We usually think of movies as being either entertaining, comical, frightening or thought-provoking, but seldom as being dangerous. And yet, because of their ability to make us escape our daily lives, films confront us with situations and themes unlikely to occur in our predictable and relatively safe environment. After WWII, major studios began to shift movie-making from its assigned entertainment purposes to address social, political, religious and ethical issues in American society. Given their immense popularity with younger spectators, the potentially dramatic influence of movies on everyday life became obvious to social and moral gate-keepers. From civil rights and political protests to sexual mores and challenges to authority, films increasingly represented a challenge to acceptable social mores. To protect itself, Hollywood developed strict censorship guidelines, which live on to this day in the form of an advisory scale warning American spectators of potential harm: G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17 and X. Movies have become dangerous indeed, their perceived threats dealing with social, political, racial, sexual and religious standards. This Fall, HNRS 310 will offer you the opportunity to view, discuss and write about 13 films that are critically acclaimed but still considered dangerous for a variety of reasons. Whether they assault your senses from an aesthetic, moral or social point of view, they will also cause you to think critically, to react and articulate your own opinions in class discussions and writing assignments.

“These are movies about which you could say, “That’s Not Entertainment.” They are galvanizing experiences. Films that rearrange your head, that challenge your bedrock ideas about life and love and the big sleep. They are consciousness-expanders, in other words, but rarely in a pleasant way. Thank God for them.” (Roger Ebert)

8/27 The Exorcist William Friedkin (1973)
9/3 Mississippi Burning Alan Parker (1999)
9/10 Repulsion Roman Polanski (1965)
9/24 Léolo Jean-Claude Lauzon (1992)
10/1 Failsafe Sidney Lumet (1964)
10/15 Lolita Adrian Lyne (1997)
10/22 Schindler’s List Steven Spielberg (1993)
10/29 Full Metal Jacket Stanley Kubrick (1987)
11/5 Innocence Lucile Hadzihalilovic (2004)
11/12 Seven David Fincher (1995)
11/26 Pulp Fiction Quentin Tarentino (1994)
12/3 The Passion of the Christ Mel Gibson (2004)
12/10 Psycho Alfred Hitchcock (1965)