Current Issues in (American) Film

1. What is “film”?  
   * Acquisition, Editing, and Delivery Systems—film, tape, computer; digital, analog  
   * Nonlinear editing (old AND new)  
   * HDTV/DTV/Convergence with film?--Digital Cinema  
   * “Film Purists”  
     - The strange case of Dogme

2. “Ownership” of film  
   * Who's the author?  
   * Copyright  
     * Piracy (e.g., in-theater copying--*Tarzan*, *Star Wars Episode I*, digital piracy)  
   * Who has the right to change, edit?  
     - Colorization (derivative work; public domain)  
     - Pan & Scan vs. Letterboxing  
     - “Clean Flicks” case

3. Originality--Is there anything really new?  
   * Remakes and sequels and prequels  
   * “Synthespians”

4. Cultural Imperialism & Film  
   * America entertains the world—does it also affect cultures?  
   * European Union’s reactions to Hollywood

5. "Indies" (the role of independent filmmaking)  
   * The post-studio era—is everything an “indie”?  
     More on this later in the term. . .
* The importance of the Film Festival
* “Breakthrough” e.g.s--Jim Jarmusch’s *Stranger Than Paradise*, Robert Rodriguez’s *El Mariachi*, Kevin Smith's *Clerks*, Allison Anders' *Mi Vida Loca*
* Independent Film Channel(s); John Pierson
* Local examples--Robert Banks, Ohio Independent Film Festival
The Language and Technique of Filmmaking

1. Shots
   * Mise en scene
   * Type of shot: ECU
     CU
     MS
     LS
     ELS
   * Two-shot, three-shot
   * Over-the-shoulder shot
   * POV shot
   * Subjective shot

2. Angles
   * High (in the extreme: "birdseye" or even "top shot")
   * Low
   * Canted

3. Camera Movement
   A: Camera base  B: Camera base
   Direction     does not move   moves
   Left/right    Pan            Truck
   Up/down       Tilt           Boom/ped/crane
   Closer/further Zoom          Dolly

1 - "Tracking" shots
B: Can result in motion parallax/motion perspective
Also:
* Zoom/Dolly combo
* Arc
* Hand-held shots
* Steadicam
* Aerial shots
* Unmotivated camera movement/"discovery" shot

4. Transitions
* Cut (video: take)
* Dissolve\(^1\)
* Fade in/fade out\(^1\)
* Wipe (also called traveling matte)\(^1\)--e.g., iris
* Swish pan

[\(^1\) - Typically requires optical printer or digital work]

5. Lighting
* Classic 3-point system (key, fill, back)
* Chiaroscuro lighting
* Gobos
6. Lenses

A. Focal length - distance from film to surface of lens

* Wide angle (short lens)
  < 35 mm
  Wide field of vision.
  Subject seems far.
  In extreme, called "fisheye."

* "Normal"
  ~50 mm

* Telephoto (Long lens)
  > 60 mm
  Narrow field of vision.
  Subject seems close.

* Zoom - variable focal length
Examples of short and long lenses' fields of vision
B. Aperture/diaphragm - size of opening

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Large opening, more light
Small opening, less light

"Fast" lenses are capable of low F-stops

C. Depth of field - the range of distance in front of the lens that appears in focus.

The following contribute to a large DOF (allowing a "deep focus" shot):
1. wide angle lens
2. greater ambient light
3. smaller aperture (large F-stop)

D. Other focus terminology
   * Rack the lens/selective focusing/focus pull
   * Follow focus
   * Soft focus

7. Film stock
   * Film size (8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, 105mm)
   * "Fast" film
8. Editing

A. Continuity Editing/Classical Editing
   1. Decoupage + Montage
   2. Master shot/Establishing shot (usually LS)
   3. Eyeline match
   4. Shot-Reverse-Shot series
   5. In80° system
   5. Invisible editing, e.g.:
      * dissolves
      * orientation cuts
      * cut on action
      * continuity (visual + sound)
   6. Consideration of legibility & centripetal decay

B. Sequence shot (long takes)

C. Parallel Editing (includes cross-cutting)

D. Montage Editing/"Thematic Montage"
9. Sound

A. Equipment
   * Mic selection (directional, non-directional)
   * Boom
   * Double-system sound recording for “production sound”/production track
   * However--most sound is added in “post”. . .

B. Post-production techniques
   * VO (voiceover) narration
   * Postdubbing/Dubbing/Looping/ADR
   * Sound effects (“real” and synthetic)
   * Foleying

C. Stylistic techniques
   * Sound design/the sound designer
   * Talkovers/overlapping dialogue
   * Sound bridges (for continuity)
   * Sound montage

D. Soundtrack music
   * Diagetic vs. nondiagetic music
   * Musical leitmotifs
   * Mickeymousing
   * Music licensing & composers’ agreements