



Why Study Cinematography?

WITH JIM SOTO



Why Cinematography?

You've been watching movies all your life! So has everybody else you know. From the 3D cineplexes to the DVD player in your dad's minivan to the 80 inch 4K TV hanging in your living room to your mobile devices; there's just no escaping movies.



Its Effects

Watching movies is an overwhelming personal experience. Whether we are aware of it or not, movies shape our perceptions about reality. Because of its visual nature, its impact in our lives is enormous.

Additionally, it's cultural influences & effects can be both positive & negative.

The Good

Positive Effects

- Provides escapism
- Reaffirms positive social values, ideals, etc.
 - Provides moments of inspiration and catharsis (e.g. Mr. Spock's sacrifice)
- Provides examples of good role modeling
- Presents realities that could otherwise be untapped by viewers



Star Trek II - The Wrath of Khan (1982)



Sin City (2005)

The Bad

Negative Effects

- Anti-social & amoral behavior glamorization (violence, sex, etc.)
- Horrific role modeling (e.g. several Disney “princesses”, multiple revenge driven vigilantes, etc...)
- Present unrealistic “realities” that create unrealistic perceptions.

The Functions of Film

Films fulfill several functions:

1. Provides entertainment
2. Communicates information about various subjects (many important)
3. Can provide understanding of life realities
4. Can help develop an appreciation of esthetics



Schindler's List (1993)

Film & Communication

Films also functions as a form of communication. Film... :

1. Provides narrative information (plot, characters, etc.)
2. Enhances mood & emotion (feelings, a cathartic effect, etc.)
3. Provides “visual pleasure” (enjoyment)
4. Teaches us about social-cultural ideas, attitudes, & values (via subtexts, themes, ideas, etc.)
5. Critiques social-cultural ideas, attitudes, & values
6. Films are polysemic—that is, different people will have different ideas as to what a film means.

The Benefits of Studying Cinematography



There can be no doubt that the study of cinematography can provide many useful benefits to those that pursue it. The benefits are too numerous to mention in a practical way, so let's keep the following list down to six.

1. Develop Students' Visual & Literacy Skills



You live in a multimedia world and appreciate variety in your learning environment. Some forms of literacy you can develop include: textual, numerical, visual, audio, and multimedia. Visual Literacy is defined as the ability to understand and *produce visual messages. You can benefit by developing your own ability to create, use, and evaluate visual resources.

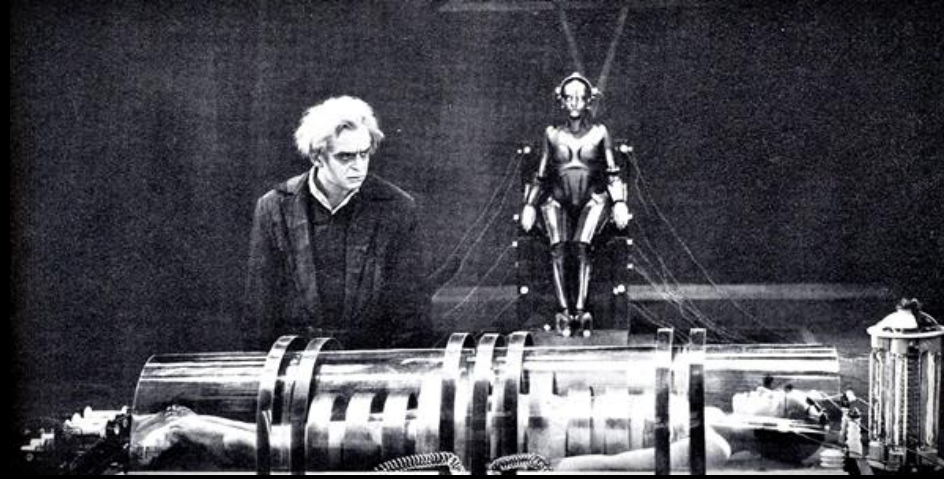
*produce visual messages = making movies.

1. Cont.



By introducing you to concepts of film literacy, such as exploring the effect of different camera shots, lighting, soundtrack, etc., you become more aware of the constructed nature of film texts; this awareness is highly beneficial when constructing and deconstructing written texts. Additionally, there is evidence that examining and understanding how art and text interact may allow you to "visualize" while reading--a key to proficiency in the enjoyment of reading.

2. Broaden Students' Knowledge of Film



Throughout the course you will watch films that you'd probably never otherwise see in the cinema and thus widen your perception, knowledge, and understanding of different types of film. You will learn about the history of cinematography, from its dawn 150 years ago, through the silent era, the "Talkies", the arrival of "Technicolor", to today's Digital 3D and VR revolutions.

3. Expand Students' Social & Cultural Awareness



All students will benefit from sharing viewing experiences in a very immersive setting then having time to discuss and analyze the experience.

4. Develop Students' Ability to View Media Critically and Thoughtfully



The majority of information absorbed by humans is collected through our sight. It seems logical that we emphasize the development of visual skills as a way of preparing for successful and satisfying lives. In a society where powerful interests employ visual data to persuade, this course aims at showing you how to look beyond the surface to understand deeper levels of meaning and tactics used to sway your thinking and steer your emotions.

5. Develop Students' Collaboration Skills



You will have the opportunity to collaborate within a team of peers in the development of a range of cinematic projects that should allow all to showcase a particular set of skills and explore personal interests using the myriad technological tools that are available today. In preparing our students for higher education and careers, 21st century skills call on us to develop highly collaborative citizens.

6. Establish Positive Attitudes to Life-long Learning



By participating in a Cinematography course, you will realize that cinema, film, and education are inseparably connected. In doing so, we will be contributing to developing the film-literate audiences of the future and establishing film as part of our students' cultural heritage. Students who appreciate the educational benefits of film will have attitudes towards learning that will extend well beyond the limits of their school years.

Portfolio Entry



Write a full page (500 word) essay for your portfolio. You'll choose to write about the one benefit (out of six) you are looking forward to the most. Don't forget to follow the correct format, write clearly, and use correct grammar. The paper is due tomorrow. (Value: 15 pts.).



Next:

WHAT IS CINEMATOGRAPHY?

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