

SIMS 246 MULTIMEDIA INFORMATION ASSIGNMENT 3: MEDIA PRODUCTION – MILESTONE 1 (DUE OCTOBER 13, 2003)

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1. INTRODUCTION

You are now entering the preproduction stage of your movie production! The output of this milestone is mostly the movie idea and an annotated storyboard.

Please read the whole assignment text carefully. Only parts of the tasks will be required to hand in.

ABOUT THE MOVIE

To guide your ideation in coming up with the topic for your movie, we would like you to produce a movie that functions as a message or interpersonal communication in the broadest sense.

Here are a few examples:

- “A day in the life of...” to send home to one’s parents
- Party Invitation
- Video Greeting Cards: (e.g., Birthday or Valentine’s Day greetings)
- Video Resume
- Personal Ad

Your final movie should have a length between 1:30 and 2:00 minutes. The length must not exceed 2:00 minutes. We don’t require you to have dialogue or actors in your movie, although the movie must have a soundtrack.

Be aware that the more you shoot in the production phase, the more work it will be in the editing stage. Therefore careful planning in the preproduction phase will save you considerable time both in production and postproduction.

2. BRAINSTORMING / IDEATION PHASE

In class, brainstorm in your group about ideas for a possible 2-minute movie. You can use any of the ideas presented above or come up with new ones as long as they function as a message or interpersonal communication in the broadest sense. Keep in mind possible location and time constraints for the production.

Come up with 2 or 3 ideas and present them at the end of class for discussion. You should leave the classroom with an idea for your short movie in mind.

3. PLOT OUTLINE AND MOTIVATION

Write up a paragraph with your plot outline. The following link is an example from the IMDB plot outline for Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid: <http://us.imdb.com/Plot?0083798>

Additionally, write a paragraph about what motivated your choice of the topic and possible formal techniques that you plan to use in your movie (e.g., we chose to make a movie that communicates to a job applicant specifically about how they did in a job interview because we wanted to experiment with the 180 degree rule and shot / reverse shot techniques). Your motivation should include who your intended audience is and who the speaker is.

4. SHOT PLAN¹

In a common movie production, you would create a screenplay and then a script in order to describe action and dialogue in great detail. The script is then used to draw a storyboard that is used for directing camera movement and actor activities during production. Note that we don't require you to write a script—your output will be the storyboard. This means that you should have quite an extensive notion of how the movie will play out already in your mind.

To prepare your storyboard, it is a good idea to think up a shot plan. Creating a shot plan means describing for each shot the mise-en-scene (location, time of day, the set and props, the lighting, the staging of the action and actors, dialogue, and the narrative function of the shot), and its cinematographic properties (distance, height, angle, level, and possibly motion). It is also often very helpful to sketch your shots as you are

¹ All examples and the table taken from: Steven Katz. Film Directing Shot By Shot: Visualizing From Concept to Screen. Michael Wiese Productions in conjunction with Focal Press, 1991.

designing them and creating your shot plan. These sketches can help you prototype a variety of shots and form the basis for your more detailed storyboard.

The following is a list of some of the cinematographic and narrative questions that you might want to use to think about in designing your shots:

Cinematographic	Narrative
Where is the camera stationed?	Whose point of view is being expressed?
What is the size of the shot?	What information are we revealing or concealing?
What is our angle of view?	What is our relationship to the subject?
Are we cutting or moving the camera?	How are we managing spatio-temporal transitions?

An example of a shot plan might look like this:

1. INTERIOR SHOT OF PARLOR. Camera is behind Lee at back of room. Lee has stood up to greet Grant. Grant enters the front door and walks straight to Lee. The two men shake hands. CUT TO:
2. REVERSE SHOT OF LEE AND GRANT as they shake hands. Marshall crosses frame and CAMERA PULLS BACK. Grant looks for a chair, Lee sits in his former place and Grant pulls up a chair for himself before Babcock can help him. Grant seems nervous. Lee is a study in composure. CUT TO:
3. MED. SHOT OF FRONT DOOR. Camera height 5 ft. Union officers enter quietly as if attending funeral. All steal glances of Lee. Camera backs up with them, pans with one officer to –

WIDE SHOT OF ROOM. ANGULAR PROFILE OF LEE AND GRANT, FAVORING LEE. Camera height 4 ft. Hold this throughout the entire conversation between the generals.

You might want to include dialogue if necessary. Shot plans can also be created in tabular (i.e., spreadsheet) form.

Having a shot plan in place makes storyboarding a lot easier. Although we don't require you to hand in a separate shot plan, we recommend you create one to aid in making your annotated storyboard.

As you make your shot plan, keep in mind that the more shots you plan to have, the more complex the editing will be. More shots increase the difficulty in continuity editing. Also, the more location changes you have in your shot plan the more complicated your movie will be to shoot.

5. ANNOTATED STORYBOARD

A storyboard is a visual account of the shots in a movie designed to make it easier for the director and cinematographer to "see" the shots before executing them.

With your shot plan in place, draw small images of each shot accompanied by information about the mise-en-scene and the cinematographic properties. Please include each of the following for each frame in your annotated storyboard:

- Shot Number
- Shot Duration
- Shot Location
- Time of day
- Set and Props
- Lighting
- Staging of the action and actors
- Dialogue
- Camera Distance (i.e., framing)
- Camera Height
- Camera Angle
- Camera Level
- Possible Camera Motion
- Narrative function of the shot

Attached to this assignment is a portion of an annotated storyboard from last semester. You are welcome to scan in hand drawn figures (as in the example) or use the computer for your drawings.

Draw one storyboard frame for each shot. It is recommended to put no more than three storyboard frames plus description on an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper. Remember to number your shots. Also, remember the more shots in the movie, the more complicated it is. Make sure your total movie duration does not exceed 2 minutes.

6. PRODUCTION PLANNING

ROLES

Equipped with your storyboard, you could begin shooting. In order to be optimally prepared for the production phase, we recommend that you devise a work distribution plan and assign roles to each member of your team.

To learn more about the different roles and tasks in the production phase you can read pp. 20-41 of our primary textbook, Film Art: An Introduction, as well as the excerpt (pp. 26-42) from Herbert Zettl's Video Basics 3 in our Course Reader.

We recommend the following roles for your production:

- Writer (creates initial script and movie idea)
- Producer (manages preproduction, production, and postproduction phases, scheduling, and resources, and creates and supervises production plan)
- Director (oversees shooting, responsible for cinematic content)
- Cinematographer (controls camera and lighting)
- Sound (responsible for sound recording and dialogue)
- Editor (responsible for final assembly)
- Continuity/Script Supervisor (ensures shot continuity in reference to annotated storyboard; can also aid in production planning)
- Actors (you can use people outside of your team as actors)

A person can take on several roles and teammates can switch roles. Role assignment ensures that all phases of production are covered and somebody feels responsible for the correct execution of the individual stages. It also helps us assess individual contributions in the scope of a group project and helps you ensure an equitable distribution of labor. Here is an example Work and Role Distribution Table:

PERSON	ROLE	TASK	ESTIMATED HOURS	ACTUAL HOURS
ALL	Writer	Create Movie Idea	1	1
William McEuen	Producer	Team and Project Coordination	2	3
Carl Reiner	Director	Create Shot Plan and Annotated Storyboard	3	4
Michael Chapman	Cinematographer	Create Shot Plan and Annotated Storyboard	3	4
Marvin Weldon	Continuity Supervisor	Create Shot Plan and Annotated Storyboard	3	4
David Picker	Producer	Create Production Plan	4	3
ALL	Director	Review and Revise Annotated Storyboard	1	1
ALL	Producer	Review and Revise Production Plan	1	1
ALL	Writer	Answer 2 Questions for Thought	1	1

PRODUCTION PLAN

At this time, you should also start planning your production schedule. There are 2 guidelines that you should keep in mind:

- **The 10:1 Shooting Ratio:** Shooting ratios vary, but a good rule of thumb is that you will need to shoot roughly 10 times as much raw material as you plan to have in the edited product. For a two minute movie, this means you will assemble it from 20 minutes of raw video material.
- **The 60:1 Editing Ratio:** For every minute of the final movie product, plan that you will spend *at least* one hour editing.

Following these rules, it makes sense to plan for one third of your time to be shooting time and the rest of the time editing time. We recommend you create a production plan to outline when and where you will shoot, who will need to be there, what equipment and props you may need, and what will be done with the output of production (i.e., where will tapes and files be stored, how will they be catalogued, etc.). It is very useful to keep a continuity report (http://us.imdb.com/Glossary/C#continuity_report) about what happens in production to aid in later editing and to make reshooting (if necessary) much easier. Using a clapboard (<http://us.imdb.com/Glossary/C#clapboard>) to mark shots in shooting can aid in this process. We also recommend you review what you have just shot on location to see if you have captured the desired content. The more information you can carry forward and use from preproduction to production and from production to postproduction, the easier it will be to avoid and repair mistakes in the process.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- What parts of the preproduction process could be automated and how? What metadata would that require?
- What parts of the production process could be automated and how? What metadata would that require?
- What information from preproduction and production do you think will help in the postproduction process? Why and how?

8. HANDING IN THE ASSIGNMENT

Milestone 1 is due on Monday, October 13, 2003, at 3:30 pm.

Please hand in a print-out of the materials in class on this due date.

Additionally, drop off the following files in the drop-off box in P:/is246/assignment2/drop_off:

REQUIRED:

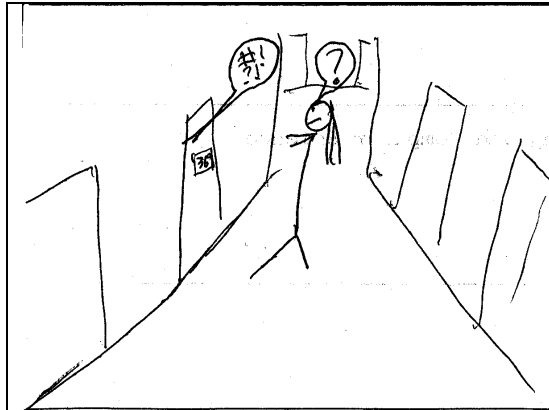
- Paragraph with Plot Outline and Paragraph with Motivation (from Part 3)
 - Format: txt, MS Word, or html
- Annotated Storyboard (from Part 5)
 - Format: PDF, MS Visio, MS PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, MS Word, or html
- Work and Role Distribution Table (from Part 6)
 - Format: MS Excel (preferred), MS Word, or html
- Answers to the Questions For Thought (from Part 7)
 - Format: txt, MS Word, or html

OPTIONAL:

- Production Plan
 - Format: txt, MS Word, MS Excel, or html

EXCERPT FROM SAMPLE ANNOTATED STORYBOARD:

	<p>1. Duration: 3s Location: Ext. Outside I-house Time: Day Set & props: I-House Lighting: Natural light Staging: Lin front of I-house Actors: Lin Dialogue: -</p> <p>Distance: Long shot Height: 5ft Angle: straight Level: - Motion: Slow zoom-in</p> <p>Establishing shot, that shows the I-house and Lin in front of the entrance. Cut into</p>
	<p>2. Duration: 9s Location: Ext. In front of I-house entrance Time: Day Set & props: I-house entrance doors Lighting: Natural light Staging: Lin in front of I-house entrance looking at the camera. Doors can be seen behind her. Actors: Lin Dialogue: "Hi. Why don't you follow me through the I-house."</p> <p>Distance: Medium shot Height: 6ft Angle: straight Level: - Motion: none</p> <p>Lin welcomes the viewer into the I-house and walks through the entrance door. Cut into</p>
	<p>3. Duration: 3s Location: Int. Outside elevator in a corridor Time: day Set & props: Elevator, corridor Lighting: Indoor Staging: Lin in elevator, walks out into corridor Actors: Lin Dialogue: -</p> <p>Distance: Medium shot Height: 5ft Angle: - Level: - Motion: -</p> <p>Elevator doors open Lin walks out (continuous motion from previous shot of Lin walking in) and she turns right and walks off frame. Cut into</p>



4.

Duration: 5s

Location: Int. Corridor.

Time: day

Set & props: corridor, open door in left side of corridor, far a way a man playing guitar.

Lighting: indoor lighting

Staging: A door in the left (~20ft from camera) is open. A man further away (~40ft) in the right side of

corridor with guitar.

Actors: Lin, guitar man

Dialogue: an argument can be vaguely heard

Distance: medium shot to medium long shot

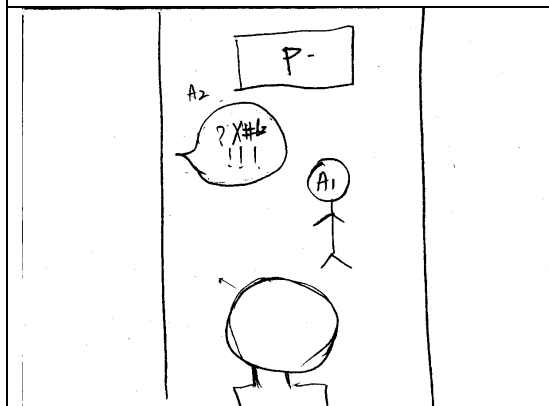
Height: 5ft

Angle: -

Level: -

Motion: -

Lin walking along the corridor. On her left she sees a door open and the voices of an argument can be heard. Far away in the right side of the corridor is a man playing a guitar. His playing can be heard very vaguely. Cut into



5.

Duration: 2s

Location: Int. In front of the door in the corridor.

Time: day

Set & props: Door, room and a poster

Lighting: indoor

Staging: Over Lin's shoulder. Greek man in room in the middle of door frame. The poster is in the background.

Turkish girl in the room off screen.

Actors: Greek man, Turkish girl, Lin

Dialogue: Greek: "No, it is not, you Turkish woman!"

Turkish: "That's what you Greek always tell..."

(continues into next shot)

Distance: medium shot

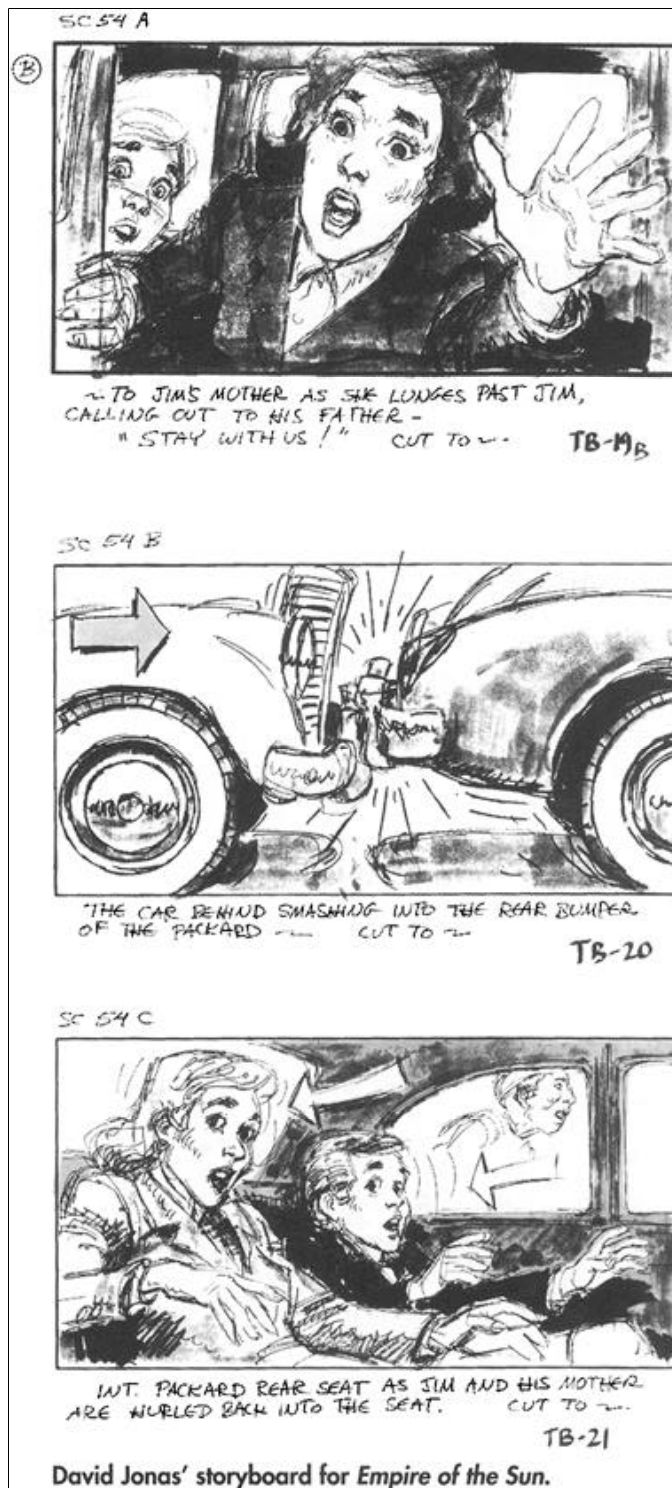
Height: 5ft

Angle: straight

Level: -

Motion: -

Over Lin's shoulder we can see the room and the Greek man inside the room arguing with somebody (blocked by door frame). A poster of Istanbul is in the background (not in focus). Cut into...

SAMPLE STORYBOARDS:²

² From: Steven Katz. *Film Directing Shot By Shot: Visualizing From Concept to Screen*. Michael Wiese Productions in conjunction with Focal Press, 1991.

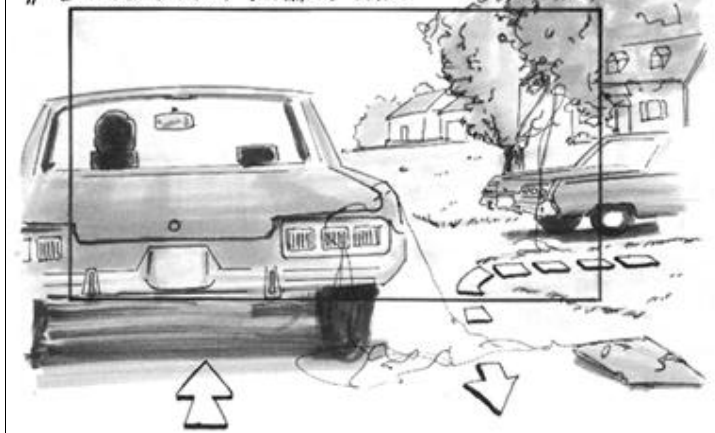


MOM OPENS BATHROOM DOOR "IS PETER UP?"
 DAUGHTER SAYS "HOW SHOULD I KNOW?"
 (SFX) DOORBELL. MOM EXITS CROSSING FRAME.



MOM OPENS FRONT DOOR. SHE SEES DAD LEAVING
 IN CAR. LOOK DOWN AND SEES SNEAKER ON
 DOORSTEP.

PAN WITH CAR OUT OF DRIVEWAY. BUMPER
 SNAGS KITE STRING HANGING FROM TREE
 // CAR PULLS AWAY DRAGGING KITE.



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