GenEd Arts          Shakespeare in the Movies          Three Assignments

Film Technique Exercise:

To sharpen your skills at film production techniques, view your assigned ten-minute segment of the David Bradley production Julius Caesar and account for the camera work Bradley employs to produce this expressionistic version of the play. Pay special attention to how the camera directs our attention and effects our experience — things like distance (long, mid, close-up, and extreme close-up); panning shots; unusual angles; the play of light (in BW films, this counts for a lot); cuts (the speed and rhythm of shifts from one view to another); special framing shots; and other radical techniques that challenge our normal way of receiving information from films. Write an efficient essay of 1-2 pages in which you catalogue what you notice and explain what you imagine to be its intended effect.

Performance Assignment:

Select a passage of 10-15 lines from any of the plays we have studied so far (Henry V, Julius Caesar, or Twelfth Night) and submit a video to the Blackboard site in which you perform a thoughtful reading. You do not need to memorize the passage, or to perform it in character as an actor would, but to read the passage to provide the greatest clarity of meaning.

Try to read slowly enough so that an audience would be able to follow your thoughts and emotions.

Expect several takes to get it right, and submit your best one.

I will not “publish” your video without asking your permission.

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Production Assignment:

For those who are energetic and risk-takers, you can replace the final writing assignment by joining a team of fellow students to produce a scene from any of the plays we have studied this semester. I must approve the scene you have chosen and the production plans.

You will need to adapt the script; cast the parts; select appropriate locations and costuming (modernizing would be a good idea); map out the camera work; rehearse your parts so that you are acting and not just reading; add supports (music, lighting, props, etc); design opening and closing credits; and observe issues of continuity and rounding out the scene to a conclusion.

On completion, submit the production to me for review. Once approved, post your video to YouTube for your classmates to enjoy.

In past semesters, approximately one-third of the students have selected this option and enjoyed it immensely — even more than writing and researching a final paper.