserved all the adulation and awards it earned. Youthful stars Matt Damon and Ben Affleck earned an Academy Award for their incisive, witty script. Damon plays a janitor at MIT who is an enormously gifted mathematician. Salivating professors bring the angry and troubled young man to psychiatrist Robin Williams, hoping Damon will conform enough to further his education. (Williams garnered an Academy Award for his heartfelt performance)... Friendship, societal expectations, and the long reach of a damaged childhood are all portrayed with such finesse that the story never feels heavy-handed."

***Gorillas in the Mist** -PG-13- ethnology, conflict, morals, values, " Sigourney Weaver more than earned her Oscar nomination for Best Actress in *Gorillas in the Mist*, dominating every frame of Michael Apted's biopic about primatologist Dian Fossey. Tenderly mothering an orphaned gorilla infant or terrorizing an African poacher with a staged lynching, the statuesque star is never less than fiercely focused, a glamorous warrior for animal rights. As the amateur scientist who researched and spotlighted Rwanda's endangered mountain gorillas in *National Geographic*, Weaver is the passionate heart that keeps an otherwise flaccid film alive-

***The Graduate** -PG-1967-life span development, mid life issues (for Mrs. R). More fun than serious. Oscar caliber. "A young man just out of college doesn't know what to do with his life. But being involved with a young woman AND her mother probably wasn't it" "Few films have defined a generation as *The Graduate* did. The alienation, the nonconformity, the intergenerational romance, the blissful Simon and Garfunkel soundtrack--they all served to lob a cultural grenade smack into the middle of 1967 America, ultimately making the film the third most profitable up to that time." Won Oscar for Best Director

***Half Nelson** 2006 R Sometimes people are attracted to each other because of their differences. When there's a nebulous attraction between a teacher and a young teenage child--as in the superb *Half Nelson*--the relationship has all the makings of confused disaster. Though there are a few uncomfortable moments when it's not obvious whether Dan (Ryan Gosling) and Drey (Shareeka Epps) might cross the line, the attraction between the pair is culled less from sexual tension than desperation. Dan is an idealistic history teacher in an inner-city school. Drey is one of his brightest students. For both, drugs represent something that may help them escape their worlds. He takes drugs to dull his dissatisfaction with himself. She views drugs as a possible way to better her life, even though she knows her brother's foray into that trade landed him in jail. Bleakly filmed and well told, *Half Nelson* soars because of the immaculate acting by Gosling and Epps. Oscar nomination ?

***High Noon** -NR-1952-(Gary Cooper, Grace Kelly) Approach-Avoidance conflicts. Is it better for the sheriff to stay and fight bad guys or leave town? Is it better for townspeople to do the

right thing and help the sheriff or turn away and save the reputation of their town? Should a Quaker wife stick to principles of nonviolence or help fight bad guys? A must see. Not your typical western. Black and White

***Hoop Dreams** PG-13, 1994- is a fascinating documentary that tracks the lives of two inner-city teenagers over a 5 or 6-year period (the film makers shot over 500 hours of videotape in the teens' homes, high schools, etc.). It would be an excellent vehicle for discussion in any number of courses, including personality, social, community, and developmental- about 3 hours. There was a big uproar that it wasn't nominated for best documentary the year it came out. There was some technicality that kept it off the list.

***Hoosiers**. PG- 1986 You have many psychologically related topics covered in the movie, from reaction to change, resistance to outsiders, gender issues, aggression, respect for authority, alcoholism, the role of sport in society, sports psychology. The movie's well done and enjoyable to watch as well. "One of the most rousingly enjoyable sports movies ever made, this small-town drama tells the story of the Hickory Huskers, an underdog basketball team from a tiny Indiana high school that makes it all the way to the state championship tournament."

***Hotel Rwanda** R 2004 "Solidly built around a subtle yet commanding performance by Don Cheadle, *Hotel Rwanda* emerged as one of the most highly-praised dramas of 2004. In a role that demands his quietly riveting presence in nearly every scene, Cheadle plays real-life hero Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager in the Rwandan capital of Kigali who in 1994 saved 1,200 Rwandan "guests" from certain death during the genocidal clash between tribal Hutus, who slaughtered a million victims, and the horrified Tutsis, who found safe haven or died. ... the ensuing chaos: "an expert in situational ethics" (as described by critic Roger Ebert), doing what he morally *had* to do, at great risk and potential sacrifice, with an understanding that wartime negotiations are largely a game of subterfuge, cooperation, and clever bribery." Amazon.com

***The Hours** -PG-13-2003-" Delicate and hypnotic, *The Hours* interweaves three stories with remarkable skill: in the 1920s Virginia Woolf (Nicole Kidman) grapples with her inner demons and slowly works on her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*; in 1949 housewife Laura Brown (Julianne Moore) feels her own destructive impulses; and in 1999 book editor Clarissa Vaughn (Meryl Streep)--much like the title character of Woolf's novel--prepares to throw a party, in honor of her dearest friend, a seriously ill poet (Ed Harris)"

***House of Games** R- 1987 - cons, relationships, motivation (David Mamet) "David Mamet's 1987 directorial debut was this mesmerizing study of control and seduction between two kinds of detached observers: a gambler who is also a con artist, and a psychotherapist who is also an emerging pop-psych guru in the book market.... Mamet's story finally becomes a fascinating study of two people protecting and extending their respective cosmologies the way rival predators fight for the same piece of turf. The psychological challenge is compelling; so is the stylized dialogue, with its pattern of pauses and hiccups and humming meter."

I am Sam -PG-13, 2002 " *I Am Sam* makes you laugh, cry, and recoil all at the same time. Perhaps no other film of recent memory has epitomized the shameless sentimentality of Hollywood as succinctly as director and screenwriter Jessie Nelson's story of a mentally challenged man fighting to retain custody of his 7-year-old daughter. Sam (Sean Penn), who has the mental age of 7, wipes down tables at a Los Angeles Starbucks and takes good care of his daughter Lucy, who was left with him shortly after birth by a homeless woman. Sam has gotten by just fine with a little help from his friends, including his eccentric neighbor (Diane Wiest) and a lovable group of similarly challenged friends, but a series of misunderstandings leaves Sam fighting to get Lucy back from the state."

***I Never Promised you a Rose Garden** -R- 1977 teenage girl with delusions, etc. struggling in a mental institution, autobiographical, "... is a very good movie, based on a based on a true story.

.. a schizophrenic teenager committed to a mental hospital and the psychiatrist played by who is trying to help her."

***Insomnia** R 2002 -Al Pacino and Robin Williams it is rich with so many psychological examples:. Disordered behavior, cognitive dissonance, states of consciousness, motivation, sensation/perception, catharsis, adolescent and adult development, "Crime never sleeps. Neither does Will Dormer (AL PACINO), a veteran LAPD homicide detective sent north to Alaska to head a murder case. There his investigation is disrupted by an ever-shining Midnight Sun that wreaks sleep-depriving havoc on his body clock and brings Dormer's shady, guilt-plagued past into the light of day."

***In the Heat of the Night** -PG- 1967 original version w Rod Steiger & Sydney Poitier, race relations in a small town, interpersonal dynamics. " Both riveting murder mystery and classic fish-out-of-water yarn, Norman Jewison's Oscar-winning *In the Heat of the Night* represents Hollywood at its wildest, cloaking exposé in the most entertaining trappings. Sidney Poitier and Rod Steiger prove the decade's most formidable antagonists. Poitier plays Virgil Tibbs, an arrogant homicide detective waylaid in Sparta, Mississippi; Steiger, in his bravura Oscar-winning turn, is Bill Gillespie, the town's hardheaded, bigoted sheriff who first arrests Tibbs for murder and then begs for his expertise."

Into the Wild 2007 R Right after graduating college, Christopher McCandless (Hirsch) abandons his conventional life for an odyssey in the Alaskan wilderness. A superb cast and an even-handed treatment of a true story buoy *Into the Wild*, ... Christopher McCandless, scion of a prosperous but troubled family who, after graduating from Atlanta's Emory University in the early 1990s, decides to chuck it all and become a self-styled "aesthetic voyager" in search of "ultimate freedom." For the next two years he lives the life of a vagabond, working a few odd jobs, kayaking through the Grand Canyon into Mexico, landing on L.A.'s Skid Row, and turning his back on everyone who tried to befriends him ..., alternates these interludes with scenes depicting McCandless' Alaskan idyll--which soon turns out be not so idyllic after all.

The Joy Luck Club R- 1993-(mother-daughter relationships, cultural assimilation, ethnic identity), " The 1993 film adaptation of Amy Tan's bestselling novel is both a delight and a moving experience, an anthology of stories wrapped in one Chinese-American woman's journey to understand her roots."

***Juno** 2007 PG-13. "... a sardonic but ultimately compassionate story of a pregnant teenage girl who wants to give her baby up for adoption. Social misfit Juno protects herself with a caustic wit, but when she gets pregnant by her friend Paulie, Juno finds herself unwilling to terminate the pregnancy. When she chooses a couple who place a classified ad looking to adopt, Juno gets drawn further into their lives than she anticipated. But *Juno* is much more than its plot; the stylized dialogue seems forced at first, but soon creates a richly textured world. Oscar nomination for Best Actress

K-Pax (2001): PG-13 "Prot is a patient at a mental hospital who claims to be from a far away planet. His psychiatrist tries to help him, only to begin to doubt his own explanations." Kevin Spacey

***The King of Hearts-** Unrated-1967- an unusual film from the 1960's about a French village in WWI. Who is crazy, normal? It is in French with English subtitles. A real gem. "An antiwar allegory for a world in which madness seemed to reign" "...Alan Bates as a Scottish soldier separated from his unit in France. He wanders into a small French village that has been abandoned by its residents in the face of oncoming combat. Instead, the town is populated by the residents of a nearby insane asylum, whose keepers have fled..."

***Kiss of the Spider Woman** -R-1985 (gender and sex roles) "starts out simply enough, hemmed in by the narrow walls of a Latin American prison cell. Molina (William Hurt) is telling his new

cellmate, Valentin (Raul Julia), his favorite story. Molina is a delicate homosexual imprisoned for seducing a minor; Valentin is a bearded revolutionary still bleeding from his interrogation. If their film unfolded into the typical prison buddy plot, it'd still be a good movie. But this is a great movie."

***Kramer vs. Kramer** PG- 1979 - divorce, gender, and sex roles, " Winner of five Academy Awards including Best Picture, Actor, and Screenplay, *Kramer vs. Kramer* remains as powerfully moving today as it was when released in 1979, simply because its drama will remain relevant for couples of any generation. Adapted by director Robert Benton from the novel by Avery Corman, this is perhaps the finest, most evenly balanced film ever made about the failure of marriage and the tumultuous shift of parental roles." Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep.

***Laberinto del fauno, El, (Pan's Labyrinth)** (2006): R " In the fascist Spain of 1944, the bookish young stepdaughter of a sadistic army officer escapes into an eerie but captivating fantasy world." Won 3 Oscars, In Spanish with English subtitles.

***Lars and the Real Girl** 2008 PG-13 To some, *Lars and the Real Girl* will play as comedy; to others, tragedy. Though Craig Gillespie allows Lars Lindstrom (a mustachioed Ryan Gosling...) a happy ending, the road is far from smooth. This ruffled Midwesterner couldn't be more miserable. ... he's been like that since childhood. Then a porn-addicted co-worker hips him to the lifelike Real Doll. The next thing everyone knows, Lars has a new girlfriend named Bianca. She's from Brazil, she's shy, and she uses a wheelchair. She's also made of silicon. (Because Lars is a devout Christian, hanky-panky is out of the question.) ..." Soon the whole town play along with the "delusion."

***Life as a House**-R- 2001-deals with a rebellious teenager who goes to stay a summer at his father's cottage and they build a new house, then the boy finds out his dad has "A respectable tearjerker, *Life as a House* is a welcome throwback to angst-ridden family dramas like *Ordinary People* and *Terms of Endearment*. It falls short of those modern classics, but you'll probably still need Kleenex if you appreciate Kevin Kline's underrated dramatic skills. As the title suggests, Kline's project is a broad metaphor for repairing damaged lives from the foundation up."

***Little Man Tate** -PG-1991- is a wonderful movie that discusses developmental, intelligence, assessment, and social issues in children. "Basically it's the story of Fred Tate, a prodigious kid (expert in mathematics, physics, music and painting, among many other things), and the struggle of his mother Dede (Jodie Foster) to give his little son the possibility of enjoy a normal life without significant worries, like most of the 8 year old kids have."

***Little Miss Sunshine** (2006): R "A family determined to get their young daughter into the finals of a beauty pageant take a cross-country trip in their VW bus.Hilarious! I loved this fun, but slightly dark comedy" Won 2 Oscars

***Lives of Others, The (Leben der Anderen, Da)** (2006) R "Before the Fall of the Berlin Wall, East Germany's Secret Police Listened to Your Secrets. ... The movie focuses on the horrifying, sometimes unintentionally funny system of observation in the former East Germany. In the early 1980s, the successful dramatist Georg Dreyman and his longtime companion Christa-Maria Sieland, a popular actress, are big intellectual stars in the socialist state, although they secretly don't always think loyal to the party line. One day, the Minister of Culture becomes interested in Christa, so the secret service agent Wiesler is instructed to observe and sound out the couple, but their life fascinates him more and more...." In German with subtitles. Won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language film.

***Lorenzo's Oil** -PG-13, 1993- is a must-see for discussion of neurological disorders (myelin sheath, fatty chains...). In the movie, Lorenzo's father (Nick Nolte) gives swell "layman's" explanations of the disorder that almost kills his young son. " ...proved that a movie about a disease doesn't have to be a typical disease-of-the-week movie. Based on the real-life case of the

Odone's family, the story concerns 5-year-old Lorenzo, suffering mightily from an apparently incurable and degenerative brain illness called A.L.D. His parents, an economist (Nick Nolte) and a linguist (Susan Sarandon), refuse to accept the received wisdom that there is no hope, and set about learning biochemistry to pursue a cure on their own."

***Malcolm X** PG-13 1992- with a discussion on social and community psychology principles in the film, leadership, social movements, "prepare him for this epic biography of America's fiery civil-rights leader, who is superbly played by Oscar-nominated Denzel Washington, from his early days as a zoot-suited hustler known as "Detroit Red" to his spiritual maturity after his pilgrimage to Mecca, as a Black Muslim by the name of El Hajj Malik El Shabazz."

***The Manchurian Candidate** -PG 13 1962-with Frank Sinatra. The topic is generally brainwashing, but with distinct allusions to conditioning principles, especially stimulus control. "After Raymond returns from the Korean War as a decorated hero, the other members of his platoon can't really remember what he did to win his medal. Two of the soldiers start having recurring nightmares, and one of them decides to investigate Raymond's current activities. What dark and sinister secrets are being withheld by the Government and the Army?"

***Memento** -R- 2002 memory, truth, "Guy Pearce (*L.A. Confidential*) and Joe Pantoliano (*The Matrix*) shine in this absolute stunner of a movie. *Memento* combines a bold, mind-bending script with compelling action and virtuoso performances. Pearce plays Leonard Shelby, hunting down the man who raped and murdered his wife. The problem is that "the incident" that robbed Leonard of his wife also stole his ability to make new memories."

***Men with Guns** -R-1998 English subtitles John Sayles, "Shot in Spanish, with a little-known cast, the film is a beguiling mix of the political and the mythical. A well-heeled doctor (Argentine actor Federico Luppi) in an unnamed Latin country leaves his comfortable home, in search of former medical students who may be caught in the political violence of the countryside."

***Million Dollar Baby** PG-13 2004 "Clint Eastwood's 25th film as a director, *Million Dollar Baby* stands proudly with '*Unforgiven*' and '*Mystic River*' as the masterwork of a great American filmmaker. In an age of bloated spectacle and computer-generated effects extravaganzas, Eastwood turns an elegant screenplay ... into a simple, humanitarian example of classical filmmaking, as deeply felt in its heart-wrenching emotions as it is streamlined in its character-driven storytelling. In the course of developing powerful bonds between "white-trash" Missouri waitress and aspiring boxer Maggie Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank), her grizzled, reluctant trainer Frankie Dunn (Eastwood), and Frankie's best friend and training-gym partner Eddie "Scrap-Iron" Dupris (Morgan Freeman), 74-year-old Eastwood mines gold from each and every character, resulting in stellar work from his well-chosen cast. ..." Amazon.com. 2004 Oscars for Best Movie, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor.

***Millions** PG 2005 - "If you've ever dreamed of finding a duffle bag containing a million dollars or called upon an imaginary being to lend a hand, then you'll enjoy "Millions." It's a story about two little boys facing life after the death of their mother who find an extraordinary gift that sends their imagination to the ends of the world. Not quite grasping that his mother is gone, seven-year-old Damian (Alex Etel) fills his world with flights of imagination. He knows all the saints, what each is noted for and the year he/she was around. He even has regular conversations with them. So he's not too surprised when he's playing in his cardboard fort near the train tracks and a bag of money falls on top of the fort. It must have come from Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), the patron saint of families."
<http://www.thezreview.co.uk/reviews/m/millions.htm>

***Mulholland Drive** R- 2001 -What is reality-Hollywood and stardom, a murder mystery, intriguing and confusing, a David Lynch creation - (on DVD) "A lost woman with amnesia is helped by a plucky ingénue new to L.A. But is everything what it seems to be?"

***Murderball (2005)**: R "A film about quadriplegics who play full-contact rugby in Mad Max-style wheelchairs - overcoming unimaginable obstacles to compete in the Paralympic Games in Athens, Greece." An outstanding documentary that plays like a movie. Nominated for an Oscar for best documentary.

***Mystic River** R 2003 "Superior acting, writing, and direction are on impressive display in the critically acclaimed *Mystic River*, Clint Eastwood's 24th directorial outing and one of the finest films of 2003. ... this chilling mystery revolves around three boyhood friends in working-class Boston--played as adults by Tim Robbins, Sean Penn, and Kevin Bacon--drawn together by a crime from the past and a murder (of the Penn character's 19-year-old daughter) in the present. These dual tragedies arouse a vicious cycle of suspicion, guilt, and repressed anxieties, primed to explode with devastating and unpredictable results. Eastwood is perfectly in tune with this brooding material, giving his flawless cast (including Laura Linney, Marcia Gay Harden and Laurence Fishburne) ample opportunity to plumb the depths of a resonant human tragedy, leading to an ambiguous ending that qualifies *Mystic River* for contemporary classic status. --Jeff Shannon" Amazon.com. 2003 Oscars for Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor

***Nell** PG-13 1994 "This film is an intelligent examination of an easygoing doctor (Liam Neeson at his teddy bear best) and his discovery of Nell (Oscar nominee Jodie Foster), a woman who was raised in the woods with no human contact except her speech-impaired mother. The movie covers a familiar "fish out of water" story unlocking Nell's soul (by deciphering her incomprehensible language) and then taking her into the modern world. What makes *Nell* special is the earnest work by Neeson, Natasha Richardson (as an uptight psychologist), and a rich, small array of supporting members (journeyman Nick Searcy as the town sheriff is marvelous). At its center is another extraordinary job by Foster, who also produced." Amazon.com

***No Country for Old Men** 2008 R The Coen brothers make ...a restrained adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's novel. Not that there aren't moments of intense violence, but *No Country for Old Men* is their quietest, most existential film yet. In this modern-day Western, Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin) is a Vietnam vet who could use a break. One morning while hunting antelope, he spies several trucks surrounded by dead bodies (both human and canine). In examining the site, he finds a case filled with \$2 million. Oscar for Best Movie

Nuts R- 1987 - prostitution, " Barbra Streisand is a mad high-priced "escort" accused of murder, but whether she's mad as hell or mad as a hatter is the question in this courtroom drama, adapted from the play by Tom Topor. While her doting, willfully uncomprehending mother (Maureen Stapleton) and stepdad with a secret (Karl Malden) try to have her judged incompetent and sent to an asylum, she fights for her day in court with the help of a hapless legal aid attorney"

***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** -R-1975 mental hospitals, their patients, and functions. "A nice rest in a state mental hospital beats a stretch in the pen, right? Randle P. McMurphy (Jack Nicholson), a free-spirited con with lightning in his veins and glib on his tongue, fakes insanity and moves in with what he calls the "nuts." "It's the classic antiestablishment tale of one man asserting his individuality in the face of a repressive, conformist system--and it works on every level. " Won 5 Oscars

***Ordinary People** -1980- adolescent identity, suicide, therapeutic relationship, parenting (the movie is very good; the book is better). Oscar winner. "The accidental death of the older son of an affluent family deeply strains the relationships among the bitter mother, the good-natured father, and the guilt-ridden younger son."

- *Pan's Labyrinth (Laberinto del fauno, El)** (2006): R " In the fascist Spain of 1944, the bookish young stepdaughter of a sadistic army officer escapes into an eerie but captivating fantasy world." Won 3 Oscars, In Spanish with English subtitles.
- *Parenthood** -PG-13-1989 Steve Martin, etc. ...great for stages of development through lifetime, and parenting styles and outcomes "The story of the Buckman family and friends, attempting to bring up their children. They suffer/enjoy all the events that occur: estranged relatives..."
- *Philadelphia** -PG-13, 1993 with Tom Hanks, for a good study of prejudice and discrimination. It showed a good example of how prejudices are formed how they manifest themselves in discrimination, and one way to overcome them. " *Philadelphia* was not only a hit, it also won Oscars for Bruce Springsteen's haunting "The Streets of Philadelphia," and for Tom Hanks as the gay lawyer Andrew Beckett who is unjustly fired by his firm because he has AIDS."
- *The Piano** -R- 1993 in New Zealand in 1900+/- **roles** and rights of men and women, single mother, prostitution, self-esteem, male -female relationships, history, " mesmerized by the film's rich, dreamlike imagery. It is the story of a Scottish woman named Ada (Holly Hunter), who has been mute since age 6 because she simply chose not to speak. Ada travels with her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin) and her beloved piano to a remote spot on the coast of New Zealand for an arranged marriage to a farmer (Sam Neill)." It won 3 Oscars
- *Platoon** -R-1986- – Vietnam War, men in groups, " *Platoon* put writer-turned-director Oliver Stone ... based on Stone's firsthand experience as an American soldier in Vietnam. Chris (Charlie Sheen) is an infantryman whose loyalty is tested by two superior officers: Sergeant Elias (Willem Dafoe), a former hippie humanist who really cares about his men and Sergeant Barnes (Tom Berenger), a moody, macho soldier who may have gone over to the dark side." Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director
- *Pride & Prejudice** -NR- 1995-gender and sex roles, a great presentation of Jane Austen's book," Jane Austen's classic novel of 1813, *Pride and Prejudice*, still wins the hearts of countless schoolgirls with its romantic story of Elizabeth Bennet and her Mr. Darcy. Now, the 1996 BBC miniseries is winning over adults, with its faithful adaptation, gorgeous scenery, and superb acting. ", "... The essence of the story is the antagonism between Mr. Darcy, a wealthy single man who believes Elizabeth to be beneath him, and Elizabeth, who upon being insulted at a dance by the aloof Darcy refuses to associate with him in any manner. Austen evokes incredible tension with the wit."
- *Pride and Prejudice** (2005): PG " The story is based on Jane Austen's novel about five sisters - Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty and Lydia Bennet - in Georgian England..." or the 4-6 hour PBS version, which is better.
- *The Prince of Tides** -R-1991 child abuse/neglect, rape, developmental psychopathology, therapy, " Nolte plays a football coach who is estranged from his wife (Blythe Danner) and who enters into an affair with the psychiatrist (Streisand) of his suicidal sister (Melinda Dillon)."
- *Rain Man** -R- 1988- is an excellent movie to introduce students to autism. Hoffman gives the performance of a lifetime in this movie - autism, an autistic savant, family," took Academy honors for best picture, director, screenplay, and actor (Dustin Hoffman) in 1988. Hoffman plays Raymond, an autistic savant whose late father has left him \$3 million in a trust. This gets the attention of his materialistic younger brother, a hot-shot LA car dealer named Charlie (Tom Cruise) who wasn't even aware of Raymond's existence until he read his estranged father's will. Charlie picks up Raymond and takes him on a cross-country journey that becomes a voyage of discovery for Charlie, and, perhaps, for Raymond, too."

***Rebel Without a Cause** unrated-1955 - James Dean, adolescent rebellion. The original misunderstood male adolescent misfit, rebellion. (Filmed in black and white) "... nervous, volatile, soulful, a kid lost in a world that does not understand him."

***Remember the Titans** -PG-2000- racial integration, racial tension, team building, coaching, " Set in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1971, the fact-based story begins with the integration of black and white students at T. C. Williams High School. This effort to improve race relations is most keenly felt on the school's football team, the Titans, and bigoted tempers flare when a black head coach (Washington) is appointed and his victorious predecessor (Will Patton) reluctantly stays on as his assistant. It's affirmative action at its most potentially volatile, complicated by the mandate that the coach will be fired if he loses a single game in the Titans' 13-game season."

Requiem For A Dream (2000): R " The hopes and dreams of four ambitious people are shattered when their drug addictions begin spiraling out of control."

***Run Lola Run** -R-1999- (German with English subtitles)- chance and life, " This is the story of young Lola (Franka Potente) and her boyfriend Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu). In the space of 20 minutes, they must come up with 100,000 deutsche marks to pay back a seedy gangster, who will be less than forgiving when he finds out that Manni incompetently lost his cash to an opportunistic vagrant. Lola, confronted with one obstacle after another, rides an emotional roller coaster in her high-speed efforts to help the hapless Manni... (the director) introduces a series of brilliant existential twists that boggle the mind."

***Sea Inside, The (Mar adentro (2004/I)) PG- 13** "The real-life story of Spaniard Ramon Sampedro, who fought a 30 year campaign in favor of euthanasia and his own right to die." Won Oscar for the Best Foreign Language film.

***Shall We Dance** PG 1997 Japanese with English subtitles [Note American version below. It could be interesting to compare the two.] "On his evening commute, bored accountant Sugiyama (Koji Yakusho) always looks for the beautiful woman who gazes wistfully out the window of the Kishikawa School of Dancing. One night he gets off the train, walks into the studio, and signs up for a class. Soon Sugiyama is so engrossed in his dancing he practices his steps on the train platform and under his desk, and becomes good enough for competition, compelling his wife to hire a private investigator to find out why he stays out late and returns home smelling of perfume. Among the colorful characters Sugiyama meets is his coworker Aoki (Naoto Takenaka), who transforms himself from geeky systems analyst to hilariously flamboyant (and bad-wigged) lounge lizard. Aoki explains to Sugiyama, "When I finish work, put on the clothes, the wig and become Donny Burns, Latin world champion, and I start to move to the rhythm, I'm so happy, so completely free." Amazon.com

***Shall We Dance** PG-13 2004 [Note original Japanese version above. It could be interesting to compare the two.] "Something got lost in translation from 1996's critically acclaimed Japanese comedy, but the American remake of *Shall We Dance?* is not without charms of its own. In being transplanted from Tokyo to Chicago, the original version's subtle humor is shaken out of its cultural context, but this is an otherwise faithful adaptation in which a weary lawyer (Richard Gere) battles his mid-life crisis with ballroom dancing lessons, while his wife (Susan Sarandon) hires a private detective to see if he's cheating. Those expecting a Jennifer Lopez showcase will be disappointed; her role as the melancholy dance instructor keeps the beautifully lovelorn J-Lo on the sidelines, while a cast of standard-issue supporting characters (especially Stanley Tucci's clandestine *faux*-Latin dance lover) provide a generous dose of Hollywood-ized comic relief. All of this gives *Shall We Dance?* a polished sheen of mainstream entertainment that many viewers--and especially ballroom dancers--will find delightfully irresistible." Amazon.com

***Shine**-PG-13, 1996 true- Australian pianist- struggle for independence-15 years in a psychiatric hospital. , "...surprising story about real-life classical pianist David Helfgott, an Australian who rose to international prominence at a very young age in the 1950s and '60s, and suffered a

psychological collapse after enduring years of abuse from his father (Armin Mueller-Stahl). Hicks has three very fine actors portraying Helfgott at different stages of his life, including the adorably wry and goofy Noah Taylor (*Flirting*), who takes up the character's teen years, and Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush, giving a great performance playing the musician as a schizophrenic adult."

***Searching for Bobby Fischer.** PG 1993- chess child prodigy, child rearing, family. It can be used in intelligence, development, social psychology, and many other areas, " based on the nonfiction book by Fred Waitzkin, about a father (Joe Mantegna) who discovers that his seven-year-old son (Max Pomeranc) is a genius at playing chess. The boy plays chess for fun, but when he's tutored by a former champion (Ben Kingsley) and entered into high-pressure competitions, an enjoyable pastime becomes a source of tension and resentment, forcing the father to reconsider his parental priorities."

***Spellbound** G 2002 "Spellbound is the extraordinary documentary that follows eight teenagers on their quest to win the National Spelling Bee competition. Think this sounds boring? Prepare to be blown away. The Bee is as intense a competition as any Olympic match, and for the spellers and their families, the stakes are just as high. The unbearable pressure becomes even more extraordinary as it is felt by ordinary teenagers. Watch as the Bee becomes a dramatic backdrop for the bigger story about kids and families today as we discover that within the roller coaster ride of the National Spelling Bee can be found the heart of America." <http://www.kidsturncentral.com/index.htm>.

***Spellbound.**-NR-1945..Alfred Hitchcock with Gregory Peck/Ingrid Bergman...Salvador Dali dream sequence is in the film.... Freudian dream interpretation, repression, surgery at a mental hospital, amnesia, psychoanalysis, " Alfred Hitchcock takes on Sigmund Freud in this thriller in which psychologist Ingrid Bergman tries to solve a murder by unlocking the clues hidden in the mind of amnesiac suspect Gregory Peck."

***Sophie's Choice** -R- 1982 oppression, sexual assault, mental illness, flashbacks to the holocaust; a good but tough movie; Meryl Streep, " The sunny streets of Brooklyn, just after World War II. A young would-be writer named Stingo (Peter MacNicol) shares a boarding house with beautiful Polish immigrant Sophie (Meryl Streep) and her tempestuous lover, Nathan (Kevin Kline); their friendship changes his life." " provides a steady, intelligent path into the harrowing story of Sophie, whose flashback memories of the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp form the backbone of the movie. Streep's exceptional performance--flawless Polish accent and all--won her an Oscar,"

***Spanish Prisoner, The** PG-1998, (The?) - intrigue and cons, reality (David Mamet), " Campbell Scott plays a green young technocrat who invents a secret and highly successful high-tech process that, it appears, most of the free world would like to get their hands on." " The plot is as full of switchbacks as a mountain highway, and the delights are in watching it unfold around Scott, who is not so much of a naif that he doesn't catch on that not only his formula, but his life, are in dire danger."

***Stand by Me** -R- 1986 for adolescent development, " but it's more about the joys and pains of boyhood friendship than a morbid fascination with corpses. It's about four boys ages 12 and 13 (Wil Wheaton, River Phoenix, Corey Feldman, Jerry O'Connell) who take an overnight hike through the woods near their Oregon town to find the body of a boy who's been missing for days."

***To Kill A Mockingbird** -Unrated-1962 very good; racism, justice, child vs. adult perspective, role modeling, morals, values "Ranked 34 on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 Greatest American Films, To Kill a Mockingbird is quite simply one of the finest family-oriented dramas ever made. A beautiful and deeply affecting adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Harper Lee, the film retains a timeless quality that transcends its historically dated

subject matter (racism in the Depression-era South) and remains powerfully resonant in present-day America with its advocacy of tolerance, justice, integrity, and loving, responsible parenthood. It's tempting to call this an important "message" movie that should be required viewing for children and adults alike, but this riveting courtroom drama is anything but stodgy or pedantic. As Atticus Finch, the small-town Alabama lawyer and widower father of two, Gregory Peck gives one of his finest performances with his impassioned defense of a black man (Brock Peters) wrongfully accused of the rape and assault of a young white woman. While his children, Scout (Mary Badham) and Jem (Philip Alford), learn the realities of racial prejudice and irrational hatred, they also learn to overcome their fear of the unknown as personified by their mysterious, mostly unseen neighbor Boo Radley (Robert Duvall, in his brilliant, almost completely nonverbal screen debut)."

***Tootsie** PG 1982 with Dustin Hoffman. Since it is an older show most of the students haven't seen it. " *Tootsie* stars Dustin Hoffman as an out-of-work actor who disguises himself as a dowdy, middle-aged woman to get a part on a hit soap opera." We discuss gender roles and the concept of androgyny. (Activities Handbook for the Teaching of Psychology, vol. 3.)

***TransAmerica** (2005): R " A pre-operative male-to-female transsexual takes an unexpected journey when she learns that she fathered a son, now a teenage runaway hustling on the streets of New York."

***Unforgiven** R 1992 "Winner of four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Director, Supporting actor, and Best Editing, Clint Eastwood's 1992 masterpiece stands as one of the greatest and most thematically compelling Westerns ever made. "The movie summarized everything I feel about the Western," said Eastwood at the time of the film's release. "The moral is the concern with gunplay." To illustrate that theme, Eastwood stars as a retired, once-ruthless killer-turned-gentle-widower and hog farmer. He accepts one last bounty-hunter mission--to find the men who brutalized a prostitute--to help support his two motherless children. Joined by his former partner (Morgan Freeman) and a cocky greenhorn (Jaimz Woolvett), he takes on a corrupt sheriff (Oscar winner Gene Hackman) in a showdown that makes the viewer feel the full impact of violence and its corruption of the soul... it's arguably Eastwood's crowning directorial achievement. --Jeff Shannon" Amazon.com

***The Usual Suspects** -R-1995 cons, gullibility, leadership, motivation (David Mamet), " Ever since this convoluted thriller dazzled audiences and critics in 1995 and won an Oscar for Christopher McQuarrie's twisting screenplay, *The Usual Suspects* has continued to divide movie lovers into opposite camps. While a lot of people take great pleasure from the movie's now-famous central mystery (namely, "Who is Keyser Söze?"), others aren't so easily impressed by a movie that's too enamored of its own cleverness to make much sense."

***Vanilla Sky** R-2001 influences, goals, ideals, reality" A successful publisher finds his life taking a turn for the surreal after a car accident with a jaded lover." "Vanilla Sky reunites director Cameron Crowe (Jerry Maguire) with über-playboy Tom Cruise, adds another sexy Cruz (Penélope) and Cameron Diaz for good measure, and delivers a wildly entertaining, bizarre venture into erotic science fiction. Adapted near exactly from Spanish filmmaker Alejandro Amenábar's 1997 romantic thriller *Open Your Eyes*, the film follows David Aames (Cruise) as he falls from his graceful Manhattan perch of inordinate wealth, good looks, and newfound love with Sofia (Cruz) because of severe facial disfigurement in a car accident caused by a suicidal ex-lover (Diaz)."

***Vincent and Theo** PG-13 1990- Vincent Van Gogh and his brother. Creativity, mental illness, social norms "the power, emotion and tragedy relating to the struggles and strife in the lives of the brothers Van Gogh are so well illustrated here."

***Walk on Water** R 2005 - ""He has been trained to kill, until he learned about his enemy",the main character Eyal(Ashkenazi), the Mossad assassin. He possessed a quiet, tough exterior with

a humorous personality at times, struggling with his own mission of hunting down a former Nazi to bring closure to a job that eventually drives his own wife to commit suicide. While watching the two main characters, Eyal and Axel, the film presented a contrasting yet enlightening view between a hetero-sexual (Eyal) and gay men and how both viewed the world as a Jew and a German, while dealing with their past demons. For the most part, Walk on Water raises interesting questions about cultural & historical grudges A must see!!" Amazon.

What's Eating Gilbert Grape? -PG 13-1993 Can be used for interesting discussions on how to define "abnormal" "this is the funny, moody tale of a young man named Gilbert Grape (Johnny Depp) who lives at home in a small town with his 500-pound Momma (beautifully played by nonpro Darlene Cates), his mentally retarded younger brother Arnie (DiCaprio, utterly convincing), and his sisters. Not a lot happens--Arnie keeps climbing a water tower and getting stuck; Gilbert is involved with a married woman (Mary Steenburgen), then meets a nice new girl in town who's closer to his age (Juliette Lewis). And that's exactly what makes this movie so much more than your run-of-the-mill Hollywood product: it's not about some mechanical, formulaic plot; it's about these characters, and it allows you to spend some time with them and get to know them."

***Wild Strawberries**, Unrated -1957 by Ingmar Bergman works well for life span as well. Erikson used this film when he taught his developmental course. "Victor Sjostrom goes beyond great as an old professor analyzing his bitter life as he travels to receive a special award. One of Ingmar Bergman's most touching films is deeply poetic and analyzes life and death through the thoughts and eyes of the regretful old man and the interactions he has with the younger people. Standout scenes include the scene between the man and his older mother, the flash back scenes to the summer house, the scene between the bickering married couple in the car, and the final sad close-up shot of the old mans face. Truly a masterwork from one of the all time great directors." "After living a life marked by coldness, an aging professor is forced to confront the emptiness of his existence." Black and White. Swedish with subtitles.

***Wit** PG-13 2001 (HBO) "Deservedly hailed as one of the best films of 2001, Wit makes it clear why top-ranking talents seek refuge in the quality programming of HBO. Unhindered by box-office pressures, director Mike Nichols and Emma Thompson turn the most unglamorous topic--the physical and psychological ravages of cancer--into an exquisite contemplation of life, learning, and tenacious, richly expressed humanity. In adapting Margaret Edson's compassionate, Pulitzer Prize-winning play, Nichols and Thompson open up the one-room setting with a superb supporting cast. But their focus remains on the hospital experience of Vivian (Thompson), a fiercely demanding professor of English literature whose academic specialty--the metaphysical poetry of John Donne--is the armor she wears against the cruel indignities of her cancer treatment. While losing all that she held dear, she reassesses her life as an aloof intellectual, and Wit illuminates her bracingly eloquent and deeply moving struggle for dignity, meaning, and peace at life's ultimate crossroads."

The quotes are from mostly Amazon.com with some from IMDb.com reviews.

This is not an exhaustive list; you should give me any additions. Almost any good movie can be looked at for its psychological themes. (Especially good are the Oscar winners for Best Foreign Language Film.)