**Between the Scenes (Scene Tectonics)  
*Mastering Macro-Montage Within the Feature Film Narrative***

**SAMPLE 14 week class outline**

Instructor: Office Hours:  
Office: Monday:  
Phone: Tuesday:  
E-mail: Wednesday:  
 Thursday:

Required Text:

Bays, J. (2014). *Between the Scenes: What Every Film Director, Writer, and Editor Should Know About Scene Transitions.* Michael Wiese Productions.

Recommended Readings:

Bordwell, D 1985, *Narration in the fiction film,* Methuen, London.

Pearlman, K 2009, *Cutting rhythms,* Focal Press, Oxford.

Chatman, S 1978, *Story and discourse: narrative structure in fiction and film*, Cornell University Press, New York.

Levaco, R (trans. 1974), *Kuleshov on Film: the writings of Lev Kuleshov,* Berkeley, University of California Press.

Objectives

This course will cover the ways screenwriters, directors, and film editors can implement the aesthetic, narrative, and cinematic connections between their scenes to evoke a stronger emotional connection with their audience. Study will span from the writing phase, through pre-production, production, and post-production of a standard feature film. Topics that will be covered include: Narrative theory including Bordwell and Chatman’s *syuzhet* and *fabula,* as well as narrative *ellipses;* Montage theory from Aumont, Eisenstein, and Kulishov as applied to the macro level of scene structure; the theory of Saussure’s Binary Oppositions as applied to aesthetic shifts; Music theory; and Bazin’s long take. This course will shift the mindset of screenwriting and filmmaking away from the traditional approaches and toward the macro-level of scene, sequence, and act structure, including overall rhythms of emotion and tension through a film narrative. Through an examination of selected films and practical exercises students will strengthen their visual storytelling abilities for the screen.

Assignments:

Every student is required to write two (2) 1000 word essays, incorporating the topics and films covered in class. Each student will also give an in-class presentation of 15 minutes in length based on one of the topics they choose for their essay assignments, including a film clip to discuss with the class. Assigned readings should be read prior to each class and students should be prepared to discuss them.

Schedule:

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| WEEK ONE | Course Introduction  Clip from ‘Gladiator’ (2000) dir. Ridley Scott  Readings:   * Kuleshov, L 1929 (trans. 1974), *Art of cinema,* Berkeley, University of California Press. |
| WEEK TWO | Binary Oppositions, Montage Theory: Collision  Clips from ‘Crash’ dir. Haggis  Clips from ‘The Fountain’ dir. Aronofky  Screening: ‘Gerry’ dir. Gus Van Sant  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 2 * Aumont, J; Bergala, A; Marie, M; Vernet, M (eds) 1983, Chapter 2 ‘Montage’, in *Aesthetics of film,* Uni of Texas Press, Austin. p.37-68. |
| WEEK THREE | Montage Theory: Linkage  Clips from ‘Titantic’ dir. Cameron  Screening: ‘Miller’s Crossing’ (1990) dir. Coen Brothers  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 3 * Pearlman Chapter 9 * Bordwell, D 2008, ‘The hook: scene transitions in classical cinema’, David Bordwell’s Website on Cinema, <http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/hook.php>. |
| WEEK FOUR | Linkage: Synchronicity Nodes and Network Narratives  Clips from ‘Elephant’ dir. Gus Van Sant  Screening: ’11:14’ dir. Greg Marcks  Readings:   * Peters, L 2008, 'Private fears in public places: network narrative...', *Synoptique 12: Melodrama*, <http://www.synoptique.ca/core/articles/private\_fears\_in\_public\_places/> |
| WEEK FIVE | Narrative Theory: Syuzhet and Transport Scenes  Clips from ‘Garden State’ Dir. Zach Braff  Clip replayed from ‘Gladiator’ from week 1  Screening: ‘Garden State’ Dir. Zach Braff  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 4 * Bordwell *Narration in the fiction film* Chapter 6 * Chapter 1 and 2 - Chatman, S 1978, *Story and discourse: narrative structure in fiction and film*, Cornell University Press, New York. |
| WEEK SIX | Scene Types  Workshop: Students will be given a short script and work in groups to create storyboards and/or short films adding *syuzhet* and transport scenes. They will then present their final works to the class. |
| WEEK SEVEN | Narrative Thoery: Fabula, Scenery, and The Long Take  Clip from ‘North by Northwest’ dir. Hitchcock  Clip from ‘Rope’ dir. Hitchcock  Clip from ‘Gerry’ dir. Gus Van Sant  Screening: ‘Lifeboat’ dir. Hitchcock  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 5 * Henderson, Brian 1971. ‘The long take,’ *Film Comment,* 7:2, p.6-11. * Kissel, Laura 2008. ‘The terrain of the long take’, *Journal of Visual Culture,* 7:3, p.349-361. * Iser, W 1978, *The act of reading: a theory of aesthetic response,* The Johns Hopkins UP, Baltimore, USA, p.99-x   Recommended:   * Pallasmaa, J 2001, *The architecture of image: existential space in cinema,* Rakennustieto, Helsinki. |
| **ESSAY 1 DUE: 1000 words** | |
| WEEK EIGHT | Music Theory  Screening: ‘Same Time, Next Year’ (1978) dir. Robert Mulligan  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 6 * Cohen, A 2001, ‘Music as a source of emotion in a film’, *Music and emotion: theory and research,* Eds. Juslin, Patrick N. , Sloboda, John A., Oxford Uni. Press, New York, pp.249-272. * Gorbman, C 1987, ‘Why music? The sound film and its spectator’, in *Unheard melodies,* Indiana Uni. Press, Indianapolis, pp.53-69 * Smith, J 1999, ‘Movie music as moving music: emotion, cognition, and the film score’, in *Passionate Views: film, cognition, and emotion,* Ed. Carl Plantinga and Greg Smith, John Hopkins Uni Press, Baltimore and London, pp.147-167. |
| WEEK NINE | Guest Speaker |
| WEEK TEN | Workshop: Students will be given a short script and work in groups to map out film score, selecting instruments, style, and mood. The two goals will be to: (1) plant a mood for each scene, and (2) capture emotion of character changes. If editing lab available, students will work with a pre-edited scene and experiment with various choices of music score and present their final edits to the class. |
| WEEK ELEVEN | Montage Theory: Rhythm  Screening: ‘Requiem for a Dream’ (2000) or ‘Pi’ (1998) dir. Darren Aronofsky  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 7 * Pearlman Chapter 4. * Smith, Greg 1999, ‘Local emotions, global moods’, in *Passionate views: film, cognition, and emotion,* Ed. Carl Plantinga and Greg Smith, John Hopkins Uni Press, Baltimore and London, pp.113-126. * Tan, E 1996, ‘The psychological affect structure of the feature film’, in *Emotion and the structure of narrative film,* trans. Barbara Fasting, Lawrence Erlbaum Association, New Jersey, pp.195-204. |
| WEEK TWELVE | Ellipses and Optic Transitions  Readings:   * Bays Chapter 8 * Iser, W 1978, *The act of reading: a theory of aesthetic response,* The Johns Hopkins UP, Baltimore, USA, p.186-196. * Ganti, K 2004, ‘In conversation with Walter Murch’, *FilmSound.org,* Accessed 4 March 2011: <http://filmsound.org/murch/interview-with-walter-murch.htm>   Student Presentations |
| WEEK THIRTEEN | Student Presentations (cont.) |
| WEEK FOURTEEN | Student Presentations (cont.) |
| **ESSAY 2 DUE: 1000 words** | |