Project A3 Title: The Kuleshov Effect

Description

The Russian filmmaking pioneer, Lev Kuleshov, first made it clear that the meaning of a shot is not determined by its content but by what follows it; in other words, meaning is primarily a function of editing. He proved this by juxtaposing the same footage of a man wearing a neutral expression with a series of different shots, and each time the audience reported a different interpretation of the original shot. The students will do something similar in this project. They initially will create a l-minute silent film that demonstrates a simple theme in a visual way, such as, "This man loves his neighborhood" They will then create a film that demonstrates the opposite theme, using the identical footage from the first one. Only two additional shots may be included in the second film that do not appear in the first one. Both films must feature the identical close up of the protagonist's face with a neutral expression. Both films will be planned and storyboarded prior to shooting. Students should be encouraged to try on a different production role from the previous project.

Product

At the conclusion of this project the student(s) will create two l-minute silent films, one which demonstrates a simple theme, and one which demonstrates the opposite theme, using the same footage.

Objectives

This project is designed to allow students to:
- Comprehend the importance of editing in the creation of a film's meaning
- Experience another film production role

Support Lessons

Success on this project will depend on lessons in:
- Montage theory (Eisenstein) and the Kuleshov Effect
- Cinematic irony

Links

This project connects to B3 and C3 in the other Film assessments. It could also, conceivably be used to connect to other assignments in the Diploma Programme, such as History in relation to the era of the Russian Revolution, or to Theory of Knowledge, in terms of how truth can be constructed or-::rearranged depending on how the facts are arranged.

Resources

Essential resources include excerpts of some of the writings of Kuleshov and Eisenstein.

Variants

This project might be modified by adding brief bits of dialogue, whose meaning can be literal in one film, ironic in the other.