Dances With Wolves Guide

Instructions: As we watch this movie in class this week, think about the following questions and be prepared to write answers for each. I will choose several and you’ll have the wonderful opportunity to respond! I know, right?!

NOTE: Movies which are trying to make a point or express a message sometimes do so by using hyperbole (exaggeration used to make a point). This movie does a very nice job of using extreme characters and situations to make its point, but it sometimes sacrifices a balanced reality in order to stay on message. This movie is good historical fiction, but it has a point of view and wants for you to agree with it when you’re finished watching.

Questions to ask yourself while viewing this picture:

- What is the primary message of Dances With Wolves? How is this message communicated in the film?
- In what three important ways is white society is shown to be backwards or savage in the film Dances With Wolves? Give specific examples of each.
- What are three specific examples of how Native American society (represented here by the Sioux) is shown to be positive or ‘civilized’ in the film Dances With Wolves?
- In the movie Dances With Wolves, why does John Dunbar [Kevin Costner] choose the post he does? What does he want?
- What does the wolf represent in Dances With Wolves? Explain why you think so using multiple examples from the movie.
- What were several sources of conflict between whites and Amerindians shown in Dances With Wolves? Some are obvious, but others are more subtle. Try to find examples of each.
- Describe the ‘government’ of the Sioux as portrayed in Dances With Wolves, including the various types of leadership roles and the processes by which both individual and group decisions are made.
- What roles or purposes does Stands With A Fist play in the movie Dances With Wolves, other than the necessary ‘love interest’? What might she represent or what is she used to say?
- How did the U.S. overcome Amerindian resistance to white expansion in the movie Dances With Wolves?