



2025 WINTER FILM SERIES

Note: In a series of films about war, there will be violent moments. The first film, at the end of the first half and at the end of the last half, has difficult, graphic moments of gunshots, in one case sudden and shocking; these are brief but they are also powerful. The last film, a documentary, shows you real people working to rescue the living and the dead from military strikes. You know better than we do if such occasions could be trigger moments for you. The middle three films, we think, are less likely to offer you such moments.

***Full Metal Jacket (1987)* January 9, 11:30 a.m. – 4 pm, includes a light lunch**

Director Stanley Kubrick's film about the Vietnam war is one some of you may remember. It was controversial when it arrived in theaters. Both the dehumanizing process of Marine Corps basic training and the inescapable nightmare reality of combat in Hue City are hard to watch. The narrative moves beyond the relentless use of the word 'fucking' in the first half, into the dark, fire-plagued violence soldiers embark on, singing M I C K E Y M O U S E as they kill and are killed in Vietnam. A scathing comic nightmare, the film itself won no Academy Awards. However, it ranks with *Dr. Strangelove* as one of Kubrick's best. Its script, its images, and the character of Joker (played by Matthew Modine), through whom we experience the film's events, allow it to lay claim, in one reviewer's words, to "the best war movie ever made." This is certainly a discussible film.

Note, the title refers to the full metal jacket bullet used by military servicemen.

***Waltz with Bashir (2008)* January 16, 12:30 - 4 p.m.**

This Israeli film is an amazing, unexpected work, combining adult animation and live action; it is both a determined documentary and a world of the surreal images of memory, a creative visual cartoon and a troubled pursuit of a soldier's lost memories. The filmmaker, Ari Folman, was a 19-year-old infantry soldier in the 1982 war with Lebanon. Making this film 20 plus years after his experience, he insists on revisiting the boy soldier he was with the eyes of the man he has become. The film was a Golden Globe winner for best foreign language film. The NYTimes reviewer, A.O. Scott, called it "a work of astonishing aesthetic integrity and searing moral power."

The war's history is complicated and we will try to unpack it with you before the film.

***Paradise Now (2005)* January 23, 12:30 – 4 p.m.**

This film was winner of a Golden Globe award for best foreign language film and the first Palestinian film nominated in the Academy Awards for best foreign language film—a difficult and controversial moment.

It shows us two young men, Said and Khaled, life-long friends, facing an imperative to defend their country. It is a carefully detailed psychological thriller, from a point of view not often presented to an American audience. While being filmed in the West Bank, in Nablus, its real-life context was always present. A land mine exploded near the set one day; a helicopter gunship launched a missile attack near them; and their location manager was kidnaped and not released until Yasser Arafat intervened: none of these events were specifically directed at the film. Its director, Abu Assad, has said of his film, "politicians want see it as black and white, good and evil, and art wants to see it as a human story." Whatever the war, whatever the conflict, there are no easy answers.

The Tillman Story (2010) January 30, 12:30 – 4 p.m.

The first of the films we have chosen that are formal documentaries, this story of NFL football player Pat Tillman (Arizona Cardinals), and his choice to enter the Army after 9/11, is one you may remember. Amir-Bar Lev's film has researched information, recovered extensive visual materials from Tillman's life, interviewed family members and military colleagues, and persisted in pursuit of the work done by Tillman's mother Dannie, to understand what happened to her son in Afghanistan. The film goes beyond her clarity and determination and shows us also the complex ways we are all complicit in the design and destruction of our soldiers as heroes. But without Dannie's determination to claim her son, the story would lack its center. Again, there are no easy answers.

Last Men in Aleppo (2017) February 6, 12:30 - 4 p.m.

In this unflinching documentary, Syrian filmmaker Feras Fayyid records the story not of soldiers but of ordinary citizens in Aleppo. These are not actors. They are members of the White Helmets, trained to move toward military strikes in order to save lives. Three men, Khaled, Subhi, and Mahmoud, founders of the organization, face the chaos and death in Aleppo, hold to their determination to rescue those they can, and live with their own awareness that to save their families, they would need to flee their city, their country. The film is suspenseful and heart-stopping, but we felt we owed it to these men to watch their world. While it is perhaps the hardest to watch of all the films in the series, it is also endowed with grace and even, unexpectedly, with beauty. In the LA Times reviewer's words, "raw, powerful, moving, and candid". We think that of all the films we watched to choose for you, this is the unforgettable one.

The war here is the Syrian civil war; President Bashar al-Assad's forces are attacking the rebels, who hold the city of Aleppo.

You do not need to be a member of LLC to attend this series. You may register on the website now until Jan. 2. \$25 for the series. No refunds for missed sessions. Hot beverages will be available each week. Bring your own water if needed. The room can be chilly, dress accordingly.