“Gone With the Wind” – Southern History or Hollywood Blockbuster?

Hollywood has relied on events in the past to provide inspiration for movies. *Braveheart*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and *Forrest Gump* all rely on settings from history to provide the plot for their story. In many cases, these movies get it right, helping to make events in the past come alive for a new generation. Making movies about the past is not a new thing though.

*Gone with the Wind* was a Hollywood blockbuster when it was released in 1939. Adjusted for inflation, it has grossed more money at the box office than any other film in US History. It was based on a book by Margaret Mitchell about the struggles of a Southern belle before, during, and after the American Civil War. It is a cinematic masterpiece that won 10 Oscars, including Best Picture and the first Academy Award for an African American. Even though this is a great movie, does it get it right? Do you think the picture that *Gone with the Wind* paints of the American South really reflects how it was before the Civil War?

You are to decide whether or not you believe *Gone with the Wind* shows an accurate picture of the American South before the Civil War. Create a thesis that states your beliefs and support your thesis with at least three paragraphs, each arguing a different point. State your thesis in your introductory paragraph and underline it. Questions to consider are listed below:

**Focus Question:** Does *Gone with the Wind* accurately show the American South just prior to the American Civil War?

**Supplemental Questions:** You must answer the focus question above. One of your three paragraphs must answer one of the supplemental questions. You do not have to answer all questions listed below, but they should help when writing the paper if you need prompting.

1. Does the movie accurately portray slaves in the American South?
2. Does the movie accurately portray Southern attitudes towards the Civil War?
3. Does the movie accurately portray how people lived in the American South before the war?

**Points for the assignment:**

30 pts. – “Gone with the Wind” Viewing Guide. It must be answered up to Question 6 for credit. Due when final essay is due.

30 pts. – Pre-writing worksheet. You must fill out the pre-writing worksheet found on the back of this writing prompt and turn it in along with your final essay.

40 pts. – Final Essay. Must have a thesis statement, introduction, body, and conclusion. Must be at least five paragraphs for full credit.

The assignment is due Friday, December 11. Each day the assignment is late, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade. Weekends count as one day.