

Film Terms:

- Angle – The camera's angle of the view relative to the subject being photographed. A high-angle shot is photographed from above, a low angle from below the subject.
- Auteur theory – a theory of film popularized by the critics of the French journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the 1950s. The theory emphasizes the director as the major creator of film art, stamping the material with his or her own personal vision, style, and thematic obsessions.
- Crane shot – A shot taken from a special device called a crane, which resembles a huge mechanical arm. The crane carries the camera and the *cinematographer* and can move in virtually any direction.
- Dolly shot, tracking shot, trucking shot – A shot taken from a moving vehicle. Originally, tracks were laid on the set to permit a smoother movement of the camera.
- Editing – The joining of one shot (strip of film) with another. The shots can picture events and objects in different places at different times. In Europe, editing is called *montage*.
- Establishing shot – Usually an *extreme long or long shot* offered at the beginning of a scene, providing the viewer with the context of the subsequent closer shots.
- Film noir – A French term-literally, black cinema-referring to a kind of urban American *genre* that sprang up after World War II, emphasizing a fatalistic, despairing universe where there is no escape from mean city streets, loneliness, and death. Stylistically, *noir* emphasizes *low-key* and *high-contrast* lighting, complex compositions, and a strong atmosphere of dread and paranoia.
- Formalist, formalism – A style of filmmaking in which aesthetic forms take precedence over the subject matter as content. Time and space as ordinarily perceived are often distorted. Emphasis is on the essential, symbolic characteristics of objects and people, not necessarily on their superficial appearance. Formalists are often *lyrical*, self-consciously heightening their style to call attention to it as a value for its own sake.
- Full shot – A type of *long shot* that includes the human body in full, with the head near the top of the *frame* and feet near the bottom.
- High-angle shot – A shot in which the subject is photographed from above.
- High contrast – A style of lighting emphasizing harsh shafts and dramatic streaks of lights and darks. Often used in thrillers and melodramas.
- Jump cut – An abrupt transition between shots, sometimes deliberate, which is disorienting in terms of the community of space and time.
- Lengthy take, long take – A shot of lengthy duration.
- Low-angle shot – A shot in which the subject is photographed from below.
- Mise en scène – The arrangement of visual weights and movements within a given space. In the live theater, the space is usually defined by the proscenium arch; in movies, it is defined by the *frame* that encloses the images. Cinematic *mise en scène* encompasses both the staging of the action and the way that it's photographed.
- Montage – Transitional sequences of rapidly edited images, used to suggest the lapse of time or the passing of events. Often uses *dissolves* and *multiple exposures*. In Europe, *montage* means the art of editing.
- Nonsynchronous sound – Sound and image that are not recorded simultaneously, or sound that is detached from its source in the film image. Music is usually nonsynchronous in a movie, providing background atmosphere.
- Oblique angle, tilt shot – A shot photographed by a tilted camera. When the image is projected on the screen, the subject itself seems to be tilted on a diagonal.
- Pan, panning shot – Short for panorama, this is a revolving horizontal movement of the camera from left to right or vice versa.
- Point-of-view shot (pov shot, first-person camera, subjective camera) – Any shot that is taken from the vantage point of a character in the film, showing what the character sees.
- Process shot (rear projection) – A technique in which a background scene is projected onto a translucent screen behind the actors so it appears that the actors are on location in the final image.
- Producer – An ambiguous term referring to the individual or company that controls the financing of a film, and often the way it's made. The producer can concern himself or herself solely with business matters, or with putting together a package deal (such as script, stars, and director), or the producer can function as an expeditor, smoothing over problems during production.
- Pull-back dolly – Withdrawing the camera from a scene to reveal an object or character that was previously out of *frame*.
- Realism – A style of filmmaking that attempts to duplicate the look of objective reality as it's commonly perceived, with emphasis on authentic locations and details, *long shots*, *lengthy takes*, and a minimum of distorting techniques.
- Synchronous sound – The agreement or correspondence between image and sound, which are recorded simultaneously, or seem so in the finished print. Synchronous sounds appear to derive from an obvious source in the visuals.

