Framing

How big in the frame?

- You'll mostly use a close-up for interviews. Getting what's interesting in this case (the face). Might vary for lectures, or to establish where people are.

Where in the frame?

- Give space to where they're looking
- Try to keep their eyes on the thirds line
- Why not space behind the head? (creepy)
- Why not straight into the camera? (very direct, use sparingly)

What in the background?

- Not flat behind the subject, in order to create depth, shove stuff in the background for interest (or pick interesting places) but avoid distractions
- probably resist titling the camera, shooting from above or below, for more formal interviews
- lighting matters (but we'll come back to that in depth)

When framing shots other than people speaking, use all of the same tips and tricks that you would in still photography (but remember: video cameras love movement, and you only shoot 'landscape'!)

Do experiment with breaking these rules but it's good to know them first.

Camera settings

Let's talk about the journey of light into your sensor, and how you can control it to get great shots.

The journey is:
(Filter)-lens set at an aperture- sensor at a 'shutter speed'-processor

The Lens
50mm lens on a 35mm sensor is like your eye; anything wider or longer than that will distort your view (this is often a good thing)

Choice of lens length affects framing - what's including in the shot - and by forcing us to move the camera, it affects depth of field (how much is in focus: see depth of field hand-out)

Wide: objects distorted, lots in the background, (more in focus)
Long: little in background, less distortion, (more out of focus)

Moving the camera closer, and zooming in, create different results you can exploit.

If you have a motorised zoom lens, basically don't use it during shots,apart from creeping in slowly perhaps. It's distracting and looks dated.

… at an aperture
An iris, just like your eye. Affects the light that comes in, but also the depth of field (how much is in focus)

Let's detour for a minute and talk about depth of field, which you can control through aperture and distance from subject (if you have bad eyesight, you can demonstrate this just with your fingers: making a 'pinhole camera' to bring things into focus, bringing your finger right in front of your eye to throw everything else out)

The sensor
The size of your sensor affects lots of things: image quality, low-light performance, depth of field, and the field of view of your lens – but you probably don't have much control over this once you're on a shoot.

Can adjust gain/ISO for extra light- best used sparingly unless you have a camera with a big sensor, because it makes images grainy.

…at a shutter speed
How long the sensor sees to record each frame (once controlled by an actual shutter). Affects brightness, makes movement choppy or blurry.

The other bits

You could have filters at the front: to protect the lens, to restrict certain kinds of light or to shade bits of the image.

The sensor: white balance to tell the camera what's white
Picture profiles to affect how much information your sensor gets

We'll come back to white balance in the lighting session
We'll come back to picture profiles in questions

How could you combine these controls to get:

Shallow depth of field on a bright day?
Good shots of sport?
Shots of someone looking silly?

That last idea matters. Playing around to get unflattering shots is a great way to learn how to flatter the subject (which will be what you want to do, most of the time!) Anyway, that's a lot to get through, especially if you're new: the best way is to play around and see how these things interact.