Lesson 16
CONTEXT CASE STUDY:
Gordon Parks and The
Making of an Argument

Gordon Parks

Gordon Parks (b. 1912, Fort Scott, Kansas; d. 2006, New York) was a self-taught photographer, filmmaker, writer, and composer. He is known for documenting the African American experience and was considered an influential photographer of the twentieth century. With a deep commitment to social justice, Parks made work that depicted important aspects of American culture from the early 1940s up until his death in 2006. He focused on issues surrounding race, poverty, civil rights, and urban life. Parks has been widely recognized for his photography and has been a recipient of numerous awards, including the National Medal of Arts (1988), and over fifty honorary doctorates.