

VIDEO EXERCISE: Sense of Place

Dates:

2/24/09 – Video Exercise Assignment Distributed

3/5/09 – Video Exercise due in class.

3/17/09 – Videos must be posted on the blog, along with your blog entry. We will begin screening videos in class.

Overview:

Our lives play out in spaces. Where we are influences how we feel, what we think, and what we say. Consciously or not, we are always interacting with our surroundings. Much as we associate times in our lives with the places we lived and worked, a sense of place helps define the people and action viewers see on the screen.

A place has its own kind of character, its own history, and its own meaning. An image of the Empire State building yields a different emotion than that of a church on the side of a country road. The people in your documentaries are characters, but so are the places where they live and work. It is essential that you learn to recognize and effectively portray these characters as well.

Details:

For this project, you will create a short film of no more than 5 minutes in length that gives a sense of a particular place of your choosing. You can define “place” as broadly or as narrowly as you choose; it could refer to a room or a location, a town or a patch of woods. Choose a place that is intriguing to you, but also provides opportunities for visually interesting footage. Although this is in no way required, you might consider completing your video assignment on a “place” that is in some way related to your proposed final documentary, as it may yield usable footage.

You will have to think carefully about this place and how to capture its essence using the tools of cinematography. Once you select a place, try to answer these questions as you think through what to shoot:

What defines this place?

What happens here?

What is interesting or memorable about it?

When you think about it, what shots jump into your mind?

What are some small details of the place that might help give it a sense of depth and character?

Do you associate a mood or feeling with it that should come across?

What is visually interesting about it?

Most importantly, how will you use the tools of cinematography to help answer these questions for viewers?

What camera positions, shots, angles, and movements should you use?

How will the images be strung together when edited? Remember: at its most basic, filmmaking is the intentional juxtaposition of images to create meaning.

If you can, feel free to shoot a place you might use in your final project.

Blog Assignment

You will have to write an entry for the class blog explaining why you chose the place you did, why you shot it the way you did, and why you edited it the way you did. As part of this post, you will need to post your video to the blog so that others can watch it. This is due by class time on March 17th.

Format:

Projects must be submitted on a DVD. All DVD's must be labeled with the student name, class number and assignment name. iDVD can be easily used to create your DVD.

Please include a countdown at the beginning of each project.

Grading:

Your grade will take into account:

The composition of your shots.

The effectiveness with which the edited piece gives a sense of place.

How effectively you use the tools of cinematography to make your video visually engaging.

The completion of your blog post, including the playable video, by the assigned date.

Of course, we need to be able to clearly see each shot, and your project can be no longer than 5 min.