

# Assignment 1: Film Analysis

- **Deadline: 28 August, 4 pm (week 5)**
- Word limit: 800 words
- Weight: 15%

Choose one of three clips

Two sections:

- a) Technical analysis (editing and sound)
- b) Short essay





# *Some Like It Hot*

Media 101  
Semester 2, 2020  
Dr. Jenny Stümer

# Some like it Hot, 1959

- directed by Billy Wilder
- Starring
  - ✧ Jack Lemmon (Jerry/ Daphne)
  - ✧ Tony Curtis (Joe/ Josephine)
  - ✧ Marilyn Monroe (Sugar Kane)
- viewed as a high point Hollywood's Golden age
- Upholding/ transgressing conventions



# The Golden Age of Hollywood

- ‘golden age of Hollywood’
- Period: late 1920s to early 1960s,
  - from start of the sound era
  - to declining box-office revenues in 1960s (partly due to rise of TV viewing)
- 1930s-1950s: Hollywood dominates film and entertainment
- **The Big Five:** MGM, Paramount, Warner Bros, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox and RKO
- **The minor Three:** Columbia, Universal United Artists



# Marilyn Monroe

- Norma Jean Baker
- biggest stars of 20<sup>th</sup> Fox century in the 1950s
- Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)
- The Seven year Itch (1954)



# The Star



# The Sex Symbol

- On one hand she was the ideal of perfect pure femininity
- On the other hand she caused all kinds of anxieties about immoral female sexuality



# Classical Hollywood

- High production values
- Consistent film style
- Three Act Narrative
- (beginning/problem –middle/development –ending/resolution)

## Tools of narration

- Cinematography
- Character Perspective:
- Soundtrack
- **Editing: what is the order of events? What are the patterns of seeing?**

=> Continuity editing (“invisible editing”)



# Continuity Editing

- associated with the Hollywood system, in which it was developed
- uses **cuts and transitions** to establish a real-world space and time
- matches **spatial and temporal relations** from shot to shot in order to maintain continuous narrative action.
- uses **shot** sequences to represent narrative as well as psychological **cause-and-effect** relations.
- appears 'seamless' or 'invisible': the point is for viewers *not* to notice the cuts



# Classical Editing

- relies on deliberately cutting for **dramatic intensity** and **emotional emphasis**.
- The sequence of shots represents a **cause and effect narrative**.

*Film Experience*, p. 269: 'Narration refers to the emotional, physical or intellectual perspective through which the characters, events and actions of the plot are conveyed.'

- The assemblage of shots is justified on the basis of **dramatic or comic necessity**.

=> **Continuity editing** = basic rule of classical editing.



# Rules of Continuity editing

⇒ Producing  
**verisimilitude**

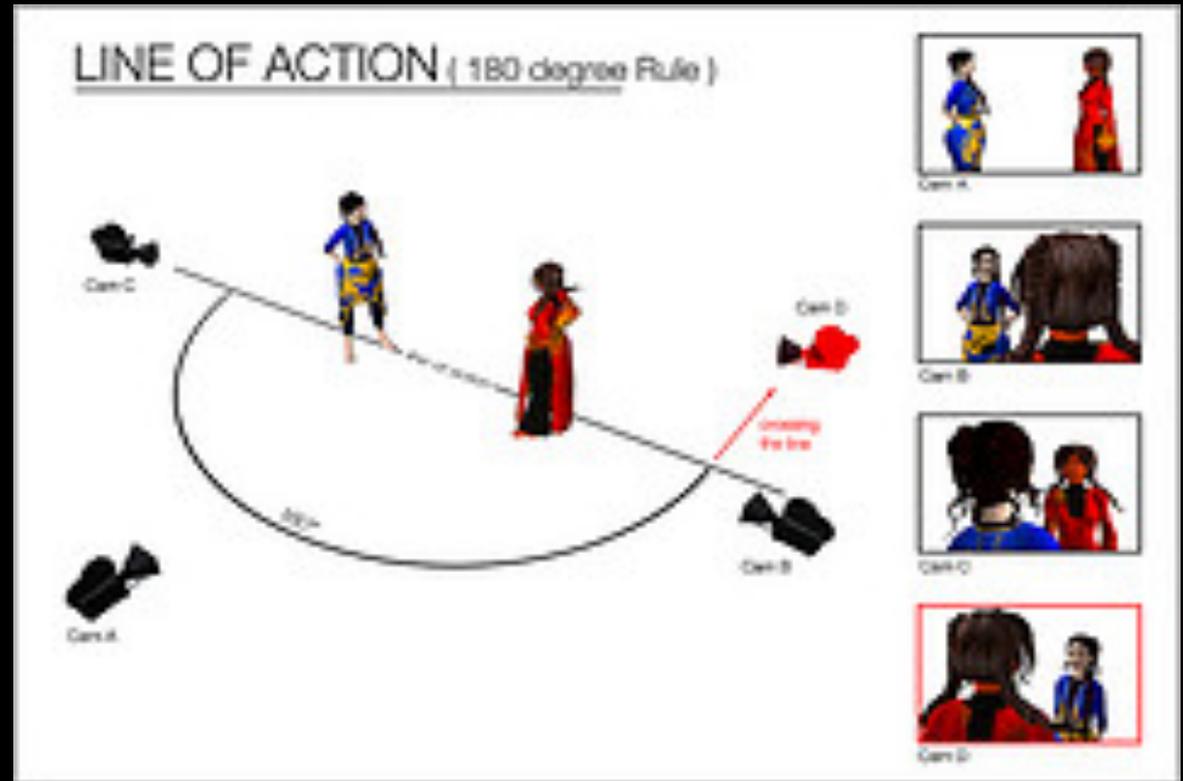
- **Establishing shot:** an opening long shot that orients the viewer in space and establishes the setting
- **Insert shots:** brief close ups point out details that are significant to the action



# Rules of Continuity Editing

## 180 Degree rule

- Primary rule of continuity editing
- Camera stays on one side of an imaginary 'axis of action'



# Rules of Continuity Editing

- **Parallel editing** (a.k.a. cross-cutting): cutting between two events
- **Match on action**: a cut depicting the continuation of an action
- **Eyeline match**: cutting between a character looking with the object of their gaze
- **Point-of-view** (POV) shot: a shot of what a particular character is seeing, (usually) preceded by a shot of that character looking

# Rules of Continuity Editing

- **Cut in/away**: transition to a close-up/alternative object of significance
- **2-shot**: two characters in a conversation together in one frame
- **Shot/reverse shot**: cutting between characters in a conversation
- **Reaction shot**: character's response to previous shot
- **Dissolve**: simultaneous fade-in and fade-out

# Aims of Editing

- ‘to generate **emotions** and **ideas** through the construction of patterns of seeing’ (*Film Exp*, 198)
- ‘to move beyond normal spatial and temporal limitations’ (198)
- editing constructs patterns of seeing by linking images in space and time
  - ✓ narrative is a chain of events occurring across space and time

# Some Like it Hot Trailer



# Laura Mulvey

- Narrative pleasure
- Cinema= voyeuristic
- active/male – passive /female



(men as bearer of the look/ women as image)

Women are constituted as “**to-be-looked-at-ness**”

# The Male Gaze

## Three interlocking looks:

- the look of the camera
  - the look of the audience
  - the look of the character
- 
- Woman as spectacle



‘to-be-looked-at-ness’



# Mulvey about Monroe



“She was always more image than character; she personified ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ in which interiority would be, by and large, irrelevant. This was, of course, due to her highly evolved masquerade, stylized gestures and performance.”

# Problems with Mulvey

- Assumes classical Hollywood addresses a male spectator
- Assumes 'the spectator' is a unitary viewing position
- Dismisses female protagonists
- Ignores queer identification
- Depends on binaries regarding sex , gender and sexuality

‘The male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification’ – Mulvey, p. 838



# Train Sequence



# The Hays Code

- 1934-1966
- named after Will Hays
- self-censorship policy of Hollywood

Among other things:

- No nudity
- No sex
- No illegal traffic in drugs/drinking
- No dead man
- No gambling
- No ridicule of the clergy
- No depiction of homosexuality

... and many more



# Circumventing the Censor

=> All kinds of subversions

Established codes between audience and filmmakers

- Clever editing
- Double-meanings
- In-jokes
- Props
- Suggestive looks/gestures
- Outfits



# The Celluloid Closet

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-TUF\\_GN\\_r8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-TUF_GN_r8)

# Comedy

- breaking taboos through humour
- deconstructing hetero-centric views
- innuendo

Sex  
Violence and Death  
Action  
Drinking  
Gender identity  
Sexuality



# Gender Performance

- The film treats gender as performance

**Judith Butler:** “We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a woman or a man.”



- Marilyn Monroe as Sugar Kane as ‘dumb blonde’
- Tony Curtis as Cary Grant as Josephine
- Jack Lemmon as Daphne



# The Feminine Masquerade

- Both Monroe and Daphne perform femininity as a mask /identity



**Joan Riviere:** “Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask ...The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the ‘masquerade’. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing.”

# Daphne

- A whole new personality
- Revels in being one of the girls
- From push-over guy to confident woman



Who's the lucky girl?



# Challenging Gender Norms

Several queer couplings

- Daphne and Osgood
- Josephine and Sugar
- Josephine and the hotel boy
- Daphne/Josephine and the gangsters
- Jerry and Joe?



# Sex and Nudity

- Coded
- E.g. smoking



# Cross Cutting/ Dating



# Homosexuality on Screen

- depictions of homosexuality and transsexuality were almost certainly hostile
- villains or victims
- The narrative would punish “deviant” behaviour

*Some like it Hot* resists these homophobic tropes



All about Eve, 1950



Rebel Without a Cause, 1955

# The Ending

- ✧ Resolution of the gender bender
- ✧ Reassuringly heterosexual romance



# Politics of the Ending



- ✧ The primary couple?
- ✧ Resolution?
- ✧ Allows many possible readings...

Reading: Suzanne Woodward. "The Enduring Appeal of *Some like it Hot*," *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media* (2012).

# Final Scene

