

**Formation of Hollywood  
and the Continuity System**

**+**

**National Cultures on Film**

# The Narrative Feature

- By early teens (1910-1915), the *narrative feature* (story-based and 45+ minutes) was emerging as the typical motion picture made
- The *star system* emerged simultaneously, increasing profits and creating a powerful ripple effect
- As a result of the star system and longer, story-based films, art design/costume/makeup divisions expanded, publicity and fandom-celebrity exploded, and the use of

# Hollywood Emerges

- Also during the teens, movie producers began heading west to the desert we now call Los Angeles and the now mythic Hollywood
- World War I (1914-1918) and its devastation to Europe (the U.S.'s greatest competition for film production) opened the door for Hollywood to become the world's most ubiquitous and powerful source of media entertainment

## Classical Hollywood's Studio System

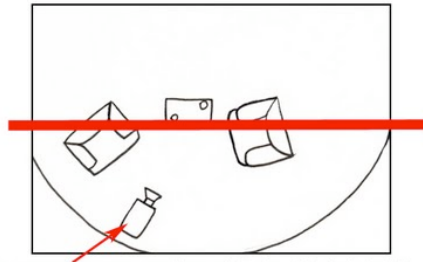
- By the 1920s, Hollywood's *vertically integrated* studio system formed, as eight major studios banded together to create an *oligopoly* so as to undermine competition and an independent cinema market in this country
- The Hollywood studio system took after Henry Ford's factory model (developed in the teens), which innovated *division of labor* and the conveyor belt to maximize production levels -- but we can only take this so far
- Classical Hollywood's *Studio System* lasted from the 1920s through to the 1960s

## The Hollywood Narrative System

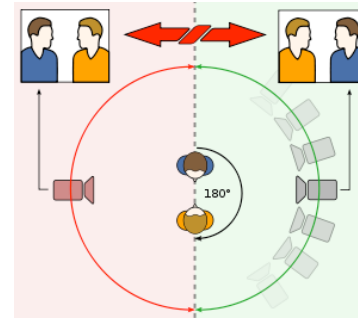
- Hollywood refined what we now call *invisible style*
- The primary goal was to economize storytelling methods and to orient, engage, and enthrall the viewer
- Continuity editing (which includes *180-degree rule* and *shot-reverse-shot*) was integral, smoothing over transitions, implying continuity from shot to shot, and thus not calling the viewer's attention away from the storyline

# 180° Rule

The 180-Degree Rule



This camera can move anywhere within the half circle, but it shouldn't stray across the red line. Otherwise, cut shots between talking characters would have them facing the same direction.



# National Cultures on Film

- Studying the relationship between national cultures and the movies allows students and critics to learn more about both
- Any movie production derives not just from the individual artists, but also from the larger society and culture in which the movie is made
- Countries have national traditions, such as value systems (ideologies), histories, peoples, languages, religions, economic & political cultures, methods of art/storytelling
- So, by studying films in the context of *national cinema*, we can learn a great deal about cultures as well as the relationship between filmmaking and nation and history

- Take Hollywood in the context of American culture, history, and economics...
- For instance, the Ford factory model, with its emphasis on maximizing efficiency and production, laid the blueprints for Hollywood
- As well, note the kinds of genres that became instantly popular in Classical Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s; most came out of the American experience: westerns (mythologizing America's settling of the western frontier), gangster films (dealing with recent influx of immigrants, Prohibition, and bootlegging), and musicals (many of which initially responded to the Great Depression and were set in Americans cities)