Term 1: Chapter 1 - Photography

Handout 2

Realism & Formalism

1. Realistic films-Give a clear picture of reality with minimum distortion and not calling attention to any one style.
2. Formal (Expressionist) films-Deliberately distorts and stylize reality, calling attention to the filmmaker, himself.
3. Classical films- most movies are in the classic vein and are functional, story –oriented films.
4. 4. Avant-garde cinema- subject matter is covered up in favor of abstraction and emphasis is put on beauty for its own sake.

The Shots

A shot is defined by the amount of subject matter framed on the screen.

Categories:

1. extreme long shot- (exterior) taken from a long distance. Also known as an establishing shot and mostly used in westerns, war films, etc…
2. long shot- Equals the distance between the audience and the stage.
3. full shot- closest range of a long shot and barely keeps the entire length of a figure in the frame.
4. medium shot-Knees to waist up and usually used for conversations. (two-shot = 2 people, three shot = 3 people and an Over-the-Shoulder Shot is a 2 shot over the back of the foreground figure.)
5. close-up-Shows little locale and zeroes in on a face.

It emphasizes the importance of things.

1. extreme close-up- this zeroes in on certain features of an object or face( the knob on a door, eyes, etc…)
2. deep-focus-(wide angle shot) –captures objects at close, medium and long range all at the same time.

The Angles:

1. bird’s-eye view- filmed from directly overhead-vulnerability
2. high angle-Using a crane or “high point”- motion is slowed down, spectator’s view
3. eye-level-put you on level with the scene or characters and let you make judgment as if you were a present onlooker.
4. low angle- opposite of high-angle and suggest verticality, increase short actors’ height and can capture sense of imbalance or confusion. Motion is sped up. Used a lot in propaganda films.
5. oblique angle-laterally tilted camera (left or right) skewing the horizon and making characters appear to be off balance . Creates tension and anxiety.

Light & Dark

Lighting “key” goes along with the genre and mood of a film.

1.high key- Bright and even lighting (comedies)

2. high contrast- harsh streaks of light throughout blackness ( tragedies)

3. low key- shadowy and atmospheric light (gangster movies)

4. film noir- lack of light, night-time and urbanity. Mostly ascribed to the ‘40s and ‘50s but there has been “neo-nior” films since the’60s(Fargo, Sin City)

Color

Use of color has developed over the years. It was not used widely in movies until the 40’s. Now we can digitally colorize old B&W films. But sometimes colorization can inadvertently evoke the wrong importance or mood to a scene. It is used for symbolism and can change drastically from scene to scene or even within a scene.

Lenses, Filters

Realistic Filmmakers more than not use standard lenses and formalists tend to use filters and optical modifiers.

1. Telephoto (long)lenses- to get closeups but can also achieve focus effects (rack /selective focusing)
2. Wide-angle (short) lenses- short focal length lenses with wide view angles.

These lenses can exaggerate movement.

Stock

1. fast stock- sensitive to light, adaptable (documentaries)
2. slow stock- need much lighting but capture colors more realistically.

The Digital Revolution

Introduced in the ‘80s and refined in the 90’s , now over the past 10 tears, Digital technology has changed the way we capture, produce, edit, distribute and even watch film.

1. Higher resolution
2. Pixels = picture elements, the more pixels per inch, the closer it resembles the real thing with little distortion, unless, of course, you desire distortion, then ou can produce it with software effects.
3. Digital cameras these day are becoming smaller yet much more flexible and require much less light than film cameras.
4. Digital video saves money.
5. Digital video is easier to edit.

Cinematography

Cinematography is controversial. Many cinematographers have been lauded when all they have done is follow the director’s shot set-ups to a tee.

1. Hitchcock used *storyboarding* so that his cinematographers would set up each shot exactly how he envisioned them.
2. George Willis (Godfather trilogy) is the most renowned cinematographer.
3. It is important for directors to know how the camera works as well as the shots he wants and the lighting.
4. Sidney Lumen ( Serpico, Dog Day Afternoon, etc.) made up a *Lens Chart* directing his cinematographers exactly which lens to use for each scene.