

## MTA 253 - LECTURE TOPICS

FILM IS A "TIME ART"  
BEST UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF  
GEOGRAPHY,  
INFORMATION,  
FEELING

ACTING BEATS  
NARRATIVE, or STORY, BEATS

ALL FILM BUILDS UPON THE INHERENT  
TENSION BETWEEN THE  
PHOTOGRAPHIC NATURALISM OF THE  
MEDIUM AND ITS FORMALISM (THE  
CAPACITY TO EDIT ALL THAT IS  
PHOTOGRAPHED).

VISUALIZING YOUR SCENE

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HOW DO YOU WANT THE VIEWER TO  
SEE THE SCENE AND WHY?  
IF YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE, IN WHICH  
CHARACTER'S "HEAD" DO YOU WANT  
THE VIEWER TO BE?

N.B.: THE STAGE IS ABOUT ACTION;  
THE SCREEN IS ABOUT REACTION

ENVISION THE QUAD-SPLIT IN  
YOUR MIND'S EYE: SINGLES, DOUBLES,  
WIDE, AND "X"

ALL CAMERA PLACEMENT AND  
MOVEMENT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN  
TERMS OF PURPOSE AND MOTIVE

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IDEALLY, THE DIRECTOR IS INVOLVED  
IN CASTING

THE AESTHETIC OF MODERN AMERICAN  
DRAMATIC FILM IS STRONGLY BASED  
UPON "NATURALISM"

HENCE, DIRECTORS ENCOURAGE  
ACTORS TO FIND THE CHARACTER  
WITHIN THEMSELVES, WHICH, SINCE  
THE 1950s, IS DESCRIBED AS "METHOD  
ACTING"

IT IS THE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY  
TO DIRECT THE D.P. TO DO THE  
FOLLOWING WITH THE CAMERA:

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- a. HOW TO FRAME THE SHOT
- b. WHEN TO CHANGE TO ANOTHER ANGLE
- c. WHEN TO CHANGE IMAGE SIZE
- d. WHEN AND HOW TO PUT THE CAMERA INTO MOTION
- e. WHEN TO CHANGE FOCAL LENGTH OF THE LENS
- f. WHEN TO CHANGE CAMERA SPEEDS OR TO STOP MOTION (FREEZE FRAME)

THE DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION OF THE SCENE DETERMINES:

- 1. USE OF OBJECTIVE CAMERA OR THE USE OF SUBJECTIVE CAMERA (P.O.V.)

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2. THE USE OF REVEALS

3. THE USE OF INSERTS/CUTAWAYS

4. THE USE OF REACTION SHOTS

N.B.: THE STAGE IS ABOUT ACTION;  
THE SCREEN IS ABOUT REACTION

FOR ANY DIALOGUE SCENE WITH TWO  
CHARACTERS, NORMALLY YOU WILL

WANT TO FILM:

A MASTER

A TWO-SHOT

REVERSE ANGLE SINGLES

O.T.S. SHOTS

CLOSE-UPS

(USE THIS AS A BASIC GUIDELINE FROM  
WHICH TO WORK)

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THE SPATIAL SEPARATION OF  
CHARACTERS IS FACILITATED  
TO THE EXTENT THAT A SPACE HAS  
BEEN FULLY ESTABLISHED FOR THE  
VIEWER

“CHEATING” IS ENCOURAGED

EACH DIRECTOR NEEDS:  
A MARKED SHOOTING SCRIPT  
A SHOT LIST OF CAMERA SET-UPS  
A FLOOR PLAN  
STORYBOARDS

IN THE BEGINNING WAS “COVERAGE”!

YOU ARE FILMING:

- a. TO COVER VITAL STORY POINTS
- b. TO COVER CHARACTER ‘BEATS’

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- a. TO PROVIDE COVERAGE OF REACTIONS AS WELL AS ACTIONS
- b. TO PROVIDE FOOTAGE SO THAT EDITORS CAN CUT ON MOVEMENT

THE DIRECTOR, IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
the D.P., NEEDS TO:

- c. CHECK THE COMPOSITION OF EACH  
FRAME
- d. REHEARSE ALL CAMERA  
MOVEMENTS WITH THE CAMERA  
OPERATOR
- e. USE A MONITOR OR VIDEOTAP  
TO FOLLOW WHAT THE CAMERA IS  
RECORDING, TODAY, MOST DIRECTORS  
WATCH A VIDEO MONITOR OR  
VIDEOTAP

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ON THE SET:

- a. ESTABLISH CONTROL: BE PREPARED AND BE DECISIVE, WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE BEING OVERBEARING
- b. MAKE SURE THE ACTORS KNOW THEIR BLOCKING, MARKS, AND THE PARAMETERS OF THE FRAME IN WHICH THEY HAVE TO WORK
- c. USE 'CRIB NOTES'
- d. TRY TO FOLLOW CONTINUITY FOR THIS MTA 253 EXERCISE
- e. ADDRESS YOUR CHARACTERS BY THEIR ROLE NAMES, AND PROVIDE DIRECTIONS TO THEM FOR THEIR SPECIFIC CHARACTERS

f. STAY IN THE MOMENT. ASK  
YOURSELF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN  
YOUR HEAD

- THE FUNDAMENTAL, CORE  
QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF  
REPEATEDLY:

“IS THIS WORKING?”