Your assignment is to write a **1,000 word essay** analyzing a selected sequence from "Chungking Express." How do the mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing and sound design work together in the sequence to underscore its themes and those of the film as a whole?

**The Sequence:**
The sequence is available online through the Film & Digital Media Department’s clip archive:
- Go to [http://slugfilm1.ucsc.edu/classarchive/](http://slugfilm1.ucsc.edu/classarchive/)
- Under “Choose Cart” scroll down to “STAMP/20A Sequence Analysis”
- Click “Get Cart”
- Enter password: chungking
- Select “play”
- Click on the film still in your browser window to start the sequence in QuickTime.

"Chungking Express" is also on reserve in the Media Center at McHenry Library (DVD 6813).

**Part 1: Shot List | Due in section Friday, October 25th.**
Prior to writing your paper, prepare a detailed shot list that includes all shots in the selected sequence. Please model your shot list on the template provided. Additional help can be found in the section of Corrigan and White on “Preparing to Write about a Film,” beginning on p. 513. **Students who do not submit a complete shot list on these dates will not be permitted to hand-in a paper and will fail the assignment.**

**Part 2: Analytical Essay | Due in class Thursday, October 31.**
Once you have compiled your shot list, begin thinking about how the techniques you have documented function together in the sequence. Develop an argument about how these techniques reinforce the scene’s themes, then select detailed, individual examples from the sequence. You do not need to describe the entire sequence, nor do you need to write about every shot. You don’t even need to write about every technique you’ve catalogued on your shot list. Rather, use selective examples to analyze how particular techniques create specific effects in the overall design of the sequence.

**Questions to Ask:**

**Mise-en-scène:** How do props and costumes help convey characters and themes? Are particular colors dominant (or absent)? Is the setting significant? If so, how is it presented? How does the lighting help convey the setting and the action? How is character blocking and placement used?

**Cinematography:** Where is the camera placed in relation to the action? Distance? Angle? How do particular compositions draw attention to elements of the settings, characters or themes? How does camera movement function in the sequence? Are different focal lengths or depths of field used? How does cinematography reinforce the mise-en-scène?

**Editing:** What kinds of transitions are there between shots? Are these always the same? Do they change? Does the editing have a particular rhythm, and is it consistent? Does it conform to rules of continuity, or does it seem disjunctive or discontinuous? What spatial and temporal relations are articulated through cutting? Graphic relations? Rhythmic relations? Associational connections?

**Sound:** What sounds are present? When does volume or pitch change? Is silence used? Are specific sounds linked to cuts or camera movement? When and how are onscreen and off-screen sound used? Are sounds diegetic or non-diegetic?

These questions are just to get you started. **You do not need to answer every question in your essay.** Use the questions as a way to help select the techniques that will be the focus of your argument. This is only the beginning. There are many other questions you can ask as well. Look back through your lecture notes and your readings.
**Tips:**

Avoid plot summary and extended visual description. Aim instead to analyze how specific cinematic techniques function to underscore the film’s themes and ideas. Organize your essay around key points in your argument, rather than a chronological examination of the sequence.

Avoid evaluative language. ("The costumes are beautiful.”) Aim instead to analyze the effects of the techniques used. ("Ada's restrictive, layered clothing impedes her movement through the natural surroundings and symbolizes her oppression.”)

Use precise film terminology. (Is the camera movement a track, tilt, pan or zoom? Is it a high-angle shot or a low-angle shot?, etc.) When in doubt, consult Corrigan and White.

Avoid vague language. ("The use of lighting in this scene is very effective” or “Parallel editing helps to create suspense,” etc.) Aim instead to analyze the specific effect of individual techniques. ("Closed frame compositions emphasize Susan’s entrapment.”)

Make a strong argument about the sequence.

*Ineffective thesis statement:* In this essay I will analyze the use of sound in Blackmail’s “knife” sequence, connecting it to larger thematic and visual patterns in the film as a whole.

*Effective thesis statement:* In Blackmail off-screen sound illustrates Alice’s powerlessness, while also encouraging viewers to identify with this position of victimization.

You are not required to do any additional research for this paper. Rely on the analytical skills you have been learning in class.

**Essay Requirements:**

- Type and double-space your paper.
- Number the pages.
- Underline or italicize film titles. (CAPS or “quotation marks” are incorrect.)
- Give your paper a title that reflects your argument about the sequence.
- Put your name, your TA’s name, and section time at the top of the first page.
- Spell check and proof read your paper.
- Print out Cover Sheet and attach it to your paper.

**Lateness Policy:** Extensions can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with the prior permission of your TA. Essays submitted late without an extension will be accepted only at the discretion of your TA; if accepted, they will be subject to a penalty of one grade step per day (ie, a B paper would become a B- if submitted one day late, a C+ if submitted two days late, and a C if submitted three days late).

**Academic Misconduct:** Any act of academic misconduct, including but not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or facilitating academic dishonesty, will result in failure of the class. Your case will be reported to your College Provost according to campus guidelines. UCSC's Academic Integrity Policy: http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/undergraduate_students/

**Additional Help:**

- Consult Corrigan and White, “Preparing to Write About a Film,” beginning on p. 513
- Meet with your TA – Office hours and locations are posted on the class website.
- Meet with Professor Stamp – Office Hours Wednesdays 2-4pm in Communications 107

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Shot list due in section Friday, October 25th

Sequence Analysis Essay due in class Thursday, October 31st.