This is a list I started about five years ago that I try and revise a couple times each year. I've made it a point as of late to go back and rewatch many of the films on this list, and have also tried to see many of the great films I haven't seen and also those reccomended to me by readers. In this latest update, I expand it to my top 200 films, and also added writeups for each of the Top 50. As a huge movie buff, this is something I have alot of fun with, and really enjoy getting feedback on. Enjoy.

NOTE: An updated version of this column can be found here

http://www.theclevelandfan.com/article_detail.php?id=3038

1. The Godfather (1972)

Perfection in filmmaking, a movie without a single weakness. The transition that Michael goes through in this film, the tens of classic scenes and moments, the lines that are repeated ad nausea to this day ... 35 years later. The script, the casting, the acting, the story - all superb. The most influential movie of all-time and Pacino, Brando, and Caan were born for their roles in it. The greatest movie ever made.

2. The Godfather - Part II (1974)

A little slower moving than the first one, but every bit as brilliant. Pacino is even better in this one, and in my view, pulls off the greatest acting performance in the history of motion pictures as Michael in the sequel. DeNiro is predictably amazing as the young Vito Corleone as the film continues to perform the case study of the two as dons of the Corleone family.

3. The Empire Strikes Back (1980)

“No. I am your father.” The climax of one of the most dramatic scenes in motion picture history as Vader reveals the truth to Luke during their epic light saber battle late in the film. The darkest and most serious film of the original trilogy, as the appealing characters from Star Wars are developed further and Yoda is introduced. Great special effects, an excellent musical score, and a number of different types of scenery. The best of this series, and one of the greatest movies ever made.

4. Saving Private Ryan (1998)

Simply put, the first and last half hour of this movie are as powerful, gripping, and realistic as any scenes in film history, and are at times agonizing to watch due to their vicious realism. And the film has an amazing cast that includes eight to ten of my favorite actors. Some say the story itself is overrated. I can see that, I guess, but felt that Spielberg ties it up all nicely at the end, and does a brilliant job directing here. In my view, this is the greatest war movie ever made. The realism, the Normandy beach reenactment, the absolutely superb acting ... all are off the charts.

5. Star Wars (1977)

The fourth of the six episodes, but the first in the series to be released in the theaters. This is the ultimate tale of good versus evil, and a film that set the stage for one of the greatest fantasy stories to ever be portrayed on the silver screen. It's easy to watch this film now and tell me you're not overly impressed, but I can't imagine many people saying that in 1977 when the special effects were off the chart.

6. Lost In Translation (2003)

I always catch heat for having this movie so high. It's clearly a love/hate film. Some see it as vastly overrated. Others, like me, see it as a work of genius. The story is so simple. An older unhappily married man meets a gorgeous young unhappily married woman in Tokyo, a city both are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with. These characters are played BRILLIANTLY by Bill Murray, in one of the best performances of his career, and Scarlett Johansson in her coming out party as an actress. The film guides you through a roller coaster of emotions that leaves you begging for more at the end. I simply can't do it justice with a short paragraph here. Just see it if you haven't. And if you have, see it again ... it gets better each time.

7. Schindlers List (1993)

It wasn't until I recently rewatched this film that I fully appreciated it's greatness. Liam Neeson plays "Oskar Schindler", a greedy German businessman that exploits cheap Jewish labor during WWII to help his factory business thrive. As he continues to witness the horrors experienced by the Jews, Schindler begins to use his factory as a way to save them. A complete masterpiece in filmmaking. Another Spielberg work of genius.

8. Lord of the Rings: Return of the King (2003)

The conclusion of a stunningly powerful trilogy, of which all three were nominated for Best Picture of the Year. This is the only of the three that won, and the film was clearly deserving; ending the journey for Frodo, Sam, and Smeagol/Gollum. Everything leads up to the battle scene at the end of this film, which is as visually impressive as any scene in film history.

9. Hoosiers (1986)

The greatest sports movie off all time. Some have called it "the Rocky of basketball".

I call Rocky "the Hoosiers of boxing". In a role tailor made for him, Gene Hackman is amazing as a basketball coach with a checkered past that comes to small town Hickory, Indiana … improbably leading the hodunk little town high school to the state championship in the dramatization of a true story. Dennis Hopper is excellent as the town drunk that lives and dies with the team, as well as the bottle.

10. Alien (1979)

The standard for sci-fi horror movies, and one of the greatest films ever made. A mining ship investigates a SOS call on a distant planet. An alien life form makes its way back on to the ship before they depart, and all hell breaks loose. An amazing performance by Sigourney Weaver in her coming out party as an actress. The film was light years ahead of its time. The alien and set design were fantastic ... the ship's design is so believable that you feel you're inside the actual spacecraft with the terrified crew. The film has you on the edge of your seat throughout - as you never know where the danger will strike next. Great tag line too. "In space, no one can hear you scream."

11. The Shining (1980)

Classic Nicholson as he plays the caretaker of a hotel abandoned for the winter. An evil and spiritual presence consumes Nicholson, and his son begins to see terrifying visions of the hotel's brutal past. All hell breaks loose about an hour or so in, and takes you on a terrifying ride towards a great ending. One of the scariest movies of all-time in my view, and one of the greatest films ever. If you like to be terrified, and have not yet seen this classic, do so immediately.

12. Silence Of The Lambs (1991)

Anthony Hopkins' role as "Hannibal Lechter" is one of the greatest performances ever. This is the terrifying tale of a young FBI agent (played brilliantly by Jodie Foster) tracking a psychopathic killer, and needing the help of an even more psychopathic Lechter to do it. An all-time classic.

13. Good Fellas (1990)

The standard for post-Godfather mob movies. A phenomenal cast. DeNiro, Liotta, Pesci, Bracco, Sorvino. Basically, this is the story of Henry Hill's (played by Liotta) ascent to the highest levels of the mob hierarchy, then the hard fall as it all comes crashing down.

14. The Deer Hunter (1978)

Powerful. Moving. Depressing. A story of what Vietnam did to a group of friends and their community. They started as blue-collar steel workers from a Midwestern town being called off by their country to war. The last 30 minutes of this movie are incredibly hard to watch, as they return back to said town, deeply changed ... and deal with life post-Vietnam. The Russian roulette scenes are gripping as any scenes from any film ever.

15. The Usual Suspects (1995)

A brilliant, brilliant film ... and an epic performance by Kevin Spacey as "Verbal Kint". A boat is blown up, and five seemingly unconnected ex-cons are brought in by police for questioning. The twists and turns are phenomenal, as is the legend of "Kaizer Soze", and the stunning conclusion.

16. Caddyshack (1980)

Any time I update this list I get criticized for ranking a comedy this high, but I strongly feel an exception needs made here, and that this is one of the greatest films ever. It's clearly one of the most influential movies of all time. Try playing a round of golf without one of the lines being spouted out by someone in your group. And the cast! Dangerfield, Chase, Knight ... Bill Murray as Carl Spackler may be the greatest comedic character EVER.

17. Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring (2001)

The beginning of the LOTR trilogy, and the beginning of the journey for Sam and Frodo. As it is in all three films, the cinematography is nothing short of breathtaking, making you genuinely believe you are witnessing the trek through middle earth to destroy the ring. Despite the lofty rankings of these films and the Star Wars films, I am not a huge fantasy guy. These movies are so well done, so believable, so breathtaking ... and are close to perfect tales of good versus evil.

18. Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002)

The journey continues, and Sam and Frodo make the acquaintance of Smeagol/Gollum, who becomes a central character the rest of the way. Sauron's forces increase, his allies grow, brilliant battle scenes are waged, and the stage is set for the War of the Ring.

19. The Departed (2006)

A great story, one of the all-time greatest casting jobs, and brilliant acting throughout make this Scorsese masterpiece one of my top twenty movies of all-time. Nicholson, DiCaprio, Damon, Wahlberg, Baldwin, Sheen … all are excellent and casted perfectly in this tale of two cops, one undercover and one crooked. Both pupeteered by Boston Irish Mafia boss Frank Costello, played by Jack Nicholson. And if that’s not enough, the scenery, music, and twist at the end are all excellent as well.

20. The Downfall (2004)

Called "Untergang, Der" in German, this is an amazing film. It examines the last days of World War II, from the perspective of Adolf Hitler, who is portrayed brilliantly and accurately in the movie. Almost the entire movie is filmed from inside Hitler's bunker, deep under the streets of Berlin, as the Russians make their final assault on the city, which effectively ended the war and toppled the Nazi regime. The range of emotions Hitler goes through in his

final days, with his top advisors, is stunning to see portrayed on film. If you have not seen this movie, you need to.

21. The Shawshank Redemption (1994)

An incredible tale of an innocent man (Tim Robbins) wrongly jailed for the murder of his wife. Robbins forges a great friendship with another inmate, played by Morgan Freeman. A great story, with top-notch acting … and a film that it’s impossible to compose a best film of all-time list without.

22. The Terminator (1984)

The coming out party for James Cameron as a director and Ah-nold as an actor. A terrifying film that was way ahead of it's time, and Schwarzenegger was perfect as the cyborg killing machine sent back in time to wipe Sarah Connor from the face of the planet in order to help affect the future.

23. Gladiator (2000)

Russell Crowe is a pompous ass in real life, but is a helluva actor as evidenced by the fact that he stars in seven of the 200 movies on this list, including the spectacular film "Gladiator". A great story, powerful acting, and frighteningly realistic battle scene special effects make this one of the greatest films of the modern era.

24. Platoon (1986)

Charlie Sheen is a fresh faced young recruit thrust into the horrors of Vietnam in this Best Picture of the Year winner from 1986. Tom Berenger and Willem Dafoe were perfect choices for the two main veteran sergeants in this film, one an brutal murdering machine (Berenger) and the other an idealistic druggie struggling with the premise of the war itself.

25. Pulp Fiction (1994)

Superb casting, acting, writing, and dialogue make "Pulp Fiction" Quentin Tarantino's best film ... and easily one of the best movies made in the last 40 years. The plot flips back and forth between the lives of two mob hit men, a boxer, a pair of diner thieves, and a gangster's wife brilliantly in this all around enjoyable film.

26**. Animal House (1978)**

Along with “Caddyshack”, the standard for American comedic films. John Belushi is downright hysterical as Bluto Blutarski in this story of an out of control frat house on a college campus. To be listed this high in a greatest film list, a comedy has to really be special, which this movie clearly is.

27. The Raging Bull (1980)

The most represented director on this list, with nine of my top 200 films, Scorsese checks in at #27 with this story of the career and life of boxer Jake LaMotta, brilliantly portrayed by Robert DeNiro in another classic performance … a role in which he gained 60 pounds to play. Joe Pesci is similarly excellent as LaMotta's brother, and the dynamic and eventual tension between these two characters is fantastic.

28. Reservoir Dogs (1992)

Already in at #25 with Pulp Fiction, Quentin Tarantino comes right back at #28 with the gripping Reservoir Dogs, the story of a team of previously unacquainted criminals hired to pull off a bank heist. What a cast here! Keitel, Roth, Buscemi, Madsen, Chris Penn … all are brilliant.

29. Office Space (1999)

A cult film, beloved by any that have spent time working in an office setting. A true comedic classic, hysterical from start to finish in exposing the woes of the cubicle life. Ron Livingston is superb as slacker supreme Peter Gibbons.

30. Clerks (1994)

Low budget and politically incorrect, "Clerks" is an absolute work of genius from director Kevin Smith. The writing and the dialogue is as good as any film ever in this story of two slacker New Jersey convenience store clerks called into work on a Saturday.

31. Requiem For A Dream (2000)

Dark, disturbing, and powerful … this film shows the dark and disturbing side of drug abuse from a couple of different perspectives. Both Jennifer Connelly and Ellen Burstyn deliver absolutely amazing performances in this film, which leaves chills running down your spine.

32. Mystic River (2003)

An all-time great performance from Sean Penn as Jimmy Markum, who reunites with childhood friends Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins following the death of his oldest daughter. This is Clint Eastwood's coming out party as a director, and in almost any other year (same year as the last Lord of the Rings) this would have won Best Picture at the Oscars.

33. A Few Good Men (1992)

"Son, we live in a world that has walls, and those walls have to be guarded by men with guns. Whose gonna do it? You? You, Lt. Weinburg? I have a greater responsibility than you could possibly fathom. You weep for Santiago, and you curse the marines. You have that luxury. You have the luxury of not knowing what I know. That Santiago's death, while tragic, probably saved lives. And my existence, while grotesque and incomprehensible to you, saves lives. You don't want the truth because deep down in places you don't talk about at parties, you want me on that wall, you need me on that wall. We use words like honor, code, loyalty. We use these words as the backbone of a life spent defending something. You use them as a punch line. I have neither the time nor the inclination to explain myself to a man who rises and sleeps under the blanket of the very freedom that I provide, and then questions the manner in which I provide it. I would rather you just said thank you, and went on your way, Otherwise, I suggest you pick up a weapon, and stand a post. Either way, I don't give a damn what you think you are entitled to." ~ Colonel Jessup

34. A Bronx Tale (1993)

A different kind of gangster movie, and a different type of role from DeNiro in this one, which he also directed. In it, DeNiro plays the working class good guy father of a boy growing up in a New York neighborhood with a Mafia influence. The boy struggles balancing his relationships with three characters, his father (DeNiro), the neighborhood crime boss, and an African American girl he is falling in love with.

35. Munich (2005)

"Crash" winning best picture in 2005 over "Munich" is one of the all-time robberies in Academy history in my view. The movie starts with the recreation of the apprehension and murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. The movie centers around what happened next, the Israeli government hiring five Mossad agents to track down and kill the individuals responsible for the attack.

36. Scarface (1983)

Pacino plays Tony Montana, a determined Cuban immigrant in early 80’s Miami that takes over a drug empire before greed and a pesky coke addiction get the better of him. Almost three hours long, and littered with powerful scenes and profuse swearing, violence, and drug use … this is the best film ever from Brian DePalma, who also brought us The Untouchables and Carlito’s Way.

37. Revenge of the Sith (2005)

The last of the six Star Wars movies to be released, and the segway from the new trilogy and the old trilogy. This is the story of the transformation Annakin Skywalker goes through in turning to the dark side and eventually morphing into Darth Vader. The special effects and conclusion to this one are very good, somewhat atoning for disappointing efforts from Spielberg in the first two installments of the newer trilogy.

38. Return of the Jedi (1983)

With the new and improved Death Star nearing completion, Leia, Luke, and Chewy rescue Hans Solo from Jabba and rally to action to stop the Empire from ruling the galaxy in this, the final chapter in the Star Wars series.

39. Jackie Brown (1997)

One of the most underrated movies ever in my view, and the third entry in my top 39 movies from Tarantino. Samuel L. Jackson is excellent as gun dealer Ordell Robie. Pam Grier is great as Jackie Brown, a flight attendant caught up with Ordell, as well as bail bondsman Max Cherry. DeNiro and Bridget Fonda also deliver excellent supporting roles in this entertaining tale that gets overlooked because of the more popular Tarantino films listed above.

40. The Taxi Driver (1976)

An epic, epic performance from DeNiro as Travis Bickle, a New York cabbie that slowly goes insane witnessing the scum of the city from the drivers seat of his cab. This is a dark, disturbing film with a stunning and brutal ending, that also features great supporting roles fro, Jodie Foster, Harvey Keitel, and Peter Boyle.

41. Rocky (1976)

A small time boxer gets a shot at the heavyweight champ in this enchanting tale that became a wildly popular series. Stallone was born for the role as Rocky Balboa, a dim witted, down on his luck, no name heavyweight boxer from the mean streets of Philadelphia.

42. Cast Away (2000)

Tom Hanks plays a Fed Ex executive that finds himself hopelessly stranded on a deserted island following a plane crash. Hanks is forced to transform himself emotionally and physically as he spends several years alone on the island, not speaking a word through a long stretch of the film.

43. Seabiscuit (2003)

The true story of the Depression-era undersized racehorse “Seabiscuit”, who lifted an entire nation through some very tough times. Not just the horse, but the jockey, trainer, and owner are all long shots as well in this incredibly uplifting film that had the patrons standing and cheering at the end when I saw this when it was released in the theaters.

44. Mulholland Drive (2001)

The type of movie that just leaves you silent in thought for a while after the film concludes and the credits are rolling. An off the wall thriller from David Lynch, a movie you can rewatch over and over again and still pick new things up. Naomi Watts is phenomenal as the main character,

a perky young gal in LA seeking to become an actress. Her world gets turned upside down as another woman, the sole survivor of a car accident walks into her apartment and her world.

45. Se7en (1995)

Good, good stuff here. Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman are homicide cops on the trail of a serial killer (played by Kevin Spacey) who is modeling his killing after the seven deadly sins. The ending is shocking, horrific, and genius … and the action is tense throughout.

46. Jaws (1975)

This all-time classic is the tale of a giant great white shark that terrorizes a small island community. The entire film leads up to the superb conclusion … which consists of a showdown between the shark and a police chief, marine scientist, and grizzled fisherman set out to stop it.

47. Old School (2003)

The greatest comedy of this decade in my view. An absolutely hysterical film about three men (Will Ferrell, Vince Vaughn, Luke Wilson) trying to relive their glory days when one of them buys a house on a college campus after catching his wife cheating on him.

48. Glory (1989)

As the US Civil War protracts and drains even the vast resources of the north, an experiment is made with black troops, serving in a special regiment under an all-white officer corps. Matthew Broderick and Denzel Washington are both brilliant as the key characters in this classic.

49. Titanic (1997)

The tale of the sinking of the unsinkable ship back in 1912 was finally brought to the silver screen in 1912 by director James Cameron, and pulled off very well in my view. The love story between a penniless artist (Leonardo DiCaprio) and a beautiful socialite (Kate Winslet) is woven in, but not in a way that detracts from the story like we saw in “Pearl Harbor”.

50. American Beauty (1999)

Kevin Spacey is great as Lester Burnham, a man who is suffering a mid-life crisis that affects the lives of his family … made up of his super bitch of a wife Carolyn and rebelling daughter Jane who hates him. The lives of all the main characters change in this film, and in different and revealing ways.

51. Cinderella Man (2005)
52. Major League (1989)
53. Apocalypse Now (1979)
54. Braveheart (1995)
55. One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest (1975)

56. Back To The Future (1985)
57. Escape From Alcatraz (1979)
58. Rounders (1998)
59. Eight Men Out (1988)
60. Casino (1995)
61. A Beautiful Mind (2001)
62. Rocky IV (1985)
63. E.T. (1982)
64. Babel (2006)
65. Pay It Forward (2000)
66. About Schmidt (2002)
67. Rocky II (1979)
68. The House of Sand and Fog (2003)
69. Catch Me If You Can (2002)
70. 21 Grams (2003)
71. American History X (1998)
72. Rocky III (1982)
73. Miracle (2004)
74. Cape Fear (1991)
75. Apollo 13 (1995)
76. World Trade Center (2006)
77. Million Dollar Baby (2004)
78. Copland (1997)
79. Heat (1995)
80. The Green Mile (1999)
81. Oldboy (2003)
82. Fatal Attraction (1987)
83. Match Point (2005)
84. Unfaithful (2000)
85. Closer (2004)
86. Patton (1970)
87. Chinatown (1974)
88. Field Of Dreams (1989)
89. Bull Durham (1988)
90. The Godfather – Part III (1990)
91. The Unforgiven (1992)
92. Traffic (2000)
93. Fight Club (1995)
94. Big Fish (2003)
95. United 93 (2006)
96. Return To Paradise (1998)
97. We Were Soldiers (2002)
98. Diehard (1988)
99. Top Gun (1986)
100. Airplane (1980)
101. Good Will Hunting (1997)

102. Mallrats (1995)
103. Gangs Of New York (2002)
104. The Insider (1999)
105. V For Vendetta (2005)
106. Full Metal Jacket (1997)
107. Deliverance (1972)
108. Poltergeist (1982)
109. The Patriot (2000)
110. Dirty Harry (1971)
111. Training Day (2001)
112. Green Street Hooligans (2005)
113. Aliens (1986)
114. The Life Of David Gale (2003)
115. Do The Right Thing (1989)
116. L.A. Confidential (1997)
117. The Game (1997)
118. Wall Street (1987)
119. Brian's Song (1971)
120. Chasing Amy (1997)
121. The Fugitive (1993)
122. Capote (2005)
123. Blazing Saddles (1974)
124. The Goonies (1985)
125. Blackhawk Down (2001)
126. Basic Instinct (1992)
127. Flags Of Our Fathers (2006)
128. The Doors (1991)
129. Sling Blade (1996)
130. The Princess Bride (1987)
131. The Blues Brothers (1980)
132. Sea Of Love (1989)
133. Fletch (1985)
134. Bang The Drum Slowly (1973)
135. Lucky Number Slevin (2006)
136. Sideways (2004)
137. When Harry Met Sally (1989)
138. The Hurricane (1999)
139. Mean Streets (1973)
140. Dog Day Afternoon (1975)
141. The Fly (1986)
142. The Midnight Express (1978)
143. Ghandi (1982)
144. Fast Times At Ridgemont High (1982)
145. Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory (1971)
146. Ghostbusters (1984)
147. Crash (2004)

148. Ray (2004)
149. The Sixth Sense (1999)
150. Little Miss Sunshine (2006)
151. The Hunt For Red October (1990)
152. The Siege (1998)
153. Close Encounters Of The Third Kind (1977)
154. Stand By Me (1986)
155. Empire Records (1995)
156. Kramer Vs. Kramer (1979)
157. The Thin Red Line (1998)
158. Forrest Gump (1994)
159. Bugsy (1991)
160. The Neverending Story (1984)
161. Saw (2004)
162. The Red Dragon (2002)
163. Breaking Away (1979)
164. Frequency (2000)
165. Big Night (1996)
166. Fargo (1996)
167. Real Genius (1985)
168. Slap Shot (1977)
169. The Natural (1984)
170. Dumb And Dumber (1994)
171. The Assassination Of Richard Nixon (2004)
172. Boogie Nights (1977)
173. Mystery, Alaska (1999)
174. JFK (1991)
175. Internal Affairs (1990)
176. The Exorcist (1973)
177. Born On The Fourth Of July (1989)
178. Stir Of Echoes (1999)
179. The Big Lebowski (1998)
180. Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)
181. The Grifters (1990)
182. The Breakfast Club (1985)
183. Entrapment (1999)
184. Two Days In The Valley (1996)
185. Arthur (1981)
186. Reality Bites (1994)
187. Swingers (1996)
188. A Fish Called Wanda (1988)
189. Batman (1989)
190. Ghost (1996)
191. Leaving Las Vegas (1995)
192. Trainspotting (1996)
193. Matchstick Men (2003)

194. The Illusionist (2006)
195. The Untouchables (1987)
196. Insomnia (2002)
197. Eyes Wide Shut (1999)
198. The Ice Storm (1997)
199. Terminator 2 – Judgement Day (1991)
200. The Color Of Money (1986)