

Film Analysis Project

Intro:

This assignment has two parts; thus, you will write two "essays." Essentially, you are writing two distinct pieces that relate to the same director you choose. Since you will be writing a short biography of the director and his films, there is no need to include that information in your shot analysis essay. Your shot analysis essay is simply that: an explication of a film sequence from one of your director's films.

Part One: Director's Biography

In this section, you will provide a short biography of the filmmaker as his life relates to the making of his films. I am only interested in his or her career in filmmaking, not when he was born, married, and died. Organize your essay into a few paragraphs pertaining to the following:

- Nationality/Time period of the director
- The types and genres of films he made
- The director's body of work → including his/her early films, their reception by the media and society
- His/her most successful films (critically and financially)
- Awards he/she received
- Any other information crucial to his/her life as a director

Part Two: Shot Analysis

This essay is focused on one sequence (series of shots creating an event with purpose) from ONE of your director's films. My advice is that you view several films (not rely on your memory of films you've seen in the past) so that you may select the best sequence to analyze. Viewing his or her body of work will also be important as you identify trends and characteristics of his/her style. Here are my suggestions for how to complete this assignment:

1. View several films, and take notes on the cinematic elements (Shots, Angles, Focalization, Lighting, Editing, Movement, Sound)—how he/she uses these to develop his/her themes.
2. Identify a sequence of roughly 25 shots from one of his/her films. This sequence should be organized around an event or meaningful purpose.
3. Complete the shot list chart (provided by me) to get all the information necessary about the sequence. You will turn this in with your essay.
4. Based on the director's choices, determine the general theme/idea/motif for the entire sequence.
5. Organize and compose the essay around how the director uses elements of cinema to highlight a theme or issue in his film(s).
6. Connect your sequence to one or more from his other films, and make a statement about his style as a filmmaker.