

## **Movies with racial equity themes 1950 to present**

\* Available through Madison Public Library

**\*Porgy and Bess (1935, 2001):** Musical drama focuses on the poverty-stricken residents struggling to survive in the Charleston tenement of Catfish Row. The sultry Bess (Dorothy Dandridge) becomes the object of desire of Porgy (Sidney Poitier), a disabled man who gets around in a cart. But Bess is also involved with Thuggis

**Edge of the City (1957):** Axel Nordmann (John Cassavetes) takes a job as a dock laborer and is continually harassed by his tyrannical supervisor, Charles Malik (Jack Warden). Malik knows a secret from Axel's past, forcing the young worker to endure his boss's torment. Eventually, Axel befriends Tommy Tyler (Sidney Poitier)

**\*The Learning Tree (1969):** As an African-American teen in small-town Kansas in the 1920s, Newt Winger (Kyle Johnson) largely shrugs off the racial prejudice of his time and place. His calm and self-controlled perspective is in direct opposition to that of his quick-tempered friend, Marcus Savage (Alex Clarke). But when Marcus

**\*Nothing But A Man (1964, 2004):** African-American rail worker Duff Anderson (Ivan Dixon) has left his 4-year old son with a nanny, and now drifts through life with little ambition. Duff's outlook on life changes when he meets schoolteacher Josie Dawson (Abbey Lincoln), a gentle preacher's daughter.

**\*Raisin in the Sun (1961, 1999):** This lauded drama follows the Youngers, an African-American family living together in an apartment in Chicago. Following the death of their patriarch, they try to determine what to do with the substantial insurance payment they'll soon receive. Opinions on what to do with the money vary.  
Walter Lee

**\*They call me Mister Tibbs (1970, 2001):** Detective Virgil Tibbs has been assigned to solve the murder of a prostitute. His pal, a political-minded minister who is spearheading a referendum on community control, is suspected of the homicide and Tibbs is faced with the decision of whether or not to investigate

**\*A Soldier's Story (1984, 1999):** A black army attorney is sent to Fort Neal, Louisiana, near the end of World War II to investigate the murder of Sgt. Waters, a black man who despised his own roots

**\*Do the right Thing (1989):** "The hottest day of the year explodes onscreen in this vibrant look at a day in the life of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. A portrait of urban racial tensions sparked controversy while earning popular and critical praise,"--Container

**\*Mississippi Burning (1988, 2001):** Set in Mississippi in 1964, this is a fictionalized version of the case of the murder of three young civil rights workers, the FBI's attempts to find the missing boys and the clash between the authorities and the locals in a Klan-dominated town.

\* **Glory (1989):** Two idealistic young Bostonians lead the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, America's first Black regiment in the Civil War. (Library only has video cassette)

**\*Boyz 'n the Hood (1991, 1998):** For three young men growing up in South Central Los Angeles, the "hood" is a place of drive-by shootings, unemployment, drugs and pain. But their reactions to the world around them vary- one is an unambitious drug dealer, his brother is a college bound teenage father, and the brother's best friend is guided by a strong father who hopes for a better life for his son

\***Malcolm X (1992, 2000):** Screen version of the life of Malcolm X, who through his religious conversion to Islam, found the strength to rise up from a criminal past to become an influential civil rights leader

\***The Great Debaters (2007):** Melvin B. Tolson is a professor at Wiley College in Texas. Wiley is a small African-American college. In 1935, Tolson inspired students to form the school's first debate team. Tolson turns a group of underdog students into a historically elite debate team which goes on to challenge Harvard in the national championship. Inspired by a true story

\***12 Years a Slave (2013):** Based on the true story of Solomon Northup. It is 1841, and Northup, an accomplished, free citizen of New York, is kidnapped and sold into slavery. Stripped of his identity and deprived of all dignity, Northup is ultimately purchased by ruthless plantation owner Edwin Epps and must find the strength within to survive. Filled with powerful performances by an astonishing cast including Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Fassbender, Benedict Cumberbatch, Brad Pitt, and newcomer Lupita Nyong'o, 12 Years a Slave is both an unflinching account of slavery in American history and a celebration of the indomitable power of hope.

\***Moonlight (2016):** A look at three defining chapters in the life of Chiron, a young black man growing up in Miami. His epic journey to manhood is guided by the kindness, support and love of the community that helps raise him.

\***Fences (2016):** Troy Maxson (Denzel Washington) makes his living as a sanitation worker in 1950s Pittsburgh. Maxson once dreamed of becoming a professional baseball player, but was deemed too old when the major leagues began admitting black athletes. Bitter over his missed opportunity, Troy creates further tension in his family when he squashes his son's (Jovan Adepo) chance to meet a college football recruiter.

\***Mudbound (2017):** Laura McAllan is trying to raise her children on her husband's Mississippi Delta farm, a place she finds foreign and frightening. In the midst of the family's struggles, two young men return from the war to work the land. Jamie McAllan, Laura's brother-in-law, is everything her husband is not - charming and handsome, but he is haunted by his memories of combat. Ronsel Jackson, eldest son of the black sharecroppers who live on the McAllan farm, now battles the prejudice in the Jim Crow South.

\***Black Panther: (2018)** King T'Challa returns home to the isolated, technologically advanced African nation of Wakanda to serve as new leader. However, T'Challa soon finds that he is challenged for the throne from divisions within his own country. When two enemies conspire to destroy Wakanda, the hero known as Black Panther must join forces with C.I.A. agent Everett K. Ross and members of the Wakandan Special Forces, to prevent Wakanda from being drawn into a world war