

HANDSOME & MAJESTIC



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HANDSOME & MAJESTIC

Directed by Nathan Drillot and Jeff Petry

2015 | Canada | 12 min

TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide has been designed to help teachers and students enrich their experience of *Handsome & Majestic* by providing support in the form of questions and activities. There are a range of questions that will help teachers frame discussions with their class, activities for before, during and after viewing the film, and some weblinks that provide starting points for further research or discussion.

The Film

Teenaged Milan is like other boys his age: he likes sports, lasagna and playing with friends. But unlike others, he faces the struggles that come with a transgender identity. With the loving support of his family, Milan chooses to stay in the rural community of Prince George to continue to educate and inspire. **Aisha Jamal**

Source: <http://www.hotdocs.ca>

The Filmmakers

SALAZAR is a director/producer collaboration between Jeff Petry and Nathan Drillot. Their partnership galvanized over a mutual interest in telling unique stories of individuals and their communities, capturing sublime landscapes, and experiencing filmmaking as an integrated part of life. SALAZAR's cinematic narratives are influenced by these experiences and sensibilities. Their work has taken them around the world, further inspiring their drive to recognize the enormity of the human condition. They've had the privilege to film world-renowned kinetic artist Theo Jansen on the beaches of Den Haag, travel the Deep South shooting over 1,500 portraits of LGBTQ Americans for the project *Self Evident Truths*, and tell the story of the only Muslim professional sumo wrestler living in Tokyo. Their documentary work with Warner Brothers recording artists Tegan and Sara even garnered them a Grammy nomination. Recognized by Pitchfork, Motionographer, TED, National Geographic, Awardeo, Hypebeast, Vice, The Creators Project, booooooom, two handfults of Vimeo Staff Picks and many other creative entities, SALAZAR continues to produce award-winning work. They just released their first feature-length documentary, *Wizard Mode*, that focuses on Robert Gagno, the current world champion of pinball, and how societies label individuals with developmental disorders, and what it means to be "normal."

Educational package written and compiled by Riisa Walden
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VIEWING THE FILM WITH STUDENTS

The following three subsections are intended to provide you with a range of Pre-Viewing, Viewing and Post-Viewing activities. They are followed by a set of questions based upon the film's larger thematic domains, some follow-up questions and quotations, sample curricular outcomes and a page of weblinks for further investigation.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Have students consider the words "handsome" and "majestic." What kinds of images, behaviours and people do they associate with these words? Based on the title of the film, *Handsome & Majestic*, have students make predictions about what this film will be about.

As a class, familiarize yourselves with and discuss terminology relating to LGBTQ identities (<http://ok2bme.ca/> Click on What does LGBTQ+ mean?, then Resources, then Kids & Teens) and make sure that students understand the difference between biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation (<http://teenhealthsource.com/> Type "Sex, Gender and Sexual Identity" into the search function of the website).

Ask students what they understand already about trans identities. Explore information about trans identities and the experiences of trans people (<http://ok2bme.ca/> Type "Trans Resources" into the search function of the website).

In pairs or small groups have students explore LGBTQ bullying statistics using the website No Bullying (<http://nobullying.com/> Type "LGBT bullying statistics" into the search function of the website). As a class, have students share information from the website that they found surprising and/or alarming.

Viewing Activities

Have students complete the PBS viewing guide on documentaries (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/docs/Copies%20of%20Viewing%20Guide.pdf>). Students can revisit their completed documents as a Post-Viewing Activity.

Have students jot down three to five ideas for discussion, or questions that the film raises in their minds. As an Extension and/or Post-Viewing Activity, students can enter their questions into an online response or polling system and can vote on the questions or issues they would like to explore in

further detail. Encourage students to use multiple levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Have students track their emotional responses as they view the film. Does the film make them feel angry, sad, hopeful, confused? What parts of the film inspire different emotions for them?

Post-Viewing Activities

Discuss with students their initial reactions to the film and Milan's experiences. Did the students' feelings evolve over the course of the film?

Milan and his parents talk openly about how his school and teachers have been complicit in the bullying and sense of exclusion Milan has felt at school. Have students make a list of ways that schools could better support students like Milan.

As a class, make connections between the experience of transphobia seen in the film and this kind of discrimination in your school and/or community. Discuss what is being done in your school and/or community to address this form of discrimination. Are these initiatives successful? If your class does not feel that transphobia is an issue at your school or in your community, why is this the case?

Have students read Avinash Chak's BBC article "Beyond 'He' and 'She': The Rise of Non-Binary Pronouns" (<http://www.bbc.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website). Then have the class practice introducing themselves with a little bit of biographical information, including their preferred gender pronoun. Follow up this activity by asking students to reflect on why this form of introduction might help to promote more inclusivity.

At one point in the film, Milan discusses the difficulty he has experienced at school as a result of gender-specific

bathrooms. If your school does not have gender-neutral bathrooms, have students draft a letter to the principal making a suggestion to make your school safer and more inclusive by designating or creating a gender-neutral bathroom.

Have students participate in a Socratic discussion on the film. Guidelines for Socratic discussions can be found here: <http://www.authenticeducation.org/documents/WhatSeminar04.pdf>

Have students complete an exit note. The exit note should contain one idea that demonstrates what they learned from the film, as well as one question that they still have about the topic.

As a class, use "The Gender Unicorn" to explore the concept of spectrums in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation (Use Google to search "Confused About Gender? The Gender Unicorn Is Here to Help!" to access the infographic and for an explanation about how to use it.) After looking at the infographic and reading about how to use it, have students discuss how they feel about the concept of a spectrum in gender identity and sexual orientation. Make a list of examples from the film where an individual exhibits fluidity in gender identity and/or sexual orientation or where an individual does not seem to fit into a neatly defined category of gender or sexual orientation?

WEBSITES AND ONLINE RESOURCES

About the Film

Production Company: www.salazarfilm.com

Vimeo: www.vimeo.com/salazarfilm

Twitter: www.twitter.com/salazarfilm

Instagram: www.instagram.com/salazarfilm

Additional Resources

BBC: Avinash Chak's article "Beyond 'He' and 'She': The Rise of Non-Binary Pronouns" offers a comprehensive introduction to the topic of gender-neutral pronouns and their increasing inclusion in mainstream culture.

<http://www.bbc.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

CBC: The article "Transgender Child's Puberty-Blocking Drug Triggers B.C. Supreme Court Fight" introduces students to some of the legal issues related to the experience of trans youth in Canada in relation to medical intervention.

<http://www.cbc.ca/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

Frontline: Part of the series "Growing Up Trans," Priyanka Boghani's article "When Transgender Kids Transition, Medical Risks Are Both Known and Unknown" explains some of the medical interventions being used by trans youth and their families.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

Gender Free ID Coalition: This coalition, of which Milan is part, seeks to end the inclusion of state-assigned gender on identification documents.

<http://gender-freeidcoalition.ca>

OK2BME: This website offers a number of LGBTQ-related resources for teachers and students. Many of the videos found under Resources can extend conversations raised by the film.

<http://ok2bme.ca>

PBS: The Frontline episode "Growing Up Trans" shares the stories of many youths who identify as trans. It is an in-depth exploration of the challenges they and their families have experienced in a world where trans identities are often poorly understood.

<http://www.pbs.org/> Type the name of the episode into the search function of the website.

TED: Geena Rocero's talk "Why I Must Come Out" points out the issue of trans visibility and introduces students to another story of a trans person's path to living the gender most right for her, despite sex assignment at birth.

<http://www.ted.com/> Type the title of the talk into the search function of the website.

The New Yorker: Jeannie Suk Gersen's article "Who's Afraid of Gender-Neutral Bathrooms?" explores the debate surrounding the implementation of gender-neutral bathrooms, a relevant issue for the trans community.

<http://www.newyorker.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

The Toronto Star: Kirstin Rushow's article "Peel Board to Include All-Gender Washrooms in Every High School" explains the decision by this Greater Toronto Area school board to mandate gender-inclusive washrooms in every school as a specific effort to create inclusive education for trans and gender non-conforming students.

<https://www.thestar.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

TransActive Gender Center: This American organization offers many resources for youth, families and educators aimed at supporting trans youth and creating safe families, schools and communities.

<http://www.transactiveonline.org>

Trans Student Educational Resources: Classes can further explore the concept of how gender identity and sexual orientation are increasingly discussed as existing along a spectrum using "The Gender Unicorn" infographic.

<http://www.transstudent.org/> Type the name of the infographic into the search function of the website.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Questions for Pre-Viewing or Post-Viewing Activities

Before viewing the film: What do you know about transgendered people? What issues do you expect to find in a film about a trans youth? After viewing the film: How did the film fit with or differ from your expectations?

Before viewing the film: If you were a boy or girl who identifies more with the opposite sex than the one you were assigned at birth, how would you feel? Would you be comfortable talking about your feelings with your family, friends or teachers? Why or why not?

What did the film teach you about the experience of being a trans person?

At one point in the film, Milan talks about how teachers did not support him as a trans student. He suggests that some adults are scared by anyone they see as different. Why are some people afraid of people they perceive to be different? What other "differences" are people sometimes afraid of?

There has been a lot of recent attention in schools to address bullying. If this has been the case at your school, has the issue of transphobic bullying been discussed? If yes, has this education been effective? If not, should this be included, and why do you think it hasn't been so far?

Is it the responsibility of schools to support trans students? In what ways can schools and teachers help to create inclusive education for trans students?

Milan experiences bullying at school from a very young age. Why do children bully others based on gender expression and identity? Is this an issue that leads to bullying in your school?

What is the role of family in supporting trans children? How do Milan's parents and his sister support him? Are there ways that he could have been better supported by his family? Would your parents and other family members be accepting if you expressed your gender in ways that do not conform with the sex you were assigned at birth? Does your family convey particular expectations about how you are supposed to express your gender identity as a boy or a girl?

Would it be useful for more students to see the film *Handsome & Majestic*? Why or why not?

Are the tone and overall message of this film positive or negative? Explain your choice with specific examples from the film.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE FILM TO EXPLORE

1. *"I am Milan Halikowski. I am handsome and majestic. I pretend to be the most handsome dude ever. I feel mad when people bully others. I cry when I get hurt. I am handsome and majestic. I understand people's differences. I say 'awesome.' I dream that I am rich. I try to fit in. I want acceptance. I am handsome and majestic."* Milan
2. *"I didn't know what trans was. I just assumed Milan was a lesbian or gonna be, or whatever, I don't care. I just wanted my child and all my children to be healthy and happy with who they are, and that was hard to watch this little person turn into this super anxious, depressed child."* Milan's mother Lynnell
3. *"[The teachers] would make me use the girls' washroom and the girls' change room. I would have to hide in the girls' bathroom and sneak in there and sneak out and make sure no one saw me because all the little kids would scream and all the big kids would tease me. If I would sneak in and use the boys' washroom, and, if they found out, I would get a detention. And I was in grade one when that first happened. I would basically be told to shut up and not say anything, so I just never really argued back or said anything. I just kind of did what I was told to do. I think adults like that are really childish and don't like to see anything different, and, if they do, it scares them."* Milan
4. *"I wish I would've heard his words sooner or educated myself."* Milan's father Mike
5. *"I've never seen a young man rise up with a smile on his face after so much. I wrote him a letter once telling him that he was my hero because no matter what, he just stands back up."* Milan's father Mike
6. *"It makes me feel really good that I am able to start making a difference. I think it is important for me to stay here so that I can help educate people and so that people don't have to travel all the way down to Vancouver to get resources, and it can be where they live, just so that this place can be a more accepting town and you don't have to be afraid to be who you want to be."* Milan
7. *"I am Milan, and I am a trans boy. There was a time that I could not admit my true self in public. This changed just recently. I have always known that I am a boy, but most people didn't believe me. At my new school, I still get bullied, but I have some support now. I am not broken. I don't need to be fixed. I am handsome and majestic."* Milan

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Design and make a poster aimed at eliminating transphobia in your school.

Be sure to address your audience in a way that will be meaningful for your school context by considering issues of bullying, freedom of gender expression and inclusion/exclusion of gender non-conforming students at your school.

You can decide on the best medium for your poster. For example, it could be hand drawn, a collage, computer-generated or a combination of methods. Whatever the form, be sensitive to how your poster will communicate your intended message and work to visually attract viewers.

Once completed, posters will be displayed around the classroom. Part of your assessment will involve participating in a group critique about the posters created. For the discussion component, remember to offer constructive feedback. You may want to use the following questions to guide your response:

- What techniques do the various posters use to successfully draw attention to their message?
- Are there any improvements that could be made to individual posters?
- Did any of the posters take a particularly original, innovative or effective approach to the task?
- Were there certain themes or messages in common that emerged in the ways that you approached this task?

ACTIVITY RUBRIC: ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Knowledge/Understanding

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Understanding trans perspectives and discrimination presented in the film and at your school	Student's poster demonstrates limited understanding of the issue and how to combat transphobia in schools	Student's poster demonstrates some understanding of the issue and how to combat transphobia in schools	Student's poster demonstrates a good understanding of the issue and how to combat transphobia in schools	Student's poster demonstrates exceptional understanding of the issue and how to combat transphobia in schools	/10

Thinking/Inquiry

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Ability to creatively and effectively design a poster to convey a clear and relevant message to an intended audience	Student demonstrates moderate creativity and ability to think about the intended audience and does not present a clear message in a visual medium	Student demonstrates moderate creativity and ability to think about the intended audience and presents a somewhat clear message in a visual medium	Student demonstrates considerable creativity and ability to think about the intended audience and presents a clear message in a visual medium	Student demonstrates outstanding creativity and ability to think about the intended audience and presents an extremely clear message in a visual medium	/10

Application

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Applying care in the execution of the task	Student shows limited care in designing and creating the poster and has not shown much eye for detail	Student shows a satisfactory level of care in designing and creating the poster and has some eye for detail	Student shows a considerable level of care in designing and creating the poster and has a good eye for detail	Student shows a high level of care in designing and creating the poster and has an exceptional eye for detail	/10

Communication

	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Ability to communicate clearly and engage in constructive peer-critique	The student has some difficulty communicating clearly and offering constructive feedback	The student does an adequate job communicating clearly and offering constructive feedback	The student does a good job communicating clearly and offering constructive feedback	The student does an exceptional job communicating clearly and offering constructive feedback	/10

Comments:

Total: _____/40

EXAMPLES OF CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

COURSE	OVERALL EXPECTATIONS
Grade 7 & 8 Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply the creative process to produce art works in a variety of traditional two- and three-dimensional forms, as well as multimedia art works, that communicate feelings, ideas and understandings, using elements, principles and techniques of visual arts as well as current media technologies. • apply the critical analysis process to communicate feelings, ideas and understandings in response to a variety of art works and art experiences.
Grade 7 & 8 Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes. • use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. • demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts. • create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques.
Grade 9-12 English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. • demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts. • identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning. • create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques.
Grade 10-12 Media Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply the creative process to create media art works, individually and/or collaboratively. • design and produce media art works, applying the principles of media arts and using various elements from contributing arts. • demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, assessing and reflecting on media art works. • analyze instances of international cooperation and conflict and explain the factors that contributed to each.
Grade 9-12 Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply the creative process to create a variety of art works, individually and/or collaboratively. • apply elements and principles of design to create art works for the purpose of self-expression and to communicate ideas, information and/or messages. • demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating and reflecting on various art works.
Grade 11 Understanding Canadian Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe historical and contemporary barriers to the equal enjoyment of human rights in Canada. • describe the rights and freedoms enshrined in Canadian law and explain how they are interpreted, how they may be limited and how they are enforced in Canada and in Ontario. • explain how the law applies to family matters. • explain the dynamic nature of law, including the way in which it evolves in response to technology and changes in societal values.
Grade 12 Canadian and International Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the relationship between law and societal values. • assess the influence of individual and collective action on the evolution of law. • explain the rights and responsibilities of individuals under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. • analyze the conflicts between minority and majority rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, and examine the methods available to resolve these conflicts.

Grade 11 Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a psychological perspective to explain how diverse factors influence and shape human mental processes and behaviour. • use a psychological perspective to analyze patterns of socialization. • use a sociological perspective to explain how diverse factors influence and shape individual and group social behaviour. • use a sociological perspective to explain patterns of socialization.
Grade 11 Gender Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of how attitudes, behaviours, roles and norms relating to gender are socially constructed, and of the complexity of gender as a concept and as a lived experience. • analyze sexism and the dynamics of power relations with respect to sex and gender in a variety of contexts. • demonstrate an understanding of homophobic and gender-based violence in both Canadian and global contexts, and of violence-prevention strategies.
Grade 11 Equity, Diversity and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore topics related to equity, diversity and/or social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research. • demonstrate an understanding of how identity is socially constructed and internalized, and of the impact of social norms and stereotypes. • demonstrate an understanding of the dynamics of power relations in various social contexts. • demonstrate an understanding of the impact individual action can have on equity, social justice and environmental issues, and of how the media can create awareness of these issues. • demonstrate an understanding of how social activism can be used to support equity and social justice objectives.
Grade 12 Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice. • analyze, in historical and contemporary contexts, the dynamics of power relations and privilege as well as various factors that contribute to power or marginalization. • assess the impact of media and popular culture on equity and social justice issues. • evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups and/or movements identified with specific aspects of the struggle for equity and social justice.
Grade 11 Dynamics of Human Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how self-concept and self-esteem influence personal well-being. • demonstrate an understanding of how self-concept influences an individual's interactions with others. • demonstrate an understanding of various social and cultural influences on relationships. • demonstrate an understanding of skills and strategies that help people to develop and sustain healthy relationships. • demonstrate an understanding of effective strategies for resolving conflicts in human interactions.
Grade 12 Human Development Throughout the Lifespan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of threats to healthy development throughout the lifespan and of a variety of protective factors that can increase an individual's resilience and reduce the impact of these threats. • demonstrate an understanding of social-emotional development throughout the lifespan and of ways of influencing such development. • demonstrate an understanding of various influences on personality development and identity formation throughout the lifespan. • demonstrate an understanding of how factors affect social-emotional development, with an emphasis on the process of socialization.

Grade 12 Working With School-Age Children and Adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of threats to healthy development throughout the lifespan and of a variety of protective factors that can increase an individual's resilience and reduce the impact of these threats. • demonstrate an understanding of social-emotional development throughout the lifespan and of ways of influencing such development. • demonstrate an understanding of various influences on personality development and identity formation throughout the lifespan. • demonstrate an understanding of how factors affect social-emotional development, with an emphasis on the process of socialization.
Grade 12 Working With School-Age Children and Adolescent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of social change. • demonstrate an understanding of how forces influence and shape social patterns and trends. • demonstrate an understanding of social science theories about social deviance, and of how various responses to deviance affect individuals and society. • demonstrate an understanding of how various social structures and conditions support or limit global inequalities.

The Overall Expectations listed above are from the *Ontario Curriculum*. Complete course descriptions, including all Overall and Specific Expectations can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html>