



The Chicago International Film Festival

Cinema/Chicago and the Chicago International Film Festival
Education Outreach Program Screening: *The Girls on Liberty Street*
Director: John Rangel
62 minutes, not rated
In English

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas/questions and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students are required to respond to the screening with a one-page essay. Essays (either all or select) must be sent to Cinema/Chicago.*

Synopsis: With only one week left until she leaves for the Army, teenager Brianna spends her final days at her home in the Chicago suburbs packing and saying goodbye to friends. But in her quiet moments and the seemingly mundane interactions with family members, Brianna's anxiety about her decision is palpable. Eschewing melodrama, the film imbues this simple story with a deft style and effortlessly natural performances, creating an assured portrait of a young woman in transition.

Recommended for: humanities, social studies, film and video students

Appropriate for: all high school students

Study Ideas/Questions:

1. The film follows various characters coping with saying goodbye. From Brianna's friends and family to Brianna herself, everyone responds differently to this change. What are the different ways people react to her leaving? How do you cope with change and saying goodbye?
2. The people in Brianna's life talk about the risks involved with joining the Army. However, there are also risks associated with other choices, such as going to college, starting a family and starting a career. What are the different "risks" associated with these various life choices? Is one more risky than the other? Explain why or why not.
3. When Selena goes to see her school counselor, we hear their conversation while we see Brianna wandering through the halls of the high school. Why do you think the director made this choice? As an audience member, how did it make you feel about what was being said?
4. Selena tells Brianna that "if anything happens" to her, Selena wants to get Brianna's clothes. Why do you think Selena said this to Brianna? Is there more to this conversation than is being said?

5. After Eddy breaks up with her, Brianna goes through a box of memorabilia and throws out everything that reminds her of their relationship. Did you agree with Brianna that it's best to discard of painful memories, or do you think all memories – the good and the bad – should be preserved? Why?
6. Towards the end of the film, Brianna finally makes amends with an old friend, Patricia. Why do you think they forgave one another?
7. Which character do you relate to the most? Why?
8. Based on what we learn about Brianna, what do you think was her motive for joining the Army?
9. The film is made with non-professional actors. Why do you think the director chose to use "real" people and not professionals?
10. Think about the ending of the film. What do you think happens next? Do you think Brianna has a good experience in the Army? Do you think she fails and returns home? Explain your prediction.

Useful Links and Resources:

Film trailer: <https://vimeo.com/48712527>

Film's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/thegirlsonlibertystreet>

Information about Cinema/Chicago's Education Outreach Program:

<http://cinemachicago.org/education/>

*Schools who do not send in essay requirement will not be allowed to attend future Education Outreach Screenings.