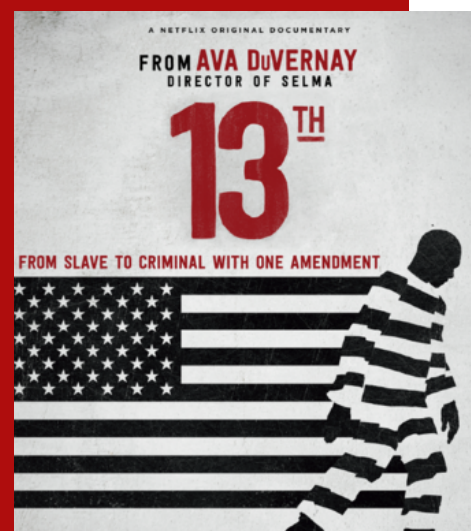


13TH MOVIE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Discussion Questions
Virtual Viewing
Virtual Discussion



FILM SUMMARY

The historical roots of African American oppression run deep, as Ava DuVernay's documentary 13TH reveals. The film looks back to the ratification of Amendment XIII, which states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." DuVernay argues that a prison-industrial complex which statistically imprisons black men disproportionately and allows for their disciplinary servitude, has taken advantage of America's black population and brings into question if this system ultimately acts as a form of modern day slavery.

Featuring a wide range of interviewees including civil rights activist Angela Davis, "The New Jim Crow" author Michelle Alexander, regular New Yorker reporter and professor Jelani Cobb, social justice author and attorney Van Jones, and many more, 13TH moves from the media-induced criminalization of black persons to the corporate privatization of prisons with eloquence, poise, and a cavalcade of statistics to back up its thesis on the dehumanization of black people in America.

While sobering in its historical recontextualization of race in America, DuVernay's film remains hopeful in acknowledging her fellow African Americans' diligence and grace in their fight for equality under intolerable conditions. No one knows how bright or dark the future of America will be, but as Jones vigilantly states, "It will be."

13TH MOVIE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions as a starting point for a group discussion or self-reflection. It is important to remember that everyone is on their own social justice journey, so leave time for next steps in the discussion. Next steps include continual education, advocacy, and lifestyle changes that shift our awareness and privilege.

01

A LEGACY OF SLAVERY

What's the underlying motive for the 13th amendment leaving a loophole for slave labor? Were you aware that the 13th Amendment still allows for some forms of slavery?

02

THE POLITICS OF MASS INCARCERATION

Before watching this documentary, were you aware that both political parties were complicit in creating the conditions that led to mass incarceration?

03

AFRICAN AMERICAN REPRESENTATION

How do you think media and popular culture representations of Black Americans, particularly Black men, have contributed to a climate of white fear and anxiety? How has that affected tough-on-crime policies?

04

BLACK STIGMA

How do you think media had contributed to the "dangerous black man" narrative?

05

THE HUMANITY OF STATISTICS

This film is full of statistics, many of them startling. Which statistic stood out to you the most? Why do you think this is? What will you do with this statistic?