
Screening Checklist: Cinematography

- Determine whether or not the cinematographic aspects of the film—the qualities of the film stock, lighting, lenses, framing, angles, camera movement, and use of long takes—add up to an overall *look*. If so, try to describe its qualities.
- Take note of moments in the film in which the images are conveying information that is not reflected in characters' action and dialogue. How do these images develop the film's themes, narrative, and meaning?
- Pay close attention to the length of shots in the film. Is there a recognizable pattern? Are long takes used? To what extent? For what purpose?
- Keep track of instances in which the film uses shots other than the medium shot (MS)—for instance, extreme close-ups (ECUs) or extreme long shots (ELSs). What role are these shots playing in the film?
- Are high- or low-angle shots used in the film? Are they POV shots, meant to represent a character's point of view? If so, what does the angle convey about that character's state of mind? If not, what does it convey about the person or thing in the frame?

- Are the compositions of shots balanced in a way that conforms to the rule of thirds, or are the elements within the frame arranged in a less “painterly” composition? In either case, try to describe how the composition contributes to the scene overall.
- Describe the extent of camera movement in the film. Is the camera moving solely to produce visual excitement? To demonstrate technological virtuosity on the part of the filmmaker? Does it play an important role in developing the film’s narrative?
- Note when the cinematography calls attention to itself. Is this a mistake or misjudgment on the filmmakers’ parts, or is it intentional? If intentional, what purpose is served by making the cinematography so noticeable?