

## **Definitions and Concepts in Midterm #1:**

### **Lecture #1: Story & Plot**

**Story:** consists of all of the events that we learn about in the course of a narrative, in the order in which they supposedly actually happened

**Plot:** refers to the arrangement of the story's events in the order in which they appear in the film

**Classical Hollywood Cinema:** vague but convenient term used to designate the style of mainstream narrative films produced in Hollywood, roughly from the teens to the mid 1960s. Films are strong in story with a high level of technical achievement and edited according to conventions of classical cutting. Films want us to forget they are a representation.

**Causality:** the relationship between cause and effect. In the context of film, it refers to the effect of techniques designed to maintain narrative continuity.

**Line of action:** refers to the chain of cause and effect relationships in a narrative.

**Closure:** the degree to which the ending of a film reveals the effects of all the causal events and resolves all the lines of action.

**Genre:** denotes a group of films with that share distinctive and recurring themes, narrative structures and images. They are recognizable through their iconography (motifs that become associated with a specific genre through repetition). Can be grouped by content (western, gangster), stylistic elements (musicals), or effect (thrillers).

**Conventions:** sets of accepted thematic and formal rules that films follow and which are accepted among filmmakers and audiences.

**Narrative form:** a type of filmic organization in where the parts relate to each other in a series of causally related events taking place in time and space.

#### **Narration forms:**

- **Omniscient:** when we know more than what every one of the characters know
- **Restricted:** when information is limited to what one character provides
- **Mixed:** when we know what the character know but also when we know things s/he does not know.

**Motivation:** includes any element that activates a narrative. It is “psychological” when it relates to character, and “motivational” when it relates to action and to generic conventions.

**Protagonist:** the main character of a film, around whom the plot action is organized.

**Antagonist:** the main person, group, society, etc, who is in conflict with the film's hero.

## **Lecture #2: Editing**

**Editing:** joining one strip of film (shot) with another. Eliminates time and space.

**Continuity editing:** a system of editing which functions to maintain a continuous and clear narrative action. It depends on matching screen direction, position, and temporal relations from shot to shot. It preserves the fluidity of an event, without showing all of it.

**Spatial continuity:** construction of space along the axis of action. It is the establishment, breakdown and re-establishment of a shot which informs us about the spatial boundaries of the action.

**Temporal continuity:** the organization and manipulation of time to construct and regulate narrative development.

**Establishing shot:** a shot offered at the beginning of a scene (usually extreme long shot or long shot) which provides the viewer with the context of the subsequent closer shots.

**Re-establishing shot:** a return to an initial establishing shot within a scene, acting as a reminder of physical context of the closer shots.

**Eyeline match:** a cut obeying the concept of axis of action, in which the first shot shows a person looking off into a particular direction and the subsequent shot shows a nearby space which contains what he or she sees.

**Matching action:** a continuity of cutting which splices two different views of the same action together at the same moment of the movement, making it seem to continue uninterrupted, since the motion of the character takes precedence.

**Axis of Action (180° Rule):** a basic guideline in filmmaking that states that two characters (among other elements) in the same scene must always be viewed with the same left/right relationship. Stabilizes the space of the playing area so as to avoid viewer disorientation.

**Shot-reverse shot:** two or more shots that are edited together, often depicting a conversation, using over the shoulder composition.

**Jump cut:** an abrupt transition from shot to shot in which the second shot is taken from an angle which is only slightly different from the previous shot, so that the objects or characters seem to "jump". This therefore represents a violation of the 180 degree rule.

**Cross-cutting:** the alteration of shots of one scene with another at a different location, conveying the sense of simultaneous time. Also known as parallel editing. Intensifies tension by reducing the duration of shots as the sequence reaches its climax.

**Intercutting:** the development of multiple stories in a parallel fashion. The continuity is often conceptual rather than physical or psychological.

### **Lecture #3: Photography**

**Extreme long shot:** taken from a great distance. Usually an exterior shot which shows much of the locale.

**Long shot:** a shot taken from a distance that includes full view of the subject and some of the surroundings.

**Full shot:** a shot that includes the human body in full

**Medium shot:** a shot in which the scale of the object is shown in moderate size. When a human is the object of the shot, they are shown from the waist up.

**Close-up:** a shot which reveals very little (if any) locale and concentrates on a relatively small object.

**Deep focus:** a shot which consists of several focal lengths, keeping both close and distant planes within sharp focus. (Usually a long shot, and also known as a wide-angle shot).

**Rack focusing:** a shift in focus from one focal length to another, neutralizing planes and guiding the spectator's eyes to various distances in a sequence.

### **Lecture #4: Mise-en-scène**

**Mise-en-scène:** all of the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed; the setting, props, lighting, costumes and makeup, and figure behavior.

**Intrinsic interest:** an unobtrusive region of the frame that draws our immediate attention because of its dramatic or contextual importance, rather than visual aspects of the shot.

**Panning:** the revolving horizontal movement of the camera from left to right, or vice versa.

**Tilt:** a vertical panning shot in which the camera moves on its axis, up or down.

**Tracking shot:** a mobile framing that travels through space forward, backwards, or laterally.

**Crane shot:** a shot taken from a device known as a crane (which resembles a mechanical arm), which can travel in virtually any direction.

**Zoom:** a single shot which is taken with a lens of variable focal length, therefore allowing the cinematographer to change the distance between the camera and the object being filmed in one continuous movement.

**Motif:** any technique, object or thematic idea which is systematically repeated throughout the film, in a significant way.

### **Lecture #5: Long Take**

**Realism:** a range of styles of filmmaking that attempt to capture reality in its true nature, with a minimum of distortion, and has emphasis on authentic locations and details, long shots, lengthy takes and distorting editing techniques.

**Diegetic sound:** any voice, musical passage or sound which is presented as having originated from within the film's world.

**Non-diegetic sound:** sound that is represented as coming from outside of the space of the narrative.

**Long take:** a shot which continues for an unusually lengthy amount of time before transitioning to the next shot

### **Lecture #6: Intellectual Montage and Discontinuity Editing**

**Discontinuity editing:** any alternative system of editing in which the techniques used are not considered appropriate in the continuity editing system. It therefore dislocates spatial and temporal continuity, and makes editing noticeable.

**Montage:** an editing technique that stresses the dynamic relationship between shots. It is often associated with Soviet filmmakers of the 20's, and is an alternative to continuity editing.

**Intellectual montage:** the juxtaposition of multiple images to create an abstract idea that is not portrayed by any single image

**Elliptical editing:** shot transitions that omit parts of an event, thus causing an ellipsis in plot and story duration

**Graphic matches:** two successive shots which are joined in order to create a strong similarity of compositional elements.

**Non-diegetic inserts:** a shot or series of shots cut into a sequence, showing objects that have no source in the fictional world of the film.

**Overlapping:** the carry-over of dialogue, sounds and music from one scene to the next. This therefore means that the cut in the soundtrack occurs after the cut in the image.

Screen direction:

**Directional flow:** refers to graphic patterns set up by in-frame and/or camera movements

**Other terms:**

**Experienced time:** the manner in which time is compressed or expanded, mostly through editing.

**Running time:** a measure of the duration or length of the film.

**Scene:** a segment in a narrative film that takes place in one time and space, or possibly two or more simultaneous actions through crosscutting.

**Sequence:** a significant segment of a film's overall structure, usually representing a completed line of action. It can include more than one location, and is not necessarily continuous.

**Shot:** an uninterrupted segment of film, between edits.

**Style:** the repeated and notable uses of film techniques characteristic of a single film or group of films.

**Stylistic system:** a patterned and significant use of techniques through which meaning and affectivity is organized in a given film.

**Technique:** any aspect of the film medium that can be chosen and manipulated in the filmmaking process.