13th (Netflix)
- This documentary examines the disproportionate number of African Americans among those incarcerated in the U.S. Directed by Ava DuVernay, the 2016 film includes interviews with prominent civil rights activists and politicians and examines the nation’s legacy of racism via such events as the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the passage of Jim Crow laws in the South.

American Son (2019; Netflix)
- Kendra Ellis-Connor (Kerry Washington) and Scott Connor (Steven Pasquale) have spent the last several years living apart, their marriage in tatters. However, an unexpected call from the Miami police station forces an unnerving reunion when their teenage son is nowhere to be found. Kendra and Scott must then set aside their differences in their pursuit of the truth about their child.

Dear White People (2014; subsequent series with the same title on Netflix, 2017-present)
- A satirical portrait of race relations in early 21st-century America, writer/director Justin Simien’s playfully perceptive feature debut tells the story of a biracial Winchester University student whose controversial radio show sparks a media frenzy of epic proportions. When Samantha White (Tessa Thompson) begins her radio program by declaring that white people will now be required to have two black friends in order to avoid appearing racist (and that drug dealers don’t count), she immediately catches the attention of the all-black residential hall that is being forced out of existence due to diversification. Subsequently elected president of the hall, Samantha becomes the subject of a reality show that deals with racial issues. Meanwhile, the Winchester University’s all-white student newspaper staff mistakenly assumes that young black outcast Lionel Higgins (Tyler James Williams) is an expert on black culture, and recruits him to report on the brewing controversy.

Hidden Figures (2016)
- Three female African American mathematicians (Taraji P. Henson, Octavia L. Spencer, and Janelle Monáe) provide crucial calculations for NASA’s space race against the Soviets, all while dealing with the racist and sexist assumptions of their white co-workers. Kevin Costner, Kirsten Dunst, and Jim Parsons co-star in this adaptation of the 2016 book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly. Directed by Theodore Melfi.

If Beale Street Could Talk (2018)
- FSU English graduate Barry Jenkins directed this film based on James Baldwin’s 1974 novel of the same name. African American teen sweethearts Fonny (Stephan James) and Tish (KiKi Layne) are ripped apart when Fonny is wrongly arrested for the rape of a Puerto Rican woman because of the machinations of a racist cop. While seeking justice for Fonny, a pregnant Tish relies on her Harlem community, including her sister (Teyonah Parris), mother Sharon (Regina King) and future mother-in-law (Aunjanue Ellis).
Just Mercy (2019)

- With numerous opportunities laid down before him right after he graduates from Harvard Law School, Bryan Stevenson’s (Michael B. Jordan) career is shaping up to be an impressive one. He decides to forgo all of those offers, however, in order to go to Alabama and represent those who cannot afford a lawyer and those who are wrongly accused. There, he meets Walter McMillian (Jamie Foxx), a man who has been convicted of murder despite the lack of evidence. To obtain justice, he must now navigate a world that is inherently against people like them. Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton.

King in the Wilderness (2018; HBO)

- As the father of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King’s last three years—from the Voting Rights Act in 1965 to his 1968 assassination—were filled with anxiety and uncertainty as he boldly fought for equality on all fronts. Peter Kunhardt directed this documentary.

Malcolm X (1992)

- Spike Lee directs the biographical drama film about African American activist Malcolm X, highlighting key phases and moments of his life.

Moonlight (2016)

- FSU English graduate Barry Jenkins wrote and directed this coming-of-age drama based on Tarell Alvin McCraney’s unpublished semi-autobiographical play In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue. The film presents three stages in the life of the main character: his youth, adolescence, and early adult life. The narrative explores the difficulties he faces with his sexuality and identity, including the physical and emotional abuse he endures growing up. Moonlight won the Academy Award for Best Picture and Jenkins won the Academy Award for Jenkins and McCraney.

Reconstruction: After the Civil War

- Henry Louis Gates Jr. presents this 2019 four-hour documentary series. The series explores the transformative years following the American Civil War, when the nation struggled to rebuild itself in the face of profound loss, massive destruction, and revolutionary social change. The twelve years that composed the post-war Reconstruction era (1865-77) witnessed a seismic shift in the meaning and makeup of our democracy, with millions of formerly enslaved people and free black people seeking out their rightful place as equal citizens under the law. Though tragically short-lived, this bold democratic experiment was, in the words of W. E. B. Du Bois, a “brief moment in the sun” for African Americans, when they could advance, and achieve, education, exercise their right to vote, and run for and win public office.

Roots (1977; eight-episode miniseries)

- Kunta Kinte (LeVar Burton) is a young tribesman of coastal Africa who has passed the rituals marking his transition into manhood. Searching for wood to build a drum, he is set upon by enslavers who capture him and then sell him in the
U.S. after a nightmarish Atlantic crossing. Defiant, Kunta refuses to consider himself an enslaved person, despite some sage advice from his mentor, the more mature Fiddler (Louis Gossett Jr.). As the years pass, the aging Kunta (John Amos) is hobbled for his repeated escape attempts. Realizing he’ll never return to Africa, Kunta settles down, becoming husband to Bell (Madge Sinclair) and father to Kizzy (Leslie Uggams), a girl infused with her father’s independent spirit. Sold and then raped by her new enslaver, Kizzy has a son, Chicken George (Ben Vereen), a happy-go-lucky cockfighting expert who uses his skills to buy his freedom. George paves the way for his children, the great-grandchildren of Kunta Kinte, who finally become free in the aftermath of the Civil War. Based on Alex Haley’s novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, the original miniseries was followed by a sequel miniseries, *Roots: The Next Generations* (1979), and a made-for-television feature, *Roots: The Gift* (1988), as well as another telefilm based on the family history of the Haley clan, *Queen* (1993).

**Rosewood** (1997)

- *Rosewood* is the story of a relatively unknown incident in a small Florida town, parts that have been fictionalized for the movie, but still faithful to the known facts, as documented in a 1994 report by the Florida Legislature. African Americans, most of them home and land owners and better off than average at the time, almost entirely inhabited the quiet town. After events that began on New Year’s Day 1923, angry whites from a neighboring community, Sumter, storm Rosewood and destroy the town over the next several days. Based on palpably false testimony by a single white woman against one “Black” stranger, many of the men of Rosewood were hunted down and lynched, or shot, or burned. The rest of the town’s residents fled into the swamps and never returned. At the time, official reports stated that six people from the Black community were slain. Neither the perpetrators nor the victims spoke of the incident again, which was promptly forgotten until 1983 when a reporter came across the old story and began investigating the facts. Interviews with surviving victims indicated that the previous reports were wrong; in reality, between 70 and 250 people were killed in Rosewood during the four-day attack. The film is a human story, about human envy, greed, and lust, about the insane psychology of a mob, but also about the courage and decency of common folks facing an unbelievable onslaught of evil. The courage of the Black residents is self-evident, and the decency on the part of a few white neighbors is reluctant, until they realize that they can’t live with themselves if they don’t help the women and children to escape. The most notable black heroes are Sylvester Carrier (Don Cheadle)—a music teacher and the best-educated man in town—and Mann (Ving Rhames)—a stranger on horseback with Samson-like strength who becomes the focus of black resistance and white hatred. The penny-pinching, adulterous town grocer John Wright (Jon Voight), one of the few white residents, also plays a key role in saving lives. Before he does, however, he must resolve painful racial issues and make a difficult personal choice. Eventually, he sees enough of the mob’s evil to know what he must do, and with the help of the reluctant owner-operators of the Gainesville railway, he helps several residents escaped. John Singleton directed this powerful, epic film,
and he does not present a “comfortable” view of the circumstances of this grim, little-known page from American history.

School Daze (1988)
- Fraternity and sorority members clash with the other students at a historically Black university in this politically charged musical, which marked the sophomore feature from director Spike Lee. Dap (Laurence Fishburne) is a politically conscious student who leads anti-apartheid demonstrations and eschews the social climbing of the Greek system. But his craven young cousin Darrell, aka Half-Pint (Lee), is willing to endure any humiliation to join the manly Gamma fraternity. As Half-Pint tries unsuccessfully to impress the Gammas with his inept womanizing, Dap engages in philosophical debates with Rachel (Kyme), his girlfriend. Meanwhile, the light-skinned, straight-haired sisters of the Gamma Ray sorority battle it out in a beauty parlor with their darker-skinned, Afro-headed fellow coeds. Eventually, Half-Pint gets the chance to join the frat but only after a degrading episode with Jane (Tisha Campbell)—the soon-to-be ex-girlfriend of his house president—causes Dap to lose all respect for him. Based in part on the Lee’s experiences at Atlanta’s Morehouse College, he also wrote and produced School Daze. Despite production numbers that included “Straight and Nappy,” a dis-fest between the “wannabes” and “jigaboos” on campus, the biggest hit on the film’s soundtrack was the go-go anthem “Da Butt,” written by Marcus Miller and E.U.’s ode to shaking one’s backside. Supporting players Kadeem Hardison and Jasmine Guy also co-starred on the TV comedy A Different World, another look at life on a primarily African American college campus.

See You Yesterday (2019; Netflix)
- Science fiction intersects with social justice in co-writer/director Stefon Bristol’s action-adventure movie. A young, African American science prodigy travels back in time with her best friend and co-inventor to stop her beloved, older brother from being killed in a fatal shooting at the hands of the Brooklyn police.

The Groveland Four (2018; PBS)
- The Groveland Four were four young African-American men—Ernest Thomas, Charles Greenlee (then a minor at age 16), Samuel Shepherd, and Walter Irvin—who in 1949 were wrongfully accused of raping a 17-year-old woman and assaulting her husband on July 16, 1949, in Lake County, Florida. The case of “The Groveland Four” included a race riot, torture, multiple murders, two trials and a Supreme Court reversal. Though widely covered by the national press, the case has been largely forgotten, even though it helped lay a foundation for the Civil Rights Movement. The documentary won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the 2018 Orlando Urban Film and Music Festival.

The Hate You Give (2018)
- A young black student (Amandla Stenberg) from a poor neighborhood who attends a prep school in an affluent area finds her uneasy life balance further disrupted when she witnesses her childhood friend being shot by a police officer.
Caught in the middle of the subsequent turmoil, she is forced to look inside herself and figure out just where she stands in her young life. Based on a book of the same name by Angie Thomas and directed by George Tillman Jr.

**Time: The Kalief Browder Story**
- The criminal justice system tragically failed 16-year-old Kalief Browder, who spent three years in Rikers Island jail awaiting trial—two of those years in solitary confinement—after being arrested for allegedly stealing a backpack. The case was never prosecuted, the charges were ultimately dropped, and Browder committed suicide after his release. His story and the challenges posed to a basic understanding of American liberties are central to this six-part documentary. *Time* is a comprehensive review of the case, using first-person accounts, archival footage, and cinematic re-creations of key scenes from Browder’s life. Exclusive interviews with a wide range of people connected to the story, from politicians to close friends and family members to social reformers, are also featured.

**To Kill a Mockingbird**
- Horton Foote and the producer/director team of Robert Mulligan and Alan J. Pakula adapted Harper Lee’s Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiographical novel to film in 1962. Set in a small Alabama town in the 1930s, the story focuses on scrupulously honest, highly respected lawyer Atticus Finch, embodied by Gregory Peck. Finch puts his career on the line when he agrees to represent Tom Robinson (Brock Peters), a Black man accused of rape. The trial and the events surrounding it are seen through the eyes of Finch’s 6-year-old daughter Scout (Mary Badham). While Robinson’s trial gives the film its momentum, there are plenty of anecdotal occurrences before and after the court date: Scout’s ever-strengthening bond with older brother Jem (Philip Alford); her friendship with precocious young Dill Harris (a character based on Lee’s childhood chum Truman Capote, played by John Megna); her father’s no-nonsense reactions to such life-and-death crises as a rampaging mad dog; and especially Scout’s reactions to and relationship with Boo Radley (Robert Duvall in his movie debut), the reclusive “village idiot” who turns out to be her salvation when she is attacked by a venomous bigot. *To Kill a Mockingbird* won Academy Awards for Best Actor (Peck), Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Art Direction.

**Underground (1995)**
- An unpredictable black comedy with an epic scope, Emir Kusturica’s highly acclaimed film looks at the modern history of Yugoslavia through the often absurd misadventures of two friends over several decades. The film begins in Belgrade in 1941, establishing the friendship between the gregarious Blacky (Lazar Ristovski) and the more intellectual Marko (Miki Manojlovic) during a drunken, late-night musical procession that establishes the riotous tone to follow. Fellow members of the Communist Party, the friends also share an involvement in shady business activities and an attraction for a beautiful actress. Soon, the chaos of World War II forces them to take refuge in an underground shelter with a variety of other townspeople. Years pass and the war ends, but Marko and the
actress trick the others into believing that the war is still going on. Kusturica turns this inherently absurd premise into a vibrant portrait of the contradictory, foolish nature of war. Winner of the Palme d’Or at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival, the film received great acclaim on the festival circuit but had a hard time securing a release in the United States.

*United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell (2016-2020; CNN)*
- Comic and political provocateur W. Kamau Bell hosts this CNN original documentary series in which he travels to the far corners of America to explore race-based subcultures.
  a. Season 1 Episode 1: The New KKK
  b. Season 2 Episode 1: Immigrants and Refugees
  c. Season 4 Episode 2: Not All White People
  d. Season 4 Episode 7: #LivingWhileBlack

*W.* (2008)
- Josh Brolin stars as George W. Bush in this Oliver Stone biopic that traces the head of state’s rise to power from a privileged alcoholic to a born-again Christian whose belief in religious destiny helped move him to the top ranks of political power. Co-written by Stanley G. Weiser, *W.* is produced by fellow Stone collaborators Moritz Borman and Jon Kilik, with Elizabeth Banks co-starring as the first lady, Laura. Jeffrey Wright plays Colin Powell, who was the first African America to serve as Secretary of State. Thandie Newton plays Condoleezza Rice, who was the first female National Security Advisor and the first female African America Secretary of State. Other actors include James Cromwell as the elder President George H.W. Bush, Ellen Burstyn as Barbara Bush, and Richard Dreyfuss as Vice President Dick Cheney.

*When They See Us* (2009; Netflix)
- Directed by Ava DuVernay, *When They See Us* is a four-part mini-series based on events surrounding and subsequent to the April 19, 1989, Central Park jogger case when five teens from Harlem were arrested and prosecuted on charges related to the sexual assault of a female victim. The story explores the lives of the five suspects, who always maintained their innocence, and the lives of their families; the five men eventually were exonerated in 2002.