



Viewing Guide for Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*

Film Background:

-**Director:** Spike Lee

-**Screenplay writer:** Spike Lee

-**Cinematography:** Ernest Dickerson

-**Release date:** June 30, 1989

-**Actors:** Danny Aiello (Sal: owner of Sal's Pizza), Ossie Davis (Da Mayor), Ruby Dee (Mother Sister), Richard Edson (Vito—Sal's younger son), Giancarlo Esposito (Buggin' Out), Samuel L. Jackson (Mister Señor Love Daddy: Radio DJ), Joie Lee (Jade--Mookie's sister), Spike Lee (Mookie), Bill Nunn (Radio Raheem), Rosie Perez (Tina—Mookie's girlfriend), Roger Guenveur Smith (Smiley), John Turturro (Pino—Sal's older, racist son)

Questions to think about while viewing:

Context questions:

-How might the film reflect the time period it was made and how relevant does it seem now?

Aesthetic questions:

-What locations does Lee choose and how do they affect the mood of the film?

-What do the streets, buildings, and people *look* like and what does that tell us about the neighborhood?

-What is the lighting and how does that affect the film's mood?

-How does Lee use sound/music to frame the film as an urban narrative?

Thematic questions:

-Who do you see on screen? Specifically, who's represented in terms of race, class, and gender?

-What is it like to live on that Brooklyn block, according to what we see in the film?

-What is the urban experience like for the film's characters?

-How do different racial/ethnic groups get along in the film?

What issues or questions does the film raise?

What similarities or differences do you see with other things we've done this semester?

Note taking while watching:

-Make notes of *specific scenes* that are significant to you – visually or otherwise -- and quickly write down *why* they seem important.

-Make a list of *themes* you see emerging in the film.

-List *specific characters* connected to these themes.

-*Describe* the neighborhood we see in the film. Use adjectives to draw a picture of what it looks, sounds, feels, and even might smell like.