

In any course, the **Discussion Board** represents an incredibly important area of engagement for students and faculty. At its best, the forum is an engaging and active space where students offer their views on key course concepts and test those views with rigorous responses to their peers. It also offers faculty the opportunity to encourage deeper levels of critical thinking through robust commentary that can sometimes develop into a sustained dialogue – in the specific forum, and throughout the class!

With these points in mind, we have provided some exemplary model discussion responses. Note that the annotated student responses are actual responses by students – we've just added specific references to key areas.

Week One Discussion: Effective Use of Aesthetic Choices [Student Post]

Editing

The Shower – *Psycho* (1960), starts out with the main character (Marion Crane) preparing to take a shower. She closes the bathroom door, takes off her robe, and steps into the bathtub. She turns on the water, and begins to lather up with a bar of soap.

[Here, the student is discussing *what* happens, but not how the editing contributes to it] The movie has many varying shots between the shower head and Marion, **[what type of cuts are used between these shots?]** who is smiling and seemingly enjoying her shower. At this point of the movie, the viewer is led to believe that everything is normal. The camera angle changes to a view of Marion with a background view of the bathroom through the clear shower curtain. The door to the bathroom opens and there is a figure approaching the shower curtain slowly. All of a sudden, the shower curtain is pulled back, and a silhouette of a person with a very large knife in their hand. Marion is stunned, she screams as the person begins to stab her repeatedly. She doesn't fight back as she is stabbed in the hands, arms and stomach. The knife never looks like it ever pierces her skin. Her hand is pressed against the shower wall as it slowly begins to descend. As she falls to the bottom of the tub, the camera switches views of Marion's face and body, and the shower drain where her

blood is flowing down the bottom of the tub. Goodykoontz & Jacobs (2014) describe this as direct cuts, one shot instantly replaced by another after a cut. **[Here, the student makes direct reference to the text]** The view changes again this time Marion is holding her hand out in front of her grabbing the shower curtain and ripping it off the rings one by one. She then falls over the side of the tub with her head on the floor. The scene closes with a close up of Marion's eye then it pans out to a view of Marion lying on the side of her face with her eyes open. The camera then pans to the closed bathroom door. If the viewer watches closely during this camera angle, Marion's pulse in her neck is racing as she is slumped over the side of the tub. This is a classic thriller scene that keeps the viewer on the edge of their seat. The use of editing to change views may cause a viewer to experience fear and does not allow the viewer to see who the killer is thus, causing the viewer to speculate who it could have been.

Cinematography

In the movie *The Long Take – Goodfellas* (1990), this scene begins with what seems to be a close up camera shot of a man handing another man some money while across the street from the Copacabana Club. This angle is what's called a medium close up, which is a shot of the chest and head of a person. (Goodykoontz, & Jacobs, 2014) **[Here, the student makes direct reference to the text]** The camera continues to follow the couple (Lorraine Bracco and Ray Liotta) as they get out of a car and approach a building. They continue walking through a warehouse area, and finally enter the backend/preparation area of a commercial kitchen. They finally arrive at the front, near the stage, where the waiters set up a special table for the couple. This scene implies that the couple are either very wealthy, or well known in the community, or both since, they have their own private entrance into the building, are shown to their table by the club's staff and told that another gentleman at an adjacent table has bought them a bottle of fine wine.

Lighting

In the movie *Dinosaurs in the kitchen – Jurassic Park* (1993), the scene opens to two children that have discovered dinosaurs in the kitchen area of the building. The lighting is coming from the right side where there are many windows. **[This is a very specific**

and insightful observation] The kitchen scene is shot in low-key lighting, which is marked by “...extreme use of deep shadows, with very high contrast between the brightest parts of the scene and the darkest parts, which are obscured in shadows” (Goodykoontz & Jacobs, p. 6.4, 2014). This appears to be a scene of doom and gloom, since the children cannot see where the dinosaurs are located while they are attempting to escape them. Once presumably safe inside the freezer, the light appears to get much brighter, thus letting the viewer know they are safe.

Reference:

Goodykoontz, B. & Jacobs, C. P. (2014) *Film: From watching to seeing* (2nd ed.).
San Diego, CA: Bridgepoint Education, Inc.