

INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCE MANUAL

The Film Experience

An Introduction

THIRD EDITION

by

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Clemson University

Bedford/St. Martin's
Boston ♦ New York

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Instructors who have adopted *The Film Experience*, Third Edition, as a textbook for a course are authorized to duplicate portions of this manual for their students.

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PREFACE

This Instructor's Resource Manual offers prompts, strategies, and advice that have proven useful in teaching introductory film courses. The material in each chapter is organized to reflect the structure of the parent text: Teaching tips suggest how to integrate the opening vignette, the Viewing Cues, the Form in Action, and the Films in Focus into lectures, class discussion, and writing assignments. Guidance is given for teaching technical vocabulary and for approaching the material from a historical, formal, or contextualized perspective. There is also a comprehensive, alphabetized list of all the movies cited in the chapter and a test bank with multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions.

The third edition of *The Film Experience* is extremely flexible. The chapters need not be read in the order they are presented nor in full; specific sections may be assigned depending on the focus of the course. Some professors, for example, might begin the course with Part 3, which examines storytelling through chapters on narrative, documentary, and experimental films and on genre. Others might begin with the formal and technical aspects of film form found in Part 2 and end the course by assigning the material on writing about film found in Part 4. Depending on the course goals and time available, certain chapters or parts of chapters might be omitted. The possibilities are seemingly endless.

The materials of this manual, when used in conjunction with the book's appendices and the companion Web site for *The Film Experience* (accessible at bedfordstmartins.com/film/experience), should provide more than enough material to teach each class session and help students broaden their understanding of the achievements and potential of the film medium.

This preface would be incomplete without acknowledgment of all the help I received in developing the Instructor's Resource Manual. I am grateful to Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White for writing such an accessible textbook. Thanks also are due to Ada Fung, who again gave me the opportunity to write and provided invaluable support throughout the process. Aga Skrodzka of Clemson University and Chuck Tryon at Fayetteville State University very graciously allowed me to include their syllabi, for which I am thankful. Sean O'Sullivan of the Ohio State University offered his syllabi and oceans of advice when I first started teaching film studies, and Jonathan Beecher Field has given me unswerving encouragement since day one. Finally, I could not have written this Instructor's Resource Manual were it not for the hundreds of Clemson students to whom I have had the pleasure of introducing film studies. They challenge and inspire me daily and provided the motivation to share the strategies, teaching tips, and advice in the pages that follow.

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FILM AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Film studies is something of an academic nomad. There are more freestanding film departments in colleges and universities every year, but it is important to acknowledge up front that introductory film studies courses may be found in a number of different departments and disciplines—English, languages, history, communications, cultural studies, ethnic/gender studies, film studies—and even in lifelong learning offerings aimed at retirees.

In addition to having many homes, introductory film courses can have many names: “Introduction to Film Studies,” “Introduction to Film,” “Film Appreciation,” and so forth. What these titles mean in terms of course goals and expectations varies as well. For example, the difference between the course that is called “Introduction to Film Studies” and the course called “Film Appreciation” may be that the former will put at least some of the leading theoretical concepts in the field into play, whereas an appreciation course might focus more on genres and have less rigorous assignments and expectations.

Course Challenges

Teaching introductory film courses presents a wide range of challenges. The more difficult include:

- teaching the vocabulary of the discipline and helping students identify film form and techniques in the context of a film
- working with a mixed student demographic
- exposing students to films with which they may not be familiar and helping them to appreciate their value
- keeping up with changing exhibition spaces

Teaching the Vocabulary of the Discipline

We can safely assume that everyone enrolled in the introductory film course has seen movies and is able to articulate what they like and don’t like about them in broad terms, but they don’t yet have the vocabulary to isolate and name which specific elements contributed to their experience of a movie as good or bad. As with any academic discipline, film studies has its own set of terms that students must be persuaded to master in order for them to be able to communicate their ideas and observations articulately in class and in their written work. It is useful to suggest to students that they think about the course as an introductory foreign language class. This approach helps them think of film studies as an academic discipline, rather than as a course in which they can simply watch movies for credit. It also reminds them that learning to express oneself articulately in any new language is a cumulative process that requires diligence, practice, and patience.

To that end, consider giving vocabulary quizzes at the beginning of class. Select only a few of the boldface terms from each section, perhaps emphasizing those that most closely relate to the film you’ll be watching, or consult the test bank for that chapter. Quizzes give students an opportunity to parse and refine their understanding of the reading. For a convenient list of boldface terms, see the Chapter-by-Chapter Glossary at bedfordstmartins.com/filmexperience/.

Multiple-choice quizzes and a quiz gradebook are also available on *The Film Experience* Web site.

Each chapter of this manual offers specific strategies for dealing with challenging filmic vocabulary. The manual highlights terms that students traditionally have difficulty mastering and offers techniques and advice to help the instructor demystify and explain what those terms mean. In the chapter on editing, for example, the manual suggests showing short scenes from specific films during class so that students can actually see various forms of editing in action. It then recommends asking students to describe what they see by correctly using as much of the chapter vocabulary as they can.

Working with a Mixed Student Demographic

Film studies attract students and instructors with various degrees of preparedness. Success for instructors—as for studios and exhibitors—can come from knowing the audience and how far they might stretch.

A sense of the students' backgrounds can help prepare the instructor for the course. Student demographics are changing. One may have to foreground the relevance of film studies to traditional-age college students, who don't watch movies the way they have been seen for the majority of film's short history. Older undergraduates and returning students can bring a different experience of films and film culture into the classroom. For both cohorts, it is important to understand how movies have been watched and constructed, given that certain conventions still obtain long after the technology has evolved.

Administering a brief survey at the beginning of the term can be revelatory. Ask students to name the last movie they saw as well as the first movie they remember seeing. If they went to see movies in a theater as small children, with whom did they see them—friends? parents? other relatives?—and where was the theater located?

Exposing Students to Unfamiliar Films

The primary student learning challenges also can vary depending on the geographical region or the type of institution in which the course is taught. An introductory film class might be an elective at a liberal arts college or it might satisfy a university-wide requirement for undergraduates from every major at a land-grant institution. A student attending a school in a rural area or one that does not offer a separate film studies major may not always experience the same type of rich, diverse film culture as a student attending school in movie hubs like Manhattan and Los Angeles. An instructor's role may involve achieving a balance between screening accessible and familiar films with exposing students to titles they might not otherwise see. Again, conducting a survey at the beginning of the semester or quarter that asks students to name their favorite movie and preferred genres or stars, as well as the movie they have seen most often, can help the instructor decide which films to screen.

Keeping Up with Changing Exhibition Spaces

Screenings may be mandatory or optional, but scheduling screenings alone presents its own set of challenges. Introductory film courses are taught in all types of physical spaces, from big lecture halls to “smart,” that is, “wired,” classrooms. The ways in which movies are viewed and

consumed inside and outside the classroom are changing almost too rapidly. Some instructors may be able to project 8mm or 70mm movies, while others might be limited to DVD or VHS and a CRT monitor. Students may opt to watch movies on their own on a computer, on an iPod or iPad, or on DVD, data that can also be gathered via a survey question. Even the number of times a week a class meets and for how long can affect the shape of the course.

No matter what the titles are or where they meet, introductory film courses have become increasingly vital, providing students with the insight and skills to contend with the increasingly visual turn that communication is taking globally.

TEACHING FROM *THE FILM EXPERIENCE*

The Film Experience situates film within the social contexts of how and where and why people watch movies. From this viewer-centric approach to film studies, the text offers clear explications of composition, narrative, history, and theory without preferring one approach over another. Supplementing these discussions are high-quality color and black-and-white frames selected from films throughout the medium's history. Using this textbook, an instructor can readily create a syllabus for a course that takes, for example, a generic, chronological, or close-reading approach to film studies.

The Film Experience is organized into four parts. Part 1 discusses how movies are made, watched, and studied. Part 2 deals with the formal and technical aspects of film form: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound. Part 3 addresses storytelling in chapters on narrative, documentary films, experimental films, and movie genres. Finally, Part 4 focuses on film histories, critical theories of studying film, and guidance for writing film essays. There are twelve chapters in all, which works nicely with the length of most semesters. Those teaching on the quarter system may double up or omit certain chapters.

As an introductory textbook, *The Film Experience* is designed to be flexible and easily adaptable to any course structure. Chapters are self-contained, and, depending on how the course is structured, they may be assigned out of order. For example, if the class topic is genre, the chapters in Part 3 may be the best place to start. Within each chapter, the movies cited, the frames selected, the Form in Action and Film in Focus features are drawn from various periods, to accommodate an introductory course surveying film history. Readings from Chapter 12: Writing a Film Essay can be assigned before any writing assignments. There is also a Glossary from which vocabulary for quizzes may be drawn.

The Film Experience has been designed to accommodate various approaches to an introductory film course, whether that approach is a formalist one, a critical one, or a straightforward film appreciation one. An experienced instructor can choose to start with narrative or film history and then move to mise-en-scène, cinematography, and editing, or vice versa. Psychoanalytic practitioners and their frame-counting cognitive colleagues will both find that the basic concepts on which their respective approaches build are explained clearly and thoroughly. A novice might opt simply to follow the order in the table of contents and screen only the Films in Focus or include some films that tie in to his or her own research interests.

HOW TO USE THIS INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCE MANUAL

A great deal of revision, thought, and creativity has gone into the development of the third edition of *The Film Experience*. A strong text deserves an equally strong Instructor's Resource Manual (IRM) that can supplement that text and train instructors how to teach their course using *The Film Experience*. This manual aims to accommodate different approaches to introductory film courses, to offer strategies for building syllabi that cover the various ways the course can be taught, and to appeal to instructors with backgrounds in film studies or in other disciplines.

In addition to satisfying these three goals, the manual includes the standard teaching aids, such as sample syllabi, chapter overviews, questions to generate class discussion, ideas for encouraging critical and active viewing among students, and a test bank. The manual also recognizes that non-majors may be enrolled in the introductory film course for the sole purpose of satisfying a graduation requirement and includes helpful ideas for engaging and sustaining their interests.

Each chapter in the Instructor's Resource Manual corresponds to the title and organization of each chapter in the parent text and includes the following:

- **Key Objectives.** Each chapter begins with a list of key objectives, drawn from the textbook, that gives an overview of the chapter's contents.
- **Chapter Overview.** The overview provides a summary of the topics covered, explains how the chapter fits within its part of the textbook, and suggests areas of emphasis to convey to students.
- **Teaching the Opening Vignette.** Each chapter of *The Film Experience* opens with a vignette drawn from a specific movie scene. The IRM suggests ways in which this vignette can be used by the instructor to launch and guide the class in a discussion of the chapter's primary concepts.
- **Teaching the Chapter.** The formal chapters of the book (Chapters 2–9) are organized into three primary sections—Short History, Elements, and Significance—that correspond respectively to historical, formal, and contextualized approaches to the chapter topic. Specific advice for teaching the topic from the historical, formal, or contextual perspective, however, is not included in each chapter of the IRM but appears only when supplemental support is deemed beneficial to the discussion. Teaching tips are also not offered for every heading within each part; rather, instruction is limited to those topics for which students frequently benefit from additional context.
- **Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts.** In these sections, the technical vocabulary from each chapter is addressed, with particular attention paid to especially difficult or confusing terms. This section also offers suggestions of ways in which the instructor can demystify these concepts. For a convenient list of boldface terms, see the glossary at the end of the textbook, or the Chapter-by-Chapter Glossary at bedfordstmartins.com/filmexperience/.
- **Teaching the Viewing Cues.** The Viewing Cues that appear throughout each chapter of the textbook serve multiple purposes. In the IRM, they have been identified either as prompts for essays, in-class exams, and take-home assignments, or as springboards for generating class discussion and for encouraging critical and active viewing among students. The Viewing Cues can also be used in conjunction with whatever film an instructor chooses to

show to illustrate a chapter's topic and in concert with additional readings the instructor may assign.

- **Teaching the Form in Action.** These illustrated sequences, which appear in Chapters 1 through 9 of the textbook, explain particular film practices in detail. Tips for teaching this feature and identifying their significance in relation to the larger chapter discussion appear in each chapter of the Instructor's Resource Manual.
- **Teaching the Films in Focus.** Each chapter offers two to three detailed analyses of how a specific form or concept works in a film. The films in these sections can be assigned for optional viewing or used as in-class supplements to aid discussion of another film. Screening one or more of the Film in Focus movies for the class or just as part of the preparation can help novice instructors educate themselves. For each film, we suggest what instructors might want to focus on, ways of talking about the analysis with the class, and other films that would work with the chapter and why.

Additional Suggestions and Films Cited. Each chapter of the IRM concludes with activities (based on the textbook's end-of-chapter Concepts at Work feature), as well as a comprehensive, alphabetical list of all the movies cited in the chapter. Among the many titles in this list are films that could be included on syllabi based on film history, national cinemas, genre, appreciation, or theory. This list is meant to be deployed in a variety of ways. Instructors can choose alternatives—based on their research interests, degree of familiarity with a particular movie, orientation of the course, or availability—to the Films in Focus. In addition, they can cross-reference the list with a list of the movies in their school's library or their personal collections. Instructors can also use the list as a guide to building up the film holdings of their department or university library. Finally, students sometimes get frustrated when the textbook explains new concepts by referring to movies they haven't seen. Using the film list, an instructor can determine whether any of the movies from which the frames in this chapter are drawn are available through the campus library and might prove more accessible to his or her students. Consider showing a relevant scene from one or two examples in class—the course is about *motion* pictures, after all!

SAMPLE SYLLABI

Sample Syllabus 1

Film: An Introduction Clemson University

Course Description

This course examines the art, economy, and politics of film. Using case studies, we will learn how to recognize, read, and analyze cinematic representation within a particular social, cultural, or political context, touching upon such important issues as race, gender, class, ideology, and censorship. The films that will be screened in this class range from examples of classical Hollywood cinema to the most recent world cinema. They include typical narrative films as well as avant-garde films. Our reading of film will be accompanied by the key texts in screen theory.

Required Texts

Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Reading Packet—available at the Campus Copy Shop

Evaluation

	1. Attendance
20%	2. Class Participation (discussion)
20%	3. Midterm Exam
30%	4. Tests
30%	5. Final Exam

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance.** Any student who misses more than four sessions, with or without excuse, will not pass this class. Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences. Three absences will jeopardize your final grade (the final grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade point). Arriving more than ten minutes late or leaving the classroom early is equivalent to one half of an absence. Our weekly **film labs** are compulsory. If you have a scheduling conflict, you should consider taking a different section of this class.
2. **Class Participation.** You must bring the appropriate reading material to each session, after having read it carefully at home. Your active and creative participation (asking well-informed questions, reading material on time, providing meaningful and relevant input during discussions, and so on) is a requirement. You need to be vocal and find a way to express your opinions about a given film or the current reading during our in-class discussions.
3. **Film Labs.** Attendance is absolutely required at the film labs. At some of the film labs, you will be asked to complete a brief film lab response sheet designed to assess your understanding of the film—you will be given the sheet at the start of the film and must turn it in at the end of lab time. *IMPORTANT NOTE:* I shouldn't have to say this, but

experience tells me I must. Everyone is expected to be respectful and attentive during film screenings (no phone calls, no headphones, no smartphones, no laptops). Anyone behaving in a disruptive way will be asked to leave the screening and will be marked absent for the day.

4. **Exams.** There is a midterm and a final exam in this class. The exams will take place as scheduled (according to the university-wide schedule) and **no make-up exams will be administered!** If you have other plans for the exam days (check our course calendar for exact dates), you should consider taking another section of this class.
5. **Tests.** Five unannounced tests will be administered to motivate you to read the texts and watch the films in a timely fashion. No make-up tests will be administered, but one (lowest) score will be dropped from your record.

COURSE CALENDAR

WEEK 1

M Introduction
Film Lab: *Team America: World Police* (Dir. Trey Parker, 2004)

WEEK 2

M GENRE. Reading: Corrigan Chapter 9
W GENRE. Reading: Thomas Schatz, “The Genius of the System”
Film Lab: *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Dir. Vincent Minnelli, 1944)

WEEK 3

M No Class: We celebrate MLK Day
W MISE-EN-SCÈNE. Reading: Corrigan Chapter 2
Film Lab: *Vertigo* (Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)

WEEK 4

M CINEMATOGRAPHY. Reading: Corrigan Chapter 3
Case Study: *Vertigo*
W PRESENCE & REPRESENTATION. Reading: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry as Mass Deception”
Film Lab: *Bamboozled* (Dir. Spike Lee, 2000)

WEEK 5

M RACE. Reading: Robert Stam and Louise Spence, “Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction”
W EDITING. Reading: Corrigan Chapter 4
Film Lab: *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dir. Dziga Vertov, 1929), *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Dir. Maya Deren, 1943)

WEEK 6

M EXPERIMENTAL FILM. Reading: Corrigan Chapter 8
W NARRATIVE FILM. Reading: Corrigan (pp. 212–53)
Film Lab: *Gilda* (Dir. Charles Vidor, 1946)

WEEK 7

- M GAZE. Reading: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”; and Richard Dyer, “Resistance through Charisma: Rita Hayworth and *Gilda*”
- W CAMP. Reading: Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp”; and Moe Meyer, “Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp”
Film Lab: *Polyester* (Dir. John Waters, 1981)

WEEK 8

- M Midterm review
- W **MIDTERM**
Film Lab: *Brokeback Mountain* (Dir. Ang Lee, 2005)

WEEK 9

- M Case Study: *Brokeback Mountain*
- W GENDER. Reading: Corrigan (pp. 387–92); and Steve Neale, “Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema”
Film Lab: *All About My Mother* (Dir. Pedro Almodóvar, 1999)

WEEK 10

- M QUEER CINEMA. Reading: Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”
- W QUEER CINEMA. Reading: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, “Queer Cinema since 1997”
Film Lab: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Dir. John Cameron Mitchell, 2001)

WEEK 11

- M No Class: Spring Break
- W No Class: Spring Break

WEEK 12

- M THIRD CINEMA. Reading: Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema”
- W THIRD CINEMA. Reading: Corrigan (pp. 368–69)
Film Lab: *The City of God* (Dir. Fernando Meirelles, 2002)

WEEK 13

- M EUROPEAN CINEMA. Reading: Corrigan (pp. 366–68)
- W THE OTHER EUROPE. Reading: Anikó Imre, “East European Cinemas in New Perspectives”
Film Lab: *Taxidermia* (Dir. György Pálfi, 2006)

WEEK 14

- M UNPACKING *TAXIDERMIA*
- W SOUND. Reading: Corrigan Chapter 5
Film Lab: *The Piano* (Dir. Jane Campion, 1993)

WEEK 15

M POSTMODERNISM. Reading: Robert Stam, “The Poetics and Politics of Postmodernism”

W POSTMODERNISM. Reading: Corrigan (pp. 413–33)
Film Lab: *I Heart Huckabees* (Dir. David O. Russell, 2004)

WEEK 16

M Final Review

W Appreciation Class

Sample Syllabus 2

Film: An Introduction

Clemson University

This course offers an introduction to the language and aesthetics of cinema. In the first part, we will study the basic elements of film grammar, from shot construction to editing to sound. In the second part, we will examine how that grammar is used to create different kinds of narratives, including documentaries, and how certain values of storytelling style have been privileged over others. In the third and final part, we will consider the question of narrative variations, from Orson Welles to the DVD era. Throughout the semester, we will focus on detailed analysis of films, looking closely at the ways in which the elements of cinema come together to make, or unmake, meaning.

Required Text

Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. 3rd ed.

Recommended Text

Kamp, David, and Lawrence Levi. *The Film Snob*s Dictionary*. New York: Broadway Books, 2006.

Note: There will be additional readings on Blackboard.

Grading Breakdown

Scene description and analysis:	15%
Midterm exam:	20%
First paper:	20%
Final paper:	25%
Participation:	20%

Participation includes the following:

- class and screening attendance
- Southern Circuit attendance and responses
- quizzes
- engagement in the course

Course Policies

Reading the Syllabus

Each class is predicated on the assumption that you have made the appropriate preparations for that day. Be sure you refer to your syllabus frequently, so that you can plan your reading and

writing for the coming week and beyond. You are responsible for the assignments and expectations outlined here. Please contact me with any questions.

The Classroom

Attendance (Class and Screenings)

Class participation and thoughtful responses to the readings are essential to the successful completion of this course and are weighted accordingly. Simply put, if you do not participate actively in class, you cannot do well in this course. I expect you to be in class on time every day. If you miss **more than five (5) meetings (class and lab combined)** over the course of the semester, your final grade will be lowered by one letter grade. If absences become a regular habit, you may fail the course.

It is distracting to the class to have students filtering in after class has begun, so please make sure to arrive on time. **Three late arrivals** will be treated as an unexcused absence. If you anticipate difficulty being on time, please let me know in advance. When class begins, you should have the relevant material for that day's discussion in front of you. If you arrive without the appropriate materials for that day's class, you may be asked to retrieve them. If you arrive unprepared for class, you may be asked to leave. In the event that I am late for class, you may leave ten minutes after the scheduled start of class.

Clemson's schedule allows time between classes for students to get to their next class, so please do not start gathering up your belongings before class has ended. If you have a class immediately before or after this one at a great distance, please let me know, and we can try to find a solution. Turn off any cellular telephones or similar devices (do not set to vibrate) and put away before class starts. As a group, you get one free pass: any phone creating noise or distraction after the first infraction will count as an unexcused absence for the offending student. You may have a drink, but please do not eat food.

If you are absent for a class, do not e-mail me to ask what you may have missed or if you have missed "anything important." It is your responsibility to be on top of your work. Rely on your classmates as resources.

You are required to attend the weekly screening, each Monday from 4:00 to 6:45 P.M. in 100 Hardin. Attendance will be taken at each screening. After the screenings, copies of the films shown will be available at the Circulation Desk on the fourth floor of Cooper Library for re-viewing, analysis, exam preparation, and essay writing. These copies cannot be checked out. If you miss a screening, it will be your responsibility to view the film on your own.

Laptop Policy

You are welcome to bring your laptop to class, but unless I ask a specific student to look up a specific piece of information, laptops should remain closed during class. I encourage you to take notes using a paper and pen—it keeps you focused and helps with your written work. Transcribing notes is an excellent way to review material for examinations.

Office Hours

I encourage you to meet with me during office hours. If you can't make my office hours, I am happy to arrange another time. I prefer e-mail for questions. I will respond to e-mail

promptly, but any questions you have about a written assignment should be sent to me at least thirty-six hours before an assignment is due. E-mailing me the night before a paper is due with a question or problem will not exempt you from turning it in on time.

Assignments

Readings

The reading schedule is meant to be flexible. As the class develops, I may add or drop readings to respond to the direction of the course. These additions or subtractions should not greatly reduce or increase the amount of reading you will be expected to complete.

As a rule, you should do the assigned reading from the textbook (*The Film Experience*) before the Monday meeting, and the Blackboard/reserve reading by the Wednesday meeting. This order may change from week to week, according to the materials in question.

Ideally, you should bring your textbook to class every day, since it may well be integral to our discussion. You are responsible for photocopying or downloading/printing the Blackboard/reserve readings and bringing the readings to class.

Quizzes

I may give a quiz occasionally to make sure you are keeping up with the reading. Quizzes are especially likely during the first few weeks of the course. If you are keeping up with the reading, the quizzes should be straightforward.

Written Assignments

The timely completion of writing assignments is essential. Papers are to be handed in outside my office, 612 Strode, on the date due. Late papers will be marked down one grade increment (A to A-, A- to B+) for each day that they are late. If you run into trouble, let me know **in advance**. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, I will be much more understanding if you contact me before, rather than after, it is due. For your protection, keep both a computer and a printed copy of all the work you turn in for this class at least until you have received your final grade.

Southern Circuit

Southern Circuit, currently in its thirty-third year, is an annual touring program showcasing and supporting independent filmmakers. The circuit represents a rare opportunity for Clemson students to meet people who spend their lives creating movies. **You must attend two of the three circuit screenings this semester, although I strongly recommend you attend all three screenings. After each of the required screenings, you will write a brief (about two typewritten pages) response paper.** The response paper may deal with any aspect of the film(s) you have seen, or with the filmmaker's discussion, or both. Responses should not be treated as essays—you don't need a formal argument or a traditional introduction and conclusion. You should, however, think about how the film and/or filmmaker connect with any of the ideas or issues we have been considering in the course. **Responses are due in class on the Monday following each screening.**

Screenings usually take place at 7:30 P.M. in the McKissick Theater (Hendrix Center)

Wednesday, Sept. 24: *Ripe for Change*, Jed Riffe
Wednesday, Oct. 29: *Counting Backwards*, Aprill Winney
Wednesday, Nov. 19: *The Meaning of Tea*, Scott Chamberlin Hoyt

Schedule of Assignments

Note! Additional readings are TBA, and readings, assignments, and screenings may be revised in updated versions of this syllabus. You will be informed of any changes in class and via e-mail. Updated syllabi versions will be available via Blackboard.

I. The Grammar of Cinema

- Week 1: **Distribution, Promotion, and Exhibition**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Introduction and Chapter 1
- Week 2: **The Shot I: The Image and the Frame**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 3; Shetley
(Blackboard)
Screening: *Chinatown* (US: Roman Polanski, 1974. Color, 130 min.)
- Week 3: **The Shot II: The Long Take and the Mobile Frame**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 3
Screening: *Children of Men* (Japan/UK/US: Alfonso Cuarón, 2006.
Color, 109 min.)
- Week 4: **Combining Images: Continuity Editing**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 4
Screening: *Casablanca* (US: Michael Curtiz, 1942. B/W, 102 min.)
- Week 5: **The World Viewed: *Mise-en-Scène***
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 2; Astruc (Blackboard)
Screening: *Me and You and Everyone We Know* (US: Miranda July, 2005. Color,
91 min.)
- Week 6: **Sound I: The Musical**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 5 & Chapter 9
Screening: *Singin' in the Rain* (US: Gene Kelly & Stanley Donen, 1952.
Color, 103 min.)
- Week 7: Southern Circuit, McKissick Theater, 7:30 P.M.
SCENE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS DUE
MIDTERM EXAM—in class, Monday
- Week 8: **Sound II: The Pop Soundtrack**
Reading: Smith; Brophy; Sisario (Blackboard)
Screening: *Once* (Ireland: John Carney, 2006. Color, 85 min.)

II. Storytelling

- Week 9: **Documentary I**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 7
Screening: *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* (US: Kirby Dick, 2006. Color, 97 min.)
- Week 10: **Documentary II**
Reading: TBA
Screening: *Taxi to the Dark Side* (US: Alex Gibney, 2007. Color, 106 min.)
- Week 11: **Classical Hollywood Narrative**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 6; Hays (Blackboard)
Screening: *All About Eve* (US: Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950. B/W, 138 min.)
- Week 12: **Generic Expectations**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 9; Warshow (Blackboard)
Screening: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (US: George Roy Hill, 1969. Color, 110 min.)
- Week 13: **Southern Circuit, McKissick Theater, 7:30 P.M.**
FIRST PAPER DUE

III. Narrative Alternatives

- Week 12: **Star Theory**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 11; Dyer; Roof; Vowell (Blackboard)
Screening: **Fall break.** No screening/class Monday Nov. 3.
- Week 13: **Auteurism I: Orson Welles**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 11; Bazin (Blackboard)
Screening: *Citizen Kane* (US: Orson Welles, 1941. B/W, 119 min.)
- Week 14: **Auteurism II: Alfred Hitchcock**
Reading: *The Film Experience*, Chapter 11
Rear Window production notes; Mulvey (Blackboard)
Screening: *Rear Window* (US: Alfred Hitchcock, 1954. Color, 112 min.)
- Week 15: **Southern Circuit, McKissick Theater, 7:30 P.M.**
- Week 16: **Film and Spectatorship**
Reading: Modleski (Blackboard)
Screening: *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (US: Woody Allen, 1985. Color, 82 min.)

Week 17:

Film and Fantasy

Reading: Bordwell (Blackboard)

Screening: *Paprika* (Japan: Satoshi Kon, 2006. Color, 90 min.)

FINAL PAPER DUE

Sample Syllabus 3

Introduction to Film and Visual Literacy Fayetteville State University

Course Description

This course will introduce students to basic concepts in film and other visual media such as video and Internet imaging. This course introduces students to formal vocabulary and methodology for developing the ability to consider visual texts critically. Through understanding and application of the basic concepts of film language, students will learn how elements such as editing, lighting, composition within the frame, cinematography, and sound combine to constitute filmic discourse. In order to understand development in these categories, consideration will be given to film history.

Textbook

The following textbook is available at the university bookstore. It is required. You should also make plans to watch all of the assigned movies in English 332. They will be available on reserve at the library in the Media Center for two-hour checkout. You might also plan to watch films using subscription services such as Netflix or Blockbuster online. Although all of the assigned movies are classics, many of them may not be available at local video stores. In addition to the textbook, we will also be reading essays posted online on Blackboard or on electronic reserves.

Corrigan, Timothy, and Patricia White. *The Film Experience: An Introduction*. 3rd ed.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- gain an understanding of the ways in which films are produced, distributed, and exhibited
- learn the formal techniques by which films and other media make meaning
- cultivate the ability to perform close readings and clear, specific analyses of films
- develop a greater understanding of the social and technological history of film
- learn what it means to think about moviegoing as an “experience” and how that experience has changed over the course of cinema’s history
- develop writing and visual analysis skills through critical papers analyzing films

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Writing Journal:	15%
Paper 1:	15%
Paper 2:	25%
Midterm:	15%
Final Exam:	20%

Grading Scale

A 90–100 B 80–90 C 70–80 D 60–70 F 59 and under

Academic Honesty

Because this course involves a significant amount of writing, absolutely every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph that you submit for credit must be your own work. Because you have all graduated from high school or the equivalent, you obviously understand the difference between your words and the work of others. This course's instructor has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy on plagiarism. This means that any student who turns in another writer's work pretending that it is his or her own will earn an "F" for the entire course.

Attendance/Film Screenings

Students in English 332 will benefit from attending class regularly and participating in class discussion. To that end, the University policy on attendance is in effect in this class. The FSU policy on tardiness is also in effect: "Students are required to arrive at each class on time and remain in class until dismissed by the instructor" (70). Tardiness may, at the instructor's discretion, be counted as an absence—especially when the late arrival disrupts the class. Four or more unexcused absences will result in your overall grade for the course being lowered by one letter per absence.

Cell Phone/Behavior Policy

I allow cell phones in class, but I require them to be in a pocket and on vibrate. If your cell "rings," you are to leave the room quietly to answer it. I do not want them out on a desk or in view at any time. Do not text message in my class. In general, you should behave respectfully toward your peers and toward the instructor in order to contribute to the best possible learning environment for yourself and your classmates. If you have any questions, be sure to consult the University's guide on recommended student behavior.

Academic Support Resources

Because we will be writing a number of papers in this course, you may consider using the Writing Center as a resource for assistance in writing your papers.

Course Outline and Assignment Schedule

Tentative Schedule

All reading and writing assignments will be due by the date they are listed. If a reading assignment is listed as due on Friday, then you should read it no later than Thursday night. Please note that FE=*Film Experience*, CW=*Course Web site*, and ER=*Electronic Reserves*.

WEEK 1:

Film: Thomas Edison shorts available on Library of Congress American Memory Web site (memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edhome.html)

Reading: CW, Hays Code and MPAA ratings system

WEEK 2:

Film: *North by Northwest* (1959), dir. Alfred Hitchcock

Reading: TFE, Chapter 6, “Telling Stories: Narrative Films”

Writing: One-to-two page review of a film of your choice

WEEK 3:

Monday is Labor Day: No class

Film: *Do the Right Thing* (1989), dir. Spike Lee

Reading: TFE, Chapter 2, “Exploring a Material World: Mise-en-Scène”

WEEK 4:

Film: *The Third Man* (1949), dir. Carol Reed

Reading: TFE, Chapter 3, “Framing What We See: Cinematography”

WEEK 5:

Film: *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), dir. Arthur Penn

Reading: TFE, Chapter 4, “Relating Images: Editing”

WEEK 6:

Film: *The Conversation* (1974), dir. Francis Ford Coppola

Reading: TFE, Chapter 5, “Listening to the Cinema: Film Sound”

Storyboard: Group storyboard project due

WEEK 7:

Film: *All About Eve* (1950), dir. Joseph Mankiewicz

Reading: TFE, Chapter 1, “Encountering Film: From Preproduction to Exhibition”

Paper I: Using Mise-en-scène and cinematography to analyze a film due

WEEK 8:

Film: *His Girl Friday* (1940), dir. Howard Hawks

Reading: TFE, Chapter 9, “Rituals, Conventions, Archetypes, and Formulas: Movie Genres”

Midterm

Fall Break Friday: No class

WEEK 9:

Film: *Citizen Kane* (1941), dir. Orson Welles

Reading: TFE, Chapter 10, “History and Historiography: Hollywood and Beyond”

WEEK 10:

Film: *The Harder They Come* (1972), dir. Perry Henzell

Reading: TFE, Chapter 10, "History and Historiography: Hollywood and Beyond"

WEEK 11:

Film: *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), dir. Errol Morris

Reading: Chapter 7, "Representing the Real: Documentary Films"

WEEK 12:

Film: *Blade Runner* (1982), dir. Ridley Scott

Reading: ER, Rick Instrell, "*Blade Runner*: The Economic Shaping of a Film"

ER, Peter Ruppert, "*Blade Runner*: The Utopian Dialectics of Science Fiction Films"

WEEK 13:

Film: *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* (1987), dir. Patricia Rozema

Reading: ER, Karen Jaehne, "*I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*: Interview with Patricia Rozema"

ER, George Godwin, "Reclaiming the Subject: A Feminist Reading of *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*"

ER, Marion Harrison, "Mermaids: Singing Off Key?"

Paper 2: Meaningfully comparing two films due

WEEK 14:

Film: *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), dir. Julie Dash

Reading: ER, Jacqueline Bobo, "Black Women Reading *Daughters of the Dust*"

WEEK 15:

Film: *Breathless* (1960), dir. Jean Luc Godard

Reading: ER, "Interview with Jean-Luc Godard," selections

Thanksgiving Break: No class Friday

WEEK 16:

Film: *Roger and Me* (1989), dir. Michael Moore

Reading: CW, John Pierson, "An Open Letter to Michael Moore"

CW, Anne Thompson, "Moore Deflects 'Sicko' Attacks"

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 14: 2–3:50 P.M.

Bibliography (Some selected readings in film and media studies)

- Acland, Charles. *Screen Traffic: Movies, Multiplexes, and Global Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1968.
- Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. London: Routledge, 1985.
- Clover, Carol J. *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Doane, Mary Ann. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Friedberg, Anne. "The End of Cinema: Multimedia and Technological Change." In *Reinventing Film Studies*, edited by Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, 438–52. London: Arnold, 2000.
- Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In) Credulous Spectator." In *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, edited by Linda Williams, 114–34. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Waller, Gregory A. *Moviegoing in America: A Sourcebook in the History of Film Exhibition*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Zimmermann, Patricia R. *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

A Note on Assignments

I will provide handouts for all major papers well in advance of the due dates. I will also provide a study guide several days before the midterm and final, including the text of all of the possible essay questions.

For the writing journal, you will be required to post ten responses of 250–300 words to the assigned movies. I will provide questions that you can use as guides to direct your responses.

INTRODUCTION

STUDYING FILM: CULTURE, PRACTICE, EXPERIENCE

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Define *film culture*, and discuss the various factors that create and distinguish it.
- Appreciate the role and impact of film viewers, and note how our experience of movies and our taste for certain films have both personal and public dimensions.
- Articulate the ways in which film culture and practice are discussed in this textbook and contribute to the film experience.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The Introduction is the first of two chapters that investigate the social and institutional forces that organize the film experience. It examines how film cultures in the twenty-first century see, understand, and enjoy movies through an ever-expanding array of media and contexts. The Introduction grounds students' academic engagement with the movies within the context of their everyday experience of film culture. It acknowledges that diverse attitudes, backgrounds, and interests influence how and why people choose, comprehend, and respond to films. It encourages students to build upon their own lived knowledge of film culture as movie viewers and use the economic, technological, and aesthetic models detailed in this book to study movies—thus increasing their enjoyment and understanding of film.

The Introduction prepares students to consider the importance of context and community in their study of film. Students may wonder why they would study film as an academic discipline when it is associated primarily with entertainment. Today the study of film represents a wide spectrum of approaches and points of view, including studies of different historical periods and national cinemas, studies of how race and gender play a part in the kinds of movies made and audiences' responses to them, and studies of particular aesthetic or formal features of films.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

A helpful way to begin class discussion about this or any chapter is by building a teaching technique around the opening vignette. The scene from *Annie Hall* described at the beginning of the Introduction immediately considers the role of the viewer in the overall film experience. One teaching option would be to screen the scene in class. Another might be to find and share an excerpt from Marshall McLuhan's writings on media, or to show a clip from *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Discuss the *Annie Hall* professor's mentions of Fellini, Samuel Beckett, and the *New York Review of Books*.

Ask students what this set of references—and even the appearance of the theater they're all standing outside of—suggest about the particular film culture the character Alvy Singer occupies. Is it similar to or different from their own film cultures? How?

Other possibilities: draft a definition of a date movie, or ask whether anyone has gotten into an argument about a movie's meaning.

TEACHING FILM AS A DISCIPLINE

Film studies as a discipline is almost as old as film itself. The first serious study of the movies as art was published only two decades after the medium's public debut in 1895. Based on their own courses of study, students can find multiple entry points into the field: business, art, chemistry, psychology, history, and economics, to name but a few.

When teaching this chapter, the primary challenge may be to explain why students will be asked to do much more in the course than just watch movies for credit, and why film studies is relevant, regardless of the student's major. Anybody can talk about film to some degree, but that basic familiarity is just the beginning of the conversation.

DVD supplements demonstrate the appeal of learning more about a film than what is apparent on a single viewing and can be a great teaching tool. These extra features, often educational, are the descendants of the travelogues and other scientific films that used to be presented by a live lecturer in the very earliest days of motion pictures. Ask which extras the students have sought out for which films. Why? What did this information add to their film experiences? Or ask whether there is a DVD that has frustrated them by its lack of additional material. Point out how these supplements make viewers more aware of advertising campaigns and the skills of below-the-line craftspeople like composers and effects specialists and thus enrich viewers' appreciation of a movie.

TEACHING FILM AS AN EXPERIENCE

Viewers in the United States are generally well versed in studio-produced, mainstream Hollywood movies, but their film experiences vary according to the viewing communities and film cultures they occupy. *The Film Experience* explores the commercial and artistic choices involved in making films and details the historical, aesthetic, economic, and technological innovations that have shaped the medium. To this approach, student spectators bring an active and wide-ranging engagement with movies that is shaped by their backgrounds, ages, education, and geographical locations. With the aid of this manual, instructors can incorporate the diverse array of their students' film experiences into the course and underscore how studying film through a cultural lens connects viewers' responses to a deeper understanding of the role movies play in our lives.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

Film Spectators and Film Cultures, p. 11

What types of films do you identify with most closely? Are they from a particular country or era or particular genres? Do they feature certain stars or a particular approach to music or settings?

This prompt offers a great way to establish a culture of lively discussion from the very first class. Capture answers on a chalkboard or white board. What are the commonalities and differences among these films? Alternatively, have students "interview" each other and fill out a brief survey (name, hometown, major, favorite film, film seen most times, and types of films with which they

identify most closely). Then go around the room and have students “introduce” each other to the class by sharing this information out loud.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Identification, Cognition, and Film Variety, p. 13

For each of the films mentioned in the Form in Action, ask the class to come up with analogous present-day movies for the categories mentioned. How did they find out about the latest Hollywood blockbuster? Would they see an animated movie from another country? What insights do they feel a recent documentary could provide about its subject? Do they agree that movies like *Juno* “may appeal to a wealthier, more urban demographic comfortable with ironic, irreverent depictions of social problems” or even that it is truly an independent film? Capture their answers and revisit them when you get to the chapter on genres.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Studying *The 400 Blows* (1959), pp. 14–15

If you screen this film, consider revisiting Truffaut’s polemic, “A Certain Tendency in the French Cinema,” even if you do not assign it to the students. Afterward, talk about the portrayal of father figures within the film and the role that men such as André Bazin and Ignace Morgenstern played offscreen to produce Truffaut’s autobiographical debut outside the “cinema of papa” system the former critic decried.

Discussion Question 1: Does it change the students’ perception of the movie to know the details of its production?

Discussion Question 2: Like success, the cinema has many fathers. Screen the carousel sequence from Hitchcock’s *Strangers on a Train* (1951). What retroactive effect does seeing it have on our understanding of how (and why) Truffaut shot the Rotor scene and how it works as a metaphor for the cinema, both technologically and historically?

Discussion Question 3: How is our appreciation of the director’s cameo deepened when we see how much the young Truffaut resembled his Antoine Doinel, Jean-Pierre Léaud? What is the effect of knowing Léaud would play Doinel for Truffaut in four other films?

Additional Suggestion: Other movies that would work as models of low-budget production are the credit card–financed *Clerks* (1994) and Steven Soderbergh’s on-the-cheap auteurist experiment *Bubble* (2006), which would lend itself well to a discussion of exhibition practices, too.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

During the first class meeting of the course, ask the students to pair up and interview each other. Pass out worksheets. Instead of having students ask, “What is your favorite movie?” have them find out “Which movie have you seen the most times?” or “What is the last movie you watched in a theater?” and “What is the last movie you watched at home?” Then have the pairs of students introduce each other to the class, each giving the other student’s name, major, and hometown, and sharing whichever answer to one of the movie questions the interviewer found most interesting. (If there are an odd number of students enrolled, the instructor could interview a student and be interviewed and then introduced by him or her.) This activity helps break down preconceptions about “good” or “bad” movies and gets people talking about their experiences of film culture.

Classroom Discussion Prompts

- Did a movie ever scare you so much you slept with the lights on?
- Have you ever developed a crush on an actor?
- Has a movie made you want to visit a different country or experience a different culture?
- Has watching a movie ever sparked your interest in learning more about a historical figure or event?
- Have you ever dressed up as a movie character for Halloween?

FILMS CITED

American Graffiti (1973)
An American in Paris (1951)
Annie Hall (1977)
Avatar (2009)
The Breakfast Club (1985)
The Bridges of Madison County (1995)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Client 9 (2010)
Dreamgirls (2006)
Fantastic Mr. Fox (2009)
Flags of Our Fathers (2006)
The 400 Blows (1959)
Ghost Hound (2007)
Gladiator (2000)
Inception (2010)
Juno (2007)
L’Arroseur arrosé (The Waterer Watered, 1895)
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
The Longest Day (1962)
Lord of the Rings (2001)

Mrs. Miniver (1942)
Nixon (1995)
Ponyo (2008)
Precious (2009)
Rushmore (1998)
Saving Private Ryan (1998)
The Shining (1980)
The Sorrow and the Pity (1972)
Spider-Man 3 (2007)
Strangers on a Train (1951)
Superbad (2007)
Train Arriving at a Station (1894)
Treasures from American Film Archives (2000)
Twilight series (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012)
World Trade Center (2006)

CHAPTER 1

ENCOUNTERING FILM: FROM PREPRODUCTION TO EXHIBITION

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Understand the ways the stages of filmmaking, from preproduction through production to postproduction, inform what we see on the screen.
- Describe how the mechanisms of film distribution determine what films we can see as well as when and how we can see them.
- Analyze how film promotion may predispose us to see certain films and to see them in certain ways.
- Evaluate the ways in which film exhibition both structures and is influenced by audience reception.
- Consider the ways in which media convergence and rapid technological advances are affecting virtually all aspects of the film experience from production to consumption.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 talks about film as an industry, rather than an art. It begins with a detailed outline of the production cycle—from the screenwriter writing the script to the very end when production wraps. Then, it examines how distribution, marketing, and exhibition help determine what we see, why we want to see it, and the contexts in which movies are—and have been—viewed.

This chapter sites our experience of film and film culture within the different cultural, emotional, intellectual, and social preferences that shape our tastes. Students know when they are being marketed to, but often they are not aware of the extent of the industry infrastructure that determines which movies they see and when or where they see them.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) is a movie that students are likely to be familiar with even if they have not seen it. Point out that just knowing about it demonstrates that they are part of a shared film culture. One way to use this opening vignette as a springboard for introducing the material covered in the chapter is simply to watch the movie's closing credits. Count how many organizations and individuals are involved in making just one movie. Instructors could also prepare a slide presentation that provides details about each of the effects companies listed and their nations of origin, shows fan sites devoted to writing new narratives about the movies' characters, or list the filmographies of Sigourney Weaver, James Cameron, or Kathryn Bigelow (Cameron's ex-wife!). To give students a sense of the increasingly global nature of the film experience, you could also compare the scene in *Avatar* in which soldier Jake Sully first meets Neytiri with a scene from *The Hurt Locker*, in which Sgt. James dons his bomb suit for the first time and discovers and disarms several linked IEDs in a narrow city street.

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

An introductory film class is one of many film experiences that students will have in their lifetimes. When teaching this chapter, it can be useful to refer to the structure of the course as an example: What we can see (distribution) depends on the collections of the instructor, the institution, nearby video stores and art houses, and so on. Promotion of the movies we watch may rely on assigned readings, familiarity with the stars, or word of mouth from friends who have already taken the course. Exhibition could take place in a theater or a classroom or on the laptops or televisions of each individual student.

Because film culture surrounds us, it is easy to keep the lesson plan for this chapter current by drawing examples from whatever movies are showing nearby. Students can bring in print ads or look at trailers, discuss ratings and reviews, or debate the merits of various theaters based on the comfort of the seats, the clarity of the sound, or the quality of the popcorn.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

Release Strategies, p. 31

How might a distribution strategy determine a response to a film? Does knowing this strategy help you understand the film's aims better?

Consider looking at Will Smith's annual dominance of the Independence Day holiday weekend or the premiere of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008) as examples of saturation releases. Or use *Idiocracy* (2006) as a case study for a limited-release movie. Director Mike Judge's black satire was "dumped" by Twentieth Century Fox. The distributor didn't screen it for critics, ran no print ads or trailers, and showed it on a mere 130 screens nationwide, even though its predecessor, *Office Space* (1999), was a word-of-mouth cult hit that sold well on DVD.

Television Distribution, p. 34

Was the movie recently screened for class likely to have been shown on television? If so, in what way? How might such distribution have significantly changed the look or feel of it?

For example, *Avatar* might lose some visual power on a smaller screen or with the absence of 3-D. And depending on which channel it aired, *The Crying Game* (1992) might need to have scenes cut or potentially offensive language dubbed for television viewing. Ask students to think of other movies that might be "neutered" if shown on television, and explain how.

Ask students to determine where the commercial breaks would be if the movie just viewed aired on network television, either as an in-class exercise or in a journal entry. Another approach would be to show in class the "abridged" versions on YouTube of the notoriously foul-mouthed *The Big Lebowski* (1998) or *Glengarry Glenn Ross* (1992) that include only the shots in which characters use expletives.

Distribution Timing, p. 36

How might the distribution of a film that has been released in the last year have been timed to emphasize certain responses? Was it a seasonal release?

Students can demonstrate their savvy by distinguishing between a summer blockbuster and an autumn award contender. Are horror films released close to Halloween? Do romantic comedies come out in February? Ask students, either working alone or in small groups, to try to name at least one movie per holiday and share the results with the class. Challenge them to come up with some titles that provide an alternative to family-friendly fare by intentionally flouting holiday traditions, such as the Christmas comedies *The Ref* (1994) and *Scrooged* (1988) or controversial horror movies like *Black Christmas* (both the 1974 original and the 2006 remake) and *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984; 2008).

Multiple Releases, p. 37

Try to identify the target audience of one of the films you've discussed in class. How might this movie have gained different audiences through DVD distribution?

To identify the target audience for one of the Film in Focus movies, have the class find reviews online from the time of the movie's original release and then from its DVD release. Return to the opening vignette to demonstrate how one film can appeal to a variety of different audiences.

The Repeat Viewer, p. 42

What recent film have you seen more than once in the theater? What elements or dimensions of this film suggest that the filmmakers would or would not have expected repeat viewings?

This Viewing Cue works well as a prompt for a journal entry. Ask students to turn in their responses before the next class, and select one or two examples to discuss as a group. Or have them answer the question as an in-class quiz where they try to use correctly as many of the terms and concepts from the chapter as they can. This exercise can be a good gauge of preparation and comprehension.

Marketing and Promotion: What We Want to See, p. 43

Name a movie you believe has had a strong cultural and historical impact. Investigate what modes of promotion helped to highlight particular themes and reactions to the film.

Distribute a list of the top-ten grossing films or recent Academy Award best picture winners and ask the class to answer this question for each movie. Ask whether success at the box office or recognition by the industry has an effect on a film's historical and cultural impact. Why or why not?

Advertising, p. 48

Track the marketing techniques you encounter for a film in current release. Do the bus ads, trailers, banners, pop-up windows, and newspaper advertisements communicate a coherent message about this film? What is it?

Ask students to bring film advertising examples to class or have them e-mail examples before the next meeting. Do any seem to be appealing to more than one audience? Point out subtle advertising campaigns, like sponsored Web pages on the *New York Times* site or tie-ins at the grocery store or sporting events. What is the strangest place they've seen a movie advertisement? Did it make them more or less likely to see that film?

Word of Mouth, p. 50

How would you summarize the “buzz” that anticipated or surrounded a recent release? Can you analyze how it prepared viewers with certain expectations?

Assign this Viewing Cue as an out-of-class research assignment. It offers a great opportunity for students to learn how to research newspaper and magazine coverage using LexisNexis. Remind students to search for articles about the stars and the director, as well as the movie itself.

Fan Engagement, p. 50

Consider a recent film release you've seen, and identify which promotional strategies were effective in getting you to attend. Was anything about the promotion misleading? Was there anything about the film you feel was ignored or underplayed in the promotion?

To model what students should consider, review the examples cited in the Film in Focus examination of *The Crying Game*.

The Changing Contexts and Practices of Film Exhibition, p. 54

Imagine several different exhibition contexts—historical, cultural, technological—for the film you are studying. Would it fare better in a nickelodeon, a movie palace, or on DVD?

Any of the Film in Focus movies, *The Hurt Locker*, or *Avatar* would work well with this Viewing Cue. Encourage students to consider the evolution of movie exhibition practices.

Technologies and Cultures of Exhibition, p. 54

What do you imagine as the ideal “culture of exhibition” for the film you are studying? Would it appear in a particular type of theater, with a particular kind of projection? What types of audiences seem most apt? How would ads target those different groups?

This Viewing Cue is a good candidate for group work. The Film in Focus discussion of *Citizen Kane* goes into extensive detail about how, where, and by whom the movie has been viewed since its initial release.

Technologies and Cultures of Exhibition, p. 58

Consider how viewing the movie you most recently watched in class on a large screen versus your laptop would affect your response.

Ask students how they decide to see a movie in the theater, or at home on a laptop, a tablet, or a smartphone. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Have they ever changed their opinion of a movie after seeing it in a different format? Ask students to consider the captive viewing experiences of traveling on a bus or an airplane in which a movie is shown. Have they ended up enjoying a film they otherwise would not have sought out?

The Timing of Exhibition, p. 58

Think of a movie you've watched as a "leisure time" versus a "productive time" activity. How might a film be viewed differently in a classroom versus during a long airplane flight? How might your film choice be affected by the timing and context in which you will view the movie?

Have the class nominate films as "leisure time" candidates and write them down. Ask students to explain why they feel these films are classified as "leisure time" rather than "productive time." Then ask them how a movie like *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* (2004) might go over in class. Could they use the movie to illustrate any of the concepts covered in this chapter? How?

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

The Changing Art and Business of the Film Trailer, p. 47

Perhaps the easiest way to approach the topic of trailers is by screening some examples during class—perhaps for *Avatar* and *The Hurt Locker* or the British and American trailers for *The Crying Game*. What sort of trailers would be shown before any of these films? What does the selection of trailers before a given movie suggest about the assumptions marketers made about likely viewers? Or have the class generate a list of trailer clichés: pieces of music that are overused or cases where the best jokes are spoiled by their inclusion in the trailer. The site www.traileraddict.com is a wonderful resource. Ask students to research award-winning trailers at www.goldentrailer.com. Were there any winners that were better than the films they were advertising? Look at the fake trailers in movies like *Grindhouse* (2007) or *Tropic Thunder* (2008)—why are they so effective? Finally, consider the decade-spanning career of voiceover master Don "In a world where . . ." LaFontaine.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Distributing *Killer of Sheep* (1977), pp. 40–41

Start by assigning newspaper and magazine articles about *Killer of Sheep*'s release after a thirty-year delay, or ask students to find some on their own.

Discussion Question 1: What influence might this film's version of black urban life have had on other films if it had been released in 1977?

Discussion Question 2: What was Milestone's history of restoring and distributing other movies both before and after *Killer of Sheep*'s theatrical, non-theatrical, and DVD distribution?

Additional Suggestion: Another Milestone release, *I Am Cuba* (1964), which was restored with the help of Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola, shares a similarly legendary status as an influential film that had fallen out of the public eye. You could show clips that highlight its mind-boggling cinematography or talk about how its limited theatrical release served as advertising for the DVD, cleverly packaged in a cigar box.

Promoting *The Crying Game* (1992), pp. 52–53

Many students may not be familiar with this movie. Spend some time discussing the differences between the British and American advertising posters during class.

Discussion Question 1: Would the word-of-mouth encouragement to keep the movie's "secret" still work in our Internet/spoiler culture?

Discussion Question 2: How does this campaign compare with the promotion of director M. Night Shyamalan's movie *The Sixth Sense* (1999), the success of which stemmed from viewers and critics not revealing an important plot twist?

Additional Suggestions: *Dreamgirls* (2006) is a more recent movie that could be used to examine promotion techniques. Talk about its appeal to audiences who had seen the Broadway show, or are fans of Beyonce Knowles's music, or who rooted for Jennifer Hudson when she was a contestant on *American Idol*. Point out the power of the soundtrack to promote the movie to additional markets. Consider how *Dreamgirls* fits into—or doesn't jibe with—the career of Eddie Murphy. Look at the effect of Hudson's best supporting actress Oscar win and the tabloid rumors of Hudson's tension with co-star Knowles on audiences' eagerness to see the movie again in theaters and buy it on DVD.

Exhibiting *Citizen Kane* (1941), pp. 56–57

It's difficult to convey to students the notoriety enjoyed by Orson Welles at the time of *Citizen Kane*'s release. Consider showing the "War of the Worlds" sequence from the documentary *The Battle over Citizen Kane* (1996) to give them a sense of the place he occupied in the culture. Look at how the original ad campaigns promoted his celebrity. The theatrical

trailer, available on YouTube, gives a fascinating glimpse into the promotional tactics of another era in film history.

Discussion Question 1: What do you know about Radio City Music Hall and what it might mean to have the premiere moved from there to a less glamorous building?

Discussion Question 2: What influence did the French critics writing in *Cahiers du cinéma* after World War II have on propelling *Citizen Kane* to renewed acclaim and classroom study?

Additional Suggestions: Two other films that make good case studies for exhibition techniques are *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) and *Southland Tales* (2006). For the former, students could research Mel Gibson’s strategy of arranging special screenings for church groups and other Christian organizations. The latter is Richard Kelly’s follow-up to the cult hit *Donnie Darko* (2001). After its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, it received mixed reviews from the critics and, more than a year later, it received only a limited theatrical release.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Take advantage of the extensive online archives of the *New York Times* (www.nytimes.com) and *Variety* (www.variety.com). Ask students to choose one of the films screened—or just mentioned—during the course. Have them find each publication’s review of the movie, and ask them to write an analysis of how, where, and why the articles differ. Also direct them to *Variety*’s “Slanguage Dictionary,” which defines the publication’s industry-specific jargon. Ask students to choose one film and write two brief reviews of that movie and its prospects if it were being released today: one with an average moviegoer in mind and one pitched at an industry professional. This exercise can be assigned again later in the course, after students have acquired an expanded vocabulary of film terms.

FILMS CITED

Adaptation (2002)
Alien (1979)
Another Year (2010)
Avatar (2009)
The Bad and the Beautiful (1952)
The Battle over Citizen Kane (1996)
Benjamin Button (2009)
Be Kind Rewind (2008)
Beowulf (2007)
Beware of a Holy Whore (1971)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
Blade Runner (1982, 1992, 2007)
The Blair Witch Project (1999)
Bonnie and Clyde (1967)

Boyz N the Hood (1991)
Bright Star (2009)
Brokeback Mountain (2005)
Bubble (2006)
Camille (1936)
Casablanca (1942)
Charlotte's Web (2006)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Clerks (1994)
Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954)
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)
The Crying Game (1992)
Dark Victory (1939)
Days of Heaven (1978)
The Departed (2006)
Dreamgirls (2006)
Driving Miss Daisy (1989)
Eat Drink Man Woman (1994)
Execution of Czolgosz (1901)
Eyes Wide Shut (2000)
4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days (2007)
Free Willy (1993)
From Dusk till Dawn (1996)
G.I. Jane (1997)
Godzilla (1998)
The Gold Diggers of Broadway (1929)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
Greed (1924)
Harlan County, U.S.A. (1976)
Heaven's Gate (1980)
Henry V (1944)
Home Alone (1990)
The Hunger Games (2013)
The Hurt Locker (2008)
I'm Not There (2007)
Inception (2010)
Independence Day (1996)
Innocents of Paris (1929)
In the Realm of the Senses (1976)
Irma Vep (1996)
Iron Man 2 (2010)
It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
Jarhead (2005)
Jaws (1975)
The Jazz Singer (1927)
Jurassic Park (1993)

The Kid (1921)
The Kids Are All Right (2010)
Killer of Sheep (1977)
The King's Speech (2010)
Lady in the Water (2006)
Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001)
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
The Little Mermaid (1989)
A Little Princess (1995)
The Lives of Others (2006)
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001)
Love Story (1970)
Lust, Caution (2007)
Marie Antoinette (2006)
The Marriage of Maria Braun (1979)
The Matrix (1999)
Men in Black (1997)
Miracle on 34th Street (1947)
Mission: Impossible III (2006)
Mona Lisa (1986)
Mr. and Mrs. Smith (2005)
My Brother's Wedding (1983)
The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser (1975)
Napoléon (1927)
Night Catches Us (2010)
Nightmare on Elm Street movies (1984–1989)
Pan's Labyrinth (2006)
Paranormal Activity (2007)
Pearl Harbor (2001)
The Pillow Book (1996)
Planet Earth (2006)
The Player (1992)
Pocahontas (1995)
The Polar Express (2004)
Reservoir Dogs (1992)
Schindler's List (1993)
Scream (1996)
Scream 2 (1997)
Sense and Sensibility (1995)
Sex Is Comedy (2002)
sex, lies, and videotape (1989)
Shaft (1971)
The Sheik (1921)
Showgirls (1995)
The Singing Detective (1986)
The Sixth Sense (1999)

Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow (2004)
Snakes on a Plane (2006)
Speed (1994)
Star Trek films (1979–1994)
Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace (1999)
Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi (1997)
Sunset Boulevard (1950)
Superbad (2007)
Tarnation (2003)
The “Teddy” Bears (1907)
The Ten Commandments (1923)
Thelma & Louise (1991)
Titanic (1997)
To Sleep with Anger (1990)
Toy Story (1995)
Trainspotting (1995)
Transformers (2007)
Unstoppable (2010)
Yentl (1983)
Zodiac (2007)

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING A MATERIAL WORLD: MISE-EN-SCÈNE

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Define “mise-en-scène” and understand how theatrical and other traditions affect the history of cinematic mise-en-scène.
- Delineate how sets and props relate to a film’s story.
- Appreciate how actors and performance styles contribute to a mise-en-scène.
- Understand the ways costumes and make-up contribute to our perception of a character.
- Explain how lighting is used to evoke particular meanings and moods.
- Critically consider the ways mise-en-scène puts in play values associated with specific film traditions.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 is the first of four chapters that identify the formal and technical powers associated with the different elements of film form: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound. It begins with a short historical, industrial, and cultural overview of mise-en-scène from its roots in pre-cinema theater to the present day. It then examines setting, props, actors, costumes and make-up, and lighting in detail. Finally, it suggests some of the cultural values and traditions that have influenced and evolved around these formal mechanisms and that help determine our interpretations of scenes, shots, cuts, and sounds at the movies.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

The original long-form *Psycho* (1960) trailer offers a rich teaching opportunity. Many students may not have seen the film, but they are usually familiar with its premise, as well as Bernard Hermann’s famous score, Hitchcock as a director, and their respective places in film culture. Hitchcock reveals himself in this clip to be a comedic actor with excellent timing—he directs several glares at the camera precisely when the audience is giggling and catches himself before describing a particularly gruesome detail. He also exhibits a well-honed sense of the slightly ridiculous figure he cuts, with his enormous body, bald head, and fastidious, delicate hands.

In addition to discussing Hitchcock’s performance style, students can also identify the creepier aspects of the décor in the house and the motel. The sunshine of the opening shots outside the motel is quickly forgotten once we enter the shadowy house. The ornate and oppressive Victorian furnishings Hitchcock shows us there provide a stark contrast to the almost clinical appearance of the notorious bathroom in cabin 1. Before Hitch pulls back that shower curtain, the high-key lighting and the import of the toilet’s presence in the frame—a first in American film—might also be mentioned and connected with discussions of the Hays Code or the relevant clip of Slavoj Žižek discussing the sequence in *The Pervert’s Guide to Cinema* (2006).

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

Cinematography and editing are not always intuitive topics for students to grasp. *Mise-en-scène*, however, generally makes sense to students because it deals with what they can see and identify in the frame. *Mise-en-scène* is what we actually see at the movies, and thus it is central. Yet as it is used in the service of the film as a whole it can also be overlooked. It can be helpful to remind students of how they control their own real-life *mise-en-scène*. They act as their own costume designers and make-up artists. They take on lead and supporting roles, depending on the situation. They decorate their living spaces to express who they are and what is important to them. They move through different settings constantly and even adjust the lights depending on the activity they're undertaking.

One way to explain why *mise-en-scène* is important is to ask students to think about a movie as a small engine. By taking it apart and examining *mise-en-scène* (or cinematography, or editing) separately, we can begin to see how all the parts work together. Even if you are not taking a historical or chronological approach to film, it can be useful to look at examples from early and silent cinema when discussing the evolution of *mise-en-scène*. Shorts like *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) can be used to illustrate many of the concepts in this chapter quickly and efficiently. Contrasting stills of actors and actresses from the studio era with ones from the 1970s also allows the class to observe how conventions of lighting, costume, and make-up have moved from more theatrical to more realistic over time. For present-day examples of *mise-en-scène*, a CGI-laden film like *300* (2006) or *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003) or even the “making of” extra on the DVD of a Pixar animated feature can introduce new ideas about scenic realism and performance style, where the filmmakers' primary challenge is creating a persuasive simulacrum of something—whether it is ancient warriors or even rat fur—“real.”

From a Formal Perspective

The Stars: Movie stars are the easiest entry point into a discussion about what viewers notice in a scene and what literally blends into the scenery. One way of introducing to the class some basic concepts of star theory is to ask students whether stars “are just like us” or not. Bring a few supermarket tabloids to class to spur discussion and help students distinguish between stars and celebrities. Ask the students to list what they know about Tom Cruise versus Johnny Depp. Why do they know personal information about these people? Does it color how they experience these stars' performances? Is there a difference between “Tom Cruise,” the public persona we think we know, and Tom Cruise the actual person?

To illustrate the difference between stars, character actors, and character types, look at the sequence from the 2001 remake of *Ocean's Eleven* in the hanger as the team of thieves convene. George Clooney and Brad Pitt are big stars. Bernie Mac is a comedian turned character actor. Elliot Gould and Carl Reiner might appeal more to an older viewer who remembers the 1960 original, which starred Rat Pack members Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. Casey Affleck, Don Cheadle, and Matt Damon are more interesting examples to consider. In 2001, Affleck and Cheadle were not yet Oscar nominees. Damon had won an Academy Award for best original screenplay, but *The Bourne Identity*, which transformed him into an internationally known action star, was not released until 2002.

For a more recent example of performative development than Antoine Doinel, discuss the principal actors' evolution over the course of the *Harry Potter* movies. They got older, but did

they get better? Were the actors able to play other roles outside the series? Encourage the class to debate these questions, then screen a scene with Daniel Radcliffe from 2007's *December Boys*, or Rupert Grint from 2006's *Driving Lessons*, and see whether the students accept these actors as their characters, or if they immediately feel like shouting, "It's Harry!" or "It's Ron!"

Lighting: Bring flashlights to class. Dim the lights and have different groups of students demonstrate different lighting schemes.

From a Contextualized Perspective

Defining Our Place in a Film's Material World: Sets, props, actors, and lighting work together like the ingredients of a meal. They may offer a viewer comfort food or an exotic new set of flavors. Some mise-en-scènes may not be to a viewer's taste or could benefit from more or less of an ingredient. Ask students to think of mise-en-scènes that resonated (or didn't resonate) with them. Why or why not? Encourage students to think critically about what elements of the mise-en-scène do or do not work.

Spectacularizing the Movies: Discuss what prompts students to see a movie on a big screen vs. at home on a laptop, or on an iPad. Some examples you might introduce are *300* (2006), *The Dark Knight* (2008), and *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* (2011).

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

An approach to evaluating comprehension could be to conduct cinematic "dictées" during class: students watch a film clip, then describe it, either alone or in groups, using as many terms from the chapter as they can. Ask them to present their "translations" to the rest of the class.

Many students find most of the concepts introduced in Chapter 2 easy to master. Instructors may want to spend extra time on the different types of lighting and perhaps show clips from each of the films mentioned in that section. Do note that the overlap between **character actors** and the particular **character types** with which they are associated can make the distinction difficult to grasp. Discuss the actors who played minor roles in the film just screened and talk about what attributes lead to them being cast in those parts. One helpful case study is J. Hoberman's article "Peter Lorre—The Voice" in *Film Comment* 41, no. 6 (2005).

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

The Elements of Mise-en-Scène, p. 70

Describe, with as much detail as possible, one of the sets or settings in the next movie you watch for class. Other than the actors, which features of the film seem most important? Explain why.

In the classroom, you can lead the students through a scene from a movie they've already watched, to model what they should look for.

Settings and Sets, p. 70

Examine the interaction of two important sets or settings in the film viewed for this unit. What is their relationship? Does that interaction suggest important themes in the film?

If you don't want to muddy the issue by asking about themes yet, ask the class if anyone has ever seen a movie shot in a place he or she knows firsthand. What was the same/different about the geography, facades, interiors featured in the film compared to those in real life? Why does the student think the filmmakers chose the location and then modified it the way they did?

Scenic and Atmospheric Realism, p. 71

While viewing your next assigned film, turn off the sound and analyze a single scene in the movie in terms of what is communicated through the elements of the mise-en-scène alone.

This is an excellent opportunity for students to work collaboratively in small groups during class. It can also provide the basis for a more extensive shot analysis assignment that incorporates the other topics covered in Part 2 of the text.

Props, p. 73

Identify the single most important prop in the last film you watched for class. In what ways is it significant? Does the prop function as an instrumental prop, a metaphorical prop, or both? Explain.

Ask students to write a quick journal entry answering the question in the Viewing Cue using a film they have recently seen.

Types of Actors, p. 75

Consider the performance of a central character or actor in an assigned film. How would you describe his or her acting style in the film? Does that style seem compatible with the story? Why or why not?

Ask students to name a movie in which they felt an actor was miscast. Why was the actor wrong for the part? Who would have been a better choice? Why?

Costumes and Make-Up, p. 77

Describe the ways in which costuming and make-up add scenic realism, highlight character, or mark the narrative development in the film viewed for class.

Showing a clip from *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) could prompt discussion about theatrical sets, make-up and costume, and stylized acting, as well as Johnny Depp's status as a star. Or show the class Chris Tucker's entrance in *The Fifth Element* (1997) and ask them to describe his

character. What is he wearing? How is he different from Bruce Willis's character? What do we expect from each of these actors from one film to the next?

Lighting, p. 82

Consider the role of lighting in a film you have recently watched. Is it low-key lighting or high-key lighting? Describe a scene in which lighting dramatically adds to the scene's emotional impact. Is there a scene where the lighting is less obtrusive but equally significant? If so, please describe it.

Scenes from *Casablanca* (1942) that show Humphrey Bogart's Rick talking with Ingrid Bergman's Ilsa are excellent examples of how three-point lighting conventions of the time were determined by gender. Pause on a close-up of Rick and then one of Ilsa, and discuss how much softer she looks or what makes her eyes seem to glisten. When they are both in the frame, talk about who is in the light and what its implied source is.

Interpretive Contexts for Mise-en-Scène, p. 92

Describe why the mise-en-scène of the film you most recently watched fits best with a naturalistic or a theatrical tradition. Explain how this perspective helps you to experience the film. Illustrate your position using two or three scenes as examples.

The *Bourne* movies rely on naturalistic mise-en-scène, but Jason Bourne's relationship to the objects in his world is often anything but. In *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007), for example, he fends off an assassin by using an unlikely weapon, a book. The mise-en-scène of Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) becomes increasingly theatrical and subjective as Joel's memories of Clementine are erased. In one scene set in his recollections of early childhood, Joel hides under an enormous kitchen table scaled to reflect his kid's-eye perspective.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Mise-en-Scène in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009), p. 85

Mr. Fox's brown corduroy suits were modeled after Wes Anderson's own and designed by the director's tailor. This intense attention to details of mise-en-scène is consistent across Anderson's oeuvre: consider looking at the intricately painted train cars in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), the elaborate cross-sectioned shots of the ship in *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (2004), or the distinctive décor of each grown child's room in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001). Ask students how the labor-intensive stop-motion technique lends itself to Anderson's exacting production design. Contrast the mise-en-scène of the displaced animals' new home with those of Farmers Boggis, Bunce, and Bean. Or compare the film's mise-en-scène to the original illustrations by Donald Chaffin in the Roald Dahl book.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

From Props to Lighting in *Do the Right Thing* (1989), pp. 80–81

Ask the students to create a map of the important locations in the neighborhood depicted within the film and the key props associated with each one (such as the folding chairs for the Greek chorus of old men on the corner).

Discussion Question 1: How do the props and characters move through these settings, and what are the consequences?

Discussion Question 2: How does lighting and costume help guide the viewer to the denouement? Contrast the elements of the *mise-en-scène* in the opening sequence with those present during the showdown at Sal's at the end.

Additional Suggestions: You might also consider showing Jacques Demy's *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964). The art director repainted actual buildings in Cherbourg with a specific palette of colors before shooting of the film began. These same colors are used for the characters' clothing and the titular umbrellas. All the dialogue in the film is sung, which could lead to a discussion of the role of voice in performance. Also, Spike Lee emulates Demy's practice of having his actors appear to glide down the streets, which could lend itself to discussions of bodily movement.

Naturalistic *Mise-en-Scène* in *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), pp. 90–91

Talk about the contrast between the glamorous *mise-en-scène* implied by the poster of Rita Hayworth and the world Ricci inhabits. It may be helpful to provide a little historical background on Italian neorealism.

Discussion Question 1: What effect does De Sica's decision to shoot on location in postwar Rome (rather than at the famous Cinecittà studios) have on the story and the viewer?

Discussion Question 2: What type of "performances" do we usually expect in settings like the church into which Ricci chases the thief, the workers' meeting place, and the theater at which the play is being rehearsed, and why?

Additional Suggestions: Other films that would lend themselves to a discussion of naturalistic *mise-en-scène* are Abbas Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry* (1997) or perhaps David Gordon Green's *George Washington* (2000). Another tactic might be to contrast De Sica's naturalistic *mise-en-scène* with a highly artificial one by introducing Tim Burton's *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985), another movie about a man's quest for his stolen bicycle.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Ask students to describe the mise-en-scène of the classroom. Compile lists of the various elements on the board. Discuss the blocking of the “actors” and what it might convey to a viewer, the location of the light sources (windows, overhead fluorescents), and the cultural meanings of the props, costumes, and setting. Or ask students to discuss how they would cast, clothe, light, and furnish the “movie version” of the class. As a naturalistic film? Set in the future? The past?

FILMS CITED

The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938)
The African Queen (1951)
After Hours (1985)
The Age of Innocence (1993)
Alexander Nevsky (1938)
Alice in Wonderland (2010)
All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)
Amadeus (1984)
The American Friend (1977)
An American in Paris (1951)
Austin Powers films (1997, 1999, 2002)
The Automobile Thieves (1906)
Avatar (2009)
Babette’s Feast (1987)
Back to the Future (1985)
Barry Lyndon (1975)
Barton Fink (1991)
The Battle of Algiers (1966)
The Battle of Manila Bay (1898)
Beauty and the Beast (1991)
Being John Malkovich (1999)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
Bicycle Thieves (1948)
The Birds (1963)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
Blade Runner (1982)
The Blind Side (2009)
The Blue Angel (1930)
Brazil (1985)
The Bridges of Madison County (1995)
Brokeback Mountain (2005)
Broken Blossoms (1919)
Cabaret (1972)

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)
Cabiria (1914)
Casablanca (1942)
Central Station (1998)
Chinatown (1974)
The Circle (2000)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)
The Company of Wolves (1984)
Damnation of Faust (1904)
The Dark Knight (2008)
Das Boot (1981)
Day for Night (1973)
The Devil Wears Prada (2006)
Donovan's Brain (1953)
Do the Right Thing (1989)
The Downward Path (1901)
Easy Rider (1969)
The Eel (1997)
The Elephant Man (1980)
E.T. (1982)
Fantasmagorie (1908)
Fantastic Mr. Fox (2009)
Field of Dreams (1989)
Fury (1936)
Gandhi (1982)
Gangs of New York (2002)
Gaslight (1944)
Gladiator (2000)
The Gold Rush (1925)
The Golem (1920)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
Grand Hotel (1932)
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010)
Henry V (1944)
Herbie Fully Loaded (2005)
High Sierra (1941)
The Hours (2002)
The Hurt Locker (2009)
Intolerance (1916)
Invictus (2009)
Jaws (1975)
Jezebel (1939)
Kill Bill: Vol. 2 (2004)
The Killers (1946)
Kindergarten Cop (1990)

Kind Hearts and Coronets (1949)
King Solomon's Mines (1937)
Kiss Me Deadly (1955)
La dame aux camélias (1912)
The Lady Vanishes (1938)
Lars and the Real Girl (2007)
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
Like Water for Chocolate (1992)
Little Women (1994)
Lord of the Rings trilogy (2001, 2002, 2003)
Louisiana Story (1948)
The Love Bug (1969)
The Maltese Falcon (1941)
A Man for All Seasons (1966)
The Man with the Rubber Head (1901)
Marie Antoinette (2006)
Metropolis (1927)
Michael Collins (1996)
Mildred Pierce (1945)
Monty Python's The Meaning of Life (1983)
My Fair Lady (1964)
Naked City (1948)
Napoléon (1927)
Napoleon (1955)
Notorious (1946)
Old Mexico and Her Pageants (1899)
127 Hours (2010)
On Golden Pond (1981)
On the Stage; or, Melodrama from the Bowery (1907)
Out of Africa (1985)
Pan's Labyrinth (2006)
Paper Moon (1973)
The Passion Play of Oberammergau (1898)
The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945)
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl (2003)
Psycho (1960)
Pygmalion (1938)
Queen Elizabeth (1912)
The Red Shoes (1948)
The Red Violin (1998)
The Return of the King (2003)
Rocky (1976)
Roma (1972)
Ronin (1998)
Seven Years in Tibet (1997)
Shanghai Express (1932)

The Sheik (1921)
Sherlock Holmes (2009)
Silk Stockings (1957)
Singin' in the Rain (1952)
The Sixth Sense (1999)
Some Like It Hot (1959)
Sophie's Choice (1982)
Spellbound (1945)
Spider-Man 3 (2007)
A Streetcar Named Desire (1951)
Sullivan's Travels (1941)
Suspicion (1941)
Sweet Smell of Success (1957)
The Ten Commandments (1923, 1956)
The Terminator (1984)
Top Hat (1935)
Total Recall (1990)
True Grit (2010)
2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
2012 (2009)
Uncle Tom's Cabin (1903)
Under the Tuscan Sun (2003)
Up in the Air (2009)
Vertigo (1958)
Waxworks (1924)
Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1971)
Winter's Bone (2010)
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
Xala (1975)
The Yellow Rolls-Royce (1964)
Zabriskie Point (1970)

CHAPTER 3

FRAMING WHAT WE SEE: CINEMATOGRAPHY

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Examine the development of the film image from a lengthy historical heritage of visual spectacles.
- Understand how the frame of an image positions our point of view according to different distances and angles.
- Explain how film shots use the depth of the image in various ways.
- Understand how film stock, color, lighting, and compositional features of the image can be employed in a movie.
- Describe the effects of different patterns of movement on the film image.
- Delineate the array of techniques used to create visual effects.
- Describe the significance of the film image in different cinematic traditions.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 3 is the second of four chapters that deal with elements of the formal and technical powers of film form. It starts with a history of the evolving technologies of the cinematic image from the invention of photography to the digital future. From there, it discusses attributes of the shot, point of view, and what happens once the frame begins to move. It closes with a discussion of the different ways of thinking about the image: as presentation or representation, and as presence or text.

Cinematography is rooted in human physiology. In this chapter, students learn how to master concepts like depth of field, framing, and various camera movements by associating them with physical movements. They also become aware of how closely advances throughout film history hew to the technological developments that make formal innovation possible. Finally, this chapter illustrates that what is outside the frame can play as important a part as the image itself in enriching each viewer's film experience.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) illustrates the importance of technology in the evolution of the cinematographer's craft. Because its main character is a photographer, *Blow-Up* encourages students to focus on the image and the ways in which it can be manipulated. To begin the unit on cinematography, an instructor could pair two scenes to view and discuss in class. Look at Thomas shooting Verushka in the controlled environment of his studio and then at the scene where he photographs the couple in the park as a way to talk about point of view and the moving frame. Or contrast the scene of him developing and examining the image of the body in the park with the tennis game that ends the film. What is the effect of the shot's depth of field, the camera's angle and its distance from the action, and the framing? How would our experience of Thomas's perceptions change if the camera reframed the image to show the murderer or the tennis ball in the offscreen space of these scenes?

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

We are part of an increasingly visual culture. Advances in digital image-making occur so rapidly it may be difficult for students to appreciate how technological limitation as well as innovation helped shape the art and craft of cinematography. Images today can be viewed the second they are captured and manipulated or even deleted just as easily.

The physical movement of the camera and the ways in which an image is framed might be easier for students to grasp at first. Students are also incredibly savvy about animation and special effects. The challenge lies in persuading them that even the images they consider eye candy can be consumed actively and critically. In time, a discussion of the “realness” or “fakeness” of each film image can become an analysis of whether these images document a world or define it. Is seeing believing anymore? Was it ever?

From a Historical Perspective

1820s–1880s: Have students construct zoetropes in class or make flipbooks.

1890s–1920s: Screen the Lumières’ *Train Arriving at the Station* (1896) and/or Edison’s *The Kiss* (1896).

1930s–1940s: Ask students to conduct an online search for Technicolor industrial films. Have them locate an illustration of the human eye in cross-section. Ask if any photographers in the class could explain f-stops. Screen excerpts from the cinematography documentary *Visions of Light* (1992).

1950s–1960s: It may help to place 3-D in the context of gimmick cinema (like William Castle’s *The Tingler* [1959]) and to discuss these innovations as the film industry’s response to the threat posed by television.

From a Formal Perspective

Aspect Ratio: To help students distinguish aspect ratios, screen the same sequence from a movie in both the letterboxed and full-screen versions. Discuss what gets lost in the latter version of the film. Or try to track down both versions of Martin Scorsese’s *New York, New York* (1977) to see the effects of panning-and-scanning an image composed and shot to take advantage of a widescreen aspect ratio.

Masks: One way to explain masks is to make analogies to present-day masking techniques that draw viewers’ attention to something in the frame using binoculars, or maybe a car’s rearview mirror.

Another approach to explaining how masks work is to discuss how Renaissance perspective—diagonal lines converging at a vanishing point—can also direct our attention within a frame. (The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy relies on related techniques to make the hobbits appear smaller than other actors and objects on the screen.) Ask a colleague in art history (or a student who is well-versed in the subject) to speak to the class on the topic or provide examples of specific works of art that demonstrate the technique.

Camera Distance: Consider getting students on their feet and having them act out the different camera distances and shots—long, medium, and close-up.

Camera Angles: Again, asking students to get up and demonstrate where cameras would be positioned for low-angle, high-angle, and crane shots of the classroom can add a kinetic memory to their comprehension of new vocabulary.

Depth of Field: It might help to relate deep and shallow focus to how the world looks to people without their glasses on. For example, a rack focus could be someone with bifocals switching from the bottom to the top of the lens. Consider bringing in a couple of pairs of drugstore reading glasses or magnifying glasses and passing them around the room.

Color: *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is an obvious candidate for color discussions. A look at how *Traffic*'s (2000) various story arcs are delineated through the use of different color filters might also lead to interesting conversation. Or, show a hand-tinted silent, like *The Great Train Robbery* (1903).

Pans and Tilts: Demonstrate the differences by the movement of your head with your neck as the pivot.

Tracking Shots: Move through the classroom, pausing for “close-ups” and so forth.

Handheld and Steadicam Shots: Instead of the *Goodfellas* (1990) sequence, show the homage from *Swingers* (1996), or the five-minute re-creation of the Dunkirk evacuation from *Atonement* (2007).

Digital Technology: Show the trailer for *The Tracey Fragments* (2007) in class. Or, for an example of machinima that may be familiar to many students, show a clip from the Web series *Red vs. Blue*, which uses figures from the *Halo* series of video games.

Animation and Special Effects: CGI and rotoscoping will be the most familiar animation techniques. Consider hunting down a movie with Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion animation effects or showing an old Disney or Warner Bros. animated short. For other special effects that employ models or mattes, look at the end of *Star Wars* (1977), when Luke destroys the Death Star.

From a Contextualized Perspective

A suggestion: it could be fun to track down and show footage from the shot-by-shot remake of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* that Eric Zala, Chris Strompolos, and Jayson Lamb began shooting in 1982, when they were twelve years old, as an example of low production values.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

This would be another good chapter to teach vocabulary and key concepts by conducting cinematic “dictées” during class: students watch a film clip, then alone or in groups describe it

using as many terms from the chapter as they can. Ask them to present their “translations” to the rest of the class. This chapter covers a lot of ground, so you may want to choose only vocabulary relating to the shot, or camera movement, or framing, then revisit the same sequence but with another emphasis.

As mentioned earlier, it can be helpful for students who have difficulty mastering the large number of movement-related terms if they associate the vocabulary with physical motions. For example, students frequently confuse “pan-and-scan” with “pans” and “panning.” Having students stand up and move their heads to familiarize them with pans and tilts, or move about the classroom to re-create dolly shots, tracking shots, or various camera angles can create helpful kinetic memories.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

A Short History of the Cinematic Image, p. 102

Think about the cinematography of your class’s most recent film screening in relation to the larger history of the image. Does the film include shots that seem like paintings, photographs, or other kinds of visual displays? How do these shots affect your understanding or interpretation of those images or the entire film?

This Viewing Cue works best as a journal-entry prompt and may serve as the basis for subsequent class discussion.

Points of View, p. 105

Identify a subjective point-of-view shot from the movie you are watching for class. Describe what marks it as such.

If the students are watching as a group, ask them to note at what time in the movie their example occurs and describe it briefly on a piece of paper they hand in at the end of the screening. If students watch the movie on their own, ask them to provide a specific time code and e-mail the example to you. Look at a popular example or two during the next class discussion or use an incorrect answer—without singling out the student—and talk about why it doesn’t fit the definition. Or use some of the more popular examples to discuss how the scenes might change if they were shown from an objective point of view.

Four Attributes of the Shot, p. 106

While watching the next film shown in your class, choose two or three distinctive shots, sketching and then describing them as precisely as possible. Why do you consider them important?

This Viewing Cue is best suited as a journal-entry prompt, or as a graded assignment.

Aspect Ratio, p. 108

Identify the original aspect ratio of the film you are studying in class. How is it appropriate or inappropriate to this film's themes and aims? If the film is exhibited in a different ratio, explain how that process affects certain scenes.

Track down a movie in both its widescreen and its full-screen versions (for example, Martin Scorsese's 1977 film, *New York, New York*) and show the same scene in each format. Ask students to discuss what visual and narrative information is lost in the reformatting of the images.

Camera Distance, p. 110

Look for a pattern of framing distances in the next film you view for class. Do there seem to be a large number of long shots? Close-ups? Explain how this pattern reinforces themes of the film.

The sequence toward the beginning of Film in Focus movie *Vertigo*, when Gavin Elster asks Scottie to follow Madeleine, could offer opportunities to discuss how the positioning of the two men within the frame suggests a power differential between them and stands in contrast to the subsequent scenes of Scottie trailing Madeleine at a distance through the streets of San Francisco.

Movement, p. 118

Examine one or two shots in which camera movements (tracks, pans) or mobile framings (zooms) are important. Why is a moving frame of a single shot used here instead of a series of shots?

Have the class watch the sequence from Film in Focus *Vertigo* (1958) where Scottie and Judy embrace in the green neon glow of her hotel room. Note how the camera encircling them re-creates the spiral of Madeleine's hairstyle and the way in which Scottie obsessively circles back to the image of the dead woman, whereas a more traditional static close-up would not have communicated Scotty's obsession as effectively.

Image as Presentation or Representation, p. 123

In the most recent film shown for class, look for shots that aim "to present" certain experiences and two or three shots that seem "to represent" different realities. Analyze one shot of each type carefully, and relate them to the film's themes.

Films in Focus movies *M* and *Vertigo* offer plenty of opportunities to discuss shots that simply document Berlin or San Francisco, for example, as opposed to those that seek to represent the interior landscapes of their respective protagonists. This Viewing Cue is a good short essay prompt.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Color and Contrast in Film, p. 115

Students may not have been alive when black-and-white televisions were still prevalent, but they should be familiar with adjusting the color and contrast of an image on a television, tablet, or smartphone. Pairing *Flowers and Trees* (1932) and *Up* (2009) can point out the role technology plays in manipulating color without the distractions of live-action subjects. Or look at the cartoonish DeLuxe color of *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956) alongside director Frank Tashlin's earlier animated shorts for Warner Bros., such as *Swooner Crooner* (1944). Alternatively, distribute black-and-white copies of a frame grab to each student and ask them to hand-tint the image. Gather, display, and discuss the effects of variations in hue on the viewer.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

From Angles to Animation in *Vertigo* (1958), pp. 124–25

Hitchcock takes full advantage of the framing opportunities that the widescreen aspect ratio called VistaVision afforded him. The framing of each image only reinforces the framing of Scottie that propels the plot. Revisit Scottie's nightmare, the (false) Madeleine's plummet from the church tower, and the stepladder scene in Midge's apartment.

Discussion Question 1: What is the importance of camera angles, if not the effectiveness of animation, on the effect these three scenes have on the viewer?

Discussion Question 2: How does the framing play off the angular nature of San Francisco's streets, Spanish mission architecture, and the Golden Gate Bridge?

Additional Suggestions: To approach the topics of angles and animation from a different angle, consider screening *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002), or either *Waking Life* (2001) or *Run, Lola, Run* (1998). Discuss the innovation in motion capture animation embodied by the character of Gollum in *Lord of the Rings* or debate how rotoscoping in *Waking Life* and computer animation in *Run, Lola, Run* allow the main characters to observe their environments from physics-defying points of view.

Meaning through Images in *M* (1931), pp. 128–29

Fritz Lang's 1931 film is a great choice for courses that emphasize historical or aesthetic approaches. The faces, not just of Peter Lorre's Becker, but of all the actors, speak to the power of the close-up. The sequence in which the mother waits for her daughter to come home from school allows students the opportunity to parse the image as presentation and as representation. As Becker's shadow falls across the poster, or as Elsie Beckmann's balloon becomes tangled overhead, the viewer is encouraged to acknowledge and interpret these images.

Discussion Question 1: Encourage students to consider the crucial role the blind vendor plays in Becker's eventual apprehension by the criminals in a film that often equates vision with control.

How does the “particular shape” of Becker’s handwriting relate to the “M” chalked on his jacket that leads to his capture?

Discussion Question 2: In which scenes can we find powerful examples equating vision with control? Does Lang distinguish between the control exerted by official authorities, like detective Lohmann, for example, and that of the mob of criminals confronting Becker at the end of the film?

Additional Suggestions: If you would like to screen a more recent movie, students tend to respond well to *Fight Club* (1999) and *Requiem for a Dream* (2000). For either film, ask them how individual characters’ subjectivity is represented. What meanings and values are assigned to these people? In *Fight Club*, we make presumptions about characters based on appearances that are revealed to be misleading or false. *Requiem* shows us the world through the eyes of different addicts, often splitting the screen to provide a collage of different perspectives of a single object or action.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

This activity could be used as a short paper assignment:

Select a scene from a widescreen movie. Shot by shot, describe what you would leave out of the frame if the same scene had been shot in academy and European aspect ratios, respectively. What if it was a silent film? What would the intertitles say? Would you cut some shots, or would you need to shoot additional footage to make up for the absence of dialogue? If the scene makes use of zoom lenses, a Steadicam, or CGI, talk about how you would film those scenes if those technologies were not yet available.

FILMS CITED

Adrift (1969)
Alice (1988)
Alien (1979)
All That Heaven Allows (1955)
Amarcord (1974)
Andrei Rublev (1969)
Antonio das Mortes (1969)
Babel (2006)
Battleship Potemkin (1925)
Becky Sharp (1935)
Bend It Like Beckham (2002)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
Blade Runner (1982)
The Blair Witch Project (1999)
Blonde Venus (1932)
Blow-Up (1966)

Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
The Celebration (1998)
Che (2008)
Chicken Run (2000)
Chimes at Midnight (1966)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Contempt (1963)
Dames (1934)
Dancer in the Dark (2000)
Days of Heaven (1978)
Death in Venice (1970)
The Earrings of Madame de . . . (1953)
Eat Pray Love (2010)
Far from Heaven (2002)
Fight Club (1999)
The Fighter (2010)
Flowers and Trees (1932)
The 400 Blows (1959)
The Freshman (1925)
Full Metal Jacket (1987)
The Girl Can't Help It (1956)
Goodfellas (1990)
Grand Illusion (1937)
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010)
The Heiress (1949)
House of Wax (1953)
The Hurt Locker (2008)
In a Year of Thirteen Moons (1978)
Inception (2010)
Intolerance (1916)
Into the Wild (2007)
Jaws (1975)
King Lear (1910)
The Kiss (1896)
L.A. Confidential (1997)
L'Argent (1983)
The Last Emperor (1987)
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
Leaving Las Vegas (1995)
Little Big Man (1970)
Lord of the Rings trilogy (2001–2003)
M (1931)
The Maltese Falcon (1941)
Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
The Matrix (1999)

Metropolis (1927)
Miami Vice (2006)
Midnight Cowboy (1968)
Napoléon (1927)
Niagara Falls (1897)
The Night of the Hunter (1955)
No Country for Old Men (2007)
Nosferatu (1922)
Numéro Deux (1975)
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge (1962)
127 Hours (2010)
Our Hitler (1977)
Ozymandias (2000)
Pan's Labyrinth (2006)
Paris, Texas (1984)
The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928)
Persepolis (2007)
Persona (1966)
Personal Velocity (2002)
Pi (1998)
The Piano (1993)
Pleasantville (1998)
Ponyo (2008)
Queen Christina (1933)
Quo Vadis? (1913)
Raging Bull (1980)
Rear Window (1954)
Rebecca (1940)
Rebel without a Cause (1955)
Red River (1948)
Requiem for a Dream (2000)
Run, Lola, Run (1998)
Saving Private Ryan (1998)
A Scanner Darkly (2006)
The Seashell and the Clergyman (1928)
The Seven Samurai (1954)
Shane (1953)
The Shining (1980)
The Shop on Main Street (1965)
Shrek (2001)
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
Spirited Away (2001)
Star Wars (1977)
Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones (2002)
10 (1979)
The Third Man (1949)

3:10 to Yuma (2007)
Timecode (2000)
Time Regained (2000)
Tokyo Story (1953)
Toy Story (1995)
True Grit (2010)
Up (2009)
Utamaro and His Five Women (1946)
Vertigo (1958)
Waking Life (2001)
Waltz with Bashir (2008)
Wavelength (1967)
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
Written on the Wind (1956)
X-Men series (2000–2009)
Zentropa (1991)
Zodiac (2007)

CHAPTER 4 RELATING IMAGES: EDITING

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Describe the evolution of the art and technologies of editing in their cultural and historical contexts.
- Understand that edited images are based on material cuts or breaks in the film.
- Examine the ways editing constructs different spatial and temporal relationships among images.
- Learn the ways editing establishes film continuity.
- Describe the particular graphic or rhythmic patterns emphasized by editing.
- Discuss the ways editing organizes images as meaningful scenes and sequences.
- Examine how editing strategies engage filmic traditions of continuity or disjuncture.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 4 is the third of four chapters that identify the formal and technical powers associated with the different elements of film form: mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound. It begins with a short historical, industrial, and cultural overview from the period of early cinema and classical editing styles, to a closer look at the development of other editing techniques, including Soviet montage, continuity editing, and digital editing. It then examines the formal aspects of editing, namely cuts and other transitions like fade-ins, fade-outs, and dissolves; techniques for editing narrative space and time; as well as graphic editing. Finally, the chapter suggests some of the ways editing helps to create filmic meaning. Students learn that editing styles are not simply neutral ways of telling stories, but methods of conveying different perspectives on art and realism.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

The efficacy of this vignette as a teaching tool does not rely upon students' familiarity with the finer points of Indian film culture, especially the conventions of Bollywood, the second largest film industry in the world. In fact, the sequence where the couple lip sync to “Tujhe Dekha To” (“When I Saw You”) communicates everything that’s at stake in the plot of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (*The Big Hearted Will Take the Bride*; 1995). The match cut pattern joining the couple across time and space is typical of these Hindi movies’ spectacular production numbers. Here, though, it also connects the predestined lovers through song in defiance of the diaspora that finds them—and this distinctive style of musical number—so far from home. You may wish to augment clips from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* with the “Wise Up” sequence from *Magnolia* (1999), in which Paul Thomas Anderson uses an Aimee Mann song to reveal alliances and rifts among the interlocking and overlapping characters in his ensemble cast.

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

Editing describes the art of connecting two different shots or film images. This fundamental practice has produced a vast array of strategies associated with different historical, cultural, and

aesthetic perspectives. Unlike the other topics covered in Part 2, editing is a practice without a physiological correlative. The rapid-fire succession of images we see out the window of a moving vehicle comes the closest to the practice of editing in our waking lives. In sleep, however, dreams may be characterized by leaps in time and space that resemble the editor's craft, transforming the known world into something new and strange.

The challenge in teaching this chapter, even if you are not taking a historical or chronological approach to film, is to make students conscious of how editing, the most distinguishing technical and formal element of film practice, can construct images, locations, patterns, and rhythms that are impossible to achieve in real life. It can be useful to look at examples from early single-shot cinema like *The Kiss* or the innovative crosscutting in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) when discussing the evolution of editing. Contrasting such films with examples of Hollywood continuity editing, Soviet montage, and MTV-style jump cuts allows students to see how editing overcomes the physical limitations of human perception to create a world, not just from other angles, but also more quickly and with greater complexity than normal human vision allows.

From a Historical Perspective

Soviet Montage: Assign a short supplemental excerpt from *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (University of California Press, 1985), such as “The Council of Three” from the section *Kinoks: A Revolution* (1922) where Vertov describes building a room from twelve different walls by editing footage shot in various parts of the world.

From a Formal Perspective

The Cut and Other Transitions: Distinguish between a fade-in and a dissolve by likening the former to a student going from class to class during a single day and the latter to a student leaving a class that meets once each week and then leapfrogging ahead to the next class. Alternatively, show the original theatrical trailer for *Casablanca* (1942) in class. Ask students to count how many optical effects—dissolves, wipes, irises—are used.

180-Degree Rule: In addition to screening the sequence from *The Big Sleep* (1946) discussed in the text, consider showing a useful (and fun) scene from the animated movie *Paprika* (2006). As the detective sits with Paprika in an empty movie theater, he explains the 180-degree rule to her by tracing visible dotted lines in the space between them. The “camera” then shifts to a position behind their heads to illustrate the spatial discontinuity the rule is designed to prevent.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

An approach to evaluating comprehension could be to conduct cinematic “dictées” during class: students watch a film clip, then alone or in groups describe it using as many terms from the chapter as they can. Ask them to present their “translations” to the rest of the class.

Students frequently struggle with the distinction between montage and Soviet montage. To illustrate the former as they are likely to construe it, show them the “montage” musical number in *Team America: World Police* (2004). Exposing the class to the polemical and poetic prose style of Dziga Vertov can help students understand why Soviet filmmakers wanted to emphasize

the constructed nature of their images. Similarly, students can learn to appreciate the political ends to which these practitioners hoped to put disjunctive editing.

“Suture” can also be a puzzling concept for students to grasp in the abstract. *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982) offers an exaggerated example of how editing can insert viewers into a specific place and point of view in a film. Show the sequence from *The Big Sleep* (1946), featured on p. 145 of the main text, to tie suture into the textbook's discussion of shot/reverse-shot editing patterns.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

The Cut and Other Transitions, p. 143

Do a shot-by-shot breakdown of one scene from a film screened in class. What is the motivation behind each cut? What overall effect do these cuts have on the scene and the film?

This cue makes an excellent basis for a short writing assignment. In class, consider screening a short silent film and modeling the shot-by-shot breakdown. The absence of spoken dialogue can make it easier for students to concentrate on the cuts. Ask the class to clap each time there's a cut to a new shot.

The Cut and Other Transitions, p. 144

Make a list of transitional devices besides cuts that are used in a film you've just watched for class. What spatial, temporal, or conceptual relationship is being set up between scenes joined by a fade, dissolve, iris, or wipe?

This Viewing Cue works especially well either as a journal entry or a more formal essay about the relationship between Brian De Palma's Odessa steps homage in *The Untouchables* (1987) and the more political montage of the original sequence in the Film in Focus movie *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).

Continuity Style, p. 148

Does the film you watched most recently in class follow continuity patterns, such as the 180-degree rule? Can you identify other ways that spatial continuity is maintained?

One example you can screen in class: The scene in the diner in *Paper Moon* (1973) in which Tatum O'Neal's Addie and Ryan O'Neal's Moses bicker about her money. This scene maintains spatial continuity through shot/reverse-shot editing patterns. However, it subtly cheats the 180-degree rule by flipping the image on a match on action without disorienting the viewer.

Duration and Pace, p. 155

What is the temporal organization of the film you've just viewed for class? Does the film follow a strict chronology? How does the editing abridge or expand time?

Umberto Eco's short essay "How to Recognize a Pornographic Movie" (collected in *How to Travel with a Salmon and Other Essays*, Harcourt, 1995) provides a humorous illustration of how editing expands or abridges time: "Go into a movie theater. If, to go from A to B, the characters take longer than you would like, then the film you are seeing is pornographic."

Graphic Editing, p. 156

What graphic patterns are constructed through the editing of the film you've just viewed? What effects do these patterns have on your viewing of the film?

Battleship Potemkin, featured in a Film in Focus, offers multiple examples of graphic editing. Consider also showing the transition from bone to spaceship in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) or a Busby Berkeley dance sequence, both of which lead nicely into a related discussion of editing through movement. Ask students to write a brief response paper describing the effects of graphic editing patterns.

Movement Editing, p. 157

Consider the last film you just viewed in class. What is the relationship between figure and camera movement within specific shots and the film's cutting?

With this Viewing Cue, challenge students to apply this chapter's concepts to their assessment of a film they watched earlier in the course in the form of a journal entry or the essay section of an exam.

Rhythmic Editing, p. 158

Time the shots of a specific sequence from any film you've viewed for class thus far. How does the rhythm of the editing in the sequence contribute to the film's mood or meaning?

Show a musical number from *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) and one from *An American in Paris* (1951) in class. Ask students to describe the moods the different editing styles convey and the effect of seeing fetishized body parts in the former as opposed to full shots of bodies in the latter.

How Editing Makes Meaning, p. 163

In the film you've just viewed for class, what different emotional and intellectual responses are evoked by the editing choices? Be sure to jot down specific examples from the film to support your response.

Play devil's advocate and ask the class how editing the film differently might change their responses. In class, screen a mash-up spoof trailer that re-cuts scenes from a film to make it seem like a different movie. For example, show the trailer for *The Shining* (1980) that is re-cut to make it seem like an advertisement for a family melodrama. YouTube and Vimeo are good sites for finding such spoof trailers.

Continuity Editing, p. 166

In the film you just viewed, at what point is continuity editing used? How does this practice encourage you to identify with the characters or to believe in the story's world?

This Viewing Cue is versatile and can be used in a number of contexts. For the Film in Focus movie *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), for example, discuss how the editing pulls us into Bonnie and Clyde's life of crime. Talk about how the accelerated pace of their bank-robbing career once C.W., Blanche, and Buck join them is supported by spatial and temporal continuity conventions, such as edits that show them speeding from one shot to the next in the same direction as the law enforcement agents who pursue them.

Disjunctive Editing, p. 171

Does the editing of the film you've just viewed for class call attention to itself in a disjunctive fashion, setting up conflicts or posing oppositional values? If so, how and to what end?

To inspire lively discussion, show the sequence from early in *Breathless* (1960) in which Michel gives Patricia a ride in his car. Ask students about what effects the jump cuts and the refusal of shot/reverse-shot patterns during their conversation have on the viewer. What connections can they make to the disjunctive editing practices in the film shown for class?

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Editing and Rhythm in *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), p. 154

Fred Astaire insisted when he began making films that his entire body be in the shot when he danced. Most of his musical numbers unfolded across a limited number of long takes. The idea was to display his skill and make it clear to viewers that there was no trickery involved. Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) turns that convention on its head and inside out, in part because its stars are not as talented song-and-dance men (and women) as their musical predecessors. Play the song "Lady Marmalade" in class and ask the students to clap to the beat. Then play the "Lady Marmalade" sequence from *Moulin Rouge!* and ask them to clap at each cut. Prepare for cacophony! Finally, play the video for Nirvana's "Smells like Teen Spirit" (1991) and have the students clap at each cut. What rhythms are produced? How do they affect our sense of spatiotemporal continuity?

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Patterns of Editing in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), pp. 160–61

Consider assigning students the December 8, 1969, *Time* magazine cover story about this movie, or Pauline Kael's October 21, 1967, *New Yorker* review.

Discussion Question 1: How does each piece advance an argument about *Bonnie and Clyde*'s place in the film culture of the day?

Discussion Question 2: Select a scene that is edited to convey spatial and temporal continuity. How does it contrast to the patterns the editor uses to suggest the psychological space that Bonnie and Clyde inhabit?

Additional Suggestions: The final scene of *Bonnie and Clyde* is justly famous for its slow-motion ballet of bullets, blood, and bodies. *The Harder They Come* (1972), released only five years later, tells the story of another folk hero outlaw, Ivanhoe Martin. The Jamaican film inverts the editing patterns of its American predecessor. Crosscutting between the present and Ivan's memories of watching a western earlier in the film gives way to a series of jerky, sped-up shots as the protagonist crumples under a barrage of bullets that shocks by its very brevity.

Montage in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), pp. 172–73

Students certainly can learn a lot from analyzing the disjunctive cutting techniques in the famous Odessa steps sequence.

Discussion Question 1: There is no single protagonist in *Battleship Potemkin*, gestures are repeated from different angles, and the citizens on the steps are fleeing the czar's soldiers. Then the Cossacks arrive and the baby carriage starts rolling to its unseen fate. How does Eisenstein use disjunctive editing techniques to make a political point?

Discussion Question 2: How does the absence of an establishing shot heighten the tension and pathos of the mother's movement against the flow of the crowd and suture us into feeling the extent of her, and the onlookers', powerlessness?

Additional Suggestions: You can also show Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* (1987), mentioned briefly in the Film in Focus, and ask students to compare the Odessa Steps sequence to De Palma's homage. The ways in which the two films differ help demonstrate the political nature of the montage in *Battleship Potemkin*. De Palma's version follows a more conventional deadline structure and focuses on protagonist Eliot Ness's race to beat the clock and bring down the gangster Al Capone. When De Palma sends a baby carriage hurtling down a railway station's stairs, how does the spatial and temporal coherence implied by the continuity editing serve the genre film's narrative goals?

Instructors could also show *Goodfellas* (1990), contrasting the famous tracking shot following Henry and Karen through the kitchen of the club with the later montage that shows the bodies of the dead Mafiosi they'd greeted in earlier long takes. The scene in which Karen attends a party with the other Mob wives has fine examples of disjunctive editing and psychologically motivated cuts.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Look again at the climactic sequence from a movie that has been screened in class. Break it down shot by shot, and have students identify where the removal of a single shot could change

our understanding of the film as a whole. It could be an eyeline match, a reaction shot, even an establishing shot. What would happen if another shot was added or a shot was held for a longer or shorter time?

FILMS CITED

An American in Paris (1951)
Ballet mécanique (1924)
Battleship Potemkin (1925)
Berlin: Symphony of a Great City (1927)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
The Big Sleep (1946)
The Birds (1963)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
Breathless (1960)
Bridges-Go-Round (1958)
Broken Blossoms (1919)
The Cheat (1912)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Clueless (1995)
Crooklyn (1994)
The Crowd (1928)
Dancer in the Dark (2000)
Desert Hearts (1985)
Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995)
Dog Star Man (1964)
Don't Look Now (1973)
Drifters (1929)
Early Summer (1951)
East of Borneo (1931)
Easy Rider (1969)
Empire (1964)
Fast & Furious (2009)
Fight Club (1999)
Flashdance (1983)
The Flicker (1965)
Flowers of Shanghai (1998)
Fury (1936)
The Graduate (1967)
The Great Train Robbery (1903)
Happy Together (1997)
A Hard Day's Night (1964)
Hiroshima, Mon Amour (1959)
The Hours (2002)
Imitation of Life (1959)

In a Lonely Place (1950)
Ivan the Terrible, Part One (1945)
Ivan the Terrible, Part Two (1946)
Jeanne Dielman, 83 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles (1975)
Last Year at Marienbad (1961)
L'Avventura (1960)
Life of an American Fireman (1903)
The Limey (1999)
Living Playing Cards (1903)
The Lonely Villa (1909)
Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
Meeting of Two Queens (1991)
Memento (2000)
Meshes of the Afternoon (1943)
Michael Clayton (2007)
Moulin Rouge! (2001)
A Movie (1958)
Natural Born Killers (1994)
October (1927)
Olympia (1938)
The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928)
Persona (1966)
Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959)
Psycho (1960)
Rear Window (1954)
Reassemblage (1982)
Rope (1948)
Rose Hobart (1936)
Russian Ark (2002)
Saboteur (1942)
San Francisco (1936)
The Scarlet Empress (1934)
Scorpio Rising (1964)
The Searchers (1956)
The Seashell and the Clergyman (1928)
Shoah (1985)
The Silence of the Lambs (1991)
Stagecoach (1939)
Star Wars (1977)
Strangers on a Train (1951)
Strike (1924)
Sunset Boulevard (1950)
Taste of Cherry (1997)
Timecode (2001)
Top Gun (1986)
Trip to the Moon (1902)

Two or Three Things I Know About Her (1967)
2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
The Untouchables (1987)
Vertigo (1958)
The Way We Were (1973)
A Woman Under the Influence (1974)
Zorns Lemma (1970)

CHAPTER 5

LISTENING TO THE CINEMA: FILM SOUND

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Understand the importance of sound to the film experience.
- Explore how the use and understanding of sound reflect different historical and cultural influences.
- Discover how sounds convey meaning in relationship to images.
- Learn how sounds are recorded, combined, and reproduced.
- Understand the functions of the voice.
- Describe the principles and practices that govern the use of music.
- Understand the principles and practices that govern the use of sound effects.
- Examine the cultural, historical, and aesthetic values that determine traditional relationships between sounds and images.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The last of four chapters that deal with different elements of film form, Chapter 5 explores how speech, music, and sound effects are constructed and how they are perceived by the film's audience. Beginning with the chorus in classical Greek theater, the chapter outlines the social and technological history of film sound. It then examines voice, music, and sound effects in detail. Finally, it discusses the significance of sound in film; that is, how a soundtrack re-creates sounds from the world around us and creates new patterns of sound that construct or emphasize meanings and themes in a film.

This chapter encourages students to consider sound analytically, something they may never have done before. It is not only viewing, but listening to movies that defines the filmgoing experience, and advanced sound technologies make that experience even more immediate and immersive.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

One way in which an instructor might use this opening scene from *The Piano* (1993) to introduce film sound is by placing it within a larger context of voice and music in film. Ask the class: How does our reception of Ada's "mind's voice" change when we are familiar with actress Holly Hunter's natural Southern accent? What does the music—and noise—from the titular piano do to challenge and expand our traditional expectations about the role of underscoring in movies? What is the difference between her voiceover and a male voiceover from film noirs like *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) or *Double Indemnity* (1944), or from an action romp like *Spider-Man* (2002)?

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

Film is an audiovisual medium, but film studies frequently privileges the visual, referring to viewers and spectators, words rooted in the sense of sight, rather than to auditors and audiences. A film's soundtrack is constructed out of many layers of sound, from the dialogue to the

background score. Sound is a sensual experience that potentially makes cinema's deepest impression. To perceive an image, we must face forward with our eyes open, but sound can come from any direction. During a particularly frightening moment in a film, we may cover our eyes to hide from the image, but we remain connected to the action through the sound. Although film sound is the least visible of the formal and technical elements of the movies, it is the element that engages us most viscerally. Listening carefully requires being informed about film history and culture, as well as specific formal elements and strategies.

To teach this chapter, it can be useful to couch the evolution of film sound within a consideration of pop compilation soundtracks from the past few decades of film history. The immediacy and ubiquity of a certain song can lure audiences into a theater, but it can also wrench them out of their suspension of disbelief because of an extra-filmic association. From there it may be easier for students to appreciate how more traditional film scores affected earlier filmmakers and analyze how voice and effects work to convey a sense of authenticity and verisimilitude.

From a Historical Perspective

1950–Present: From Stereophonic to Digital Sound: Consider examining this era in the context of the evolution of consumer audio equipment over the same period, as phonographs and reel-to-reel players gave way to eight-track tapes, cassettes, CDs, and now digital music players.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

An approach to evaluating comprehension could be to conduct cinematic “dictees” during class: students watch a film clip, then alone or in groups describe it using as many terms from the chapter as they can. Ask them to present their “translations” to the rest of the class.

Students usually grasp what diegesis is (even if they don't always spell it correctly). Even so, it is worth spending extra time on synchronous and asynchronous sound, semidiegetic sound, and the difference between voice-off, voiceover, and looping. Any one of the Film in Focus sections offers abundant examples, but *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) is an especially rich text to revisit. Consider giving a quiz in class. Show clips with examples of semidiegetic sound, voiceover, and so on, and ask students to use the appropriate term to describe the sound in each clip. Go over their answers during class to help students master these often confusing differences.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

Sound and Image, p. 184

Technologies of watching—and listening—to movies have changed rapidly in recent years. Characterize the audio experience of the last film you watched. How much of this experience was specific to the film's sound design and how much to the format, platform, or venue through which you watched the film?

This Viewing Cue could work as a journal prompt or as a one-page writing assignment following a class screening.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Sound, p. 185

Distinguish an example of synchronous sound (with an onscreen source) from an example of asynchronous sound (with an offscreen source) in the film you are studying. Are these sounds easy to distinguish?

This Viewing Cue can be used to explore the complicated play of synchronous and asynchronous sound in the Film in Focus movie *Singin' in the Rain*. During the “Make ’em Laugh” number, where is the orchestra? Or, view the opening credits of *Ghost World* (2001) during class. At first it seems that the Bollywood song “Jaan Pehechaan Ho” is asynchronous. Then we learn the music comes from a movie that Enid is watching on television. At times, though, the image from the movie *Gumnaam* (1965) fills the whole screen. Ask the students whether there is a synchronous source for “Jaan Pehechaan Ho” within the dancers’ diegesis.

Diegetic and Nondiegetic Sound, p. 186

Find an example of diegetic sound in the film you are studying, and one of nondiegetic sound. What would the movie be like without the nondiegetic sound?

Show Holly Golightly singing “Moon River” on the fire escape in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961). Can she hear the string section that comes in after the first verse? Can Paul? Are the musicians standing below her window part of the diegesis but outside the frame?

Sound Production, p. 190

In the film you’ve just viewed, from what direction do particular sounds come? What are the most audible elements of the film’s sound mix? Is the mix full, or are there relatively few sounds?

The Film in Focus movie *The Conversation* (1974) lends itself well to this Viewing Cue. How does Gene Hackman’s Harry Caul manipulate the sounds in the city square? Ask students to think about the way he isolates Cindy Williams’s “Red Red Robin” song. How is it different from traditional film sound design, which uses close sound perspective even when the speakers are far away?

Voiceover, p. 193

Identify specific uses of voice in the film you will screen next in class. Is dialogue abundant? If voiceovers are used, what are their function and diegetic status?

Consider contrasting the braying voice of Lina Lamont in *Singin’ in the Rain* with the “mind voice” of Ada in *The Piano* to introduce a discussion about voice. Ask students to speculate what a Lina voiceover might sound like. Would it give us new insights into her broad character? Conversely, what if we had no access to Ada’s inner life?

Narrative Music, p. 200

As you watch the film assigned for your next class, pay particular attention to its music. Is the film's score drawn from the classical tradition? Is popular music used? How do scoring choices contribute to the film's meaning?

Screen the Film in Focus *Singin' in the Rain* and ask students to list one scene with a traditional score, one that uses popular music, and so on. Other films that work well with this Viewing Cue are *American Graffiti* (1973) and *Dazed and Confused* (1993). Jeff Smith's chapter from *The Sounds of Commerce* (Columbia University Press, 1998) on *American Graffiti* and the pop compilation soundtrack make excellent supplemental reading.

Sound Effects in Film, p. 202

To what extent do sound effects add to a film's sense of realism? Locate an example in a film you recently watched that demonstrates how sound effects are primarily responsible for creating a particular impression of location, action, or mood.

The sound effects that Harry Caul records in *The Conversation* serve to heighten the viewers' sense of unease. Ask students to come up with examples of horror and suspense movies that rely on sound effects to convince us that the dangers on the screen are real.

Sound Effects in Film, p. 202

Isolate a particular scene in a film you recently viewed for class and determine which sound seems especially responsible for conveying information to the spectator. How do voice, music, and sound effects work together?

This Viewing Cue works particularly well as a journal entry prompt or as an exam question. Consider asking students to identify a scene from a film screened for class, then describe another such scene from a film they've watched outside of class.

Authenticity and Experience, p. 204

How does the soundtrack of the next film you view "authenticate" the image? Would the absence of sound affect the film's authenticity? How?

Both *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Conversation* teach us not to believe everything we hear. Show the students the "Would You" sequence from *Singin' in the Rain*, then tell them that the person who actually dubs Lina's voice is not Debbie Reynolds, it's Jean Hagen. The actress playing Lina is "dubbing" herself. The second half of the Viewing Cue may be better suited for an exam question that allows students to choose one film out of those the class has seen.

Sound Continuity, p. 206

Identify two or three instances of sound continuity in a film you have watched for class. How do these instances support either the narrative action or the thoughts and feelings of a character?

Ask students to answer this question in a journal entry or on an exam. It could also be the basis of a short essay assignment.

Sound Montage, p. 211

Is sound montage used to create meaning at certain points in the film? If so, how and to what effect?

Use this Viewing Cue to tease out how Harry Caul reverses the practice of sound montage in *The Conversation* even as the film's sound editor Walter Murch manipulates aspects of the mix, such as room tone. Murch also discusses *The Conversation* in his book *In the Blink of an Eye* (Silman-James, 2001), and it may be helpful to assign a brief excerpt.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Music and Meaning in *I'm Not There* (2007), p. 197

The array of cover versions of Bob Dylan's songs is mind-boggling. Every genre, every gender, every generation seems to try him on for size. One way to explore the blurry distinctions between diegetic and nondiegetic music in *I'm Not There* could be to ask students as a class to assemble a compilation of covers of the songs that the six different characters are associated with—how do the cover artists balance the “Bob Dylan-ness” of these songs with their own styles? How pronounced are the similarities or differences? Discuss how and whether the film's segments achieve this same balance between subject and style. Are some more successful than others? Why? Another approach would be to place *I'm Not There* in the context of director Todd Haynes's other music-centric biopic films, such as *Velvet Goldmine* (1998) and his infamous short about Karen Carpenter, *Superstar* (1988).

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Sound and Image in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), pp. 188–89

There are a number of wonderful musicals, but *Singin' in the Rain* has the added advantage of a plot that pivots on the relationship of sound to image, the history of film sound technologies, and the process of recording and reproducing sound. It also has moments where the distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic sound gets very slippery.

Discussion Question 1: Can Gene Kelly's Don Lockwood hear the orchestra accompanying his singing and dancing in the title number?

Discussion Question 2: Why can we only hear the taps of his shoes some of the time? Furthermore, why would he wear tap shoes outside a dance studio?

Discussion Question 3: Why didn't Don wear one of the bright yellow raincoats featured in the "Good Mornin'" number (seen just minutes before) to see Kathy home? These questions can make students more conscious of how filmmakers play fast and loose with sound design in their quest for greater "authenticity" and help them become more analytical listeners. Peter Wollen's shot-by-shot analysis of the number in his monograph on the film (*Singin' in the Rain*, British Film Institute, 1992) is a useful resource.

Additional Suggestions: Jacques Demy's film *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* doesn't foreground the history of film sound technology in its plot, but because the singing in this all-sung musical was recorded after shooting, it does encourage discussion of automated dialogue replacement (ADR) and postsynchronous sound. For non-French-speaking viewers, an extra layer is added by the need to read subtitles. Or, screen *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967) to talk about how Jean-Luc Godard constructs sound montages to express his political views, such as when Juliette's husband and his friend listen to radio broadcasts about the war in Vietnam, or when the construction noises in Paris are foregrounded in the sound mix, or via Godard's own hushed voiceovers.

The Ethics and Effects of Sound Technology in *The Conversation* (1974), pp. 208–9

Harry Caul's surveillance expert hit screens a few months before the resignation of Richard Nixon. Placing the film within the context of Watergate crimes like illegal wiretapping and the secret recording of telephone conversations can launch a lively discussion of the ethics of surveillance. Sound is used in service of narrative, but the narrative is about the uses of sound.

Discussion Question 1: How is sound used to suture us into the story—and implicate us in Caul's eavesdropping?

Discussion Question 2: How does sound designer and editor Walter Murch subvert the conventions that usually govern sound perspective and room tone to tell the story?

Discussion Question 3: How is the physicality of sound represented in the scene in which Caul plays his saxophone along with the record player, or when he later returns to his ransacked home, festooned with unraveled magnetic tape?

Additional Suggestions: *The Lives of Others* (2006), in which a zealous East German Stasi captain conducts surveillance on a playwright and his actress mistress, is an obvious successor to *The Conversation*. An interesting project would be to focus on the equipment used in each film. *The Lives of Others* uses authentic Stasi listening and recording devices to evoke the film's 1984 setting, whereas *The Conversation*'s reel-to-reel players and headphones were the most advanced audio equipment available in 1974.

A different take on audio equipment can be found in *Diva* (1981). Two recordings of women's voices drive the plot. The first is a reel-to-reel bootleg of soprano Cynthia Hawkins, who has refused to release recordings. The second is a cassette tape secretly recorded by a

prostitute named Nadja, who names the mastermind of a Parisian prostitution ring. There are numerous scenes that foreground the act of listening.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Create two scores for a sequence from a movie using prerecorded music—classical and popular—that express the psychology and interior landscapes of the characters. Write “liner notes” explaining the rationale behind your choices.

Alternative Activity

Visit FilmSound.org and use the list of film sound clichés as a reference to analyze the film you watched for class. Or select sound effects from the free libraries and create an alternative soundtrack for a sequence that changes its meaning.

FILMS CITED

Alexander Nevsky (1938)
American Graffiti (1973)
Applause (1929)
Band of Outsiders (1964)
Barton Fink (1991)
The Big Chill (1983)
The Big Sleep (1946)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
Blade Runner (1982)
Blazing Saddles (1974)
Blue (1993)
Blue Angel (1930)
Born to Dance (1936)
Bridget Jones’s Diary (2001)
Broken Blossoms (1919)
Casablanca (1942)
Citizen Kane (1941)
The Cobweb (1955)
The Conversation (1974)
Doctor Zhivago (1965)
Don Juan (1926)
Dracula (1931)
Dr. Strangelove, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)
Duck Amuck (1953)
Edison Studios’ Sound Experiment (1895)
Enthusiasm (1931)
Eve’s Bayou (1997)
Fantasia (1940)

Far from Heaven (2002)
First Name: Carmen (1983)
Forbidden Love (1992)
Glengarry Glen Ross (1992)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
Hallelujah! (1929)
Hamlet (1948)
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2005)
High Noon (1952)
History of the World: Part I (1981)
How to Train Your Dragon (2010)
I'm Not There (2007)
Indiana Jones series (1981–2008)
India Song (1975)
Jaws (1975)
The Jazz Singer (1927)
Jurassic Park (1993)
Kill Bill Vol. 2 (2004)
King Kong (1933)
La Jetée (1962)
L'Argent (1983)
Laura (1944)
Le Million (1931)
Little Women (1994)
Looking for Langston (1989)
Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing (1955)
M (1931)
Madame X: An Absolute Ruler (1977)
The Magnificent Ambersons (1942)
Mildred Pierce (1945)
Nashville (1975)
Natural Born Killers (1994)
News from Home (1976)
Night Mail (1936)
Nostalgia (1983)
Now, Voyager (1942)
On the Waterfront (1954)
The Piano (1993)
Pickpocket (1959)
Playtime (1967)
The Plow That Broke the Plains (1936)
Psycho (1960)
Rancho Notorious (1952)
Rebecca (1940)
Reservoir Dogs (1992)
Rocky Balboa (2006)

The Royal Tenenbaums (2001)
Saturday Night Fever (1977)
The Searchers (1956)
Secretariat (2010)
The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
The Shining (1980)
Shrek (2001)
Sin City (2005)
Singin' in the Rain (1952)
The Sound of Music (1965)
Spellbound (1945)
Star Wars (1977)
Step Up 3D (2010)
Stranger than Fiction (2006)
Sunset Boulevard (1950)
Surname Viet Given Name Nam (1989)
Taxi to the Dark Side (2007)
The Ten Commandments (1956)
The Terminator (1984)
The Third Man (1949)
THX 1138 (1971)
Topsy-Turvy (1999)
Touch of Evil (1958)
Tout va bien (All's well) (1972)
2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (1964)
Way Down East (1920)
Weekend (1967)
Wild at Heart (1990)
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
Written on the Wind (1956)

CHAPTER 6

TELLING STORIES: NARRATIVE FILMS

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Explore the cultural ubiquity of storytelling in film.
- Discover the different historical practices that create the foundations for film narratives.
- Examine how film narratives construct plots that can arrange the events of a story in different ways.
- Learn the way film characters motivate actions in a story.
- Discuss the way plots create different temporal and spatial schemes.
- Examine the power of narration and narrative point of view and how they determine our understanding of a story.
- Describe the differences between classical and alternative narrative traditions.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 6 is the first chapter in Part 3, which deals with organizational structures: narrative, documentary, and experimental films, as well as familiar movie genres. Chapter 6 begins with a short history of narrative and narrative film from its roots in storytelling to the present day. It then examines the three-part structure of narrative—beginning, middle, and end—and the different ways in which narrative elements can order time and space. Finally, it considers the cultural and historical contexts that shape each narrative.

This chapter draws upon ideas that students may have encountered in literature, creative writing, anthropology, sociology, or screenwriting classes. It exposes the underlying structures that cause viewers to prefer and seek out movies with certain kinds of plots, stories, or narrative styles and prompts students to examine what motivates their own moviegoing choices.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

Stranger than Fiction (2006) relies on the audience's familiarity with narration and narrative conventions. We take it for granted when an omniscient narrator starts speaking, and we understand that the characters on the screen can't hear that voice. Consider beginning the discussion of narrative forms by looking at two scenes from the movie that subvert our expectations: when Harold Crick first hears Karen Eiffel's voice and when he learns from Professor Hilbert that he is the main character in a novel by an author who always kills off her protagonists. Students can discover how much they already know about how narrative works. It is worth discussing with them how Will Ferrell's name in the opening credits might signal that the movie will follow one type of narrative, Dustin Hoffman's a second, and Emma Thompson's a third; and how the film capitalizes upon and upends our narrative expectations.

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

We seek out good films with interesting characters, plots, and narrative styles. All of these narrative elements and structures offer numerous possibilities for creating different kinds of stories, invariably related to the cultural and historical contexts that help shape them. Movies

draw from a wide variety of narrative traditions: oral, written, visual, and musical. Many film narratives follow a classical pattern of linear development and parallel plots; others deviate from those patterns and explore different ways of constructing a story. Choosing a specific narrative form means committing to certain options and excluding others.

In real life, students create narratives all the time. They tell stories about their weekend, describe how they overcame an academic obstacle, revise the story of a failed romance, or omit incriminating details from an anecdote when sharing it with a parent or teacher.

According to Jean-Luc Godard, every film has a beginning, a middle, and an end, but not necessarily in that order. Film narratives allow us to explore and think about how we organize time and history into meaningful patterns.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

Regardless of the academic home of this course or its particular focus, it is essential that students are conversant with the myriad ways film organizes time and space. The chapters in Part 3 examine the different ways in which movies are organized to tell a story or, in the case of experimental film, evoke memories, dreams, and sensory states. When teaching technical vocabulary for this section, encourage students to construct their own narratives by asking them to write essays and journal entries that apply terminology learned in class to the films watched.

Another approach to evaluating comprehension could be to administer a short quiz after the screening. Ask students to name the major and minor characters, name the type of plot, list the narrative time and locations, and identify the kind of narration used. Or have them write a brief treatment of the plot and describe how it differs from the story.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

1900–1920: Adaptations, Scriptwriters, and Screenplays, p. 218

For the film you recently watched in class, describe as much of the story as you can. What are the main events, the implied events, and the significant and insignificant details of the film's story?

Ask students, alone or in groups, to describe the movie using forms characteristic of an oral narrative, a newspaper story, a graphic novel, a children's picture book, a pop song, or a symphony. Or ask them to use the storytelling conventions of their major. Have them write a lab report, create a PowerPoint presentation, draft a blueprint, or even solve an equation. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Stories and Plots, p. 223

How do story and plot in a film differ? In what order does the plot in the film you've just viewed present the events of the story?

Ask students what would happen if they reordered the events of the story. In the classroom, you can prompt students to distinguish between story and plot by listing the top-ten-grossing films of the previous year and asking them to describe the stories and plots of each one.

Characters, p. 226

Focus on a single character in the film you're currently studying. Is the character realistic or extraordinary? Explain how. Does the character's historical or cultural realism seem at odds with your own?

The Film in Focus movies make excellent candidates for this Viewing Cue. For example, use this Viewing Cue as an exam essay question and ask students to make a case for Veda from *Mildred Pierce* (1945), Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Captain Renault from *Casablanca* (1942), and so on. Either name specific characters or simply provide the titles of films from which students can choose if you would also like to test their retention of character names and plot points.

Character Coherence, Depth, and Grouping, p. 227

Select a character in the film you're watching for class that you might define as singular. Does that singularity indicate something about the values of the film? Does the character seem coherent? How?

This Viewing Cue works well as a prompt for discussion. Eve Harrington in *All About Eve* (1950) seems at first to be a singular character, but our impression of her uniqueness is overturned in the final minutes of the film. Debate the merits of character coherence in class. Do real people act coherently?

Character Coherence, Depth, and Grouping, p. 227

What kinds of social hierarchies are suggested by the character groupings in the film you've just viewed?

One interesting approach to implementing this Viewing Cue would be mapping the social hierarchies in the Film in Focus movies *Apocalypse Now* and *Daughters of the Dust* (1991) and how they relate to issues of race in each film. Another might involve comparing the matriarchal structures in Julie Dash's film with those found in *Mildred Pierce*.

Character Types, p. 228

Turn your attention to the film's most important minor characters. What do they represent?

Colonel Kurtz from *Apocalypse Now* plays a pivotal role in that movie despite having relatively little screen time. Ask students to enumerate his contradictions and discuss how he compares to more one-note characters, like Dennis Hopper's photojournalist, in the film.

Diegetic and Nondiegetic Elements, p. 231

Describe the diegesis of the film you just watched in class. Which events are excluded or merely implied when that diegesis becomes presented as a narrative?

This Viewing Cue highlights how plot selection and omission shapes a story from its diegesis. For example, what we know about Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* is filtered through the accounts that characters share with Captain Willard long before we meet Kurtz himself. Ask students to apply what they've learned in this chapter to movies they watched for other chapters.

Diegetic and Nondiegetic Elements, p. 232

As you view the next film, identify the most important nondiegetic materials and analyze how they might emphasize certain key themes or ideas.

Use this Viewing Cue in class and then again as an exam question. Have the students identify and make a case for a single nondiegetic element being the most important one for a particular movie. For example, in the Film in Focus *Apocalypse Now*, it might be Walter Murch's many credits or perhaps the pop music on the soundtrack.

Narrative Patterns of Time, p. 236

How is time shaped in the film narrative you just viewed? What especially important instances of frequency or duration can you point to in this narrative's time scheme?

This Viewing Cue works best as a journal or an essay prompt, enabling students to demonstrate their mastery of the material and the relevant vocabulary.

Narrative Space, p. 239

Identify the three most significant narrative locations in the movie you've just viewed. How does the narrative construct different meanings for each location?

Point out that there may not be as many as three narrative locations, or there may be more, depending on the film. For example, cases could be made for the boat and Kurtz's compound as significant narrative locations in the Film in Focus movie *Apocalypse Now*. In the *Redux* version released in 2001, director Francis Ford Coppola seems to be making a case for the importance of the French plantation by restoring a long sequence set there. In *Mildred Pierce*, the title character's changing fortunes are reflected by the domestic spaces she inhabits.

Narrative Perspectives, p. 240

From what point of view is the narration of the film you are studying? If not controlled by an individual, how might the narration reveal certain attitudes about the story's logic?

Reassign the narrative point of view to a secondary character, then ask the class to describe the plot from his, her, or its perspective in a journal entry. Choose a couple of promising entries to share in the next class meeting.

Narrative Perspectives, p. 245

What narrative perspective features most prominently in the film you've just viewed? If the narration is omniscient or restricted, how does it determine the meaning of the story?

Daughters of the Dust takes an unusual approach by sharing the narrative perspective of several characters, including that of Unborn Child, who tells viewers the futures of the other characters. In class, for a journal entry, or on an exam, ask students to describe how a story's meaning would change if a restricted narration was replaced by an omniscient narration or vice versa. Have them cite specific examples from the movie to build their case.

Narrative Traditions, p. 247

For the film you will watch next in class, what type of history is being depicted? What does the narrative say about the meaning of time and change in the lives of the characters? What events are presented as most important, and why?

Any of the Film in Focus movies would work well with this Viewing Cue. Discussion of national, social, and personal histories could touch on changing gender and racial roles as well as how perceptions of U.S. history and foreign policy evolve. For example, when U.S. soldiers riot during a Playboy Bunny extravaganza in the depths of the Vietnamese jungle in *Apocalypse Now*, the visual and sonic chaos might reflect the collision between the highly mediated bodies represented in *Playboy* and the horrifically real injuries inflicted upon the bodies and psyches of American servicemen.

Narrative Traditions, p. 248

How would you describe the narrative tradition of the film you're now studying? What specific features of this film define it as part of one tradition or another?

Use this Viewing Cue as a question on the next exam to gauge student comprehension and retention of the material and the relevant vocabulary.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Nondiegetic Images and Narrative, p. 233

It may be useful to spend a little time discussing the intertitles in *Intolerance* (1916). D.W. Griffith includes his authorial signature in the design of the intertitles and creates a rhythm by returning to the quotation from Walt Whitman. Ask the class how the flexibility of intertitles might lend itself to reaching audiences who speak different languages. Conduct a poll: Are they more or less distracting than subtitles or dubbing are today? To create context for the evolution

of opening and closing credit conventions, ask them to research Saul Bass or more current title designers like Kyle Cooper. (Consult www.artofthetitle.com for other possible candidates.) Does it affect our experience of a film to know that its titles are not the work of the film's director? Or does it make us feel like complicit, savvy insiders, as we feel when we are addressed directly by Ferris Bueller in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) or by Harry Lockhart in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005)?

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Plot and Narration in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), pp. 242–43

The story of *Apocalypse Now* seems straightforward. Captain Willard travels through the jungles of Vietnam and Cambodia looking for Colonel Kurtz. Eventually he finds him. The plot, too, is linear and progressive. However, the first-person narration complicates the plot by charting Willard's regressive psychological development as he travels from civilization to savagery. The textbook suggests several different ways the film could be plotted. Ask students to suggest other alternatives.

Discussion Question 1: Have them map out the individual episodes that make up the plot. For each one, choose a character—a Playboy Bunny, the Photojournalist, Clean. What would change if the film was connected to that character's subjectivity? Or if it had an omniscient narration?

Discussion Question 2: How does Coppola's investigation of the limitations of traditional narrative express his feelings about the Vietnam War, a conflict that did not follow the arc traced by earlier U.S. engagements overseas? Consider including excerpts from the Conrad novella, Eliot's poem, and Campbell's studies in your course packet.

Additional Suggestions: The film treated in the chapter's opening vignette, *Stranger than Fiction*, offers a more whimsical but just as postmodern an approach to the difficulties posed by traditional narrative and restricted and omniscient narration.

Classical and Alternative Traditions in *Mildred Pierce* (1945) and *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), pp. 250–51

One way to get at how these personal, female narratives differ from one another might be to ask what would happen if you switched their narrative patterns.

Discussion Question 1: How would *Mildred Pierce*'s plot structure change if the narrative drifted across the perspectives of Veda and Monty, too?

Discussion Question 2: If the movie could show only a few days from Mildred's life, which should they be?

Discussion Question 3: How could *Daughters of the Dust* be reordered as a linear narrative powered by causal logic?

Additional Suggestions: Nominally, *Pretty in Pink* (1986) and *The Tracey Fragments* (2007) are movies about adolescent girl outcasts who yearn for unobtainable boys. The former follows a traditional deadline structure leading to the prom, while the latter orders the plot to convey a fractured and impressionistic version of what it feels like to be a teenager, forgoing a linear narrative in favor of a pattern of repetition and variation stitched together by an unreliable voiceover narrative.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Imagine a film, such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), in which setting seems to determine plot (“follow the yellow brick road,” for example) and transpose its characters to the world of another film: a mystery film or a social drama, for example. How would you design the new setting, and how would you rethink the plot based on a new setting?

Alternative Activity

Another approach would be to describe what would happen if you transposed a talky melodrama or women’s picture into a fantastic environment like a science fiction film, a western, or a historical epic.

FILMS CITED

Adaptation (2002)
The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1954)
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (1905)
Alien (1979)
Amistad (1997)
Antonia’s Line (1995)
Aparajito (1956)
Apocalypse Now (1979)
Babel (2006)
Back to the Future (1985)
Battleship Potemkin (1925)
Being There (1979)
Ben-Hur (1907)
Ben-Hur (1925)
Ben-Hur (1959)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
Blow-Up (1966)
Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
Bourne films (2004–2007)
Bringing Up Baby (1938)
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

Cape Fear (1991)
Cast Away (2000)
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (2006)
Cinderella (1900)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Claire's Knee (1970)
Cleo from 5 to 7 (1962)
The Conformist (1970)
Contempt (1963)
The Conversation (1974)
Crash (2004)
Curse of the Golden Flower (2006)
Daughters of the Dust (1991)
The Deer Hunter (1978)
Desperately Seeking Susan (1985)
The Devil Wears Prada (2006)
Die Hard: With a Vengeance (1995)
Do the Right Thing (1989)
Drumline (2002)
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)
Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986)
Fight Club (1999)
The 400 Blows (1959)
Four Rooms (1995)
Garden State (2004)
The General (1927)
Germany in Autumn (1978)
Gladiator (2000)
Glory (1989)
The Godfather (1972)
The Godfather: Part II (1974)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
The Graduate (1967)
Grand Illusion (1937)
The Great Train Robbery (1903)
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007)
Hiroshima Mon Amour (1959)
The Hours (2002)
House of Sand (2005)
The Ice Storm (1997)
Imitation of Life (1934)
Inglourious Basterds (2009)
Intolerance (1916)
Jaws (1975)
Jerry Maguire (1996)
Juno (2007)

King John (1899)
The King's Speech (2010)
La Chinoise (1967)
Lady in the Lake (1947)
Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001)
Life Is Beautiful (1997)
Life of an American Fireman (1903)
Little Big Man (1970)
Little Miss Sunshine (2006)
Live Free or Die Hard (2007)
Lone Fisherman (1896)
Lost Highway (1997)
Lost in Translation (2003)
The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934)
Meet the Parents (2000)
Memento (2000)
Mildred Pierce (1945)
Milk (2008)
Million Dollar Baby (2004)
Mortal Kombat (1995)
Mulholland Dr. (2001)
My Dinner with Andre (1981)
My Fair Lady (1964)
Mystery Train (1989)
National Velvet (1944)
The New World (2005)
9 to 5 (1980)
North Country (2005)
Ocean's Eleven (2001)
October (1927)
Orlando (1992)
Paris, Je T'Aime (2006)
Pather Panchali (1955)
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (2006)
Pollyanna (1920)
Pride and Prejudice (1938)
The Public Enemy (1931)
Pygmalion (1938)
Rashomon (1950)
Rear Window (1954)
The River (1951)
Robinson Crusoe (1902)
Robinson Crusoe on Mars (1964)
Roman Holiday (1953)
Rules of the Game (1939)
Run, Lola, Run (1998)

Russian Ark (2002)
Secretariat (2010)
Se7en (1995)
The Searchers (1956)
The Sheik (1921)
The Silence of the Lambs (1991)
The Social Network (2010)
Son of the Sheik (1926)
Spider-Man (2002)
Stagecoach (1939)
Stardust (2007)
Stranger than Fiction (2006)
Sunset Boulevard (1950)
Taste of Cherry (1997)
Taxi Driver (1976)
Thelma & Louise (1991)
They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1969)
The Tin Drum (1979)
Two Evil Eyes (1990)
Uncle Tom's Cabin (1903)
Vertigo (1958)
Walk the Line (2005)
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
The World of Apu (1959)
Wuthering Heights (1939)
Xala (1975)
Zelig (1983)

CHAPTER 7

REPRESENTING THE REAL: DOCUMENTARY FILMS

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Recognize that documentary films are best distinguished as cultural practices.
- Learn how documentary films employ nonfictional and non-narrative images and forms.
- Understand that documentary movies make and draw on specific historical heritages.
- Study the common formal strategies and organizations used in documentary films.
- Appreciate how documentary films have become associated with cultural values and traditions from which we develop filmic meaning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 7 is the second chapter in the section dealing with movie genres and narrative, documentary, and experimental films. This chapter is devoted to documentary film, a term that was first coined in 1926 to describe the visual and auditory representation of real events and actual experiences. The chapter begins with a short historical overview of documentaries, from the traveling exhibitions of the 1890s to the digital documentaries of today. It then examines the interplay of nonfiction and non-narrative in documentary. Finally, it looks at the organizational patterns and rhetorical positions employed to convey the social, political, historical, cultural, and educational value of documentary as a movie form.

In this chapter, students investigate the similarities and differences between narrative and documentary cinemas. They learn how documentary cinema creates a film experience that expands how we see, listen, and think about a person, an event, an idea, or the larger world.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

To use this opening vignette as a springboard for discussion, consider placing your initial emphasis on the vital role that editing plays in the art and craft of documentary. Documentary narrative arcs often emerge in the editing room, and documentary filmmakers tend to have a ten-to-one shooting ratio. Use these two ideas to bracket a conversation about *9/11* (2002) and *Fahrenheit 9/11's* (2004) similarities and differences. Filmmakers Jules Naudet and Gédéon Naudet were already working on a documentary about New York firefighters when they captured the events of September 11, 2001, unfolding before them. Michael Moore came to the event after the fact, assembling archival footage and interviews to communicate a particular point of view. Is one film's depiction more "real" than another? Ask students what role—if any—the perceived audience for each film plays in their assessment. What sorts of roles do the filmmakers—Michael Moore and the Naudets—adopt in their respective narratives?

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

Documentary cinema has generated numerous and complex traditions, from the many types of social documentaries to the many kinds of ethnographic films. As a form, it sometimes overlaps and exchanges tactics with narrative cinema, but documentary films emphasize the educational pleasure of obtaining new information or insight about events, people, and even

ideas. The strategies and formal features that these films use include expository organizations that contrast, accumulate, or develop facts and figures. In addition, documentaries can occupy any number of rhetorical positions to explore, analyze, persuade, or even “perform” the world. Documentaries provoke us to see the world with fresh eyes.

To teach this chapter, draw parallels between documentary’s educational and intellectual objectives with the way in which this course also aims to lead students’ intellectual activities down new paths. Members of the class are more knowledgeable about documentary cinema than they may realize. Emphasize that many of the broadcasts on PBS, Discovery Channel, and History can all be considered documentary movies. With that in mind, ask students to name the documentaries they have seen, and refer back to specific titles on that list where appropriate as you work through the contents of this chapter. Instructors new to teaching documentary are encouraged to consult Patricia Aufderheide’s *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2007) to familiarize themselves with the central issues of documentary filmmaking.

From a Historical Perspective

1930–1945: The Politics and Propaganda of Documentary: Consider comparing *Triumph of the Will* with U.S. propaganda films like the *Why We Fight* series (1943–1945) or even certain racist and nationalistic Warner Bros. cartoons, such as *Herr Meets Hare* (1945).

From a Formal Perspective

A fun way to explain exposition to students is to look at the character Basil Exposition from *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997) and discuss his role in providing the movie’s backstory.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

One way to evaluate students’ comprehension would be to administer short quizzes after screenings. Ask students to name the major and minor characters in the film, describe the organizational patterns, list the narrative time and locations, and identify the kind of narration or rhetorical position used. Ask students to use as much technical vocabulary as possible to describe what new or ignored realities the film reveals and what assumptions and opinions it confronts.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

A Prehistory of Documentaries, p. 258

What historical precedents (scientific treatises? essays? news reports?) might explain the strategies used in the film you’ve just viewed?

This Viewing Cue is a good prompt for a journal entry.

Nonfiction and Non-Narrative, p. 264

Is the film you have just seen in class best described as nonfiction or non-narrative? What elements helped you decide which categorization was more appropriate?

Assign this Viewing Cue to students to complete after your screening to guide post-film discussion, or use it as an exam question. Alternatively, consider screening an excerpt from a documentary like *Planet Earth* (2006), which uses voiceover narration and music to sculpt narratives around images of nature. Ask students whether a documentary that contains stories but does not truly tell a story is nonfiction or non-narrative.

Expositions: Organizations That Show or Describe, p. 266

Examine carefully the organization of the film you've viewed most recently. Does it follow a clear formal strategy? Explain.

To supplement this Viewing Cue, show the opening minutes of *Super Size Me* (2004) and *Grey Gardens* (1975), and ask students to comment on how each opening scene functions to bring the viewer into the film.

Rhetorical Positions, p. 270

Describe the presiding voice or attitude of the film you just viewed. Is the dominant rhetorical position appropriate for the subject? Can you imagine another way of filming this subject? Explain.

This Viewing Cue is a good candidate for prompting discussion of the Film in Focus movie *Sunless* (1982). Ask students what the film would be like with a “voice-of-God” narrator or a more straightforward ethnographic approach.

The Significance of Documentary Films, p. 271

What makes a documentary film you have recently seen meaningful? How specifically does it achieve its aims and make its values apparent?

This Viewing Cue would make an excellent essay question on an in-class or take-home exam, allowing the students to demonstrate their mastery of the vocabulary and the concepts covered in this chapter.

The Social Documentary, p. 277

Identify a documentary film you've seen that can be considered a social documentary. What type of social documentary is it? Explain.

When using this Viewing Cue to guide class discussion, refer back to the list of documentaries the students have seen that you compiled while teaching the chapter opening vignette.

Personal Documentaries, Reenactments, and Mockumentaries, p. 282

Consider a documentary you recently viewed. What were its aims and assumptions? How might seeing this documentary in a different historical or cultural context distort or change those aims and assumptions?

One good example to cite here is *The War Room*, which was filmed during Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign and released in 1993. Another might be Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke* (2006) or the Holocaust documentary *A Film Unfinished* (2010). How do the intervening years affect a viewer's experience of these films? This Viewing Cue could also be used to continue the discussion of 9/11 brought up in the context of the opening vignette.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

The Contemporary Documentary: *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010), p. 281

After screening the film, ask the class about how it upends the documentary form and exploits what we think we know about its conventions. It is said that documentaries are made in the editing room, yet when we finally see a cut of Thierry Guetta's footage of the street artists we've seen him shooting, it's a disaster. A common occurrence in documentary filmmaking is the realization while editing raw footage that the main "character" may not be the person that the director originally set out to shoot. Once we see that he's no filmmaker, Thierry Guetta shifts from our knowledgeable guide to this underground culture to a subject, a full-fledged participant on a maximalist scale as the aptly named Mr. Brainwash. Banksy's film, if we can call it his, is a fitting extension of his other work. He seems to have appropriated Guetta's images and tweaked them to make cryptic observations about the culture, all the while hiding in plain sight like a big painted elephant. Ask students what they think the title *Exit Through the Gift Shop* is saying about the state of art and of documentary. What is Banksy "selling" us? And who do students think would have accepted the Oscar if *Exit Through the Gift Shop* had won the Academy Award for best documentary? Introducing Shepard Fairey's legal tangles around his famous Obama HOPE image might be another way into a discussion of the appropriation of others' images.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Nonfiction and Non-Narrative in *Man of Aran* (1934), p. 265

Man of Aran employs a cumulative organizational pattern.

Discussion Question 1: What are the tasks in which the Aran islanders engage on a daily basis?

Discussion Question 2: How do human rhythms coordinate and clash with natural rhythms? Replace the film’s soundtrack with contemporary music to draw out the patterns and repetitions—the Velvet Underground’s *Live MCMXCIII* works surprisingly well.

Additional Suggestions: Contrast the staged shark hunt in *Man of Aran* with the seal hunt in Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922), the short documentaries of Sicilian life that Vittorio De Seta shot in the 1950s, or the “Four Men on a Raft” sequence in Orson Welles’s unfinished documentary *It’s All True* (1993).

Organizational Strategies and Rhetorical Positions in *Sunless* (1982), pp. 272–73

Chris Marker’s film poses many questions and frustrates simple answers.

Discussion Question 1: How does *Sunless* embrace and subvert the conventions of the travelogue?

Discussion Question 2: What sort of internal logic does it construct around images—of cats, or trains, for example?

Discussion Question 3: How does the return of earlier images, such as the Japanese dancers, affect the viewer searching for a narrative thread?

Discussion Question 4: What are the things that seem to quicken the unnamed narrator’s heart?

Discussion Question 5: What connects the “image of happiness”—the three Icelandic children—to the rest of the film? Is it only, as the narrator claims, “the black” of the images on either side of the image of the children, or something more?

Additional Suggestions: Another approach might be to screen some of the episodes that comprise *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau* (1966–1976). Compare them with the natural history documentary films of Jean Painlevé or Charles and Ray Eames’s *Powers of Ten* (1977).

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Ask students to identify and research two or three documentaries dealing with their academic major, career plans, place of birth, or a course they’re currently taking. For example, a student from Abbeville, South Carolina, “birthplace of the Civil War,” might look at Ken Burns’s work. Another student interested in the mental health field could learn about the legal battles surrounding *Titicut Follies* (1967). A veterinary science major could examine the ethics of raising a chimpanzee among humans as depicted by *Project Nim* (2011). A film studies major could learn about the history of film criticism in the United States in *For the Love of Movies* (2010). Have them write up their findings, using as many relevant vocabulary terms from the chapter as possible to describe what kinds of approaches different filmmakers have taken.

FILMS CITED

Apropos of Nice (1930)
Atomic Cafe (1982)
Baseball (1996)
The Battle of Algiers (1966)
Borat (2006)
Born into Brothels (2004)
Capitalism: A Love Story (2009)
Capturing the Friedmans (2003)
Chronicle of a Summer (1961)
The Civil War (1990)
The Cove (2009)
Daughter Rite (1979)
Dead Birds (1965)
Dogtown and Z-Boys (2001)
Don't Look Back (1967)
Drifters (1929)
Elizabeth (1998)
Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2007)
Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room (2005)
Exit Through the Gift Shop (2010)
Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004)
Fall of the Romanov Dynasty (1927)
F for Fake (1974)
42 Up (1998)
49 Up (2005)
Gimme Shelter (1970)
Grey Gardens (1975)
Grizzly Man (2005)
A Healthy Baby Girl (1996)
Hearts and Minds (1974)
Heaven (1987)
Hour of the Furnaces (1968)
If God Is Willing and da Creek Don't Rise (2010)
An Inconvenient Truth (2006)
The Interview (1997)
In the Year of the Pig (1968)
Japanese Relocation (1943)
Jungle Adventures (1921)
The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters (2007)
Koyaanisqatsi (1983)
Land Without Bread (1933)
Leaving Jerusalem by Railway (1896)
Listen to Britain (1942)
Lost, Lost, Lost (1976)

The Magicians of Wanzerbe (1949)
Maine (1898)
Man of Aran (1934)
Manufacturing Dissent: Uncovering Michael Moore (2007)
Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
March of the Penguins (2005)
Moana (1926)
Moi un noir (1958)
The Motion Picture Camera Goes to War (1898)
My Father's Camera (2001)
Nanook of the North (1922)
Night and Fog (1955)
Night Mail (1936)
9/11 (2002)
Of Great Events and Ordinary People (1979)
Paris Is Burning (1990)
Planet Earth: Jungles (2006)
The Plow That Broke the Plains (1936)
President McKinley's Funeral Cortege at Buffalo, New York (1901)
Primary (1960)
Rain (1929)
The River (1937)
Rough Sea at Dover (1896)
Salesman (1968)
7 Up (1963)
Sherman's March (1986)
Shoah (1985)
Sicko (2007)
Simba (1928)
Song of Ceylon (1934)
A Song of Ceylon (1985)
The Spanish Earth (1937)
Sunless (1982)
Super Size Me (2004)
Surname Viet Given Name Nam (1989)
Tabu: A Story of the South Seas (1931)
The Thin Blue Line (1988)
Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould (1993)
This Is Spinal Tap (1984)
The Times of Harvey Milk (1984)
Titicut Follies (1967)
Triumph of the Will (1935)
Vertigo (1958)
The War (2007)
The War Room (1993)

Waste Land (2010)
The Watermelon Woman (1996)
When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts (2006)
Who Killed Vincent Chin? (1988)
Why We Fight series (1943–1945)
Winged Migration (2001)
Wordplay (2006)
Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory (1895)

CHAPTER 8

CHALLENGING FORM: EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND NEW MEDIA

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Recognize experimental film and media as cultural practices.
- Explore how experimental works make and draw on aesthetic histories.
- Investigate how these works interrogate the formal properties of their media.
- Appreciate how experimental media can both challenge, and become part of, dominant film forms and institutions.
- Examine some of the common organizations, styles, and perspectives in experimental media.
- Learn how viewers can prepare themselves to watch and appreciate experimental works.
- Recognize that the challenges of experimental media contribute another dimension of significance to the film experience.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 8 explores experimental audiovisual media from its origins to the present day, giving students the necessary tools to watch and discuss some of film history's most complex, challenging, and possibly most rewarding cinematic endeavors. It starts with a short history of experimental film and media practices, beginning with the parallel developments in motion picture technology and modernism in the arts in the early twentieth century. It then examines experimental and abstract narrative forms; associative, structural, and participatory organizational practices; and surrealist, lyrical, and critical stylistic orientations. It concludes with a consideration of how experimental media challenge and expand viewers' perceptions.

This chapter focuses on experimental practices that are alternative to commercial narrative cinema and to corporate- or state-sponsored documentaries. It draws students' attention to media artists who often have only been able to make their work and show or distribute it thanks to the financial assistance of universities, cultural foundations, and government agencies. It explores how experimental forms, though in some ways the least accessible mode of film and media, have fundamental bearing on how we see.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

Implicit in any discussion of Guy Maddin's *Brand upon the Brain!* (2007) is the notion of live performance. Although the film is available on DVD, ask students to consider what aspects of the film experience get lost in that format. Discuss the filmmaker's use of various techniques that date back to early cinema and the film's aesthetic similarities to the silent films that were accompanied by lecturers and shown on midways or in vaudeville houses. Compile a list of the celebrity narrators of this film to date, and ask the class to nominate other narrators for future performances. Whom would they select, and for what reasons?

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

Experimentation with form and abstract imagery has occurred throughout film history. While students may not be familiar with the leading luminaries of experimental films, they are likely to recognize many experimental film and media practices because they have been appropriated by music video directors and animators and have even been used in short films on *Sesame Street*.

When teaching this chapter, take advantage of the ever-expanding number of online resources to increase students' exposure to contemporary experimental artists. In addition to screening one of the Film in Focus movies or another feature-length work, consider punctuating your lecture and class discussion with an array of experimental shorts.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

This chapter doesn't present a huge amount of new vocabulary, but given the challenging nature of the subject, it would be especially important for students to have a full grasp of the appropriate technical vocabulary from the previous chapters, particularly Chapters 2 through 5. Depending on which experimental films are screened in class, it would be nearly impossible to discuss some of the imagery and techniques employed without being comfortable using technical film terms. Conduct an in-class review or administer a short quiz after the screening. Ask the class to define technical terms or to describe the film's organizational patterns, list the narrative time and locations, and identify its stylistic orientation, using as much technical vocabulary as possible.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

1910s–1920s: European Avant-Garde Movements, p. 289

What historical precedents might have shaped the strategies used in the film you just viewed? Does aligning the film with an historical precedent shed light on its aims? Explain.

Invite colleagues from art history, literature, history, or language departments to come speak about modernism, or ask them to suggest works of art or readings that might be illustrative.

Formalisms: Narrative Experimentation and Abstraction, p. 299

Consider how abstraction is achieved and used in a film screened for class. How do repetition and variation contribute to the film's shape?

Ask students to respond to this Viewing Cue on an exam or in a journal entry or short reaction paper. In class, screen some of the short films of pioneering video artist Lillian Schwartz, created in conjunction with computer scientists at Bell Labs in New York City in the early 1970s. Or watch animator Jodie Mack's *Unsubscribe #1: Special Offer Inside* (2010), the first in a series of shorts that manipulates and abstracts everyday paper goods into rapidly morphing geometric shapes. (These films can be found at lillian.com and jodiemack.com)

Experimental Organizations: Associative, Structural, and Participatory, p. 299

What is the formal organization of the next experimental film you see in class? Identify the most representative shot or sequence and discuss its meaning.

This Viewing Cue is an excellent question for students to ponder in a journal entry.

Styles and Perspectives: Surrealist, Lyrical, and Critical, p. 306

Characterize the style of the film or media work you have viewed for class. What points to the artist's presence or position behind the work?

If you screen the Film in Focus *Ballet mécanique* (1924), you can ask students to research Fernand Léger's paintings. Or, if you screen *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), ask students to discuss the presence of filmmaker Maya Deren in her film, either in class or in a journal entry. Or ask students to watch one of the pieces by video artist Ximena Cuevas available online—for example, *El Diablo en la Piel* (*Devil in the Flesh*)—and discuss how her work relies on and subverts classical Hollywood conventions.

Experimental Film Traditions, p. 309

Consider your own interpretive process as you watch an experimental work. What specific images or sounds solicit your attention? What devices remind you of the elements of cinema? Are there any elements that bring to mind influences outside of film?

Have students respond to these questions in a journal entry. Use the same questions to guide the next class discussion.

Experimental Film Traditions, p. 312

Consider the film you've just viewed for class. Is it part of an expressive or confrontational tradition? Explain.

Use this Viewing Cue as a prompt for discussion at the beginning of a class following a screening (or at the end of the screening), or on a test to gauge students' comprehension of the film or films screened.

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Lyrical Style in *Bridges-Go-Round* (1958), p. 307

The word “cinema” shares a Greek root with kinetic motion. This kinship is often most evident when bodies in motion are filmed. Consider placing Shirley Clarke's *Bridges-Go-Round* (1958) in a dance with city symphony films like *Manhatta* (1921) or installations like Bill Brand's 1980 *Masstransiscope*, which is a mural installed in a New York City subway station and animated by the movement of passing trains. Or partner the rhythmic editing of the bridges

with the way *NY Export: Opus Jazz* (2010) shoots the choreography of Jerome Robbins’s 1958 “ballet in sneakers” in various New York City locations. Ask students to comment on each film’s use of vivid color. Or screen Eva Weber’s 2008 short, *The Solitary Life of Cranes*. How does Weber, like Clarke before her, reveal the dynamic nature of the massive but invisible city structures right before our eyes?

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Avant-Garde Visions in *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), pp. 292–93

Have students map the film by following the “narrative trajectories” of each of these inanimate “characters.”

Discussion Question 1: What is the significance of the key, the knife, and the mirror? This question could open a post-screening discussion of Deren’s film.

Discussion Question 2: How does *Meshes of the Afternoon* draw upon traditions from poetry and painting? Look at pages from William Blake’s illustrated editions of *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* in class. Or find paintings by Odilon Redon online from the MoMA exhibition of his work in 2005–2006.

Additional Suggestions: A more “recent” film assembled from the decaying detritus of nitrate film history, *Decasia* (2002), has also been performed live as *An Environmental Symphony with Projections*. Bill Morrison’s assemblage employs repetition and a visceral original score and would be an interesting film to compare with the film examined in the opening vignette, *Brand upon the Brain!*

Formal Play in *Ballet mécanique* (1924), pp. 300–1

There are many potential points of entry for discussing *Ballet mécanique*, among them Léger’s involvement with the cubist and futurist movements in painting.

Discussion Question 1: How does the repetition of familiar geometric shapes create a rhythm that, along with the music, propels the film forward?

Discussion Question 2: Spend some time discussing the film’s title. How does it encourage certain interpretations of the images that follow?

Discussion Question 3: How does the fracturing of the female image here differ from the fetishization of women characteristic of classical Hollywood narrative?

Additional Suggestions: Guy Maddin’s so-called docufantasia, *My Winnipeg* (2007), which employs repetition, reenactment, ballet interludes, and other techniques to create a portrait of his Canadian hometown, is another good candidate to either replace or pair with *Ballet mécanique* for this discussion.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Explore the film and video section of UbuWeb, <http://www.ubu.com/film/>. Select a filmmaker, and write a short shot-by-shot analysis of a segment from one of his or her works. Research the artist, and introduce your paper with a biographical overview. Be sure to identify in what sort of venue the work would most often be presented: a gallery or museum, a theater, or on cable or public television.

Alternative Activity

Consider showing a music video for a Björk song in class. The musician frequently does innovative work with directors like Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, Chris Cunningham, Stéphane Sednaoui, and Matthew Barney, and her videos offer plenty of material for discussion. Ask students to consider the worlds that Björk creates in her music videos, and whether surrealist traditions, impulses, or moods can be detected. Be sure to ask students to explain whether or not surrealism works within the format of the music video.

FILMS CITED

Alice (1988)
Allegretto (1936)
The Art of Vision (1965)
Automatic Moving Company (1910)
Ballet mécanique (1924)
Being John Malkovich (1999)
Berlin: Symphony of a Great City (1927)
Black Girl (1966)
The Blood of a Poet (1930)
Blue (1993)
The Book of All the Dead (1975–1994)
Borderline (1930)
Bowling Alley (1995)
Brand upon the Brain! (2007)
Brazil (1985)
Bridges-Go-Round (1958)
British Sounds (1972)
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)
Chelsea Girls (1966)
“Country Weekend Pt. 1,” *mini:mentals* (2006–)
The Crazy Ray (1925)
Decasia (2002)
Destino (1945, 2003)
The Difference Engine #3 (1995–1998)
Empire (1964)

Enthusiasm (1931)
Entr'acte (1924)
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004)
Eye Myth (1967)
Film #7 (1951)
Fireworks (1947)
Flaming Creatures (1963)
Flesh (1968)
The Flicker (1966)
The Garden of Earthly Delights (1981)
Gently Down the Stream (1981)
Gina Kim's Video Diary (2002)
Glimpse of the Garden (1957)
Going Forth by Day (2002)
The Hand (1965)
Handsworth Songs (1986)
Heart of Glass (1976)
Histoire(s) du cinéma (1988–1998)
Hold Me While I'm Naked (1966)
Hour of the Furnaces (1968)
“Human Behavior” (1993)
Invocation of My Demon Brother (1969)
Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles (1975)
La région centrale (1971)
Last Year at Marienbad (1961)
Lemon (1969)
Letter to Jane (1972)
Lost, Lost, Lost (1976)
Lucifer Rising (1972)
Manhatta (1921)
The Man Who Envied Women (1985)
Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
Mass Ornament (2009)
Memories of Underdevelopment (1968)
Meshes of the Afternoon (1943)
Mothlight (1963)
A Movie (1958)
Multiple Orgasm (1976)
Nervous System (1994)
Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy (1989)
Orpheus (1950)
Passion of Remembrance (1986)
The Patriot (1979)
Perfumed Nightmare (1978)
Rapture (1999)
Rat Life and Diet in North America (1968)

Rhythmus 21 (1921)
Riddles of the Sphinx (1977)
Rose Hobart (1936)
The Seashell and the Clergyman (1928)
Serene Velocity (1970)
Se7en (1995)
Sleep (1963)
Spirited Away (2001)
Street of Crocodiles (1986)
Strike (1925)
Surname Viet Given Name Nam (1989)
Symbiopsychotaxiplasm (1968)
Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 2 1/2 (2005)
Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman (1978–1979)
They Are Lost to Vision Altogether (1989)
Third Eye Butterfly (1968)
Tongues Untied (1989)
Trip to the Moon (1902)
24-Hour Psycho (1993)
Two or Three Things I Know About Her (1967)
Un chien andalou (*Andalusian Dog*, 1928)
Vertical Roll (1972)
Video Fish (1975)
Video Flag (1985–1996)
Wavelength (1967)
Weekend (1967)
Window Water Baby Moving (1959)
Zorns Lemma (1970)

CHAPTER 9

RITUALS, CONVENTIONS, ARCHETYPES, AND FORMULAS: MOVIE GENRES

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Understand why film genres attract audiences.
- Recognize that film genres spring from a long historical heritage, and that they can change over time.
- Learn the conventions and formulas of the six major genres—comedy, the western, melodrama, the musical, the horror film, the crime film—and their subgenres.
- Examine how genres function as cultural rituals that coordinate audience needs and desires.
- Explore how audiences' prescriptive and descriptive understanding of certain film types become ways of making meaning through genre.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 9 focuses on genre, which may be defined as a category or classification of a group of movies in which the individual films share similar subject matter and similar ways of organizing the subject through narrative and stylistic patterns. The film industry uses formulas and conventions as part of its economic strategy to attract repeat audiences, but genres also appeal to the human need for archetypes, rituals, and communication. The chapter begins with a short history of film genre that covers its connections with the genres used to classify works of literature, theater, music, painting, and other art forms; its prominence in the studio system; and the development of new genres in the postwar period. It then groups the various expectations, conventions, and formulas on which film genres rely into six paradigms: comedies, westerns, melodramas, musicals, and horror and crime films. Finally, the chapter considers some of the cultural values and traditions that have influenced and evolved around these paradigms and how generic displacement and generic reflexivity work to distinguish revisionist genres from their classical predecessors.

This chapter demonstrates to students that identifying films by genre helps to place them in their historical context by connecting them to other films, plays, books, and works of art that have come before. It establishes the idea that a film is a dialogue between filmmaker and audience, and genre is an unspoken agreement on the language.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

You might begin the lesson on film genre by screening the sequence in *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) in which Shaun and his friend first realize that they are surrounded by zombies. You could talk about how the movie borrows conventions from classics such as *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and *28 Days Later* (2002). For example, other films, such as *American Zombie* (2007), use the zombie as social commentary, while the boy-meets-zombie romance *Make-Out with Violence* (2008) heighten the anxieties of adolescence that are typical of teen movies. Or consider the decision to make the *Shaun of the Dead* zombies slow-moving as an example of the ways in which the movie relies upon our knowing recognition of genre convention. Finally, ask students whether they can articulate precisely *why* the concept of *Pride and Prejudice* and

Zombies is so funny or describe the effect on viewers' bodies of combining horror and comedy—do they scream or laugh? How does their knowledge of film genres and conventions allow them to feel in on the jokes?

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

Our understanding of movies is a function of genre expectations. A film genre is a set of conventions and formulas repeated and developed through film history. Narrative, documentary, and experimental films each have particular genres associated with their respective organizations. Emphasize to students that films rely on repetitions and rituals; they train their viewers to become experts in genre conventions. Genre often governs our decision to see a movie, and we return to those films because of our knowledge of, and expectations about, characters, narrative, and visual style.

It might be useful to ask the class to name examples of movies in their favorite genres, as well as those they avoid, when teaching this chapter. Under what circumstances do they seek out different genres? How do they use movie genres to express certain cultural values or enact certain rituals? Ask them how a “date movie,” for example, differs from one they’d see as part of a group outing. Are there certain genres they consistently turn to when they need to be cheered up, like comfort food?

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

When teaching technical vocabulary for this section, encourage students to construct their own narratives by asking them to write essays and journal entries that apply terminology learned in class to the films watched. The mastery of the vocabulary presented in this chapter is especially important, as film genre affects our viewing experience in such profound, yet subtle, ways that it can often be difficult for students to find the appropriate words to discuss these concepts.

Another approach to evaluating comprehension could be to administer a short quiz after the screening. Ask students to identify the movie’s genre. Is it a hybrid, or does it belong to a distinct subgenre? Have them describe the expectations, formulas, and conventions at work, and identify the values being prescribed or described, using as much technical vocabulary as possible.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

A Short History of Film Genre, p. 319

Consider the historical precedents for the genre represented by the film screened in class. Do they come from literary or theatrical history? From a cultural or religious ritual?

Ask students to bring an image (or other example) that illustrates the historical precedent to class. Or have them submit the pictures in advance and compile them in a PowerPoint presentation. Have them describe what made them choose the images. If you have art history, theater, or architecture students in the class, ask them how their respective disciplines might describe the genre.

The Elements of Film Genre, p. 321

For a movie you have recently watched, identify the genre and describe three conventions typically associated with this genre.

This Viewing Cue would prompt a productive class discussion. Collate the conventions the students describe and reintroduce them in the post-screening discussion. How many did they predict accurately? Which were missing, and why?

Conventions, Formulas, and Expectations, p. 323

Reflect on a film trailer you recently saw. Based on the generic expectations triggered by the trailer, what conventions or narrative formulas could you expect in the film itself?

Ask students to answer this question in a journal entry. Encourage them to make connections between the film trailer they watched and other trailers for movies in the same genre. At the next class meeting, group students by movie genre based on the trailers they watched (for example, the students that watched trailers for horror movies are in one group, the students that watched trailers for romantic comedies are in another), and ask them to discuss and compare their findings.

Movie Genres: Six Paradigms, p. 325

Think back to a film you recently watched. Can you identify it as a particular hybrid and/or subgenre?

This Viewing Cue would make an excellent journal prompt or prompt for in-class discussion, allowing the students to demonstrate their mastery of the vocabulary and the concepts covered in the chapter.

Movie Genres: Six Paradigms, p. 340

Identify the generic paradigm of the film you watch next in class. Which characteristics of this genre are most apparent?

Consider using this Viewing Cue after the screening to jog students' memories. Ask them to take a few minutes to write down the generic characteristics of the film at the beginning of the next class.

Classical and Revisionist Genres, p. 345

Place a film you recently watched in a generic tradition and discuss whether, how, and why it exemplifies classical or revisionist characteristics.

This is an excellent opportunity for students to work collaboratively in small groups during class. Consider having half the groups work on a list of the classical characteristics and the other

half list the revisionist characteristics and then ask each group to present evidence that proves on which side of the generic tradition the film resides.

Local and Global Genres, p. 347

Consider whether and how the cultural or historical context seems to shade and shape the generic formulas used in a film you recently watched.

If you are showing the Film in Focus *Chinatown*, for example, you might want to spend some time talking about what was going on in American culture in 1974—Vietnam, Watergate—as well as potentially relevant biographical information about director Roman Polanski—the murder of his family during the Holocaust and the murder of his wife, Sharon Tate, by the Manson family—as having an influence on how the generic formulas for hard-boiled detective films and film noir are used in *Chinatown*. Or discuss how the martial arts skills on display in a movie like *Fists of Fury* (1971) are appropriated and rendered somewhat campy in a Hollywood high-concept film like *Charlie's Angels* (2000).

TEACHING THE FORM IN ACTION

Genre Revisionism: Comparing *True Grit* (1969) and *True Grit* (2010), p. 346

The Coen brothers have said that their film is not a remake of the 1969 version but a new adaptation of the original novel by Charles Portis. Ask students how this declaration works to create the necessary space to take on a story that featured a legendary western icon like John Wayne and make it the directors' own. Similarly, how does casting Mattie with an actress closer to the age of the character in the book heighten the stakes of her quest, make her seem even smaller in the vast widescreen landscapes, and also add to the humor of her steely determination to avenge her father? Does the surreal nature of the climactic sequence in the 2010 film revise generic formula or transform *True Grit* into an existential western? It may be worthwhile to take a look at the coda of the film, when the grown-up Mattie searches for Rooster Cogburn, and compare its Wild West show to similar scenes from an earlier revisionist western, Robert Altman's *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* (1976).

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Generic *Chinatown* (1974), pp. 342–43

Chinatown represents the 1970s idea of 1930s hard-boiled detective fiction and 1940s film noir. Once they get over how young Jack Nicholson is, students generally have an easy time describing how elements of the mise-en-scène especially work to suggest earlier films.

Discussion Question 1: How do *Chinatown*'s social and sexual attitudes diverge from what could be expressed onscreen in the 1940s?

Discussion Question 2: It is Jake Gittes’s job to look, to follow, to photograph. How does the act of seeing work in *Chinatown*? What are some examples of clues that this private eye sees but fails to understand in time?

Additional Suggestion: Consider screening two scenes from *The Big Sleep* (1946) to illustrate *Chinatown*’s updating of generic conventions. The first scene comes from the film as it was originally shot in 1945. Vivian Sternwood Rutledge sits on Philip Marlowe’s desk as they pass the telephone back and forth while they speak with the police. In this version, Lauren Bacall is wearing a heavy veil, similar to the one that Faye Dunaway’s Evelyn Mulwray wears. The second scene comes from the 1978 remake of *The Big Sleep* and shows Charlotte Sternwood (as the character was called in this version) and Marlowe meeting in a restaurant and exchanging innuendo-laden dialogue about horse racing. Compare it with two *Chinatown* scenes: when Evelyn officially hires Jake as they sit together in the red circular banquettes, and, later, when she cleans his wounded nose in her bathroom.

The Significance of Genre History in *Vagabond* (1985), pp. 348–49

Agnès Varda’s take on the road movie frustrates genre expectations and may frustrate students.

Discussion Question 1: How does changing the “typical” road movie protagonist into a hitchhiking young woman, Mona, whom we know is dead from the movie’s outset, affect the viewing experience?

Discussion Question 2: With which of the eighteen points of view do they identify most strongly?

Discussion Question 3: What is the effect of seeing more of Mona’s journey than any of the individuals she meets?

Additional Suggestions: *Freeway* (1996), Canadian indie *Highway 61* (1991), or any of the revisionist road movies cited in the textbook could be substituted for *Vagabond*.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Consider some films recently screened for class (not for this chapter). Ask students to identify their genres and then discuss the effects of switching casts or settings or soundtracks, either as a writing assignment or as an impromptu classroom discussion.

FILMS CITED

Across the Universe (2007)

Adam’s Rib (1949)

Ali: Fear Eats the Soul (1974)

Alien (1979)
All About Steve (2009)
All That Heaven Allows (1955)
All That Jazz (1979)
The American Friend (1977)
American Pie 2 (2001)
Annie Hall (1977)
Austin Powers in Goldmember (2002)
Bad Girls (1994)
Badlands (1973)
Barbarosa (1982)
Beauty and the Beast (1991)
The Big Sleep (1946)
Black Swan (2010)
Blazing Saddles (1974)
Blue Velvet (1986)
Body Heat (1981)
Boys Don't Cry (1999)
Boyz N the Hood (1991)
The Breakfast Club (1985)
Bringing Up Baby (1938)
Bring It On (2000)
Brokeback Mountain (2005)
Broken Blossoms (1919)
Buffalo Bill's Wild West (1899)
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)
The Car (1977)
Carrie (1976)
Carrie Nation Smashing a Saloon (1901)
Chicago (2002)
Chinatown (1974)
Clueless (1995)
The Covered Wagon (1923)
Dancer in the Dark (2000)
Dances with Wolves (1990)
Dark Victory (1939)
The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951)
Deadwood (2004–2006)
The Departed (2006)
Déetective (1985)
Detour (1945)
Devdas (2002)
A Diary of Chuji's Travels (1927)
Don't Look Now (1973)

Double Indemnity (1944)
Dreamgirls (2006)
Duel (1972)
Easy A (2010)
Easy Rider (1969)
Exiled (2006)
The Exorcist (1973)
Fantasia (1940)
Far from Heaven (2002)
The Fighter (2010)
The Fly (1958)
The Fly (1986)
42nd Street (1933)
The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1921)
Freaks (1932)
The French Connection (1971)
From Show Girl to Burlesque Queen (1903)
Funny Games (2007)
The Furies (1950)
The General (1927)
The Godfather (1972)
The Godfather: Part II (1974)
Gold Diggers of 1933 (1933)
The Golem (1915)
The Golem (1920)
Goodfellas (1990)
The Grapes of Wrath (1940)
The Great Train Robbery (1903)
Groundhog Day (1993)
Hairspray (2007)
Halloween (1978)
Hana-bi (1997)
The Hand That Rocks the Cradle (1992)
The Hangover (2009)
Heathers (1989)
Heimat (1938)
Heimat (1984)
High Plains Drifter (1973)
His Girl Friday (1940)
The Host (2006)
Hunting Scenes from Bavaria (1969)
Imitation of Life (1934)
Imitation of Life (1959)
Infernal Affairs (2003)
The Inheritors (1998)
In the Bedroom (2001)

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
It Happened One Night (1934)
Jaws (1975)
The Jazz Singer (1927)
Johnny Guitar (1954)
Juice (1992)
Kaidan (1964)
The Killer (1989)
Knocked Up (2007)
L.A. Confidential (1997)
The Last Wave (1977)
The Left-Handed Gun (1958)
The Little Mermaid (1989)
The Living End (1992)
Love Crimes (1992)
Love's Labour's Lost (2000)
Magnificent Obsession (1954)
The Magnificent Seven (1960)
Malcolm X (1992)
The Maltese Falcon (1941)
The Man Who Fell to Earth (1976)
The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)
McCabe and Mrs. Miller (1971)
Metropolis (1927)
Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975)
Monty Python's The Meaning of Life (1983)
My Beautiful Laundrette (1985)
My Darling Clementine (1946)
My Fair Lady (1964)
The Namesake (2006)
New Jack City (1991)
Night of the Living Dead (1968)
No Country for Old Men (2007)
Nosferatu (1922)
Nosferatu the Vampyre (1979)
O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)
Ordinary People (1980)
Panoramic View of Niagara Falls in Winter (1899)
Paper Moon (1973)
Paris, Texas (1984)
Patton (1970)
Pennies from Heaven (1981)
The Philadelphia Story (1940)
Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (2011)
Police Academy (1984)
Porky's (1982)

Precious (2009)
The Priest from Kirchfeld (1914)
The Proposal (2009)
Psycho (1960)
The Public Enemy (1931)
Ran (1985)
Repo Man (1984)
Revere the Emperor (1927)
Road Movie (1974)
Road to Perdition (2002)
The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)
Rush Hour 3 (2007)
Saturday Afternoon (1926)
Saw (2004)
Scarface (1932)
Scarface (1983)
The Searchers (1956)
Shane (1953)
Shaun of the Dead (2004)
The Sheik (1921)
The Shining (1980)
The Shop Around the Corner (1940)
The Silence of the Lambs (1991)
Sin City (2005)
Singin' in the Rain (1952)
The Sixth Sense (1999)
Small Town Girl (1936)
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
The Sound of Music (1965)
Spider-Man films (2002, 2004, 2007)
Stagecoach (1939)
Star Wars (1977)
The Stepfather (1987)
A Streetcar Named Desire (1951)
The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach (1971)
Sullivan's Travels (1941)
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974)
That's Entertainment (1974)
Thelma & Louise (1991)
There Will Be Blood (2007)
They Drive by Night (1940)
Touch of Evil (1958)
The Trapp Family (1956)
Triplets of Belleville (2003)

True Grit (1969)
True Grit (2010)
28 Days Later (2002)
Two-Lane Blacktop (1971)
2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
Underworld (1927)
Unforgiven (1992)
Vagabond (1985)
Viridiana (1961)
The Wages of Fear (1953)
Way Down East (1920)
Weekend (1967)
West Side Story (1961)
Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? (1962)
Wild Boys of the Road (1933)
The Wild Bunch (1969)
Written on the Wind (1956)
Yellow Submarine (1968)
Young Frankenstein (1974)
You Only Live Once (1937)
You've Got Mail (1998)

CHAPTER 10

HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY: HOLLYWOOD AND BEYOND

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Learn the broad outlines and periods of film history.
- Understand film history as global, emphasizing the distinctive nature of different national cinemas as well as transnational influences.
- Examine film practices and filmmakers marginalized by traditional Hollywood-centered histories.
- Explore “lost” film history and the importance of film presentation.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 10 begins with a historical overview of Hollywood and global film history, dividing the time line of film history into four broad periods—early cinema, cinema between the wars, postwar cinemas, and contemporary cinemas. Each historical section introduces the thematic and stylistic concerns, as well as a few key masters and masterpieces, of the various film cultures from that period. This chapter then explores the lesser-known film cultures within the United States that have been marginalized in film history. Finally, Chapter 10 introduces the topics of orphan films and film preservation.

This chapter teaches students how the movies construct visions of history and explains how the way we look at film history is the product of certain formulas and models. Furthermore, watching films made in another era or community requires us to consider them, to some degree, as documents whose style and subject matter require historical context to be appreciated.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

Perhaps the best way to present the opening vignette is by constructing a simple time line indicating when, where, and by whom each of the three films was made to illustrate how these similar stories emerge from different film histories. For *All That Heaven Allows* (1955), you could discuss the social climate in the United States in the 1950s and the careers of Douglas Sirk, Rock Hudson, and Jane Wyman. Repeat the same exercise for *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) and *Far From Heaven* (2002). Or play *Far from Heaven* director Todd Haynes’s commentary track from the Criterion Collection of *Ali*, in which he discusses the connections between his film, Fassbinder’s, and Sirk’s. Profile the film industries and social mores from which each film emerged. Ask students to revisit the section on melodrama in Chapter 10 and then propose theories about what it means that the central “crisis” in this basic plot shifts from class, to race, to homosexuality. If this story were to be remade again today—in New Orleans or Kosovo or Tehran—what would the transgressive relationship at its center look like?

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

This chapter emphasizes the importance of historical context when watching films made in another era or culture. Conventional film history makes sense to students because its approaches and methodologies resemble those they’ve encountered in history courses throughout their

academic careers. Students also possess real-life, firsthand knowledge of the power that economic forces or influential individuals have exerted in recent history, as well as the blistering pace at which technology evolves. Additionally, they construct their own narratives and histories according to periods centered on school or family.

When teaching this chapter, it can be useful to look at examples of how the movies have convincingly reconstructed past events throughout their history. In addition to considering various biopic films, for instance, look at how technological history has affected the form and content of movies. During the silent and early sound eras, a major element may have been train travel. One present-day example that could really resonate with students' lived experience might be the case of the mobile telephone. Collect examples from movies from the past twenty years, and discuss how the depiction of once cutting-edge devices instantly date a film or how a narrative that predates this technology would be changed by its presence.

Teaching Film History as Periodization

Below are some key points to hit for each of the historical periods and/or film cultures:

Early Cinema

- the international dominance of Hollywood, which began in 1907–13
- the rise of the star (or celebrity) system in the movies, which began around 1910
- the beginnings of continuity editing (as an early elaboration of narrative form)

Classical Hollywood Cinema

- the standardization of film production and the establishment of the feature film
- the cultural and economic expansion of movies throughout society
- the development of narrative realism and the integration of the viewer's perspective in editing and narrative action
- the introduction of synchronized sound
- the empowerment of the Hays Office and the founding of the Production Code Administration in 1934
- the elaboration of movie dialogue and the simultaneous growth of characterization in films
- the prominence of generic formulas in constructing film narratives

German Expressionist Cinema

- concentrated on the dark fringes of human experience
- represented irrational forces through lighting, set, and costume design

Soviet Silent Films

- emphasized documentary and historical subjects
- embodied a political concept of cinema centered on audience response

French Impressionist Cinema and Poetic Realism

- conducted radical experiments with film form
- integrated poetic innovations into traditional movie realism to unsettle perceptions in a way that exhibits a socially conscious perspective

Postwar Hollywood

- reflected the dissolution of the traditional power of the studios after the 1948 Paramount decision
- explored more controversial themes and issues as part of a new standard of realism

Italian Neorealism

- depicted postwar social crises
- used a stark, realistic style clearly different from the glossy entertainment formulas of Hollywood and other studio systems

French New Wave

- broke with past filmmaking institutions and genres
- used film to express personal vision

Japanese Cinema

- placed character rather than action at the center of a narrative
- emphasized the contemplative aspect of images

Third Cinema

- rejected technical perfection in opposition to commercial traditions
- embraced film as the voice of the people

Contemporary Hollywood

- the expansion of a youth audience as the dominant group of moviegoers
- the arrival of conglomerates, blockbusters, cable, and home video
- the elevation of image spectacles and special effects

Contemporary European Cinema

- new German Cinema: Confronted Germany's Nazi and postwar past, and emphasized the distinctive, often maverick, visions of individual directors
- today's pan-European cinemas broaden the traditional view of "the national"

Indian Cinema

- rooted in Hindu culture and mythology
- features elaborate song-and-dance numbers

African Cinema

- focuses on social and political themes rather than commercial interests
- explores the conflicts between tradition and modernity

Chinese Cinema

- includes films from the “three Chinas”—the People’s Republic of China (or mainland China), Hong Kong, and Taiwan
- ranges from the strong aesthetic vision of Fifth Generation films to *wuxia*, or martial arts films, to Sixth Generation explorations of urban life and controversial themes

Iranian Cinema

- presents spare pictorial beauty, often of landscapes or scenes of everyday life on the margins
- developed an elliptical storytelling mode in part as a response to state regulation

Teaching the Lost and Found of Film History

The roles of women, LGBT people, and people of color behind the screen (and onscreen) have historically been restricted. One way to explore how the roles and representations of marginalized peoples have changed in the film industry is to ask students to compare and contrast early pioneers (for example, Alice Guy Blaché, Lois Weber, Oscar Micheaux) with their contemporary counterparts (for example, Kathryn Bigelow, Spike Lee, Tyler Perry). This could be assigned as a research paper or group assignment. Alternatively, you could pick a comparison and make that the subject of a class discussion.

Another question you could pose to your students in a class discussion is whether or not a filmmaker’s sexual identity affects the projects they work on, or their aesthetic. What about an actor’s sexual identity? Rupert Everett famously said, “Honestly, I would not advise any actor necessarily, if he was really thinking of his career, to come out.” Does being openly gay affect how audiences might perceive actors in certain roles?

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

The chapters in Part 4 examine the different ways in which movie history may be organized. When teaching technical vocabulary for this section, encourage students to explore how our sense of history becomes richer and more insightful through an awareness of film historiography by assigning essays and journal entries that cite important dates, names, and events and use terminology learned in class.

Another approach to evaluating comprehension could be to administer short quizzes after screenings. Ask students to identify the movie's approach to history and its place within film history. Have them describe how assumptions about film history help shape our understanding and enjoyment of individual movies and film movements. Or, consider giving vocabulary quizzes at the beginning of class. Select only a few of the boldface terms from each section, perhaps emphasizing those that most closely relate to the film you'll be watching. Giving a definition and an example allows students to begin to parse and refine their understanding of the reading.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

Postwar Cinemas, p. 366

How does the content of the film you just viewed identify it as part of a particular period? Which formal characteristics of this film seem common to this era?

Of Hitchcock's films, *Psycho* (1960) works well with this Viewing Cue, which can be used as a journal entry prompt or test question. You could also use this Viewing Cue and *Psycho* to generate a lively discussion about the formal characteristics that may have been influenced by Hitchcock's television work during the same period. Of course, this Viewing Cue can also be adapted for any of the historical periods covered in this chapter.

Contemporary Film Cultures, p. 369

Scan local film listings, noting how many different countries are represented. If the range is limited, why do you think this is so? If you have located foreign films, what kinds of venues or channels show them?

Flip the script. Redefine local by searching the film listings in online editions of foreign newspapers. What's playing in Trastevere or Lahore or Dublin or Kigali? How many American films are showing on international screens?

Indian Cinema, p. 375

Compare a Western and a non-Western film. What differences exist in the narrative or visual elements?

In addition to screening a Bollywood musical, consider showing a samurai film, Korean horror film, or tracking down a Nollywood action movie.

Contemporary Film Cultures, p. 379

Compare at least two films from the same movement (such as New German Cinema or Hong Kong new wave). Do the characteristics discussed in this chapter apply?

This Viewing Cue would make an excellent prompt for a take-home exam or longer paper.

Women in Contemporary Hollywood, p. 383

Consider a recent film you watched that was directed by a woman. How would you characterize and distinguish the filmmaker's perspective behind the camera?

It might be interesting to look at two women directors' approaches to adaptation: for example, Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair* (2004) and Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* (1999). Or choose a woman-directed film in a genre not traditionally associated with female audiences (perhaps one of Kathryn Bigelow's works). Ask students whether there is a perceptible difference between films in the same genre that have been directed by men and those directed by women.

LGBT Filmmaking, p. 391

What models or types of sexuality appear in one of the films you've recently seen? How does its historical moment shape these models?

Leave it up to the individual students to decide which film to discuss in a journal entry and ask them to submit their responses before the next class meeting. Select a couple of entries and use them as a way to spark discussion.

Indigenous Media, p. 394

Think about a film you recently watched that depicts another culture. What questions do you have about what you are seeing? How would you put the film in context in order to answer those questions?

This Viewing Cue may not be appropriate for a course that takes a film appreciation approach, but it would lend itself to courses concerned with how history is portrayed through film. Consider inviting historians or anthropologists to speak to the class or ask them to recommend additional readings and resources.

Orphan Films, p. 395

View an "ephemeral film" on the Internet Archive at www.archive.org/details/ephemera. What does it tell us about history?

Duck and Cover (1952) and various hygiene films might make for interesting class discussion. Have the students research the annual Orphan Film Festival or Home Movie Day. Or discuss how ephemeral film has been co-opted for comedic purposes by *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. If a TV show has rediscovered an orphan film and remarketed it for commercial purposes, even mockingly so, is it still an orphan film? Alternatively, what does it mean for ephemeral films as a whole to be spoofed in films like *Dodgeball* (2004) and TV shows like *Futurama*?

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

***Taxi Driver* and New Hollywood (1976), pp. 372–73**

Most films made during the same period share not only historically recognizable themes, plot devices, characterizations, genres, and visual styles but also use similar costuming, casting, editing, and sound practices. At the same time, an individual film works to differentiate itself within these period standards. For example, Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* manifests the “spirit of the age” in New York City during the U.S. Bicentennial and describes its cultural atmosphere using formal and narrative innovations influenced by European art cinemas.

Discussion Question 1: What roles do cinematography, voiceover narration, and score play in situating this movie within a certain period?

Discussion Question 2: How does the fragmentation of *Taxi Driver*’s narrative work to give the audience a greater sense of Travis Bickle’s fragmented psyche and create greater psychological realism?

Discussion Question 3: Consider the careers of Martin Scorsese, writer Paul Schrader, and composer Bernard Hermann. How does their direct or academic knowledge of film history allow them to create a movie that can reflect its historic present?

Additional Suggestion: *Fight Club*’s engagement with masculinity, consumerism, and the self-help culture of the late 1990s, and director David Fincher’s background in music videos, make the 1999 movie a more recent candidate to screen and discuss using the periodization approach to film history.

Lost and Found History: *Within Our Gates* (1920), pp. 388–89

To create a local context for the impact that a movie like Micheaux’s might have had, ask students to research the exhibition history of race movies in your region. Or have them do a shot-by-shot analysis of a sequence to detail how the editing style of *Within Our Gates* diverges from the practices of Hollywood continuity editing.

Discussion Question 1: What is the effect on film history when a movie thought lost is rediscovered?

Discussion Question 2: What are the roles that archives and preservationists play in our evolving understanding of film histories?

Discussion Question 3: How does Micheaux’s movie work as a counter-narrative to *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and the U.S. historical amnesia about race relations and lynchings?

Additional Suggestions: Orphaned hygiene films, sponsored films, instructional films, and home movies offer another fascinating glimpse into a history that might otherwise be lost or considered insignificant. Consult the Prelinger Archive online to assemble a series of these short

films: <http://www.archive.org/details/prelinger>. Ask students what they can tell an audience today about daily life at the time of filming. What is presumed or taken for granted? How are gender, race, class, sexuality, and so on represented? *The Field Guide to Sponsored Films*, by Rick Prelinger (National Film Preservation Foundation, 2007), may be downloaded from the site by instructors looking for additional guidance.

For a more humorous approach, discuss how *Mystery Science Theater 3000* relied on the Prelinger Archive for short-episode fodder, riffing on instructional films on hygiene, dating, music education, the value of studying home economics, and the role of the metal spring in modern (1950s) society. Many of these shorts are available online, and it could be interesting to examine which aspects of the ephemeral films the *Mystery Science Theater 3000* crew chose to joke about, and what that says about how values have shifted since the 1950s.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Ask students to watch a movie with an older friend, parent, or grandparent. It should be a film the older person remembers enjoying when they were the age the student is now. Does the movie “hold up” years later? Are there certain references or jokes that might be lost on a younger viewer? Have students compile short oral histories that describe how personal history intersects with film history.

Alternative Activity

Watch the Academy Award–winning documentary *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara* (2003) with an older friend, parent, or grandparent. How does Robert S. McNamara’s account of various world events jibe with personal memories of those moments or the accounts in history textbooks?

FILMS CITED

Aguirre: The Wrath of God (1972)
Alexandria . . . Why? (1978)
Ali: Fear Eats the Soul (1974)
Alice in the Cities (1974)
All That Heaven Allows (1955)
American Dream (1990)
Anders als der Anderin (Different from the Others) (1919)
Antichrist (2009)
The Apple (1998)
Apocalypse Now (1979)
Arugbá (2010)
Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner) (2001)
Avatar (2009)
Babel (2006)
Bamako (2006)

Bamboozled (2000)
Basic Instinct (1992)
The Battle of Algiers (1966)
Battleship Potemkin (1925)
Beloved (1998)
The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)
Bicycle Thieves (1948)
The Big Parade (1925)
The Big Sleep (1946)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
Black Girl (1966)
Black God, White Devil (1964)
Blade Runner (1982)
The Blood of Jesus (1941)
The Blue Angel (1930)
Blue Steel (1989)
Blue Velvet (1986)
Body and Soul (1925)
Born in Flames (1983)
Boys Don't Cry (1999)
Boyz N the Hood (1991)
Breaking the Waves (1996)
Breathless (1960)
Bride & Prejudice (2004)
Brokeback Mountain (2005)
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)
Cabiria (1914)
Cape No. 7 (2008)
Caravaggio (1986)
Carmen Jones (1954)
The Celluloid Closet (1995)
Chan Is Missing (1982)
The Children's Hour (1961)
Christopher Strong (1933)
The Circle (2000)
Citizen Kane (1941)
A City of Sadness (1989)
A Clockwork Orange (1978)
Clueless (1995)
Cruising (1980)
Dance, Girl, Dance (1940)
Daughters of the Dust (1991)
D.E.B.S. (2004)
The Decline of Western Civilization (1981)
The Derby (1896)

Desperately Seeking Susan (1985)
Diary of a Mad Black Woman (2005)
Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995)
Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler (1922)
Duck Soup (1933)
East Place, West Palace (1996)
Edge of Heaven (2007)
Edward II (1991)
8 ½ (1963)
Exodus (1960)
Face/Off (1997)
The Fall of the House of Usher (1928)
Far from Heaven (2002)
Fast Times at Ridgemont High (1982)
Film about a Woman Who . . . (1974)
Film No. 4 (Bottoms) (1966)
Finye (1982)
Fitzcarraldo (1982)
The 400 Blows (1959)
4 Little Girls (1997)
Frankenstein (1931)
Fred Ott's Sneeze (1896)
Fuses (1967)
Gas Food Lodging (1992)
Ghost in the Shell (1996)
Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence (2004)
Girlfight (2000)
The Godfather (1972)
Go Fish (1994)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
Grass (1925)
Hairpiece: A Film for Nappyheaded People (1984)
Happy Together (1997)
Hard, Fast and Beautiful (1951)
Harlan County, U.S.A. (1976)
Heimat (1984)
Herbie Fully Loaded (2005)
Hero (2002)
The Hidden Half (2001)
Hiroshima, Mon Amour (1959)
The Hour of the Furnaces (1968)
House of Flying Daggers (2004)
Howl (2010)
The Hurt Locker (2008)

I Accuse (1919)
If God Is Willing and da Creek Don't Rise (2010)
I Like It Like That (1994)
Illusions (1982)
In a Better World (2010)
In and Out (1997)
In the Mood for Love (2000)
In the Realm of the Senses (1976)
Intolerance (1916)
It Happened One Night (1934)
It's Complicated (2009)
The Jazz Singer (1927)
Jennifer's Body (2009)
The Joyless Street (1925)
Ju dou (1990)
Julie & Julia (2009)
Kandahar (2000)
The Kid (1921)
The Kids Are All Right (2010)
The Killer (1989)
The King of Comedy (1983)
King Kong (1933)
Kiss of the Spider Woman (1985)
Khush (1991)
La Bamba (1987)
La fée aux choux (The Cabbage Fairy) (1896)
Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India (2001)
L'Argent (1929)
The Last Laugh (1924)
Laurel Canyon (2002)
A League of Their Own (1992)
Life on Earth (1998)
The Lives of Others (2006)
The Living End (1992)
The Lonedale Operator (1911)
Love & Basketball (2000)
M (1931)
Macbeth (1971)
Mädchen in Uniform (1931)
Malcolm X (1992)
Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
The Marriage of Maria Braun (1979)
Memento (2000)
Memories of Underdevelopment (1968)
Menace II Society (1993)

Metropolis (1927)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (1935)
Mildred Pierce (1945)
Milk (2008)
Mi Vida Loca (1993)
Mo' Better Blues (1990)
Monsoon Wedding (2001)
Mother India (1957)
The Movies Begin: A Treasury of Early Cinema (2002)
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)
My Darling Clementine (1946)
My Name Is Khan (2010)
The Namesake (2006)
Nanook of the North (1922)
Nanook Revisited (1988)
Napoléon (1927)
Natural Born Killers (1994)
Near Dark (1987)
New Jack City (1991)
The Night of the Hunter (1955)
Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror (1922)
The Notorious Bettie Page (2006)
Ossessione (1943)
Paris Is Burning (1990)
Pather Panchali (1955)
Persepolis (2007)
Philadelphia (1993)
Please Give (2010)
Poison (1991)
Portrait of Jason (1967)
Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire (2009)
Psycho (1960)
Pulp Fiction (1994)
Quo Vadis? (1913)
Raise the Red Lantern (1991)
A Raisin in the Sun (1961)
Ramayana: The Epic (2010)
Rape (1969)
Rashomon (1950)
Rebel without a Cause (1955)
Red Road (2006)
Reds (1981)
Rome, Open City (1945)
The Rules of the Game (1939)
Run, Lola, Run (1998)
Safe (1995)

The Scarlet Empress (1934)
The Searchers (1956)
The Seashell and the Clergyman (1928)
The Secret Life of Bees (2008)
The Seventh Seal (1957)
Shaft (1971)
Shanti Om (2007)
She's Gotta Have It (1986)
Sholay (1975)
The Silences of the Palace (1994)
Sita Sings the Blues (2008)
Sleepless in Seattle (1993)
Slumdog Millionaire (2008)
Smoke Signals (1998)
Somewhere (2010)
The Song of Freedom (1936)
Spartacus (1960)
The Spirit of TV (1990)
Stagecoach (1939)
A Star Is Born (1954)
Still Life (2006)
The Strange Girl (1913)
Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song (1971)
Tampopo (1985)
Taste of Cherry (1997)
Taxi Driver (1976)
The Ten Commandments (1923)
Their Eyes Were Watching God (2005)
These Three (1937)
Throne of Blood (1957)
Tilai (1990)
The Times of Harvey Milk (1984)
Titanic (1997)
Tokyo Story (1953)
Tongues Untied (1989)
Touch of Evil (1958)
Trances (1981)
U-Carmen eKhayelitsha (2005)
Ugetsu (1950)
Uncle Tom's Cabin (1903)
Vertigo (1958)
Wayne's World (1992)
What You Should Know about Biological Warfare (1952)
The Wheel (1923)
When the Levees Broke (2006)
Where Are My Children? (1916)

The White Balloon (1995)
Who Framed Roger Rabbit (1988)
Who Killed Vincent Chin? (1988)
Wings of Desire (1987)
Winter's Bone (2010)
Within Our Gates (1920)
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
The Woman in the Window (1944)
The Women (1939)
Word Is Out (1977)
Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory (1895)
Working Girls (1931)
The World (2004)
Wuthering Heights (1939)
Yeelen (1987)
Yellow Earth (1985)
Yesterday Girl (1966)
Yi yi (2000)
Zero for Conduct (1933)
Zoot Suit (1981)

CHAPTER 11

READING ABOUT FILM: CRITICAL THEORIES AND METHODS

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Explore the concept of cinematic specificity and the method of formal analysis.
- Recognize the interdisciplinary nature of film and media studies.
- Understand the major positions in classical film theory, from Soviet montage theory to formalism and realism.
- Learn about the key schools of thought within contemporary film theory, including semiotics, structuralism, and ideological critique; poststructuralism and psychoanalysis; feminist theory; cultural studies; philosophical approaches; and postmodernism and new media.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 11 explores major methods, concepts, and thinkers in film theory from the first decades of the medium to the electronic age. It begins with an overview of the two concepts at the heart of film theory: cinematic specificity and the interdisciplinary nature of film and film studies. It then considers film theory in historical context, beginning with early film theory and the major concerns of classical film theory from Soviet montage to formalism and realism. Next, the chapter looks at postwar film culture, including auteur theory and genre theory, as well as the role played by film journals. The chapter ends with contemporary film theory, engaging students in theoretical approaches rooted in semiotics, structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, apparatus theory, spectatorship, gender and sexuality, cultural studies, cognitive theory, and postmodernism.

This chapter aims to demystify the field of film theory, although students may certainly have to struggle with theory and do some work to understand film on a more abstract plane. In reading and picking apart theorists' work, it is important to remember that referring to "theory" is a useful, shorthand way to refer to a body of knowledge and a set of questions. It is important to emphasize to students that we study film theory to gain historical perspective, to acquire tools for decoding our experiences of particular films, and, above all, to comprehend the hold that movies have on our imaginations, desires, and experiences. While this chapter serves as an overview of the major critical questions in film theory, encourage your students to seek out and read the work of theorists mentioned in this chapter.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

Using the opening shot of *Caché* (2006) to launch a lesson on film theory can open up several fruitful lines of discussion. Is it a mystery? A melodrama? A psychoanalytic examination of individual and national guilt about the French treatment of Algerian immigrants? Students can debate aspects of spectatorship theory as they try to determine whose gaze the viewer is meant to identify with: the unseen surveillant or the bourgeois couple being watched. What is the effect of having this long shot "fast-forwarded," revealing the image to be on video rather than film, as a spectator in the theater might assume? How does *Caché* fit into director Michael Haneke's oeuvre? What are his authorial signatures and preoccupations? Consider assigning groups of

students to take different theoretical approaches—identity politics, apparatus theory, Marxism—and debate the advantages and liabilities of each film theory.

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

To present an overview of the history and debates of film theory, situate some important concepts and methods in relation to two general issues of theoretical inquiry:

1. **cinematic specificity**, which addresses the distinct characteristics of the medium or of the inner workings of a specific film
2. **interdisciplinarity**, which recognizes that cinema draws from other arts, and that the study of film borrows from other disciplines such as philosophy, literature, and history

Emphasize to students that film studies, like any academic discipline, tends to advance by active questioning and dissent. Pluralism and skepticism add a welcome perspective on ideas that might otherwise become rote and ossified, simply “applied” to new cases. Film scholars continue to draw on the legacies of previous inquiries to identify the salient questions our contemporary audiovisual experience raises and to develop tools with which to address those questions.

When teaching this chapter, consider assigning supplementary readings that demonstrate different or evolving theoretical approaches to the film you screen. If the class reads both Laura Mulvey and Tania Modleski on *Rear Window*, for example, they will more readily realize that film theory is a lively, contentious, ongoing conversation in which they, too, can take part.

Teaching Film Theory and Historical Context

Film theory today is considered part of an academic discipline. Earlier writers on film, however, came from many contexts and traditions. An overview of film theory from a historical perspective allows us to contextualize how the works of major film theorists were formulated over time and to understand how key principles and terms have been defined and debated. One way to show students how specific theoretical concerns develop or change over time is to take one of the two main issues—cinema’s specificity or its interdisciplinary nature—and follow it through the different historical periods. For example, ask students to explore how both early film theorists and contemporary media theorists are dealing with questions of cinematic specificity. What’s similar about their questions or paths of interrogation? What’s different?

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

The chapters in Part 4 explore and explain how reading and writing about film deepens and enriches our experiences of the movies. When teaching technical vocabulary for this section, encourage students to explore through essays and journal entries the different critical methods that have evolved over the years that shape and color how we think about a movie.

Another approach to evaluating comprehension could be to administer short quizzes at the beginning of classes. Select only a few of the boldface terms from each section, perhaps emphasizing those that most closely relate to the film you’ll be watching. Giving a definition and an example allows students to begin to parse and refine their understanding of the reading.

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

Film Theory: Cinematic Specificity and Interdisciplinarity, p. 403

Compare a scene from a film you have viewed either in class or on your own with a passage from the book from which it was adapted. What elements are specific to the film?

This Viewing Cue works well as a prompt for a short research assignment for which students could choose from among all of the films screened for the course and track down the source of one film's story. For example, compare how the graphic novel *A History of Violence* (2005) represents a scene that also occurs in the movie adaptation. Or, if you are using Film in Focus movie *Clueless* (1995) and/or giving the course in an English department, consider asking students to read selections from *Emma* and discuss how the filmmakers updated and translated Jane Austen's novel into a different medium. Or look at the pulp novel *Badge of Evil* by Whit Masterson and Welles's *Touch of Evil* (1958).

Formalism: Béla Balázs and Rudolf Arnheim, p. 407

From the last film you viewed for class, explore a shot or scene in terms of (1) Béla Balázs's arguments about the close-up or (2) Rudolf Arnheim's arguments about the two-dimensional screen.

Film in Focus *Timecode* (2000) would be a particularly compelling work to consider. Ask students to respond to this Viewing Cue prompt in an essay or a journal entry.

Realism: André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer, p. 408

From a realist position, analyze a recent film you viewed. Can you identify a scene that corresponds with André Bazin's ideas about the long take or Siegfried Kracauer's ideas about photography's power to capture the everyday?

One approach would be to narrow down this Viewing Cue and apply it to the final sequence of Film in Focus *Touch of Evil*. After screening it in class, ask how Welles's representation of the end of Hank Quinlan's life jibes with Bazin and Kracauer's ideas.

Film Journals, p. 410

Look at several issues of one of the journals mentioned in this section. Characterize the publication's perspective on film culture, giving concrete examples.

This Viewing Cue works best as a journal entry. Assign it as a prompt after a unit on conducting research at the library.

Structuralism, p. 417

Compare The Wizard of Oz (1939) to a fairy tale. Do they share a similar narrative structure?

Instructors may wish to assign excerpts from Salman Rushdie's 2008 BFI Film Classics monograph on *The Wizard of Oz* for the students to read before class. The ideas he advances can help shape the discussion.

Ideological Critique, p. 418

Does the film you are watching put forth a clear ideological position? Are there ways to see conflicting positions in it?

Touch of Evil offers any number of interesting ideological positions about ethics and the nature of power. Consider dividing the students into groups and asking each group to characterize the position of a character from the film and present its findings to the class. For example, you might ask how Tanya's worldview is conveyed by the position of the camera, the dialogue, even her costume and make-up.

Spectatorship, p. 420

Consider your experience as a spectator of the film screened most recently for class. Did you relate to the point of view of a particular character or was your perspective more omniscient? Were you aware of the apparatus (the camera, the projection)?

All three Film in Focus movies would work well with this Viewing Cue. *Timecode* and *Touch of Evil* might offer more obvious examples, but *Clueless* uses classical Hollywood continuity editing techniques to align the viewer with Cher's point of view.

Theories of Gender and Sexuality, p. 422

Describe the interrelated issues of gender representation and gendered spectatorship in a film you viewed recently.

Clueless offers a surprisingly rich array of examples of gender representation and gendered spectatorship, located primarily in adolescent girls. Use director Amy Heckerling's film and this Viewing Cue to launch class discussion of feminist, lesbian, and gay film theory. Perhaps show a few scenes from Heckerling's earlier film, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) to provide additional context.

Or, consider the role played by Mercedes McCambridge's character in *Touch of Evil* in the scene in the motel in which blond, innocent Susie (Janet Leigh) is held captive by Grandi gang members. How are these women represented, and how do their representations relate to Marlene Dietrich's fortune-teller Tanya?

Reception Theory, p. 424

Conduct a reception study of the film you just viewed by surveying your classmates about which characters and situations they responded to most favorably. Compare and contrast their opinions with those of film reviewers.

Be certain to ask students to gather pertinent data about geography, age, gender, and membership in a particular interpretive community when they conduct their surveys. Or have them retroactively compile this data for all the films shown, based on student journal entries or response papers. You might also consider assigning this Viewing Cue after every film, having a different student or group conduct the survey each time, then ask the students to analyze all of their data in light of what they've now learned about reception theory.

Star Studies, p. 426

Research the star of the film you are about to watch for class. What does your previous knowledge of this star bring to your viewing? Is the role at odds with his or her established image?

Ask students to respond to this Viewing Cue in class or in their journals before watching the film. In the class after the screening, ask them to share their previous knowledge of the star and discuss his or her role in this movie. Or modify the Viewing Cue and ask students what they know about Tom Cruise versus “Tom Cruise” or about another actor frequently mentioned in the tabloids.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Genre and Authorship in *Touch of Evil* (1958), pp. 414–15

One approach to teaching *Touch of Evil* would be to extend students' understanding of Welles as a cultural figure beyond Kane and Quinlan. In addition to discussing the history behind *Touch of Evil* specifically, spend some time talking about the director's “boy wonder” years in theater and radio in New York, culminating in the notorious “War of the Worlds” broadcast that helped Welles land his carte-blanche contract with RKO Radio Pictures. Or show online clips of Welles as a raconteur on talk shows and as a television commercial spokesperson in his later years. Within that context, examine Welles's stylistic excess, particularly the camera work, in *Touch of Evil*. Or spend some time going through the memo by Welles that informed the 2000 restoration team's decision making. If you want to focus more on the film noir angle, you could contrast Welles's acting work as corrupt Quinlan in *Touch of Evil* and as Michael O'Hara in *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947).

Discussion Question 1: How does Welles light, frame, and shoot Quinlan and Grandi to emphasize their monstrosity and corruption?

Discussion Question 2: How does the echoing sound design during the denouement recall scenes set in the Thatcher Library in *Citizen Kane*? What influence do you think Welles's

performance in the radio production of *War of the Worlds* had on his evocative use of sound here?

Additional Suggestion: Any Hitchcock film would work just as well for an examination of the intersection of genre and authorship. For example, you could contrast the behavior of the anxious clerk at the hotel where Susie is assaulted in *Touch of Evil* with Norman Bates's tics when he first meets Marion Crane in *Psycho* (1960).

***Clueless* about Contemporary Film Theory (1995)? pp. 430–31**

In addition to making certain that students are familiar with Jane Austen's novel *Emma*, it might be useful to assign them Baudrillard's work on the simulacra, or Dick Hebdige's studies of teenage subcultures in England, or Mike Davis's 1992 book about Los Angeles, *City of Quartz*. The virtual "shopping" montage is a sequence that occurs again and again in movies directed at young women.

Discussion Question 1: How might unbridled consumerism actually circumscribe women's choices? To drive the point home, you might show the scene in *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion* (1997) in which the characters watch *Pretty Woman* (1990) and Romy mocks the main character when she is prevented from shopping.

Discussion Question 2: What aspects of *Clueless* come across as dated now? Are outmoded technologies like computer programs and clunky telephones a useful way to think about the evolution of film theory? What is still "useful" about past styles in the movie and in the academy?

Additional Suggestions: Woody Allen's 1985 movie *The Purple Rose of Cairo* can be discussed in the context of genre theory, female spectatorship theory, star theory, phenomenology, and postmodernism. *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (2005) winks at movie clichés that its writer and director, Shane Black, helped popularize, while gleefully turning other conventions of action movies upside down.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Ask students to search for a movie they've watched for class on Movies in Frames (<http://moviesinframes.tumblr.com>), which distills a movie into four essential frames. What codes—of lighting, camera movement, framing, or figure movement—are used to create meaning? Have them choose their own four frames and explain their choices.

Alternative Activity

Nicholas Rombes has been conducting an ongoing experiment in film writing (<http://therumpus.net/sections/nicholas-rombes-blogs/>), "freez[ing] a film at 10, 40, and 70 minutes, and keep[ing] the commentary as close to those frames as possible." Ask students to

select a film from class on which to conduct a similar experiment. This activity (and the one above) would work as the basis of an essay.

FILMS CITED

All About My Mother (1999)
All That Heaven Allows (1955)
And God Created Woman (1956)
Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat (1896)
The Big Heat (1953)
Blade Runner (1982)
Breathless (1960)
Caché (2006)
Casino Royale (2006)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Clueless (1995)
Crash (2004)
Daughters of the Dust (1991)
Dead Man Walking (1995)
The Fall of the House of Usher (1928)
Fight Club (1999)
Film Study (1926)
Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within (2001)
Footlight Parade (1933)
Germany Year Zero (1948)
The Godfather (1972)
Gone with the Wind (1939)
Hamlet (1921)
Hiroshima, Mon Amour (1959)
His Girl Friday (1940)
Indiana Jones series (1981–2008)
Into the Wild (2007)
The King and I (1956)
L'Avventura (1960)
Lucía (1968)
The Magnificent Ambersons (1942)
The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)
Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
The Matrix (1999)
Mean Girls (2004)
Milk (2008)
Morocco (1930)
Mother (1926)
My Darling Clementine (1946)
Now, Voyager (1942)
One Hour Photo (2002)

Posse (1993)
The Quick and the Dead (1995)
Rear Window (1954)
Rebel Without a Cause (1955)
Riddles of the Sphinx (1977)
Rio (2011)
The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975)
The Searchers (1956)
Star Wars (Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope) (1977)
To Sleep with Anger (1990)
Tree of Life (2011)
Touch of Evil (1958)
Unforgiven (1992)
Vertigo (1958)
Volver (2006)
Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (2010)
West Side Story (1961)
The Wizard of Oz (1939)
Young Mr. Lincoln (1939)
Zajota and the Boogie Spirit (1989)

CHAPTER 12

WRITING A FILM ESSAY: OBSERVATIONS, ARGUMENTS, RESEARCH, AND ANALYSIS

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Understand the difference between reviews and critical essays.
- Learn how to take notes on films and how to organize those notes.
- Choose a topic and develop it into a thesis and argument for a paper.
- Conduct research and integrate sources.
- Acquire the skills to turn your work into a polished essay.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Since the beginnings of the movies, writers of reviews, scholarly essays, and philosophical books have debated the achievements of individual films and the cultural importance, function, and value of this new art form in general. Chapter 12 shows how writing about movies can become a rich extension of our fundamental film experiences. It begins by making a distinction among the subject matter of a film, the material that directly or indirectly comprises the film, and the meaning or the interpretation a writer discovers within that film. The chapter describes the steps a writer follows in preparing to write about a film: asking questions, taking notes, and selecting a topic. It then examines the elements of the analytical film essay in detail, from interpretation, argument, and evidence to outlines and topic sentences. Finally, it offers a writer's checklist as well as guidance for research, citation, revision, manuscript formatting, and proofreading.

This chapter exposes students to aspects of writing about film that they may not have considered analytically before. It provides them with the tools to construct analytical essays with confidence.

TEACHING THE OPENING VIGNETTE

To teach the opening vignette, you may want to place *Orlando* (1992) in the context of the challenges inherent in adapting a novel for the screen. Examining the ways in which writer/director Sally Potter incorporates and translates Virginia Woolf's language, at times even having the title character break the fourth wall and address the audience directly, may help students situate their own writing on film. To provide additional context, you could assign the passage from Virginia Woolf's novel in which Orlando changes genders. Another approach might be to screen this sequence and distribute reviews and critical essays (or excerpts) about the film. Or, research Quentin Crisp and discuss Potter's decision to cast the male writer to play Queen Elizabeth to demonstrate the sort of information gathering that is essential to thinking and writing about film. Orlando's description of her transformation, "Same person. No difference at all. Just a different sex," should also encourage students to approach their own work with a critical eye for telling details.

TEACHING THE CHAPTER

The aims and mechanics of good writing about film may be familiar to students who study literature or history. But competence in this kind of writing can benefit students in all disciplines. We live in an increasingly visual culture, and the importance of identifying an audience, of balancing subjective and objective perspectives, of taking notes, and of sketching an outline that develops a particular argument and interpretation is universal and transferable. With the aid of the many genuine student papers reproduced in this chapter for reference, students can observe that actual writing requires a clear and detailed thesis, strong topic sentences, and concrete evidence from the film, and that a first draft is always followed by a series of revisions that work to clarify the argument, its ideas, and its presentation. Careful proofreading then follows final revision, with special attention paid to easily missed mistakes in mechanics, such as spelling and punctuation.

When teaching this chapter, it can be useful to root examples in the films you've already watched for the course. Ask students to collect reviews and critical articles and dissect individual writers' prejudices and points of view. Encourage them to write often, in class and at home, to overcome their inhibitions and insecurities and provide you with diagnostic material that will allow you to adapt this chapter's concepts to accommodate their specific needs.

Teaching Students How to Prepare to Write about a Film

Encourage students to approach each film that is screened for class as though they might write an essay about it. What do they think they will see? Why are they watching it? What is the relationship between the film and the material being covered in class? Have them jot down their speculations before the screening and encourage them to take notes while watching the movie. In the next class, ask them to share their observations and any revelations. Applying the steps in this section to every film allows students to limber up and will make the prospect of writing their first essay less daunting.

Taking Notes

In addition to what the text itself suggests, recommend that students also take notes on:

- the unusual—events or formal maneuvers that stand out in the film
- events or techniques that recur with regularity
- oppositions that appear in the film

Revision, Manuscript Format, and Proofreading

Many students tend to leave too little time to write even a first draft of a paper before it's due. Consider adopting the Writer's Checklist below as a kind of contract with the students. It gives them a clear outline of your expectations. Ask them to submit a completed, signed checklist with each paper, attesting they have followed every step.

Writer's Checklist

1. Review your notes, filling in details where you can. Ideally, view the film one more time.
2. Try to summarize the most important themes or motifs in the film.
3. Formulate a working thesis and argument for the essay.
4. Outline the argument. If possible, use full sentences for headings because they can then become your topic sentences.
5. Develop the central idea of each paragraph with details from the film that support that paragraph's topic sentence.
6. Rewrite your thesis statement to reflect any changes or refinements in your thinking that occurred while writing your first draft.
7. If you are writing a research essay, be sure to use the correct documentation format for in-text citations and the Works Cited list (see pp. 459–61).
8. Revise your essay, checking for large problems such as vague or illogical organization, and proofread for surface errors in spelling and grammar.
9. Select a title that reflects the main argument of your paper.
10. Print out the essay, and correct any remaining typographical errors.

Teaching Technical Vocabulary and Key Concepts

Ask students to watch a short scene in class and take notes using the common abbreviations or symbols for visual compositions listed below. Reviewing these notes will reveal whether you should spend more time on a particular topic or shot.

es: establishing shot

ha: high angle

ct: cut

cu: close-up

mcu: medium close-up

la: low angle

trs: tracking shot

ls: long shot

ds: diegetic sound

ps: pan shot

mls: medium long shot

nds: nondiegetic sound

vo: voiceover



low camera angle



high camera angle



tracking shot

TEACHING THE VIEWING CUES

Personal Opinion and Objectivity, p. 438

Examine a short critical essay about a film you have seen in class. What subjective or objective claims does the writer make about the film? What evidence from the film does he or she provide? Be specific.

This Viewing Cue can be adapted to any supplemental reading you have assigned and incorporated into a journal entry.

Identifying Your Readers, p. 439

As you prepare to write an analytical essay about a film you have seen in class, consider your readers. What defines them? What are their interests? What do they need or want to know about the film?

Ask students to answer the prompt in this Viewing Cue as an informal in-class exercise. This approach helps demystify the writing process for students with less confidence.

Asking Questions, p. 441

Before viewing your next film, jot down three or four questions you want to direct at the film. During the film, write down three or four more about specific shots or scenes. Later, attempt to answer all of your questions as precisely as possible.

This is another Viewing Cue you may want to incorporate throughout the course to accustom the students to thinking critically about film, both thematically and on the level of the individual shot. Share some of the more provocative responses in class.

Taking Notes, p. 445

Which events, sounds, or shots in the film you just viewed stand out as unusual? As most important? As examples of a pattern of repetition? Describe clearly and concretely one or two events, sounds, or shots from the film.

The Film in Focus *Citizen Kane* offers ample examples of unusual events, sounds, or shots. In class look at the opening sequence as a model: the progress the camera makes toward the lit window in Xanadu before the light is extinguished, or the presence of the squawking bird that marks the abrupt transition toward the end, when Susan leaves Charlie. Or ask students to nominate their own candidates from *Kane* or any of the other Film in Focus movies.

Interpretation, Argument, and Evidence, p. 447

Sketch an argument for your essay. What is the logic of its development? What conclusions do you foresee making?

Make this Viewing Cue a mandatory journal entry in preparation for writing papers.

Thesis Statement, p. 448

Write a precise thesis statement. Is your thesis specific enough, or does it need refinement? Is it sufficiently interesting to encourage readers to continue reading your essay?

This Viewing Cue may be combined with several others in this chapter to prepare students to craft a persuasive essay.

Outline and Topic Sentences, p. 449

Formulate a specific interpretation for the film you are writing about. Why is that interpretation important? What new light does it shed on the film for your readers?

Ask students to use this as part of a larger Writer's Checklist and to refer back to it when writing each subsequent essay.

Outline and Topic Sentences, p. 449

Create a detailed outline of your essay. Does your outline include subsections that can later be developed with details and evidence from the film?

To use this Viewing Cue in class, spend some time going over the outline examples included in this chapter. Ask the students to create their own outlines as homework, and then spend additional class time correcting any common errors once you've had time to review their work.

Revision, Manuscript Format, and Proofreading, p. 450

In your draft, look for consistent errors and troublespots that you need to pay special attention to during revision.

It may be helpful to consult the examples in the textbook or go through a draft of one of your own essays during class to demonstrate that no writer can afford to skip this essential step.

Using Film Images in Your Paper, p. 451

Locate areas in your essay where an image might improve your argument. Are there technical aspects, such as the use of lighting or types of camera movements, that could be further explained with an illustration?

This Viewing Cue, like Orlando's description of her transformation from male to female in the opening vignette ("Same person. No difference at all. Just a different sex."), can also be used to demonstrate occasions when an image pads a paper but does not strengthen its argument.

Writer's Checklist, p. 451

After writing your first draft, revise your thesis statement to reflect changes in your thinking. Be sure to sharpen your thesis to better describe your argument.

Ask students to respond to this Viewing Cue after returning paper drafts to the class.

Secondary Research, p. 457

Locate at least five secondary research sources for your essay topic. What are the most recent books on the film or topic? Find at least two relevant scholarly articles on this topic.

This Viewing Cue can work as an assignment after a trip to the library and a lesson on locating secondary research. This will allow you the opportunity to make the distinction in class between reliable and unreliable sources.

Internet Sources, p. 458

Search the Internet for information about your film and topic, and locate at least one useful source. What distinguishes this source from other online information about your topic?

Bundle this Viewing Cue in with others you've asked students to respond to before meeting with you for one-on-one paper consultations.

Using and Documenting Sources, p. 459

How will you collect the research you need to formulate and present your argument? What sources will you use? Keep a detailed list of each for later documentation.

Incorporate this Viewing Cue into your guidelines for preparing a research paper.

Direct Quotations and Paraphrasing, p. 459

As you prepare to integrate research into your essay, think about a particular quote or critical position you will argue against. What factual or historical material will support your argument? Note passages you can use to bolster a central part of your essay.

Walk through an example of this approach during class using an article you've assigned as supplemental reading for a specific film.

TEACHING THE FILMS IN FOCUS

Analysis, Audience, and *Citizen Kane* (1941), pp. 442–44

If you choose to show *Citizen Kane*, try to situate it for students as “one of those movies that everyone talks about but few have ever seen.”

Discussion Question 1: What dialogue, images, sound, and so on in the film seemed familiar? They may know that Rosebud is a sled or even that it was allegedly a pet name Kane-model William Randolph Hearst called his mistress, Marion Davies.

Discussion Question 2: What does it mean to alert audiences when another filmmaker “borrows” from *Citizen Kane* or pays homage to Welles? Some students might have drawn a connection between the shots of the warehouse at the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and the ending shots of Kane’s belongings in Xanadu. Consider showing both scenes in class and asking what Steven Spielberg and George Lucas gain from ending such an already highly referential pastiche of a movie with a *Citizen Kane* “quotation.”

Additional Suggestions: Students might know that the White Stripes’ frontman Jack White constructed song lyrics out of *Citizen Kane* dialogue (and published them under the name “Third Man Music” [Welles starred in *The Third Man* in 1949]). Why would White want to create a connection between his work and Welles’s? Depending on the potential, perceived audience, a student might use any of these connections to write a review of Welles’s first movie or as a jumping-off point in crafting a critical essay.

Interpretation, Argument, and Evidence in *Rashomon* (1950), pp. 453–56

This Film in Focus illustrates the play of competing narrative points of view and the difficulty in arriving at a clear interpretation based on available evidence.

Discussion Question 1: How do the themes of bias and interpretation in *Rashomon* provide a model for writing about film? The sample student paper can serve as a cautionary tale about the importance of conducting secondary research and citing sources correctly and thoroughly.

Discussion Question 2: How do we deal with the temptation to incorporate the thinking of other writers when dealing with well-known films like *Rashomon*? Discuss how the perspectives of other writers must be attributed and weighed in the context of the student’s own argument.

Additional Suggestions: The *Rashomon* model has been appropriated by any number of films (and other works), in whole or in part. Even a 1999 episode of *The Simpsons* finds Marge persuading Homer to go to Japan by saying, “You liked *Rashomon*.” To which Homer replies, “That’s not how I remember it.” Search imdb.com for other multiple perspective, contradictory narratives with unreliable narrators, and discuss why this format endures across decades and cultures.

From Research to Writing about *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), pp. 462–66

Working with this Film in Focus serves to demonstrate the wealth of secondary sources available to a writer. The scenario in the textbook illustrates a methodical, step-by-step approach to collecting information, refining one's paper topic, and incorporating secondary sources correctly cited. Contributing a new take to such a vast store of information on a film may seem daunting to introductory-level students.

Discussion Question 1: How does this student paper example demonstrate the ways in which a writer can sum up critical viewpoints and deploy them alongside quotations from the film itself in the service of his or her own arguments?

Discussion Question 2: How does this writer deploy images from the film to illustrate and extend his thesis?

Additional Suggestions: Investigate critical writing that places Tim Burton's films in the tradition of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Discuss the challenges of writing critically about a recent movie as opposed to classic films about which so much has already been written. What are the strategies you could use in each instance?

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Alternative Activity

Ask students to identify films about films, writers, or art and analyze in detail how one of them critically engages with a movie or style that preceded it.

FILMS CITED

Almost Famous (2000)
Battleship Potemkin (1925)
The Bourne Ultimatum (2007)
Bringing Up Baby (1938)
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)
Carrie (1976)
Central Station (1998)
Citizen Kane (1941)
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)
Double Indemnity (1944)
Fearless (1993)
His Girl Friday (1940)
In the Bedroom (2001)
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
Julie & Julia (2009)
Letters from Iwo Jima (2006)
Little Vera (1989)

Mädchen in Uniform (1931)
Mishima (1985)
My Beautiful Laundrette (1985)
O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)
Of Gods and Men (2010)
Orlando (1992)
Orpheus (1950)
The Philadelphia Story (1940)
Psycho (1960)
Rashomon (1950)
The Sorrow and the Pity (1972)
Sullivan's Travels (1941)
The Thin Red Line (1998)
Tokyo Story (1953)
Traffic (2000)
Walk the Line (2005)

TEST BANK FOR
THE FILM EXPERIENCE: AN INTRODUCTION
THIRD EDITION

CHAPTER 1
ENCOUNTERING FILM: FROM PREPRODUCTION TO EXHIBITION

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Preproduction is
 - A. before the cameras roll.
 - B. when a project is in development.
 - C. when funds are raised.
 - D. when a crew is assembled.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 21.

2. In the 1990s, independent films were typically financed
 - A. with leftover money from the major movie studios.
 - B. through pre-sales of distribution or broadcast rights in different markets.*
 - C. by the director's personal funds.
 - D. by working with large financial institutions.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 24.

3. A location scout's job is to
 - A. decide on the location of craft services.
 - B. determine the places that provide the most suitable environment for the movie.*
 - C. rent out soundstages to filmmakers.
 - D. suggest to the screenwriter where the movie should be set.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 25.

4. When did the practice of identifying which actors would work best for which roles emerge?
 - A. in the 1920s
 - B. in the 1800s
 - C. in the 1940s
 - D. in the 1910s*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 24.

5. After 1915, most films were distributed with running times of
 - A. 5 minutes.
 - B. 90 to 120 minutes.*
 - C. roughly 15 minutes.
 - D. 10 to 20 minutes.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 30.

6. Releasing a film in as many locations as possible as soon as possible is called
- A. block booking.
 - B. engagements.
 - C. saturation booking.*
 - D. a limited release.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 31.

7. Which of the following is an example of an ancillary market?
- A. Pay-per-view
 - B. Internet streaming
 - C. Blu-ray
 - D. Video on demand (VOD)
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 33–36.

8. In which of the following locations can a movie be exhibited?
- A. on a long plane ride
 - B. in a movie palace
 - C. in a college classroom
 - D. in a multiplex
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 54.

9. Which film does your textbook give as an example of a film that did better on home video than in its initial theatrical release?
- A. *The Matrix*
 - B. *Lawrence of Arabia*
 - C. *Reservoir Dogs*
 - D. *Titanic*
 - E. *Blade Runner* *

The answer can be found on p. 37.

10. A film can be brought to the attention of a potential audience through
- A. film trailers.
 - B. billboards.
 - C. the star's appearance on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*.
 - D. tie-in games on movie Web sites.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 43.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. The _____ selects the cameras, film stock, lighting, and lenses to be used, as well as the camera setup or position. (**cinematographer**)

The answer can be found on p. 27.

2. The score and all of the film's soundtracks are adjusted to their final levels and combined in the _____ . (**sound mix**)

The answer can be found on p. 28.

3. A _____ is a company or an agency that acquires the rights to a movie from the filmmakers or producers (sometimes by contributing to the costs of producing the film) and then makes that movie available to audiences by renting, selling, or licensing it to theaters or other exhibition outlets. (**distributor**)

The answer can be found on p. 29.

4. _____ involves releasing a film in gradually widening markets and theaters so that it slowly builds its reputation and momentum through reviews and word of mouth. (**Platforming**)

The answer can be found on p. 31.

5. The unauthorized duplication and circulation of copyrighted material is also known as _____ . (**piracy**)

The answer can be found on p. 35.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What are the consequences of the evolving patterns of video distribution? Give two examples of how video distribution might affect local responses, tastes, and expectations.
2. How did D. W. Griffith's three-hour epic, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), create new distribution and exhibition patterns and attract new audiences?
3. Explain how the timing of movie exhibition can vary and how that can influence other considerations about the movie being watched.
4. What effect might be created for the film viewer when two promotional tactics create different sets of expectations about a movie?
5. Explain two major differences between film exhibition as leisure time and film exhibition as productive time.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING A MATERIAL WORLD: MISE-EN-SCÈNE

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Mise-en-scène includes
 - A. sets and setting.
 - B. actors.
 - C. aspects of lighting.
 - D. props.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 64.

2. The function of costumes and make-up in films is
 - A. to help viewers understand and follow a character and the development of the story.
 - B. to reproduce the clothing and facial features of people living in a specific time and place.
 - C. to signify genre.
 - D. to draw out or point to important parts of a character's personality.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 77–79.

3. Character actors are
 - A. relatively large groups of “background artists” who provide character and sometimes personality to large crowd scenes.
 - B. recognizable actors associated with particular character types or minor parts.*
 - C. the focal points in the mise-en-scène.
 - D. the two or three actors who appear most often in a film.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 75.

4. Naturalistic acting requires an actor to
 - A. employ emphatic and highly self-conscious gestures.
 - B. fully and naturally embody the role to communicate that character's essential self.*
 - C. seem fully aware that he or she is acting and addressing an audience.
 - D. speak in pronounced tones with elevated diction.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 75.

5. Aspects of nineteenth-century visual culture that influenced the staging of early films included all of the following EXCEPT
 - A. tableaux of key dramatic moments.
 - B. special effects.*
 - C. participation of famous stage actors.
 - D. indoor lighting systems.
 - E. painted sets and props.

The answer can be found on p. 67.

6. Chiaroscuro lighting has been used in films
 - A. to create a light and lofty feeling.
 - B. to create an uneasy atmosphere.*
 - C. to create an impression of natural light.
 - D. to replicate the lighting in a museum or an art gallery.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 84.

7. A fantastical environment that is obviously artificial and even bends the laws of nature is an example of a/an
 - A. theatrical mise-en-scène.*
 - B. heroic mise-en-scène.
 - C. comic mise-en-scène.
 - D. naturalistic mise-en-scène.
 - E. atypical mise-en-scène.

The answer can be found on p. 89.

8. An example of a cultural prop is
 - A. Gene Kelly's umbrella in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).
 - B. the knife in *Psycho* (1960).
 - C. a mysterious briefcase in *Ronin* (1998).
 - D. the tiny Volkswagen Bug in *Herbie Fully Loaded* (2005).*
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 73.

9. What is a McGuffin?
 - A. a computerized model
 - B. a prop that appears to be important only at first*
 - C. a highlighting technique that illuminates the person or object from behind
 - D. an arrangement of characters or groups according to visual patterns
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 73.

10. A set designer
 - A. scouts for realistic locations.
 - B. determines how actors are costumed and made up.
 - C. uses lighting to shade and accentuate figures, objects, and spaces of the mise-en-scène.
 - D. supervises the construction of sets.*
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 70.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. A term meaning literally “placed in a scene” or “onstage,” _____ refers to those elements of a movie scene that are put in position before the filming actually begins. (**mise-en-scène**)

The answer can be found on p. 64.

2. Large soundproofed buildings called _____ were designed to facilitate the construction and movement of elaborate sets. (**soundstages**)

The answer can be found on p. 68.

3. A _____ is an object that functions as a part of the set or as a tool used by the actors. (**prop**)

The answer can be found on p. 72.

4. Actors are frequently cast for parts precisely because of their association with certain _____ that they seem especially suited to portray due to their physical features, acting style, or previous roles. (**character types**)

The answer can be found on p. 75.

5. _____ is a lighting style that uses three sources: a key light, backlighting, and fill lighting. (**Three-point lighting**)

The answer can be found on p. 82.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. How do different approaches to and cultural contexts for mise-en-scène help us identify and assign meaning? What effects might be created for the film viewer through sets, props, acting styles, blocking, lighting, and other elements of mise-en-scène?
2. How can the arrangement and movement of actors in relation to each other within the physical space of a mise-en-scène be deployed to accentuate relations among them?
3. What are the effects of directional lighting in conjunction with the narrative and other features of the mise-en-scène? Give two examples of directional lighting that elicit certain responses.
4. What is a metaphorical prop? Give two examples of what one might convey in a film.
5. Explain how characters attract or repulse us through the clothing and make-up they wear.

CHAPTER 3

FRAMING WHAT WE SEE: CINEMATOGRAPHY

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. CinemaScope
 - A. was used exclusively by director Nicholas Ray.
 - B. is another name for Academy ratio.
 - C. has an aspect ratio of 1.33:1.
 - D. uses an anamorphic (or compressed) lens to achieve a widescreen aspect ratio.*
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 107.

2. Onscreen space refers to
 - A. action less important than the action in the frame.
 - B. the space visible within the frame of the image.*
 - C. a small circular piece of the image.
 - D. the implied space or world that exists outside the film frame.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 108.

3. Deep focus means
 - A. shifting rapidly from one object to another.
 - B. only the background of the image is in focus.
 - C. multiple planes in the image are all in focus.*
 - D. a shot of long duration.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 113.

4. Close-ups can
 - A. indicate nuances in a character's thoughts.
 - B. show the intensity of a character's feelings.
 - C. show details of a person or an object.
 - D. suggest a special significance of an object.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 109.

5. A matte shot
 - A. changes the tones of the recorded image with different tinted lenses.
 - B. makes the action move at unrealistic speeds.
 - C. projects a background for the action on a screen.
 - D. joins two pieces of film, one with the central action or object and the other with the additional action.*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 120.

6. Masks
- A. are mostly associated with silent films.
 - B. isolate and emphasize a specific object or action in that image.
 - C. are used to reshape a film frame.
 - D. cut off portions of the frame so that part of the image is black.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 108.

7. Filters are
- A. transparent sheets of glass or gels placed in front of the lens.*
 - B. lenses with a focal length of at least 75mm.
 - C. capable of magnifying and flattening distant objects.
 - D. an alternative to the proprietary Technicolor process.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 102.

8. The “pan-and-scan” process
- A. covers portions of the frame so part of the image is black.
 - B. is a technique used to film large, open spaces.
 - C. is a technique where the camera is wheeled along a track.
 - D. cuts off outer portions of the image that are not central to the action to fit a television screen.*
 - E. None of these options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 108.

9. Introduced in the 1930s, the first handheld cameras were
- A. too expensive to use.
 - B. used primarily by families for home movies.
 - C. used during World War II for newsreels.*
 - D. too heavy to use.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 102.

10. Point of view refers to
- A. the perspective of a character through camera placement.
 - B. the more impersonal perspective of the camera.
 - C. a discontinuous perspective that moves dramatically among characters.
 - D. the position from which a person, an event, or an object is seen (or filmed).
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 105.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. By 1909, the width of the strip of film used for filming and exhibiting movies, or _____, was standardized as 35mm. (**film gauge**)

The answer can be found on p. 100.

2. The basic unit of cinematography is the _____. (**shot**)
The answer can be found on p. 105.

3. _____ was the dominant color film process until the 1950s. It recorded different colors separately and used a dye transfer process to create a single image with a full spectrum of color. (**Technicolor**)
The answer can be found on p. 101.

4. The _____ describes the relation of width to height of the film frame as it appears on a movie screen or television monitor. (**aspect ratio**)
The answer can be found on p. 106.

5. The _____ is the distance from the center of the lens to the point where light rays meet in sharp focus. (**focal length**)
The answer can be found on p. 101.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. How were evolving color processes used to offer realism or heighten artifice and spectacle? Give two examples.
2. What was nitrate film stock, and why was it short-lived?
3. What are the advantages of zooms over traveling shots? Give two examples of how they differ.
4. What effect might be created for the film viewer when the frame moves from one position to another within a single continuous shot?
5. Explain the differences between a tracking shot, a dolly shot, and a handheld or Steadicam shot.

CHAPTER 4 RELATING IMAGES: EDITING

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. A scene is
 - A. a model for sports montages.
 - B. an identifiable motif, regardless of changes in space and time.
 - C. a single length of film.
 - D. one or more shots that describe a continuous space, time, and action.*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 159.

2. “Kinoki” (Kino-Eye) was
 - A. Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein’s first film.
 - B. a Soviet documentary filmmaking group that included Dziga Vertov.*
 - C. modernist, politically engaged filmmaking in the Soviet Union of the 1920s.
 - D. another name for the Kuleshov effect.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 138.

3. The continuity script ensures
 - A. that lighting is consistent from shot to shot.
 - B. that an upturned collar in one shot is still upturned in another shot.
 - C. that an actress’s make-up is the same in each shot.
 - D. that a cigarette almost burned down in one shot is not freshly lit in a later shot.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 165–66.

4. Montage is
 - A. a specific type of cut that was developed for music videos.
 - B. the repetition of a significant image in a film.
 - C. a style emphasizing the breaks and contrasts between images joined by a cut.*
 - D. used to disassociate two similar images.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 137.

5. A specific goal of Hollywood’s continuity style is
 - A. to establish verisimilitude.
 - B. to tell stories efficiently, requiring minimal mental effort on the part of viewers.
 - C. to approximate the experience of real time by following human actions.
 - D. to construct an imaginary 180-degree space in which the action will develop.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 144.

6. Which of the following is a continuity editing device?
- A. insert
 - B. dolly shot
 - C. shot/reverse-shot
 - D. options A and C*
 - E. options B and C

The answer can be found on pp. 144–51.

7. An example of a nonlinear editing pattern is
- A. a flashforward.*
 - B. a reaction shot.
 - C. a long take.
 - D. a cutaway.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 152.

8. Which of the following is NOT an example of a transition?
- A. dissolve
 - B. wipe
 - C. fade-out
 - D. iris-off*
 - E. fade-in

The answer can be found on pp. 141–44.

9. Which of these early 1900s films famously ends with a bandit shooting his gun directly into the camera?
- A. *Trip to the Moon* (1902)
 - B. *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)*
 - C. *Life of an American Fireman* (1903)
 - D. *The Lonely Villa* (1909)
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on pp. 136–37.

10. Which of the following statements about eyeline matches is NOT correct?
- A. They give the impression that consecutively depicted spaces are adjacent ones.
 - B. They are often used in shot/reverse-shot sequences of characters in conversation.
 - C. They can make it seem that the characters onscreen are in different spaces.*
 - D. They give the illusion of continuous offscreen space into which characters could move.
 - E. They help remind viewers that the characters onscreen share a physical space.

The answer can be found on pp. 148–49.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. The technique of alternating between two or more strands of simultaneous action is called _____ . (**crosscutting**, or **parallel editing**)

The answer can be found on p. 136.

2. In a _____, the direction of an action is edited to a shot depicting the continuation of that action. (**match on action**)

The answer can be found on pp. 156–57.

3. The _____ is the break and the common border that separate two shots from two different pieces of film. (**cut**)

The answer can be found on p. 141.

4. A _____ is an edit that intentionally creates gaps in the action and goes against the norms of continuity editing. (**jump cut**)

The answer can be found on p. 168.

5. A _____ briefly superimposes one shot over the next, which takes its place: one image fades out as another image fades in. (**dissolve**)

The answer can be found on pp. 142–43.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. Explain two possible uses of graphic editing in a film.
2. Distinguish among graphic editing, movement editing, and rhythmic editing. How can these three patterns work together to support or complicate the action being shown?
3. What is overlapping editing? Give two examples of what it might convey in a film.
4. What effect might be created for the film viewer by omitting establishing shots?
5. How has the ease and affordability of nonlinear digital computer-based systems affected film editing?

CHAPTER 5
LISTENING TO THE CINEMA: FILM SOUND

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. A microphone suspended over the action outside of camera range on a device resembling a fishing pole is called
 - A. a boom.*
 - B. a clapboard.
 - C. a sound bridge.
 - D. a walla.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 187.

2. After the introduction of synchronized sound in 1927, the Movietone system
 - A. recorded sound directly onto the film stock.*
 - B. synchronized a phonograph record with the projector.
 - C. used live performers who sang along with the film characters.
 - D. showed slides to provide the lyrics for sing-alongs.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 181.

3. Sound effects are used
 - A. to help suggest a location.
 - B. to establish a particular mood.
 - C. to appeal to the audience subtly and viscerally.
 - D. to give an impression of depth to the two-dimensional image.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 201–02.

4. The sound that marks the moment when the mother sees the word “murder” on her bedroom door in *The Shining* is an example of
 - A. a stinger.*
 - B. a transition.
 - C. a soundtrack.
 - D. mickey-mousing.
 - E. a Foley artist.

The answer can be found on p. 199.

5. Film music can
 - A. help sell soundtracks.
 - B. make specific events feel timeless.
 - C. capture the zeitgeist of its characters’ and viewers’ generation.
 - D. help tell audiences what is happening in the plot.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 195-201.

6. Mickey-mousing is
- A. a way to narrate through music rather than language.*
 - B. a way to promote pop music.
 - C. a way to narrate through language instead of music.
 - D. only used in Disney movies.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 199–200.

7. An example of synchronous sound is
- A. a stinger.
 - B. music that is played over a film's credits.
 - C. narration by someone who is not a character in the story.
 - D. music coming from a iPod playing on screen.*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 185.

8. An example of asynchronous sound is
- A. a talking head.
 - B. a character singing.
 - C. musical motifs that signify a character.*
 - D. room tone.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 185.

9. Which 1927 Warner Bros. film is credited with convincing studios and audiences that synchronized sound was here to stay?
- A. *The Lights of New York*
 - B. *The Jazz Singer**
 - C. *The Birth of a Nation*
 - D. *The Plow That Broke the Plains*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 182.

10. Sound perspective refers to
- A. the creation of sound effects.
 - B. the relationship between the sound mixer and the soundtrack.
 - C. the volume of the soundtrack.
 - D. the apparent distance of a sound source.*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 191.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. _____ has a visible onscreen source, such as when dialogue appears to come directly from the speaker's moving lips. (**Synchronous sound**)

The answer can be found on p. 185.

2. A _____ does not belong to the characters' world; they cannot hear it.
(nondiegetic sound)

The answer can be found on p. 186.

3. A musical _____ may be played in different ways at different times to help convey something about a character, or it may be a piece of music associated with a specific character or group of characters. **(motif)**

The answer can be found on p. 198.

4. A _____ is a character, a person, or an unidentifiable voice that provides commentary during a film. **(narrator)**

The answer can be found on p. 192.

5. A _____ creates sound effects and synchronizes them with the images. **(Foley artist)**

The answer can be found on p. 187.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What was the Vitaphone system, and why was it short-lived?
2. How was sound provided during film showings until the late 1920s?
3. Name two possible functions of prerecorded popular music within a film.
4. What are two possible uses of silence in narrative sound films?
5. Describe two types of film-sound transitions, explaining what they are and how they might be used.

CHAPTER 6

TELLING STORIES: NARRATIVE FILMS

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Character development can involve
 - A. a physical alteration.
 - B. changes from within.
 - C. an improvement or advancement in some quality of the character.
 - D. a loss of or return to some previous state or a deterioration from the present state.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 229–31.

2. A historical narrative location
 - A. is transformed through spiritual or other abstract means related to the narrative.
 - B. marks a historical setting that can carry important meanings and connotations.*
 - C. connects a character's state of mind and the place he or she inhabits at that moment.
 - D. describes spaces and places inscribed with distinctive social values or ideologies.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 238.

3. A story is
 - A. focused on one or more characters.
 - B. the subject matter or raw material of a narrative.
 - C. ordered chronologically.
 - D. tends to be summarized easily.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 222.

4. The deadline structure
 - A. adds to the tension and excitement of a plot.*
 - B. tends to slow down the action in a film.
 - C. employs a lot of narrative flashforwards.
 - D. is an uncommon temporal scheme in narrative films.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 236.

5. Third-person narration
 - A. sees events from outside the story.
 - B. cannot be omniscient.
 - C. may assume a more objective and detached stance vis-à-vis the plot and characters.
 - D. Options A and C are correct.*
 - E. Options B and C are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 240.

6. According to narratology,
- A. there is an unlimited number of action possibilities for a plot.
 - B. plots proceed through a limited number of actions.*
 - C. the best plots should be confusing to follow.
 - D. the best plots feature unrealistic characters.
 - E. the best plots should feature no more than two characters.

The answer can be found on p. 224.

7. An example of linear chronology
- A. structures its story in terms of beginning, middle, and end.*
 - B. might interweave past, present, and future in less predictable or logical patterns.
 - C. may leap ahead of the normal cause-and-effect order to a future incident.
 - D. tells of past events from the perspective of the present or future.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 234.

8. An example of multiple narration
- A. calls attention to the point of view to complicate or subvert its own authority.
 - B. is signaled by the pronoun “I” in written or spoken texts.
 - C. uses several different narrative perspectives for a single story or for different stories.*
 - D. largely confines itself to the experiences and thoughts of the major characters.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 244.

9. Credits
- A. are sometimes seen at the beginning and sometimes at the end of a movie.
 - B. introduce actors, producers, technicians, and others who have worked on the film.
 - C. identify the secondary players and technicians.
 - D. are a nondiegetic element of the narrative.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 232.

10. Classical Hollywood narrative
- A. employs an omniscient or a restricted narration that suggests some degree of realism.
 - B. often appears as a three-part structure.
 - C. develops with linear chronologies directed at certain goals.
 - D. centers on one or more central characters.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 247.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. The _____ orders the events and actions of the story according to particular temporal and spatial patterns, selecting some actions, individuals, and events and omitting others. (**plot**)

The answer can be found on p. 222.

2. The entire world that a story describes or that the viewer infers is called its _____, which indicates the characters, places, and events shown in the story or implied by it. **(diegesis)**

The answer can be found on p. 231.

3. _____ refers to the length of time an event or action is presented in a plot. **(Narrative duration)**

The answer can be found on pp. 236–37.

4. When a film reduces an otherwise realistic character to a set of static traits that identify him or her in terms of a social, physical, or cultural category, this character becomes a _____. **(stereotype)**

The answer can be found on p. 229.

5. When a flashback describes the perspective on the whole story, it creates a _____, which tells of past events from the perspective of the present or future. **(retrospective plot)**

The answer can be found on p. 235.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What effect might be created for the film viewer when a narrative frame brackets the film's narrative in a way that helps define its terms and meaning?
2. Explain two possible major general advantages of including divided characters in a film narrative.
3. What is plot order? Give two examples of plot orders and what they each might convey in a film.
4. How did the introduction of sound technology and dialogue in the late 1920s enable film narratives to create and develop more intricate characters who were used to propel more complex movie plots?
5. Give an example of a nondiegetic element and explain how it might contribute to the meaning of a film.

CHAPTER 7

REPRESENTING THE REAL: DOCUMENTARY FILMS

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Arriflex is
 - A. a lightweight 16mm camera.*
 - B. a portable magnetic sync-sound recorder.
 - C. video equipment.
 - D. one of the most renowned “city symphony” documentaries.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 261.

2. In 1926, the term “documentary film” was coined by
 - A. F. W. Murnau.
 - B. John Grierson.*
 - C. Robert Flaherty.
 - D. Dziga Vertov.
 - E. the Man of Aran.

The answer can be found on p. 256.

3. Personal documentaries became a rapidly growing subgenre in the 1980s because of
 - A. increased interest from major film studios.
 - B. increased shooting ratios.*
 - C. the development of the lightweight 16mm camera.
 - D. the golden age of television.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 261.

4. Which of the following does NOT describe a non-narrative film?
 - A. a film that uses a visual list as an organization pattern
 - B. a film that de-emphasizes stories and narratives
 - C. a film that is based solely on factual descriptions of events*
 - D. a film that contrasts between objects as an organization pattern
 - E. All of the options describe a non-narrative film.

The answer can be found on pp. 263–64.

5. Some specific purposes of political documentaries are
 - A. to provoke or move viewers with the will to reform social systems.
 - B. to support a particular social or political issue or group.
 - C. to take analytical or persuasive positions.
 - D. to investigate and to celebrate the political activities of men and women.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 275–76.

6. Historical documentaries
 - A. are a type of social documentary.
 - B. rely on old film footage or letters, testimonials by historians, or photographs.
 - C. recover and represent events or figures in history.
 - D. are often compilations of materials.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 276–77.

7. Which of the following statements on cinéma vérité is correct?
 - A. It typically employs reenactments.
 - B. It began in the United States, before spreading to Canada and France.
 - C. It insists on filming real people, events, and objects in a confrontational way.*
 - D. It was developed by Dziga Vertov.
 - E. It is closely associated with the mockumentary.

The answer can be found on p. 278.

8. An example given in your textbook of a documentary that uses reenactments is
 - A. *Paris Is Burning* (1990).
 - B. *Atomic Cafe* (1982).
 - C. *The Thin Blue Line* (1988).*
 - D. *Dead Birds* (1965).
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 280.

9. In the 1930s and 1940s, which of these institutions supported documentary practices?
 - A. the American Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)
 - B. New York City's Film and Photo League *
 - C. the German ZDF television station
 - D. the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 260.

10. Contrastive organizations
 - A. present a series of oppositions meant to indicate the different points of view.
 - B. may suggest a more complicated relationship between objects or individuals.
 - C. are a variation on cumulative organizations.
 - D. may be evaluative, distinguishing between positive and negative events.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 266.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. Among the very first movies that appeared in 1895, some were called _____ because they showed moving nonfiction snapshots of real people and events. (**actualities**)

The answer can be found on p. 259.

2. The American documentary version of cinema vérité, _____ aims to capture unfolding events as unobtrusively as possible. (**direct cinema**)

The answer can be found on p. 278.

3. A _____ eschews or de-emphasizes stories and narratives, instead employing other forms like lists, repetition, or contrasts as its organizational structure. (**non-narrative film**)

The answer can be found on p. 263.

4. A _____ takes a much more humorous approach to the question of truth and fact by using a documentary style and structure to present and stage fictional (sometimes ludicrous) realities. (**mockumentary**)

The answer can be found on p. 280.

5. _____ aim to reveal global cultures and peoples, both living and extinct, authentically, without imposing the filmmaker's interpretations, but in fact they are often implicitly shaped by the perspectives of their makers. (**Anthropological films**)

The answer can be found on p. 277.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. Explain two possible functions of reflexive positions in documentary film.
2. How have cable and satellite television networks provided more opportunities for documentary projects?
3. What are cinema vérité and direct cinema? Give two examples of how these two approaches differ.
4. What are some of the advantages and liabilities of governments and institutions funding and distributing documentary films?
5. How did the introduction of optical sound recording in 1927 advance documentary films?

CHAPTER 8 CHALLENGING FORM: EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND NEW MEDIA

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Who considered cinema the most important of the arts for the revolutionaries?
 - A. Germaine Dulac
 - B. Dziga Vertov
 - C. Fernand Léger
 - D. Vladimir Lenin*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 289.

2. Which of the following is *not* a “city symphony” film?
 - A. *Manhatta* (1921)
 - B. *Borderline* (1930)*
 - C. *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927)
 - D. *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929)
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 289.

3. MTV brought which of these previously experimental techniques into the mainstream?
 - A. breaking of continuity rules
 - B. nonlinear narratives
 - C. use of handheld cameras
 - D. juxtaposition of different film stocks
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 296.

4. Which of the following is a type of experimental organization?
 - A. associative
 - B. abstract
 - C. structural
 - D. both A and C*
 - E. both B and C

The answer can be found on p. 299.

5. Film scholar Tom Gunning suggests that early cinema’s “look at me!” quality continues to shape ongoing film traditions such as
 - A. special effects.
 - B. musical numbers.
 - C. formal techniques used by avant-garde cinema.
 - D. comedy skits.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 297.

6. Which of the following statements about Andy Warhol is NOT accurate?
- A. He made *Empire* (1964), an eight-hour film of the Empire State Building.
 - B. The screening of his controversial film *Flaming Creatures* (1963) was shut down by the police.*
 - C. He definitively shaped the underground film movement in the 1960s.
 - D. He created his own version of the Hollywood studio system.
 - E. He produced both *Chelsea Girls* (1966) and *Flesh* (1968).

The answer can be found on p. 291.

7. Which of the following is an example of a formalist practice in experimental film?
- A. the use of a stationary medium shot to frame images as flat planes
 - B. the structural repetition of geometric shapes
 - C. the exploration of the principles of light
 - D. the use of editing to produce a “flicker effect”
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 298.

8. An example of expanded cinema is
- A. *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959).
 - B. *Serene Velocity* (1970).
 - C. *Video Fish* (1975).*
 - D. *Zorns Lemma* (1970).
 - E. *Chelsea Girls* (1966).

The answer can be found on p. 304.

9. Which of the following statements about surrealism is correct?
- A. It is used to express a personal position in film.
 - B. It uses recognizable imagery in strange contexts.*
 - C. It borrows from traditions of inspiration and creativity based in Romanticism.
 - D. It is typically associated with a political stance.
 - E. It is only used in video art.

The answer can be found on p. 304.

10. Third Cinema
- A. rejected commercial cinema.
 - B. rejected “auteur” or art cinema.
 - C. engaged directly with the people.
 - D. was a term coined by Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 295.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. A great many experimental films are _____, that is, concerned with problems of form over issues of content. (**formalist**)

The answer can be found on p. 298.

2. _____, formal experiments that are also nonrepresentational, use color, shape, and line to create patterns and rhythms that are purely form-based or abstracted (that is, made more conceptual than concrete) from real actions and objects. (**Abstract films**)

The answer can be found on p. 299.

3. _____ typically emphasize a personal voice or vision through the singularity of the image or through the use of voiceover or handheld cameras. (**Lyrical films/Lyrical styles**)

The answer can be found on p. 305.

4. While based in documentary in its presentation of information, 1980s _____ also used experimental techniques of editing, design elements drawn from advertising and propaganda, and self-conscious voiceover and personal reflection. (**activist video**)

The answer can be found on p. 312.

5. A term used in both information science and communications as well as the arts, _____ refers to an array of technologies including the Internet, digital formats, video game consoles, smartphones, wireless devices, and the software applications and imaginative creations they support. (**new media**)

The answer can be found on p. 287.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What topics did the underground film movement in New York engage with in the 1960s? Give two examples of filmmakers and how they deployed documentary and experimental practices.
2. What was the Sony Portapak, and how did electronic video technology spur both activist video and video art?
3. How do films that focus on the material of the film (its grain, sprockets, and journey through a projector past a beam of light), and follow a particular editing logic or other formal principle of construction, inform a wide variety of media art and challenge the audience's perceptions?
4. What effect might be created for the film viewer by essay films that blur the boundaries between experimental and documentary to question the "truth" of documentary?
5. Explain two possible uses of surrealist imagery and narrative logic in animated and live-action films.

CHAPTER 9

RITUALS, CONVENTIONS, ARCHETYPES, AND FORMULAS: MOVIE GENRES

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Fordism inspired Hollywood studios to
 - A. create, again and again, many different modified versions of a popular movie.
 - B. establish their association with specific genres.
 - C. refine their production line techniques.
 - D. efficiently recycle formulas and conventions, stars, and sets.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 319.

2. In the first films of the 1890s, common formulas for short films included
 - A. westerns.
 - B. “blue movies.”*
 - C. sporting events.
 - D. slapstick comedies.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 319.

3. In romantic comedies,
 - A. attention is drawn to a peculiar or awkward social predicament.
 - B. romance will eventually overcome predicaments on the way to a happy ending.
 - C. the emotional attraction of a couple is treated in a consistently lighthearted manner.
 - D. humor takes a second place to happiness.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 328.

4. Which of the following statements about slapstick comedies is NOT correct?
 - A. They revolve around physical stunts set in fairly restricted social spaces.
 - B. They are marked by their physical humor.
 - C. They reemerged in the 1980s.
 - D. They comprised some of the first narrative films.
 - E. They feature barbed verbal exchanges between men and women.*

The answer can be found on p. 327.

5. Narratives that rely on coincidences and reversals and build toward emotional or physical climaxes are typical of
 - A. backstage musicals.
 - B. slasher films.
 - C. existential westerns.
 - D. melodramas.*
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 331.

6. In westerns,
- A. violent confrontations are central.
 - B. the battle is often about individual justice or revenge.
 - C. the hero is often a loner for whom violence comes naturally.
 - D. quests move through wide-open canyons and deserts.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 328–30.

7. An example of a psychological horror film is
- A. *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991).
 - B. *Don't Look Now* (1973).
 - C. *Funny Games* (2007).
 - D. *Psycho* (1960).
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 337.

8. An example of a hard-boiled detective film is
- A. *Goodfellas* (1990).
 - B. *Scarface* (1932).
 - C. *The Maltese Falcon* (1941).*
 - D. *Hana-bi* (1997).
 - E. *The Departed* (2006).

The answer can be found on p. 340.

9. A historical paradigm is
- A. a film that represents the generic ideal at a particular point in history.*
 - B. a historical genre that is no longer appealing to audiences.
 - C. a film that represents the generic ideal in a formal or structural sense.
 - D. a genre that is based on the reenactments of real, historical events.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 345.

10. Film noir
- A. uncovers darkness and corruption in virtually all its characters.
 - B. emerged in the 1940s.
 - C. is a film style of shades and shadows that, in turn, reflects the shady moral universe.
 - D. can be considered a subgenre of crime films.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 340–41.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. A _____ is a category or classification of a group of movies in which the individual films share similar subject matter and similar ways of organizing the subject through narrative and stylistic patterns. (**genre**)

The answer can be found on p. 316.

2. In a _____, a spiritual evil erupts in the human realm, sometimes to avenge a moral wrong and sometimes for no explainable reason. (**supernatural horror film**)

The answer can be found on p. 337.

3. In the 1930s and 1940s, _____ transformed the humor of the physical into fast-talking verbal gymnastics, arguably displacing sexual energy with barbed verbal exchanges between men and women when the Production Code barred more direct expression. (**screwball comedies**)

The answer can be found on p. 327.

4. In _____, the idyllic and redemptive moments of song and dance are part of everyday lives. (**integrated musicals**)

The answer can be found on p. 335.

5. A _____ is created through the interaction of different genres to produce fusions, such as romantic comedies or musical horror films. (**hybrid genre**)

The answer can be found on p. 325.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What was the Paramount decision of 1948, and what was its effect on movie genres?
2. What is generic reflexivity? Give two examples of what it might convey in a film.
3. How do generic formulas provide patterns for developing stories in a particular genre?
4. What effect might be created for the film viewer when a revisionist genre film realigns certain generic expectations or breaks with certain generic conventions?
5. Explain two possible uses of genre in publicizing a film.

CHAPTER 10
HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY: HOLLYWOOD AND BEYOND

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The “Biograph Girl” was
 - A. Florence Lawrence.*
 - B. Birt Acres.
 - C. D. W. Griffith.
 - D. Mary Pickford.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 358.

2. For many historians, cinema history began with the first screening of
 - A. *The Derby*.
 - B. *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*.*
 - C. *Fred Ott’s Sneeze*.
 - D. *The Lonedale Operator*.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 357.

3. Which of the following statements accurately describes German expressionist cinema?
 - A. It focused on the dark fringes of the human experience.*
 - B. All films were simultaneously filmed in German, French, and English versions.
 - C. It celebrated the excesses of human life through big musical productions.
 - D. It emphasized historical and documentary subjects.
 - E. All films were silent.

The answer can be found on p. 361.

4. Germaine Dulac’s *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928) is an example of
 - A. early cinema.
 - B. Third Cinema.
 - C. an impressionist film.*
 - D. dialectical montage.
 - E. Italian neorealism.

The answer can be found on p. 363.

5. The Motion Picture Production Code
 - A. averted the threats of local censors.
 - B. kept censorship efforts within the industry.
 - C. was adopted in 1930.
 - D. governed the depiction of crime and sex.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 360.

6. Parallel Cinema was
- A. centered mainly in Calcutta.
 - B. exemplified by the films of renowned director Satyajit Ray.
 - C. rooted in Bengali landscape and culture.
 - D. an alternative to India's commercial cinema.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 375.

7. An example of a postwar film movement, which spanned from 1946 to 1968, is
- A. Italian neorealism.
 - B. Third Cinema.
 - C. Japanese cinema in the West.
 - D. the French New Wave.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 364.

8. An example of a "Big Five" studio is
- A. Universal.
 - B. United Artists.
 - C. Fox.*
 - D. Columbia.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 360.

9. In the early 1990s, the burgeoning trend of aesthetically innovative films by young LGBT filmmakers was dubbed
- A. New LGBT Cinema.
 - B. New Queer Cinema. *
 - C. Parallel Cinema.
 - D. Pride Cinema.
 - E. Third Cinema.

The answer can be found on p. 392.

10. Characteristics of Iranian cinema include
- A. child protagonists.
 - B. an elliptical storytelling mode.
 - C. spare pictorial beauty.
 - D. rural settings.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 379.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. _____ is the study of the methods and principles through which the past becomes organized according to certain perspectives and priorities. (**Historiography**)

The answer can be found on p. 356.

2. A conventional way of organizing film history, _____ divides film history into historical segments that help identify movies' shared thematic and stylistic concerns. **(periodization)**

The answer can be found on p. 356.

3. _____ links together conflicting or unrelated images to generate an emotional, intellectual, and political understanding of events. **(Dialectical montage)**

The answer can be found on p. 363.

4. Films that have been abandoned by their owners or copyright holders, or otherwise neglected are called _____. **(orphan films)**

The answer can be found on p. 395.

5. The genre known as _____, which featured streetwise African American protagonists, was made possible in part by the black power movement. **(blaxploitation)**

The answer can be found on p. 386.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What was HUAC, and what was its effect on Hollywood's creative pool?
2. How did Hollywood movies change in 1968, when the Production Code era officially ended and the ratings system was introduced?
3. What are orphan films? Give two examples of how the variety of forms, styles, and uses of orphan films helps us understand how central film was to the twentieth century, and how taken for granted it was.
4. What effect might be created for the film viewer by the proliferation of LGBT images in mainstream television and films?
5. Explain two possible benefits of film archives and film preservation.

CHAPTER 11

READING ABOUT FILM: CRITICAL THEORIES AND METHODS

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The “imaginary”
 - A. is one of three domains of psychic experience.
 - B. deals in images.
 - C. is rooted in the mirror stage.
 - D. refers to psychoanalysis and in particular to French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s definition of a particular realm of psychic experience.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on p. 419.

2. In her essay, “Is the Gaze Male?” E. Ann Kaplan notes that
 - A. women enjoy being looked at by men.
 - B. vision is associated with submission.
 - C. vision is associated with ownership and power.*
 - D. the sexual identity of a filmmaker has no bearing on his or her work.
 - E. the sexual identity of a filmmaker influences his or her work.

The answer can be found on p. 421.

3. Which of the following is a hallmark of classical film theory?
 - A. classicalism
 - B. constructivism
 - C. auteur theory
 - D. realism*
 - E. postmodernism

The answer can be found on p. 406.

4. In “Cinema/Ideology/Criticism,” Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni use category “e” to designate films that
 - A. feature formal excesses or internal contradictions.*
 - B. stand out as “perfect” representations of an era.
 - C. seamlessly illustrate certain ideologies.
 - D. reject the status quo.
 - E. All of the options are correct.

The answer can be found on p. 418.

5. In his essay “The Evolution of the Language of Cinema,” André Bazin
 - A. saw the image not only as a reference to reality but also as a record of it.
 - B. argued that montage interfered, by altering spatial and temporal relationships.
 - C. viewed cinema as a means of transcending time.
 - D. advocated for the use of composition in depth.
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 407–08.

6. Which of the following statements about star studies is NOT correct?
- A. Star studies theorists are interested in how an audience's reception shapes a star's cultural meaning.
 - B. It is a revealing and useful critical approach because it taps into our everyday experience as fans.
 - C. It studies discourses about stars, like promotion and publicity, outside of movie roles.
 - D. It studies how viewers interact with the cinematic apparatus.*
 - E. All of the statements are correct.

The answer can be found on pp. 424–26.

7. Gilles Deleuze describes the “movement image” as
- A. prevalent in early cinema.
 - B. a cause-and-effect view of the world.*
 - C. representing the open-endedness of time.
 - D. best demonstrated in the films of Roberto Rossellini.
 - E. the dominance of digital media in our lives.

The answer can be found on p. 428.

8. For Jean Baudrillard, an example of a simulacrum is
- A. window-shopping.
 - B. Disneyland.*
 - C. “the cultural logic of late capitalism.”
 - D. pastiche.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 432.

9. In the 1950s, *Cahiers du cinéma* published the writings of which of the following?
- A. Jean-Luc Godard
 - B. François Truffaut
 - C. Jacques Rivette
 - D. Eric Rohmer
 - E. All of the options are correct.*

The answer can be found on pp. 409–10.

10. David Bordwell, one of the most prolific and well-respected film scholars, advocates
- A. cognitivism.*
 - B. phenomenology.
 - C. referentiality.
 - D. the analogy of film to dreams.
 - E. None of the options is correct.

The answer can be found on p. 428.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK QUESTIONS

1. In the 1950s _____, which asserts that a film bears the creative imprint of one individual (typically the director), emerged when specific directors were vocally championed by the French critics. (**auteur theory**)

The answer can be found on p. 410.

2. The study of narrative forms, _____ is a branch of structuralism that encompasses stories of all kinds, including films. (**narratology**)

The answer can be found on p. 417.

3. Formalist approaches to specific film texts are often called _____, which analyze texts by isolating, naming, and considering the effects of individual elements and of their interrelationships, sometimes by looking at a segment of film shot by shot. (**close readings**)

The answer can be found on p. 402.

4. A _____ is composed of a *signifier*, the spoken or written word, picture, or gesture, and a *signified*, the mental concept it evokes. The two parts cannot be imagined without each other. (**sign**)

The answer can be found on p. 413.

5. _____ focuses on how a film is received by audiences, rather than on who made a film or on its formal features or thematic content. (**Reception theory**)

The answer can be found on p. 423.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (3–4 SENTENCES)

1. What is star studies? In what ways can it present a particularly revealing and useful critical approach to cinema?
2. What is cinephilia, and how does it inform the *politique des auteurs*?
3. Explain two possible ways that reception theorists see multiple ways of interacting with a text as confirmation that individuals actively make meaning even in response to otherwise homogenous mass media.
4. How have recent theories of exile and homeland, cultural hybridity and diaspora, and the global and the intercultural added to the store of explanatory frames we have for looking at race and representation in cinema?
5. How has an ideological critique of film and mass culture exerted a profound influence on shaping film theory?