Film Art

HUM 2034

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2017-2018

Introduction

This course aims to introduce you to aspects of film studies including film analysis and film history, with the aim to develop your abilities to view films critically and to deepen your understanding of the cinematic experience. It offers an in-depth examination of the various formal dimensions of film such as cinematography, editing, mise-en-scène, acting, costume and sound, as well as the stylistic use of these techniques in the filmic form and narration. The course is illustrated with various examples of silent cinema, Russian Film Montage, Weimar Cinema, neorealism, film noir, recent European Cinema and 'world cinema'.

We shall be examining, among other topics, broader questions of cinema's relation to history, culture and society. Bordwell and Thompson's introductory film textbook *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017, ***11th edition***) will be used as a handbook, supplemented by other readings. Be sure to buy the last (eleventh) edition.

Copies of *Film Art* are available at the reading room or can be ordered on-line free of shipping costs at www.amazon.de or http://www.bookdepository.co.uk.

Instructional formal

The aim of the tutorial sessions is to understand *how to do film analysis* and therefore we focus in class in particular *on watching and analysing film* (clips). We focus in this course on chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of *Film Art*. You study each chapter at home, that means besides reading the text, watching relevant and illustrative film clips on the UM server. In this course you will work in *groups of two*. Each group will chair at least once the discussion of a chapter of *Film Art* in class *by analysing relevant film clips on the UM server*. That means in general 2 clips of your own choice from the film shown in Lumière Film Theatre, two *given* clips discussed in *Film Art,* and illustrative clips of your own choice (for instance found on YouTube; see hand-out in the first week for further instructions).

Each group will subsequently apply the theory, analytical concepts and terms discussed in the chapter of *Film Art* to a given film (see hand-out in the first week for instructions). Thus first we study a chapter of film art, which we apply in the next session on a film. Each group will prepare an in-depth analyses of a fragment of contemporary film.

The final assessment is an overall analysis of a film of your own choice based on chapters 2, 3, 4 ,5 , 6 and 7 of *Film Art*. In week two of the course you will make a choice for a film. It is good practice to apply the different chapters as soon as possible on your own film.

Next to the films discussed in class, we will watch each week a film that plays a central role in course and *Film Art* in Film Theatre Lumière. *Those screenings are compulsory, the films form an integral part of the course.*

How to hand in your analyses, midterm and final essay and how to present your analysis in class

You will receive an email with the request to open a dropbox account (it's free www.dropbox.com) and an invitation to share a folder with your tutor which will be used to share information throughout the course.

The same folder will be used to upload your *analyses as a PDF documents* to dropbox (*not MS-Word or in another word processor format*). Give the files a recognisable name: group number & team number & session number: presentation-group1-4-3 and drop it in the correct folder of your group. This is also the place to upload *your presentations as a PDF* document with the name analysis-group1-4-3. Use for the presentation *only screenshots* with as little text as possible.

You'll be using the PDF documents for the projecting of your presentation in class, this to avoid all PowerPoint related problems.

The midterm analysis and the final essay should be uploaded to Safe Assignment (Student Portal) as usual because they are graded.

Assessments and grading

Each group of two students chairs at least one session in which a chapter of *Film Art* is discussed. Furthermore will each group make an in-depth analysis of a given film fragment based on the chapters discussed. Which group will present when will be planned in week 1 and put in a scheme on a hand-out in the first week. On this hand-out you'll find as well an explanation where to find the relevant film clips, how to make screen shots, and how to upload your in-depth analyses of minimum 500-600 words on dropbox.

All presentations and discussions of film analyses have to be illustrated with relevant screenshots, graphs and/or sketches *(no film clips!!)*. In this course we do not work with PowerPoint, but we will present the pdf's uploaded on dropbox (see also the explanation in class during the first session).
Since watching a film fragment (at least twice) in class plus presenting and discussing an analysis seriously takes time, we won't have be able to present all analyses in class.

Furthermore each individual student has:

- To choose a film to be used for the midterm assessment and final assessment (preferably seen in a theatre).
- To hand in the midterm analysis with an analysis of a fragment of the film of your own choice, based on the chapter 5 THE SHOT: CINEMATOGRAPHY (minimum 500-600 words).
- To prepare a compact and terse pitch of your own film (why this film is interesting to be analysed).
- To hand in the final essay of your own film (minimum 5000 words). In your analysis you have to refer to at least two relevant academic articles on the field of film studies.

You'll find extensive information, checklists and tips for the assignments as well as assessments in the course book.

The midterm and final essays are written individually. See for some suggestions on doing film analysis of the film your own choice also *Film Art*: Chapter 8 SUMMARY: STYLE AND FILM FORM (pp. 303-324), Chapter 11 FILM CRITICISM: SAMPLE ANALYSIS (pp. 400- 450). You will be responsible to find a video or digital copy of the film yourself and have to watch the film several times for the analysis.

The grading of the course will be based on the following aspects:

Group assessments:

- The chairing of a session in which a chapter a chapter of *Film Art* is discusses with help of film clips on the UM server - participation
- The analyses of the given film fragments on the basis of each chapter of *Film Art* (**minimum** 500-600 words) pass/fail.

Individual assessments:

• Presence in classroom and screenings in Lumière (compulsory)	pass/fail
• Tutorial participation and preparation	sufficient
• Presentation of your own film (session 7)	pass/fail
• Midterm analysis (session 7) 500-600 words **minimum**	grade 30%
• Final Assessment: Film Essay 5000 words **minimum**	grade 70%

A digital version of your midterm analysis should be submitted on Student Portal (Safe Assignment) before the deadline on April 16th - *no hard copy*.

The grading criteria of the Midterm and Final Assessments are explained below (see session 7).

A digital version of your final essay should be submitted on Student Portal (Safe Assignment) before the deadline on May 18th - *no hard copy*.

Analyses that are handed in after the deadline, will not be marked and will not contribute points towards the final grade.

A resit examination is only available for students who have complied with the compulsory attendance requirements and took part in all of the assessments. A resit implies complying to the grading criteria as formulated above.

Handbook

Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2017). *Film Art. An Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (11th edition) - earlier editions can differ (considerably) from the latest edition.

Film viewings (Filmtheater Lumière)

- *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, USA 1939)
- *Citizen Kane* (Orson welles, USA 1941)
- *L'Avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy, 1960)
- *Battleship Potemkin* (Bronenosets Potyomkin (S.M. Eisenstein, USSR 1925)
- *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1974)
- *Breathless* (À bout de souffle) (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1960)

Films to be analysed in class

To be announced, see hand-out in the first week.

Recent changes of the course.

On the basis of feedback of the students, the following has been changed:

- The course book has been revised and the discussions of the theory and concepts of *Film Art* are set up differently to make the sessions more participatory and lively.
- The selection of films shown in Lumière has been changed to integrate the films better in the tutorial sessions.
- The requirements for the assessments are revised.

Course coordination and tutoring

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Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri - Martin McDonagh

Sessions per week

Week 1

Monday April 9th - Session 1

Chapter 1: Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business & Introduction of the course

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 1: Film as Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business, pp. 1-48.

16:00 Screening Lumière

The Wizard of Oz (Victor Fleming, USA 1939)

Thursday April 12th - Session 2

Chapter 2 & 3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FILM FORM and NARRATIVE FORM

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 2 The Significance of Film Form (pp. 50-71) and Chapter 3 Narrative Form (pp. 72- 110).

Illustrate the discussion with help of *The Wizard of Oz* showed in Lumière.
You could add examples of yourself.

These chapters explain:

First of all that these chapters are some ways the most important chapters in *Film Art*. They are designed to get you actively thinking about how films are made from many parts that relate dynamically to one another to make a system. It suggests that you can and should participate actively in the viewing of any film, looking for individual devices and trying to explain why they are in the film and what effect they have on the viewer. In other words, Chapter 2 suggests why close analysis of films is important.

The concept of the film's form as a system is introduced early in the chapter. *Films are not random collections of technical devices, you should look at films as wholes*. Much of the first half of Chapter 2 is devoted to explaining how the spectator reacts actively to the film, forming expectations, drawing on previous knowledge of conventions, reacting emotionally to what occurs on the screen, interpreting it, and evaluating the whole experience.

The second half of the chapter lays out the principles of film form. It also explains the concept of *segmentation*, or breaking a film down into parts for the purposes of analysis. All of these concepts will be crucial to the more specific subjects of later chapters. The way a film is made up, including its form and set of stylistic elements. Humans long for structure and form. Film is a unique medium that possesses its own form, which a viewer must understand in order to fully enjoy and evaluate it. Just as we perceive and understand a novel differently than we would a painting, the visual and aural cues we receive from a film help us to read it as a text. To understand how a film's form operates, the viewer needs to analyse it in terms of function, similarity and repetition, difference and variation, development, and unity/disunity.

Because narrative form is so familiar, we seldom stop to think about what a narrative consists of and how it affects us. This chapter aims to get you to step back and examine aspects of storytelling that you usually take for granted. You should come to realise that viewing a narrative film is not simply a passive activity, and that you as a viewer are actively engaged in forming expectations about what will happen and in keeping track of how events relate to one another.

The Wizard of Oz - Victor Fleming

Week 2

Monday April 12th - Session 3
Chapter 2 & 3 Analysis of film form and narrative form

This session we analyse the form and narrative of the *film as a whole*.
Each group presents the analysis of the given film in class (see for the titles the hand-out in the first week).

What should your analysis contain?

You do not need to work on a film clip for this assignment since it deals with *the film as a whole*.
Read these notes before you go to watch the film, it helps you to focus your attention and read it again after viewing the film, just before starting your analysis.
Make notes during the viewing.
Discuss the points one by one with your 'partner' before writing down the analysis.
For presentation in class only use screenshots.
Pay special attention to the terms in italics below.

Film form and Style

Discuss several *stylistic elements* of the *film form* and indicate what are its *functions* in the overall *form*? How are they motivated?

Explain how the film creates *audience expectations* and how they help to understand the *film's organisation*. Does the film create *suspense and surprise*, and how are situations and characters we see on screen related to our own *experiences*? Do we feel suspense, surprise, shock, and humor when our expectations are not met as anticipated.

How does the film deal with *emotions* and how do they interact with the *film's total system*?

Give an short description of the *referential, explicit, implicit, and symptomatic meanings* of the film.

Give examples of *similarity and repetition*, *difference and variation*, *development and unity/disunity*.

Are *elements* or *patterns repeated* throughout the film? If so, how and at what points? Are *motifs* and *parallelisms* asking us to compare elements?

How are elements *contrasted* and *differentiated* from one another? How are different elements *opposed* to one another?

What principles of *progression* or *development* are at work throughout the *form of the film*? More specifically, how does a comparison of the *beginning and ending* reveal the overall form of a film?

What degree of *unity* is in the film's overall form? Is *disunity* subordinate to the overall unity, or does disunity dominate?

Narrative form

The concept of narration, the range and depth of which varies enormously from film to film, sheds light on the process by which narratives convey information to the spectator. Armed with this small number of important concepts, you should be able to carry out narrative analyses. Most, but not all narrative analysis run through the categories of cause-effect, story-plot, differences, motivations, parallelism, progression from opening to closing, and narrational range and depth. Most common narrative's components are causality, time, and space. Narratives have a plot that is affected by cause-and-effect relationships and contain exposition, narration, and a conclusion. The number of possible narratives is limitless.

Explain why your film is a *narrative* film and how it uses *causality, time, and space* (not of the whole film, discuss just some relevant examples). Does it make use of other *formal principles*, such as *parallelism*? Does the film rely on other *preconceptions of narrative form* in order to *tell the story*?

One basic tool for the examination of narrative form is the distinction between plot (the events as they are presented on the screen) and story (the events as we mentally reconstruct them in chronological order). Understanding the plot-story distinction will help you understand a film's narrative as constructed by the filmmakers. Moreover, the construction of the story (for example, figuring out how events depicted in flashbacks fit into the story's chronology) is one of the activities that make us participate in the ongoing development of the film.

Give some examples of *story events* that are directly presented to us in the *plot*, and of story events that that we must *assume or infer*? Is there any *non-diegetic* material given in the plot?

Causal, temporal, and spatial relations among events are the building blocks of a film's narrative. They provide you with the basic tools to discover how we can understand narratives. Causal and temporal factors, for example, are what enable us to understand the very concept of a flashback, and realise when its events occurred in relation to the rest of the action.

What is the earliest *story event* of which we learn? How does it relate to later events through a series of causes and effects?

Explain how the filmic events are linked by *cause and effect, time, and space.*

Does your film *give and withhold information* to tell the film's story, and with what effect?

Make use of the terms *diegesis, non-diegetic elements, plot and story* (don't analyse the whole film, just give some obvious examples).

What is the *temporal relationship* of story events? Has *temporal order, frequency, or duration* been manipulated in the plot to affect our understanding of events?

Does the *closing* reflect a clear-cut *pattern of development* that relates it to the *opening*? Do all *narrative lines* achieve *closure*, or are some left *open*?

How does the *narration* present *story information* to us? Is it *restricted* to one or a few characters' knowledge, or does it range freely among the characters in different spaces? Does it give us considerable *depth of story information* by exploring the characters' *mental states*?

Does the viewer know more than the characters (*unrestricted (omniscient) narration*) or is the viewer's understanding limited to what *characters* know (*restricted narration*). Or does the film combine both *styles of narration*? Give some examples

Give an example of how the plot *distributes* story information in order to achieve specific *effects*. What is the *range and depth of story information*? Which characters are the *agents of action* (create the *cause*) and which character then solicits results (*effects*)?

How closely does the film follow the *conventions of the classical Hollywood cinema*? If it departs significantly from those conventions, what *formal principle* does it use instead? Does your film manipulate *classical narrative format* to create a new type of film that utilises *causality, time, and space* but plays games with it? Which elements are manipulated?

16:00 Screening Lumière

Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, USA 1942, 101 min)

Thursday April 12th - Session 4
Chapter 4 THE SHOT: MISE-EN-SCÈNE

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 4 The shot: mise-en-scène (pp.112-158)

Present at least two examples of *Citizen Kane* showed in Lumière.
Present at least the film clips on the UM server of the following examples discussed in *Film Art* chapter 4*:* 4.18-4.20 Activating areas of a setting, 4.113-4.114 Restrained acting, 4.124-4.125 Frontality gets action, and 4.167-4.170 Developing a scene over time.
Present at least two new examples (for instance on YouTube).

Hand-in the title of your personal film choice. Use the film for the midterm analysis *and* the final essay. You can integrate the midterm analysis in your final analysis.

This chapter explains:

Chapter 4 is the first of four chapters devoted to the basic stylistic techniques of the cinema: mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound. This order leads you through increasing levels of difficulty. We begin with mise-en-scene because it involves the persons, places, and things readily apparent on the screen.

The chapter aims to get you thinking analytically about matters that you are accustomed to noticing casually in their ordinary film-going: set design, costume, makeup, lighting, and staging of movement, including acting. You should come to realise that all the elements placed before the camera result from a complex series of decisions by the filmmakers and have an enormous impact on the spectator.

The analyse of the mise-en-scène (meaning “putting into the scène”), which is used to signify the director’s control over what appears in the film frame. It includes the setting, lighting, costumes, and staging (including acting and movement), which combine together to create a specific system in every film.

Mise-en-scène can be analysed according to unity, disunity, similarity, difference, and development. In controlling the mise-en-scène, the director stages the event for the camera. Usually judged by standards of realism, mise-en-scène is not a standard of value, because it contains the powerful ability to transcend normal conceptions of reality.

The viewer who wants to study mise-en-scène should look for it systematically. We should watch, first of all, for how setting, costume, and the behaviour of the figures present themselves in a given film. As a start, we should try to trace only one sort of setting or a scene.

We should also reflect on the patterning of mise-en-scène elements. How do they function? How do they constitute motifs that weave their ways through the entire film? In addition we should notice how mise-en-scène is patterned in space and time to attract and guide our attention through the process of watching the film and to create suspense or surprise.

Finally, we should try to relate the system of mise-en-scène to the large-scale form of the film. Hard-and-fast prejudices about realism are of less value here than an openness to the great variety of mise-en-scène possibilities. Awareness of those possibilities will better help us to determine the functions of mise-en-scène.

Citizen Kane - Orson Welles

Week 3

Monday April 12th - Session 5
Chapter 4 Analysis of mise-en-scène

This session we analyse the mise-en-scène of the given *film fragment*.
Each group presents the analysis of the given film in class (see for the titles the hand-out in the first week).

What should your analysis contain?

Discuss one example of each of the four areas of mise-en-scène: setting, costume and make-up, staging (movement and acting), and lighting.

Take thereby the following into account:

How does the *setting* shape the *audience's understanding* of the story action (don't forget *colour, props, make-up*). Do (portions of) *costumes* play *motive and causal* roles in the *narrative*?

How is *lighting* manipulated. Are lighter and darker areas within the *frame* used to create the *overall composition of a shot*. How do they *guide our attention* to certain *objects and actions*? Does lighting *articulate textures*? Discuss the relevant features of film lighting: its *quality, direction, source, and colour*. How is the lighting characterised by its use of *shadows*?

How is the *staging* of a scene affected by the *action and the camera's distance* from it? Discuss an example of how the *actor's performance* consists of *visual* elements and *sound* and how acting *cooperates with other film techniques*.

Give an example of how the actor's *faces, bodies, and gestures* are used.

Discuss how the mise-en-scène affects *audience attention* by drawing across the *screen*, shaping the *sense of the space* represented, and emphasising certain parts of it. This is often accomplished through the *manipulation of spatial and temporal factors*. Mark how our attention is drawn by *changes in shape, light, movement, and other visual qualities* of the image. The *depth of field* (flatness or three-dimensionality) of the *frame* is also a component of mise-en-scene.

Give (an) example(s) of how the filmmaker uses mise-en-scène to guide audience attention across the screen, in other words, how does the filmmaker shape the *sense of the*

space represented, emphasise certain parts of it, are there any changes in *movement, colour, differences, balance of distinct components, and variations in size*).

How does the director control the *rhythm of time* as it unfolds (how long remain the shots on the screen and what is the *duration of the shots*, any beats or pulse to create a *pattern of accents*?). Is time adjusted by *figure placement* of the shot?

16:00 Screening Lumière

L'Avventura (Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy, 1961)

Thursday April 12th - Session 6
Chapter 5 THE SHOT: CINEMATOGRAPHY

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 5 The shot:Cinematography (pp. 159-215)

Present at least two examples of *L'Avventura* showed in Lumière.
Present at least the film clips on the UM server of the following examples discussed in *Film Art* chapter 5: 5.27-5.28 Wide Angle, 5.34-5.36 Long lenses and movement, 5.41-5.43 The zoom at work, 5.52-5.53 Racking focus, 5.209-5.210 Camera movement through the seasons, 5.225-5.236 Touch of Evil.
Instruction video: zoom and moving camera effects (UCM server).
Present at least two or more examples (for instance on YouTube).

This chapter explains:

This is the longest chapter in *Film Art* we study. This is because cinematography is such a complex subject. The modern motion-picture camera and raw stock offer an enormous range of technical possibilities for lens length, shooting speed, aspect ratio, color, and camera movement—all of which profoundly affect the look of the film. Moreover, the filmmakers make a huge number of aesthetic decisions about how to frame their images.

This chapter introduces you to all the basic possibilities of cinematography, with an emphasis on what the various techniques and framing choices look like on the screen. Hence this is also the most heavily illustrated chapter in the book, with more than two hundred frame enlargements.

Here for the first time you are being asked to look not just at what they are seeing (actors wearing costumes, moving around sets, and so on) but also how the film presents the mise-en-scene elements. By the end of this unit of the course, you should be able to look at films in a new way. You will have gained the vocabulary to describe all the visual elements of a shot. For example, you will know that the opening of *Touch of Evil* is more than just a scene of a couple strolling across the Mexican border, unaware of a bomb in a car that passes them. You will be able to specify that it is a craning and tracking long take that begins on a close-up framing and ends on a medium-long framing.

The film's photography style, known in filmmaking as cinematography, describes not only what is filmed, but how it is filmed. Cinematographers are responsible for three factors: the photographic aspects of the shot, the framing of the shot, and the duration of the shot. Cinematography also determines the range of tonalities, manipulates the speed of motion, transforms perspective, and controls what is seen in each frame.

The film shot, then, is a very complex unit. Mise-en-scène fills the image with material, arranging setting, lighting, costume, and staging within the formal context of the total film. Within that formal context, the filmmaker also controls the cinematographic qualities of the shot – how the image is photographed and framed, how long the image lasts on the screen. You can sensitise yourself to these cinematographic qualities in much the same way that you worked on mise-en-scène. Trace the progress of a single technique, say camera distance – through an entire scene. Notice when a shot begins and ends, observing especially how the long take may function to shape the film's form. Watch for camera movements, especially those that follow the action (since those are usually the hardest to notice). Once you are aware of cinematographic qualities, you can move to an understanding of their various possible functions within the total film.

Film art offers still other possibilities for choice and control. Chapters 4 and 5 focused on the shot. The filmmaker may also juxtapose one shot with another through editing, and that's the subject of Chapter 6.

L'Avventura - Michelangelo Antonioni

Week 4

Monday April 16th Session 7
Chapter 5 Analysis of cinematography. Hand-in Midterm

Compact and terse pitch of your own film

This session we do not discuss your midterm analyses (that would take too much time), but you will give an entertaining, passionate, personal or intellectual presentation in which you explain (shortly) why your film is an interesting film to analyse !!

You have very little time: don't waste your time with an extensive introduction of the film's story or other irrelevant information, and film clips take time, you only have 8 minutes !!

How to proceed for the midterm:

Don't make an analysis of the whole film but of an illustrative fragment (when necessary you can always refer to other salient cinematographic qualities used elsewhere in the film).

Do not write down a simple inventory of the cinematographic qualities but *focus on the functions*:

- the functions within the fragment and the functions of the analysed fragment in the film as a whole,
- the functions in relation to the film form and style (Chapter 2 and 3).

For the midterm you have in other words:

To choose a film which you use for your final essay as well.

Submit a digital version of your midterm analysis of 500-600 words minimum, with an analysis of a fragment of the film of your own choice through Students Portal (Safe Assignment) before 16:00 on the deadline on April 16th - *no hard copy*.

What should your midterm analysis contain?

How does the filmmaker control all visual elements such as *colours and textures* by *manipulating film stock, exposure, and developing procedures*?

Give some examples of how the *pace of a shot* is controlled.

Give an example of the *use of perspective relations* determining the *scale, depth, and spatial relations of the scene*. Can you say anything about the *focal length, the type of lens and the effects thereof* ?

Does the film make use of *CGI* and with what *effects*? Does the film make use of a certain *projection system and mattes* to create *special effects*?

Give an example of the *use of the frame*. Is it used as a *neutral border*? Or does it produce a *certain vantage point* onto the material within the image?

What is the size/shape of the frame (*aspect ratio*). Why did the filmmaker make this choice? What are the effects?

Discuss an example of how the *frame* limits the image and how *off-screen and onscreen space* are used.

Discuss an example of *how the frame constructs a position* from which the material in the image is viewed (indicate how the *camera positions, including angle, level, height, and distance change the perspective of the viewing image*).

How is *mobile framing* used? How does it change the *framing* of the object with a *pan, tilt, tracking, crane, or hand-held shot*?

How does the mobile framing function: *spatially, temporally, or with patterns*?

Any long takes?

And focus on the functions, in the fragment and the film as a whole !

16:00 Screening Lumière

Battleship Potemkin (Bronenosets Potyomkin) (S.M. Eisenstein, USSR, 1925)
(plus a filmic essay of the famous stair sequence)

Battleship Potemkin - Sergei M. Eisenstein

Thursday April 19th Session 8

Chapter 6 THE RELATION FROM SHOT TO SHOT: EDITING

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 6 The relation from shot to shot: editing (pp. 216-262).

Present at least two examples of *Battleship Potemkin* showed in Lumière.
Present at least the film clips on the UM server of the following examples discussed in *Film Art* chapter 6: 6.1-6.4 Linking shots with optical devices, 6.5-6.8, 6.23-6.33 Editing for timing and impact/Editing for graphic contrast, 6.54-6.74 The Malthese Falcon, 6.123-6.134 Intensified continuity (L.A. Confidential), and 6.142-6.143 Graphic matching in narrative cinema, 6.153-6.152 Jump cut.
Instruction videos: the 180 degree rule (UCM server).
Present at least two or more examples (for instance found on YouTube).

This chapter explains:

Editing is perhaps the most difficult of the four types of film technique to notice systematically. Viewers may be aware of transitions from shot to shot when these are particularly noticeable, as with a slow dissolve, or a rapid burst of short, disorienting shots, or a cut accompanied by a burst of loud noise. On the whole, however, you are looking at what is in the shots, not how the spatial, temporal, rhythmic, and graphic aspects of shots are affected by the way they are edited together.

Moreover, editing is more difficult to grasp than, say, techniques of cinematography. A camera movement occupies time, and you can watch it unfold; but a cut is instantaneous, and once it occurs, it may not be easy for you to remember what had preceded the shot now on the screen.

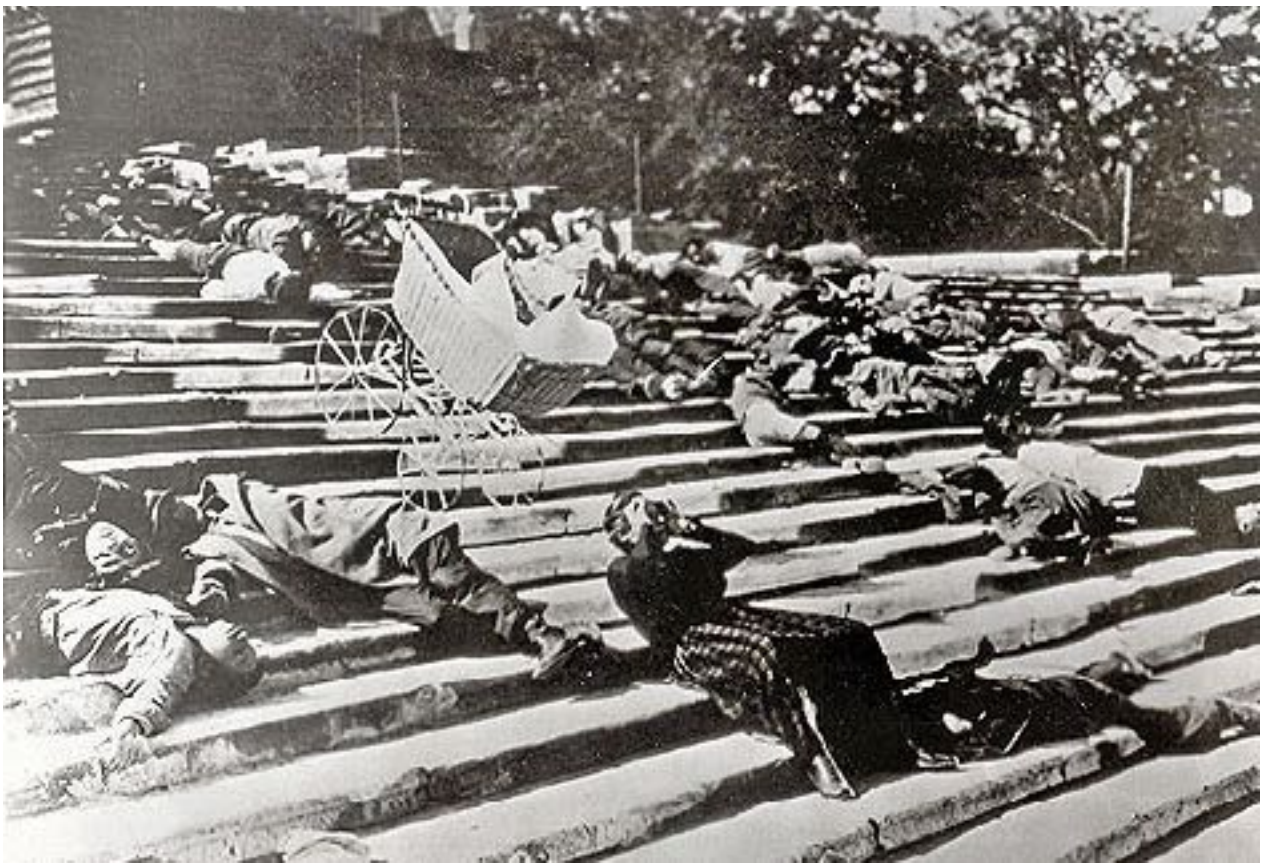
Yet editing has an enormous impact on how we respond to films, and with a bit of practice one can become aware of editing without losing any enjoyment in watching the actions taking place on the screen. Chapter 6 aims to “freeze” the editing and to lay shots out systematically on the page so that you may study the typical patterns and possibilities of editing.

The process of editing, or the coordination of one shot with the next. Its most common use is in continuity editing, which is designed to ensure a smooth narrative transition between shots for the viewer. Editing can also be employed for a wide array of artistic purposes across the spatial, temporal, and graphic realms.

More generally, we can ask the question we ask of every film technique: How does this function with respect to the film’s narrative form? Does the film use editing to lay out the

narrative space, time, and cause-effect chain in the manner of classical continuity? How do editing patterns emphasise facial expressions, dialogue, or setting? Do editing patterns withhold narrative information? In general, how does editing contribute to the viewer's experience of the film?

Some practical hints: You can learn to notice editing in several ways. If you are having trouble noticing cuts, try watching a film or TV show and tapping with a pencil each time a shot changes. Once you recognise editing easily, watch any film with the sole purpose of observing one editing aspect – say, the way space is presented or the control of graphics or time. Sensitise yourself to rhythmic editing by noting cutting rates: tapping out the tempo of the cuts can help.



Battleship Potemkin - Sergei M. Eisenstein

Week 5

Monday April 23th - Session 9
Chapter 6 Analysis of editing

This session we analyse the editing of the given *film fragment*.
Each group presents the analysis of the given film in class (see for the titles the hand-out in the first week).

What should your analysis contain?

How uses the filmmaker the multiple *categories of film shots* at his/her disposal, and what are the various *styles* that are used to *join shots*, including *the cut, wipe, dissolve, fade-in, or fade-out*. The most common means of joining two shots is the *cut*.

Is *continuity editing*, the *dominant editing style* of films of the West used. When continuity editing is use, how does it create a *smooth flow from shot to shot*. This style typically falls into four categories: *graphic, rhythmic, spatial, and temporal relations between shot A and B*.

Graphic editing (*graphic match*) involves configuring *patterns of light and dark, line and shape, volume and depth, movement and stasis*, independent of the shot's relation to the time and space of the story.

What '*"rhythmic" relations* are created? Forms the *durations* of shots in a sequence form a *pattern or rhythm*? How does the filmmaker adjust the *length of the shots* in relation to one another (rhythmic editing).

How does *"spatial" editing* construct the *space* within a film. Are the shots spatially *continuous*? How does it connect *actions and objects* and control the *physical relationships* between them. How does the filmmaker relate *points in space* through *editing* (*similarity, difference, or development*) to allow the action move from one spot to any other. In the case the space is *discontinuous*, what creates the discontinuity? (*Crosscutting*? *Ambiguous cues*?).

How does the editing control the *compression* and *expansion of time* within the film as well as its *chronology*. How does the editing control the *time of the action* denoted in the film by setting up the *temporal relationships between events*. Are the shots *temporally continuous*? If so, what creates the continuity? (For example, *matches on action*?) If not, what creates the *discontinuity*? (*Ellipsis? Overlapping cuts*?).

Discuss the *proxemic categories* of film shots.

Discuss the various *styles of joining shots*.

Are any *alternatives to continuity editing* used in the film? Does the film use for instance *abstract or associational forms for purely graphic or rhythmic qualities, independent of the time and space* they represent?

Is *discontinuous editing used for narrative purposes* (e.g. to create ambiguity between the audience and the film)? The film October is a good example of a narrative film that relies on discontinuous editing.

Is the *180-degree axis* of action employed (not always necessary) such as *shot/reverse shot*, *eye line matches*, *reestablishing shots*, and *matches on action*). Is spatial continuity maintained through *cheat cuts* and *point-of-view cutting*?

Is *crosscutting* used in order to make the contrast between two or more stories more meaningful?

Does the film create *ellipses in time* (for instance by using *graphic matches* and *montage sequences*)?

16:00 Screening Lumière

The Conversation (Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1974)

Thursday April 26th - No Session

The Conversation - Francis Ford Coppola

Week 6

Monday April 30th - Session 10
Chapter 7 SOUND IN CINEMA

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 7 Sound in cinema (pp. 303-324)

Present at least two examples of *The conversation* showed in Lumière.
Present at least the film clips on the UM server of the following examples discussed in *Film Art* chapter 7: 7.3-7.6 Letter from Siberia, 7.19 Mr. Hulot's holiday, 7.42-7.44 offscreen sound implies space, 7.45-7.57 Jackie Brown first run-through, 7.70-7.72 A character replies to the narrator.
Present at least two new examples (for instance found on YouTube).

This chapter explains:

As with mise-en-scene, everyone notices sound while watching a film. But as we point out at the beginning of Chapter 7, it is easy to assume that the people and things on the screen are making the sounds we hear, and that's all there is to it. Yet the sound track of a film can be elaborately designed, manipulated, and assembled, especially in this day of multiple-track recording and digital surround sound.

Chapter 7 aims to introduce you to concepts and terms that permit analysis of the sonic experience.

The various techniques of sound including sound recording, mixing, and reproduction. Sound is powerful because it engages a distinct sense mode and can actively shape how we perceive and interpret the image on screen. Several aspects, such as loudness, pitch, and timbre are the fundamentals of film sound. Rhythm, fidelity, and spatial conditions give temporal dimension to sound and offer many creative possibilities to the filmmaker.

Sound is as flexible and wide-ranging as other film techniques, but harder to study because audiences typically think of sound as simply an accompaniment to the "real" cinema: the moving images. The creation of sound resembles editing of the image track. Though the audience is not aware of sonic manipulations, the sound track demands as much choice and control as does the visual track. Much work goes into capturing specific sounds at specific qualities for a film.

As usual, both extensive viewing and intensive scrutiny will sharpen your capacity to notice the workings of film sound. You can get comfortable with the analytical tools we have suggested by asking several questions about a film's sound.

16:00 Screening Lumière

Breathless (À bout de souffle) (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1960).

Thursday May 3rd - Session 11

Chapter 7 Analysis of sound

This session we analyse the use of sound in a given *film fragment*.
Each group presents the analysis of the given film in class (see for the titles the hand-out in the first week).

What should your analysis contain?

What sounds are present? Give examples of the three types of sound in the cinema: *speech, music, and noise* (also called *sound effects*) and discuss the *hierarchy* of their importance in a particular scene. How are *loudness, pitch, and timbre* used? Is the *mixture* sparse or dense? *Modulated* or *abruptly* changing?

Where is the sound coming from? In the story's space or outside it? Onscreen or offscreen. If offscreen, how is it shaping your response to what you're seeing?

How are the various sorts of sounds organised across a sequence or the entire film? What patterns are formed, and how do they reinforce aspects of the film's overall form?

When is the sound occurring? Simultaneously with the onscreen story action? Before? After?

Is the sound related *rhythmically* to the image? If so, how?

Is the sound *faithful or unfaithful* to its perceived *source*?

Give an example of *sound mixing*, how several tracks or layers overlap to create a combined and ongoing *stream of auditory information*. Is sound used to *coordinate with the images* on screen or to *contrast* with them? Thus the sound's *fidelity* (its realistic quality) achieve any special effects?

Give an example of *external* and of *internal diegetic* sound, indicate the source in the story or film world. Give an example of *non-diegetic sound*, indicate the source outside the story world. Is the line between diegetic and non-diegetic sound blurred?

Discuss the *sound perspective* (the sense of spatial distance and location analogous to the cues for visual perspective). Where is the sound coming from? In the story's space or

outside it? *Onscreen or offscreen*? If offscreen, how is it shaping your response to what you're seeing?

When is the sound occurring? Simultaneously with the story action? Before? After? How does the filmmaker use sound to *represent time* (*synchronous sound* is heard at the same time as the appearance of the visual source of the sound; *simultaneous sound* is found when, in terms of story events, the sound takes place at the same time as the image; sound can also precede or follow the action with which it is associated).

How are the various sorts of sounds *organised* across a sequence or the entire film? What *patterns* are formed, and how do they *reinforce aspects* of the film's overall form?

For each of questions above, what *purposes* (functions) are fulfilled and what *effects* are achieved by the *sonic manipulations*?

As always, it isn't enough to just name and classify. These concepts and terms are most useful when we examine how the types of sound we identify function in the total film.

Breathless (À bout de souffle) - Jean-Luc Godard

Week 7

Monday May 7th - Session 12

Chapter 8 SUMMARY: STYLE AND FILM FORM

Read *Film Art. An Introduction* (2017): Chapter 8 Summary: style and film form (pp. 303-324).

Every student shortly presents his or her plan for the final essay. There is space for Q&A and the grading criteria for the essay will be discussed.

This chapter functions as a summary

of chapters 4 through 7, which introduced the four basic types of film technique. In those chapters, the techniques had been analysed in extended scenes or whole films, but only in isolation. For example, in Chapter 4 we analysed only the mise-en-scene in *Our Hospitality*, putting aside its cinematography and editing. Chapter 8 brings all the techniques together for the first time in detailed stylistic analyses of whole films. The most important purpose of *Film Art* is to teach you *how to analyse whole films, not just recognise isolated techniques*.

Moreover, the chapter seeks to show that the interaction of techniques shapes a film's overall style. Continuity editing requires certain standardised decisions about performance, framing, and lighting. Welles's "deep focus" in *Citizen Kane* is a matter of cinematography and mise-en-scene. In turn, the cooperation of techniques works with the film's overall form to achieve particular effects.

Once you have finished this chapter, you should be ready to analyse every aspect of a film on your own. You have been introduced to the different types of film and the characteristic types of form that are used to shape whole films. You also know all the individual techniques that go into the making of the scene-by-scene progression of the film within those formal systems.

How to prepare for your final essay

Before writing your final essay read the chapters 'Film Art: Summary: Style as a Formal System', pp. 308- 326 and the' Appendix: Writing a Critical Analysis of Film', pp. 450-456. Take also a look at: 'Critical Analysis of Film North by Northwest' pp 402- 410.

See Film Art: 'Appendix: Writing a Critical Essay of a Film', (pp. 450-456) and the checklist below.

Your final essay -is an analysis of a whole film, not just a fragment. You can of course start from (a) fragments - that is one of the best practices.

In your final essay you should analyse the style and form as the framework for the total film. The form (the repeated and salient use of film techniques) is in our case a narrative system and style.

The final essay (5000 words **minimum**) is written individually and contains an extended analysis of the film of your own choice of.

A digital version of your final essay should be submitted on Student Portal (Safe Assignment) before 23:55 hrs Friday, May 18th.

You will be responsible to find a video or digital copy of the film yourself. You have to watch the film several times before writing the analysis and you should illustrate your analysis with screenshots and if necessary with graphs and sketches.

How to proceed:

Start your analysis from a fragment (or a series fragments).
Look for functions in relation to the film form and film style.
Relate your findings to more broader discussions about the film (aesthetic, political, societal, moral issues related to the film) or other analyses of (the) films.
In your analysis you have to refer to at least two relevant academic articles on the field of film studies.

What should your analysis contain?

There are four primary steps that must be taken in order to analyse a film.
Determine the organisational structure of the film, its narrative or non-narrative formal system.
Identify the salient techniques used.
Trace out patterns of techniques within the whole film.
What are the functions for the salient techniques and the patterns they form?
What unique artistic and technical choices are by filmmaker in order to establish his/her style?
Make clear which technical choices the filmmaker makes from all the technical possibilities available and how the filmmaker adheres to them throughout the film to retain consistency.
In which way adheres the film to the viewer's general stylistic expectations and does the film require that the viewers changes their expectations.

Keep in mind that:

Your analysis will focus on a selection of cinematographic means, since no single film uses all the technical possibilities available because the filmmaker makes certain technical choices and adheres to them throughout the film to retain consistency. Historical circumstances, such as the availability of certain technologies, may also limit the range of technical possibilities a filmmaker can employ.

For the audience, stylistic expectations derive from both personal experience of the world generally and from personal experience of film and other media. A film can either adhere to a viewer's general stylistic expectation or require that the viewer changes his/her expectation.

No single set of rules will allow the audience to understand every film automatically. Any film creates a unique form from an interplay of overall structure and film style, and each individual element functions according to its place within that system.

Hand-in your Final essay in Safe Assignment before Friday the Friday, June 2th, 23:55 hrs - no hard copy.

Thursday May 10th - No Session

Week 8

No Sessions

Annexes

Film Viewers' Guide 1

What to Watch for?
The Whole Film

Film Art emphasizes that to appreciate a movie you have to consider it as a whole. Some parts may be intriguing in themselves, but the film operates as a total system, and any part gains its full meaning in that context. This is why we introduce the concepts of overall form (Part Two) and style (Part Three). Whether you're watching a film for diversion or for deeper understanding, as part of an evening's entertainment or as a class assignment, you'll appreciate the film most fully if you have an overall sense of how it's put together. This means developing the habit of thinking of any part, no matter how small, in relation to the rest of the film.

For example, two lines of dialogue from *Jerry Maguire* have entered everyday American English. "Show me the money!" has become a cliché, while "You complete me" has been parodied in comedy skits. Taken by themselves, they are easy to mock. In the overall film, however, they play complicated roles. "Show me the money!" is at first an amusing line that Rod Tidwell uses to make Jerry swear he'll serve as a good agent for him. Rod wants to amass money to keep his family secure in the years when he can no longer play football. This is a businesslike attitude, but we've already seen that one side of Jerry doesn't want the sports business to be wholly about money. He has glimpsed the possibility of actually serving his clients as friends. So even though Jerry agrees to help Rod get a bigger paycheck, we can anticipate a conflict coming up. As the plot develops, Rod will learn that his search for bigger paychecks demands that he think not only of himself and his family but his team.

"You complete me" first appears when Jerry and Dorothy have quit the firm they work for and watch a loving deaf-mute couple signs to each other. Dorothy knows American Sign Language and can interpret their gestures–a piece of knowledge that tells us that she's a sympathetic person. More generally, the line works as a summation of both Dorothy's and Jerry's situations. She is moved by his "mission statement," which shows that her idealism finds an outlet in his dream of a personalized sports agency. Jerry, on the other hand, must come to understand what Dorothy offers him. He loves her son and she has bolstered his confidence, but he is not ready to love her fully. Dorothy guides him toward becoming, in her words, "the man he almost is." By the end of the film, when he declares, "You complete me" in front of a room full of women with unhappy relationships, he admits that he needs her to fulfil the best side of himself. As with "Show me the money!" the line gains its deepest meaning in the overall development of the plot.

The overall context of a movie can make any element significant. Consider credit sequences. (See "A Closer Look," pp. 98-99.) At a minimum, credits can set a mood, like an overture in an opera or stage musical. The thunderous, looming title credit of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is stamped in flame-licked steel plates that slowly enlarge while metallic percussion hammers out a frantic pulse. The shot evokes the flames of nuclear war, the danger of physical action, a battle against machines, and the film's concern with humanizing its cyborg. By contrast, as we point out in *Film Art* (p. 431), the candy box title cards of *Meet Me in St. Louis* evoke nostalgia for cozy family life at the turn of the last century. For *Se7en*, David Fincher wanted to set up anxiety in the spectator from the start, especially since the villain appears rather late in the film, so he commissioned graphic designer Kyle Cooper to create fast-cut, scratch-and-burn credits which suggest mutilation and madness.

At the Very Start: Logos and Opening Credits

Most theatrical motion pictures begin in a standardized way. First are the logos identifying the distributor and the production company. The major distributors have logos known around the world–the Paramount mountain, the MGM lion, Columbia's Lady Liberty, the Warner Bros. shield, the Universal globe, and the enormous futuristic letters of Twentieth Century Fox. The production company responsible for the film also tries to present a vivid, memorable image, as when Spielberg's Amblin Company recycles the silhouette of the bicycle against the moon from *ET*. In addition, an introductory logo can play a formal, stylistic, or thematic role in the film. The Paramount peak dissolves into a real mountain at the beginning of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and in the opening of *The Matrix* the Warner Brothers shield loses its bright blue and yellow tones and becomes a gloomy circuit-board green suitable for the cyberspace adventure which follows.

Until the 1950s, a feature film followed a set format: lengthy credits at the very start, a "The End" title at the close, often followed by a shot listing cast members and their roles. In the 1950s, some films began to have "precredits" sequences, one or two scenes which whetted the viewer's interest before the opening credits. Later filmmakers hit upon one strategy that's still common: Start the plot immediately but present the credits superimposed over the action we see, as in *Jerry Maguire*. Likewise, few films today include a "The End" title, since a long fade-out and a surge of music are enough to suggest that the plot has finished.

For many decades the credits listed were quite selective. Nearly all of the hundreds of workers who participated in making the film were long-term studio employees, and so they went uncredited. When studios became chiefly distribution companies in the 1960s and 1970s, all workers, from stars down to carpenters and grips, became freelance workers, and they were able to negotiate a credit line. Now everyone who works on the movie, in any capacity, must be credited by name. As a result, a new format arose. The opening credits (also called the "main title") lists key personnel: main stars, screenwriters,

cinematographer, composer, special-effects creators, editors, producers, and–last by tradition–director. The full credits (or "end title") rolls at the film's conclusion, almost always in small white type on a black background. For the major participants, the size, sequence, and placement of the credits are negotiated contractually.

Credits can also anticipate motifs that will arise in the film's story. Several of Hitchcock's films had credits designed by Saul Bass, who had a genius for finding a graphic design to epitomize aspects of the film. Bass created the spiraling opening imagery of *Vertigo,* which introduces the motif of vision (an enlarged eye) and the hero's fear of falling (the sinister tower). Bass filled the opening frames of *North by Northwest* with crosshatched parallels, which first evoke latitude and longitude lines (this movie will be about traveling) and then become the grid of a New York City skyscraper's facade. Bass's simpler horizontal credits for *Psycho*, blocks of white zipping on and offscreen against a black background, anticipate the window blinds and the highway line markers of the film's first part.

Kyle Cooper's credits for *Mission Impossible* also anticipate upcoming action, sandwiching names among a flurry of images that will be seen later in the film, all introducing key elements of treachery and romance. (It's as if the credits sequence became a trailer for the movie.) The stick-figure cartoons opening *Catch Me If You Can* highlight motifs of pursuit and flirtation, and the whole sequence evokes the 1960s, when the film's action takes place and when such animated credits were common.

Similarly, end credits can participate in the overall film's development. Just as opening credits may unfold during a scene, the film's epilogue may appear as closing credits are rolling. *Silence of the Lambs* holds the audience through all its final credits by presenting a lengthy shot of Hannibal Lecter pursuing the doctor who once had charge of him, and both fade into a crowd, suggesting that the doctor will be Lecter's next victim. The closing titles of *Armageddon* are wedged into home-video-style footage of the young couple's wedding, a scene which brings the plot to a close. *A Bug's Life* charmed audiences with its final credits, which parodied the "NG" ("No Good," or blooper) shots that used to accompany comedies.

And some filmmakers cunningly add material *after* the final credits, as if rewarding devoted viewers who didn't rush for the exit. *Airplane!* was one of the first films to save a gag for the very end of the credits, a device exploited by John Hughes in several later films. Takeshi Kitano, by contrast, adds a lyrical landscape shot to the final credits for *Sonatine*, softening the harshness of the plot's conclusion. Each part of a film, even its very first or very last moments, can contribute to its overall effect.

(. . .)

Film Art is devoted to showing you what to watch for in a film, but if you intend to write about a movie, you will want to watch with particular concentration. One strategy is to start to develop a *film memory*. Some people are naturally endowed with an ability to recall lines of dialogue, but anyone can increase what she or he retains from experiencing a movie. You can decide to notice certain aspects of film technique.

For example, once you decide to watch for patterns of color in the set design and cinematography of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, you will note that locales are differentiated. Cinematographer Andrew Lesnie and his team manipulated the images digitally to create vivid contrasts. The idyllic world of the Shire was filmed in a lush rural setting, but in post-production the filmmakers boosted the yellow-green tones to create a spring-like look. That look disappears abruptly in the night forest, lit with harsh blue light, as the hobbits are attacked by Black Riders. The orange of the flames in Bilbo Baggins' fireplace in early scenes differs from the slightly green hue added to the fire in the threatening Prancing Pony inn. The arrival in Rivendell introduces a more autumnal look, while the Fellowship's failed attempt to pass over the mountains takes place in blindingly white snow. Immediately after that, the group enters the gloomy Mines of Moria. Lesnie and director Peter Jackson have explained that they tried to suggest the terror of the place by bleaching out the faces' flesh tones to create an almost corpselike look. You can trace such patterns and contrasts through the entire *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. As digital technology simplifies post-production treatment of footage, more films will make use of such motivic manipulations of color.

Some people say that watching for technique distracts them from the story, and it is true that many movies try not to call attention to their style. But you can learn to watch for both technique and story. It's multitasking, like driving a car while carrying on a conversation. It just takes practice.

Still, at any moment a lot is going on in a movie; it's hard to watch for everything at once. That's why it's good to concentrate on certain elements. In addition, if you want to study a movie, either for writing or just in order to deepen your understanding, you'll want to watch it several times. We all know how the movies we love reveal unexpected pleasures on repeated viewings. A scene you didn't much care for becomes a new favorite after you understand what purposes it serves. Subtleties of plot or performance stand out when you know what's coming up next.

Repeated viewings are essential if you plan to write about the film, and so is note taking. Because movies are dense with all kinds of visual and sonic information, notes help you recall key points. How do you take notes? If you're watching the film on video, no problem; you can stop, reverse, and replay as much as you like. Sometimes, though, you'll have to write during a screening. Here you shouldn't aim for perfect penmanship, since you're the only person who'll have to decipher your scratches. Try writing without

dropping your eyes from the screen; you'll be surprised how legible the results can be. You may want to use a light-tipped pen (available in office supply stores), which casts a small beam on the page to guide your writing without disturbing others.

But, you're probably asking, if I can't capture everything, what do I take notes on? That depends on your writing project, which is the subject of the next section of this manual. (source http://highered.mheducation.com/sites/1259534952/student_view0/index.html)

Film Viewers' Guide 2

You'll typically encounter three sorts of writing assignment in an introductory film course. A short **screening report** asks you to demonstrate your understanding of a film and its relationship to a course topic. It's somewhat like an essay answer on an examination. Another type of assignment is the film **review**, which lets you try writing the sort of evaluative commentary you might find in *Newsweek* or *Rolling Stone*. Third, there is the **analytical essay,** a longer piece that digs more deeply and develops a sustained argument about the film. The analytical essay is the longest, most complicated, and (for most students) the most challenging writing assignment.

(...)

The Analytical Essay

The analytical film essay typically runs 5 to 15 double-spaced pages. Being an analysis, it points out how various parts of the film fit together systematically (see *Film Art*, p. 396). Like a screening report and a review, the analytical essay includes descriptions, but the descriptions are typically more detailed and extensive. Like the review, the analytical essay also puts forth the writer's opinion, but here the opinion doesn't usually address the ultimate worth of the film. When you analyze a film, you're defending your view of the ways parts of the movie work together.

Think about a sad song. You could *describe* the song in various ways ("It's about a woman who wants out of a dead-end relationship"). You could also give your *evaluation* of it ("It's too sentimental"). But you can also *analyze* it, talking about how the lyrics, the melody, and the instrumentation work together to create the feeling of sadness or to make the listener understand the relationship. That's the sort of thing people who study film do when they analyze movies.

The analytical essay is also an *argumentative* piece. Its goal is to allow you to develop an idea you have about the film by supplying good reasons for considering that idea seriously. The sample analyses in Chapter 11 are argumentative essays. For instance, in analyzing *The Thin Blue Line*, we argue that the film tells a real-life story in a way that suggests how difficult the search for truth can be (p. 425). Likewise, our discussion of *Raging Bull* tries to show that the film criticizes violence as used in mass entertainment while still displaying a fascination with its visceral appeal (p. 438).

How do you come up with an argument for your essay? The preparatory work usually consists of three steps.

1. Develop a *thesis* that your essay will explain and support

Start by asking yourself questions. What do you find intriguing or disturbing about the film? What makes the film noteworthy, in your opinion? Does it illustrate some aspect of filmmaking with special clarity? Does it have an unusual effect on the viewer? Do the film's implicit or symptomatic meanings (pp. 63-65) seem to have particular importance?

Your answer to such questions will furnish the *thesis* of your analysis. The thesis, in any piece of writing, is the central claim your argument advances. It encapsulates your opinion, but not in the way that a film review states your evaluation of the movie. In an analytical essay, your thesis is one way to help other viewers understand the movie. In our analysis of *His Girl Friday* (pp. 396-400), our thesis is that the film uses classical narrative devices to create an impression of rapid speed. With respect to *Man with a Movie Camera* (pp. 422-425), our thesis is that the film makes the viewer aware of how even documentary films manipulate the world they present to us.

Typically, your thesis will be a claim about the film's *functions*, its *effects*, or its *meanings* (or some mixture of all three). For instance, we argue that by creating a wide variety of characters in *Do the Right Thing,* Spike Lee builds up interconnected plotlines; this allows him to explore the problems of sustaining a community (pp. 404-408). In our discussion of *North by Northwest*, we concentrate more on how the film achieves the effects of suspense and surprise (pp. 400-404). The analysis of *Meet Me in St. Louis* emphasizes how technique carries implicit and symptomatic meanings about the importance of family life in America (pp. 431-438).

Your thesis will need some support, some reasons to believe it. Ask yourself, "What would back up my thesis?" and draw up a list of points. Some of these reasons will occur to you immediately, but others will emerge only as you start to study the film more closely. And the reasons, which are conceptual points, will in turn need backup—typically, evidence and examples. You can sum up the structure of an argumentative essay in the acronym **TREE**: **Thesis** supported by **Reasons** that rest upon **Evidence** and **Examples**.

2. Draw up a segmentation of the entire film

Analyzing a film is a bit like understanding a building's design. When we walk through a building, we notice various features—the shape of a doorway, the sudden appearance of an immense atrium. We may not, however, have a very strong sense of the building's overall architecture. If we are students of architecture, though, we want to study the design of the whole building, and so we'd examine the blueprints to understand how all the individual parts fit together. Similarly, we experience a film scene by scene, but if we

want to understand how the various scenes work together, it's helpful to have a sense of the whole film's shape.

Movies don't come equipped with blueprints, so we have to make our own. The best way to grasp the overall shape of the movie is to make a segmentation, as we suggest in *Film Art*. (See in particular pp. 72-73, 105-106, 355, 361, 370, 377.) Breaking the film into sequences gives you a convenient overview, and your segmentation will often suggest things that will support or help you nail down your thesis. For example, in studying *The Thin Blue Line*, we made a separate list of all the flashbacks to the murder. When we saw them lined up on our page, we spotted the pattern of development in them that became part of our analysis (p. 426).

Now that you have a segmentation, you can go on to see how the parts are connected. In examining a non-narrative film, you will need to be especially alert to its use of categorical, rhetorical, abstract, or associational principles. See our analysis of *Gap-Toothed Women* (pp. 354-359) for an example of how you can base an analysis on the overall shape of the film.

If the film presents a narrative, your segmentation can help you answer questions like these: How does each scene set up causes and effects? At what point do we understand the characters' goals, and how do those goals develop in the course of the action? What principles of development connect one scene to another? The opening scenes of *Jerry Maguire* establish Jerry as a sports agent who's having a crisis of conscience. Fearing he's becoming "another shark in a suit," he impulsively sends out a memo (what he calls a "mission statement") that criticizes his firm's policies. Because of his insubordination, he's fired. Because he needs a job, he tries to build his independent agency on trust, but he sometimes still takes his clients for granted. The bulk of the film consists of his struggle to remain principled—with the help of a woman who tries to bring out his better side and a football player who tries to teach him the value of direct communication. Thus the romantic plot line develops in relation to Jerry's efforts to improve both his business and his personality. An analysis of the narrative would show how each scene continues the cause-effect logic, affects the hero's goals, and traces out the changes in his character and his love life.

Should you include your segmentation in your written analysis? Sometimes it will make your argument clearer and more convincing. We think that a broad scene breakdown helps illustrate some key points in our discussions of *His Girl Friday* (p. 397) and a more detailed one clarifies *The Thin Blue Line* (pp. 447-448). Perhaps your argument will gain in strength if you bring out a still finer-grained segmentation; we do this in considering the three sub segments of the final chase scene in *North by Northwest* (pp. 403-404).

However much of your segmentation finally surfaces in your written analysis, it's good to get in the habit of writing out a fairly detailed segmentation every time you examine a film. It will help you get an overall sense of the film's design. You probably noticed that

nearly every one of our analyses includes, early on, a statement about the film's underlying formal organization. This provides a firm basis for more detailed analysis. Writing out a segmentation is also good practice if you want to become a filmmaker yourself: screenwriters, directors, and other creative personnel usually work from a plot outline that amounts to a segmentation.

3. Note outstanding instances of film technique

As you watch the film, you should jot down brief, accurate descriptions of various film techniques that are used. You can get ideas for analyzing style from Chapter 10. Once you have determined the overall organizational structure of the film, you can identify salient techniques, trace out patterns of techniques across the whole film, and propose functions for those techniques. These techniques will often support or refine your thesis.

As a start, be alert for techniques taken one by one. Is this a case of three-point lighting? Is this a continuity cut? Just as important, the analyst should be sensitive to context: What is the function of the technique *here*? Again a segmentation will help you by drawing attention to patterning. Does the technique repeat or develop across the film?

At any moment in a film, so much is going on that it's easy to be overwhelmed by all the technical elements. Shot composition, performance, lighting, camera movement, color design, dialogue, music–all these things can be present and changing from second to second. Often, beginning film analysts are uncertain as to what techniques are most relevant to their thesis. Sometimes they try to describe every single costume or cut or pan, and they wind up drowned in data.

This is where planning your paper's thesis in advance helps you. Your thesis will make certain techniques more pertinent than others. For example, we argue that in *North by Northwest* Hitchcock creates suspense and surprise by manipulating our range of knowledge (pp. 400-404). Sometimes he lets us know more than the main character, Roger Thornhill, and this builds up suspense: Will Thornhill walk into the traps that we know are awaiting him? At other moments we know only as much as Thornhill does, so that we're as surprised as he is at a new turn of events. Hitchcock devotes particular film techniques to creating these effects. Crosscutting between lines of action gives us more knowledge than Thornhill has, while POV camerawork and cutting restrict us to his understanding of certain situations.

So other techniques, such as lighting or performance style, aren't as relevant to our thesis about *North by Northwest*. (They might, however, be very relevant to some other thesis about it—say, that it treats thriller conventions somewhat comically.) By contrast, we emphasize acting technique more in our discussion of *Raging Bull*, because acting is pertinent to our discussion of the film's use of realistic conventions. Similarly, the editing in *Meet Me in St. Louis* would be interesting from the standpoint of another argument, but it is not central to the one that we are making, so it goes almost completely unmentioned.

Once you have a thesis, an awareness of the overall shape of the film, and a set of notes on the techniques relevant to your thesis, you are ready to organize your analytical paper.

Organization and Writing

Broadly speaking, an argumentative piece has this underlying structure:

> **Introduction:** Background information or a vivid example, leading up to:
> Statement of thesis
>
> **Body:** Reasons to believe the thesis
> Evidence and examples that support the thesis
>
> **Conclusion:** Restatement of thesis and discussion of its broader implications

All of our analyses in Chapter 11 adhere to this basic structure. The opening portion seeks to lead the reader into the argument to come, and the thesis is introduced at the end of this introduction. Where the introduction is brief, as in the *His Girl Friday* analysis, the thesis comes at the end of the first paragraph (p. 397). Where more background material is needed, the introduction is somewhat longer and the thesis is stated a little later. In the *Thin Blue Line* essay, the thesis comes at the end of the third paragraph (p. 425).

You can sometimes postpone the full statement of a thesis by casting it as a question, as we do in our analysis of *Chungking Express* (p. 417). We end the second paragraph by asking what the film accomplishes by following one brief plot by a second one containing a new set of characters. But if you pursue the question-based structure, be sure to provide at least a hint of the answer fairly soon (as we do in the last full paragraph on p. 418) to guide the rest of your argument.

As you know, the building block of any piece of writing is the paragraph. Each slot in the argumentative pattern outlined above will be filled by one or more paragraphs. The introduction is at least one paragraph, the body will be several paragraphs, and the conclusion will be one or two paragraphs.

Typically, the introductory paragraphs of a film analysis don't display much concrete evidence. Instead, this is the place to introduce the thesis you want to advance. Often this involves situating the thesis in relation to some background information. For example, our analysis of *Tokyo Story* situates the film in a tradition of noncontinuity editing before stating our thesis (p. 413). Usually the introductory paragraph or two set out generalizations of this sort.

If you're adventurous, you may wish to avoid background information. You can start with one concrete piece of evidence—say, an intriguing scene or detail from the film—before you move quickly to state your thesis. Our *Meet Me in St. Louis* piece uses this sort of opening (p. 431).

Writing a film analysis poses a particular problem of organization. Should the body of the argument follow the film's progress in chronological order, so that each paragraph deals with a scene or major part? In some cases this can work. We try it with our *Gap-Toothed Women* discussion, which traces out the patterns of development across the film (pp. 354-359). By and large, however, you strengthen your argument by following a more conceptual structure of the sort indicated in our outline.

The body of your essay consists of a series of *reasons* to believe the thesis. You'll back those points up with evidence and examples. Consider our analysis of *Breathless* (pp. 408-413). Our thesis is that Godard's film both pays homage to *film noir* outlaw movies and reworks their conventions through a rough-edged treatment. This thesis obliges us to use a comparison-and-contrast strategy. But first we start with a paragraph of background (p. 409), sketching the relevant Hollywood outlaw-movie traditions. The second paragraph shows how the basic story of *Breathless* resembles the criminal-couple-on-the-run movie. The next three paragraphs make the point that Godard's film also reworks Hollywood conventions: Michel seems to be imitating tough-guy stars, while the film's form and style seem casual, as if aiming to let the audience enjoy a new, more self-conscious version of an American crime movie.

Since the essay relies on comparison and contrast, the body of the piece explores the film's similarities to and differences from Hollywood conventions. The next eleven paragraphs seek to establish these points about the film's narrative form:

1. Michel is like a Hollywood protagonist in certain ways (p. 408).

2. The action is, however, much more choppy and digressive than in a Hollywood film (p. 409).

3. The death of the policeman is handled more abruptly and disconcertingly than in a normal action movie (p. 409).

4. ,5. By contrast, the bedroom conversation of Patricia and Michel is untypical of Hollywood genre scenes because it is very static, marking little progress toward Michel's goals (p. 429).

6. Once the plot starts moving again, it stalls again (p. 410).

7. ,8. Moving toward resolution, the plot again picks up, but the finale remains enigmatic and open-ended (p. 410).

9. ,10. Overall, Michel and Patricia are puzzling and hard to read as characters (pp. 410-411).

11. The characterization of the couple is thus sharply different from that of the romantic couple in most outlaws-on-the-run plots (p. 411).

Each of these points constitutes a reason to accept the thesis that *Breathless* uses genre conventions but also revises them in unsettling ways.

Supporting reasons may be of many sorts. Several of our analyses distinguish between reasons based upon the film's overall narrative form and reasons based upon stylistic choices. The portion of the *Breathless* essay we've just reviewed offers evidence to support our claims about the film's reworking of Hollywood narrative conventions. The paragraphs that follow this material (pp. 411-413) discuss Godard's similarly self-conscious use of stylistic strategies. In analyzing *Meet Me in St. Louis,* we concentrate more on reviewing various motifs that create particular thematic effects. In either case, the argument rests on a thesis, supported by reasons, which are in turn supported by evidence and examples.

If you organize the essay conceptually rather than as a blow-by-blow résumé of the action, you may find it useful to acquaint your reader with the plot action at some point. A brief synopsis soon after the introduction may do the trick. (See our *North by Northwest* analysis, pp. 400-404, or our *Chungking Express* discussion, pp. 417-422.) Alternatively, you may wish to cover basic plot material when you discuss segmentation, characterization, causal progression, or other topics. The crucial point is that the writer isn't forced to follow the film's order.

Typically, each reason for the thesis becomes the topic sentence of a paragraph, with more detailed evidence displayed in the sentences that follow. In the *Breathless* example, each main point is followed by specific examples of how plot action, dialogue, or film techniques at once refer to Hollywood tradition and loosen up the conventions. Here is where your detailed notes about salient scenes or techniques will be very useful. You can select the strongest and most vivid instances of mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound to back up the main point that each paragraph explores.

The body of the analysis can be made more persuasive by several other tactics. A paragraph that *compares or contrasts this film with another* might help you zero in on specific aspects that are central to your argument. You can also include *a brief in-depth analysis of a single scene or sequence* that drives your argumentative point home. We use this tactic in discussing several films' endings, chiefly because a concluding section often reveals broad principles of development. For instance, the last two scenes of *Jerry Maguire* underscore the two plotlines, professional and personal. First comes his professional reward: Jerry's client Rod triumphs on the field and pays tribute to Jerry's personal investment in his career. The last scene shows Jerry, Dorothy, and her son strolling past a playground, underscoring their reconciliation as a family (and developing the hints dropped in the beginning that one of Jerry's redeeming qualities is his concern for children). Just as we advise you to pay particular attention to the film's ending as a key place to discover what the film's trying to do (p. 73), *a close analysis of the film's ending* can be a convincing way to end the body of your analysis.

In general, the body of the argument should progress toward stronger or subtler reasons for believing the thesis. In discussing *The Thin Blue Line*, we start by tracing how the film provides a kind of reconstructed investigation, leading to the killer (pp. 425-427). Only then do we ask: Is the film more than a neutral report of the case (427-428)? This leads us to argue that the filmmaker has subtly aligned our sympathies with Randall Adams (p. 428). Yet the film goes beyond aligning us with Adams. It also bombards us with a great deal of information, some of it fairly minute, even trivial. The purpose, we suggest, is to urge the viewer to sort out conflicting data and notice details (pp. 428-431). This is a fairly complex point that would probably not come across if introduced early on. Only after the analysis has worked through more clear-cut matters is it possible to consider such nuances of interpretation.

How to end your argumentative essay? Now is the time to restate the thesis (skillfully, not repeating previous statements word for word) and to remind the reader of the reasons to entertain the thesis. The ending is also an opportunity for you to try for a bit of eloquence, a telling quotation, a bit of historical context, or a concrete motif from the film itself–perhaps a line of dialogue or an image that encapsulates your thesis. In making preparatory notes, ask yourself constantly: Is there something here that can create a vivid ending?

Just as there is no general recipe for understanding film, there is no formula for writing incisive and enlightening film analyses. But there are principles and rules of thumb that govern good writing of all sorts. Only through writing, and constant rewriting, do these principles and rules come to seem second nature. By analyzing films, we can understand the sources of our pleasure in them and we are able to share that understanding with others. If we succeed, the writing itself can give pleasure to our readers and ourselves.

Key Questions for an Analytical Essay

1. Do you have a thesis? Is it stated clearly by the end of the first or second paragraph of your analysis?
2. Do you have a series of reasons supporting the thesis? Are these arranged in logical and convincing order (with the strongest reason coming last)?
3. Are your supporting reasons backed up? Do your segmentation and your stylistic analysis provide specific evidence and examples for each reason you offer?
4. Does your beginning orient your reader to the direction of your argument? Does your concluding paragraph reiterate your thesis and provide a vivid ending?

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