

SPRING 2015
Western Illinois University
ENG/BC 496 (Topics in Film)—*Italian Cinema-*

Class meetings: M/W 9:00- 9:50 (SI 220)
Film screenings (LAB): T 3:00-5:00 (SI 220)

Dr. Roberta Di Carmine, PhD
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Director Interdisciplinary Film Minor
Office Hours: M 11:00-1:00; T 2:00-3:00; W 2:00-3:00
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Course description and goals:

The aim of this course is to develop interpretative skills relevant to the study of Italian cinema by examining some of its most significant films. More specifically, we will analyze the ways in which Italian society is portrayed by focusing on how family and human relationships are generally typified in Italian cinema. In this class, we will discuss a wide range of films, genres and movements, from *cinema muto* (the silent period) and Italian neorealism to “*commedia all’italiana*” (Italian style comedy), “Spaghetti Western” and animation. Some of the themes recently explored in Italian cinema (immigration, sexual politics, political corruption, elderly care) will be also considered. The class involves lectures, in-class discussions, presentations, film papers and a final research paper.

Not open to students with credit in BC 496. Prerequisite: ENG/BC 290, ENG/BC 390, and 6 s.h. in approved film minor electives, or permission of instructor.

Texts Required:

1. *The Italian Cinema Book*, edited by Peter Bondanella, BFI 2014
2. *Writing about Movies*, 3rd ed. By Karen Gocsik, Richard Barsam, Dave Monahan, Norton 2013

Readings are required and should be completed before each screening or according to the syllabus.

Texts Recommended:

- A History of Italian Cinema*, by Peter Bondanella, 2009
A New Guide to Italian Cinema, by Carlo Celli and Marga Cottino-Jones, Palgrave, 2007
Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium, by Mario Mignone, 2008
The History of Italian Cinema: A Guide to Italian Film From Its Origins to the Twenty-First Century, by Gian Piero Brunetta, Princeton UP, 2011

Films:

1. *Assunta Spina* (dir. Francesca Bertini and Gustavo Serena, 1914. 62 m)
2. *Roma, Citta' Aperta* (Rome, Open City, Dir. Roberto Rossellini, 1945. 100 m)
3. *Ossessione* (dir. Luchino Visconti, 1943, 144 m)
4. *Riso Amaro* (Bitter Rice, Dir. De Santis, 1949. 108 m)
5. *La Dolce Vita* (dir. Federico Fellini, 1960, 180 m).
6. *Ieri, Oggi, e Domani* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, dir. Vittorio de Sica, 1963. 119 m)
7. *I Soliti Ignoti* (Big Deal on Madonna Street, Dir. Mario Monicelli, 1958, 106 m)
8. *La Maschera del Demonio* (Black Sunday, dir. Mario Bava, 1960. 87 m)
- 9 *Per Un Pugno di Dollari* (A Fistful of Dollars, dir. Sergio Leone, 1964. 101 m)
10. *Accattone* (1961, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini, 116 m)
11. *Il Conformista* (The Conformist, dir. Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970. 111 m)
12. *Allegro non Troppo* (dir. Bruno Bozzetto, 1976. 85 m)
13. *Gomorra* (Gomorra, dir. Matteo Garrone, 2008. 137 m)
14. *Pranzo di Ferragosto* (Mid-August Lunch, dir. Gianni Di Gregorio, 2009. 95 m)
15. *La Grande Bellezza* (The Great Beauty, dir. Paolo Sorrentino, 2013. 142 m)

Film Screenings: If a student misses a screening and the film is not available at the library, it is his/her responsibility to find other ways to watch the film before the discussion (i.e. Netflix). **Attendance at films screening is required.**

Requirements and Evaluation:

- Presentation (200 pts)
- 4 film papers (400 pts)
- Research paper (300 pts)
- Attendance and participation (100 pts)

Total points: 1000. Grading Scale:

1000-934= A

933-900=A-

899-867=B+

866-834= B

833-800= B-

799-767=C+

766-734=C

733-700=C-

699-667=D+

666-634=D

633-600=D-

below 600 pts= F

NOTE: NO TEXTING OR CHECKING PHONE IS ALLOWED DURING CLASS. PLEASE SILENCE YOUR PHONE AS SOON AS YOU ENTER THE CLASSROOM. I WILL PENALIZE STUDENTS WHO DON'T RESPECT THESE POLICIES BY TAKING OFF POINTS AND, IF NECESSARY, I WILL ASK THEM TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM. NO FOOD IS ALLOWED AT FILM SCREENINGS/DISCUSSIONS.

Course Policies:

a- Students are required to write 4 film papers (400 pts). In these papers, students must use the critical/film language that are learning in the course and include specific examples from the film(s) and reading(s) to support the argument. Each paper must be 4 full double-spaced pages, typed, proof-read, spell-checked, and formatted (font: 12; side margins: 1 inch). Students need to refer to MLA online for samples of how to properly quotes and paraphrase. Also, refer to the text required for this class, *Writing about Movies*, to review film terms/film language and for samples of film papers. Don't hesitate to ask for my help if you need assistance or have any questions about the writing style/papers. Papers SENT AS EMAIL ATTACHMENTS WON'T BE ACCEPTED.

b- Presentation (200 pts). Students are required to meet with me before the presentation. Students are highly encouraged to start doing research on their presentation as soon as I distribute a schedule.

c- Research paper of 10-12 pages (double-spaced) (300 pts total: final paper=260 pts; in-class presentation=40 pts). The research paper consists of a close analysis of two films or a filmmaker chosen by the student among those studied in class. Students must have a topic/theme they would like to explore in their final project therefore I highly encourage everyone to start thinking about the final paper as soon as possible. I will be happy to meet students individually and help them frame the argument around the topic of their choice but these meetings must occur several weeks before the paper is due. In this final project, students need to closely refer (by quoting or paraphrasing) to at least 4 readings amongst those studied throughout the semester. Also, additional research is required with consultation and citation of 4 articles/book chapters/essays on the films chosen. I will distribute a list of academic journals and texts to consult during week 4. The draft of the final paper of at least 6 pages is due Monday, May 4. See policies below about submission and presentation of the final paper's draft. Individual conferences are scheduled for May 6 (Wednesday) and **the final paper is due WEDNESDAY, May 13 at 9:00 am.**

****In-class presentation of research paper/final project (40 pts):** Together with the submission of the draft of the final paper, students are required to give a brief in-class presentation of their final project. A one-page outline is also required for this presentation and will be submitted together with the draft. Failure to submit the outline and give the presentation will be penalized 40 pts. Also, students who submit a draft of less than 4 pages will be penalized 30 pts.

Please note: film essays and final paper SENT AS EMAIL ATTACHMENTS WON'T BE ACCEPTED.

Class Meetings/Procedures and Participation/Attendance Policies:

Participation

Each week students are expected to come to class prepared for a discussion on the film and readings. Since the discussion revolves around the readings, the film(s), and lectures, **active participation** is based on a careful reading of both films and literary texts as well as understanding of how the two relate. **Keep in mind that your contribution to discussions counts toward your participation grade.** Remember to be respectful in class, disagreements are inevitable in discussions but they should always be conducted in a civil manner. In-class activities (screening reports, film reviews, quizzes) will be given regularly and graded as “participation grade.”

Attendance

Regular attendance and participation is REQUIRED. Attendance will be taken regularly in class periods *and screenings*. **You are allowed 4 unexcused absences (0-4 absences= 50 pts; 5-8 absences= 20 pts; 9-11 absences= 10 pts; 12+ absences= 0 pts).** Remember, consistent late arrival or early departure DOES affect your attendance grade. **Also, as previously mentioned, students who check their phone while in class will be penalized (10 pts each week). It is always the student’s responsibility to check with a classmate (AND NOT THE INSTRUCTOR) for missed material (lectures/handouts) given in discussions/film screenings.**

NOTE: Students whose behavior during film screenings creates a distraction to others will be asked to leave. **Consistent late arrival or early departure at film screenings and class periods DOES affect your final grade.**

Additional Course Policies:

1. LATE WORK: LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. When a paper is due, students need to submit the hard copy of their paper, and if they fail to do so their papers will be penalized 50 pts per hour.

Exceptions: only serious emergency situations will be considered for excused absences and late papers and they include: absence related to hospitalization with proof of documentation from the doctor from the hospital; absence due to death of a family member with a documentation of funeral service attendance or official note from funeral home; absence due to universities activities, such as sport and students organizations, with an official note; absence due to religious obligations with documentation from university official. Note that letters from

parents/relatives WILL NOT be accepted. It is always up to the instructor to decide whether or not the documentation provided is acceptable and after a carefully review of the request. In any case, the student needs to contact the instructor immediately if he/she misses an in class exam. This policy will be applied to attendance as well. NOTE: In the case a student misses class for any reasons, it is always the student's responsibility to make arrangement for the missed class and for checking with a classmate of any missed material (notes) in discussions/film screenings.

2. No incomplete is given in this course.

3. Successful participation in this course requires that students complete all the requirements/assignments.

4. PLAGIARISM: Students should be aware that plagiarism or cheating of any form will not be tolerated and that academic misconduct entails severe penalties. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. As stated on the website regarding Students' Rights and Responsibilities, "plagiarism is intentionally or knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism occurs whenever:

- one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product without acknowledgment. This includes all information gleaned from any source, including the Internet; one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words without acknowledgment; one uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials without acknowledgment; one fails to acknowledge with a citation any close and/or extended paraphrasing of another; one fails to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it is a few words, a sentence, or a paragraph.

Typical examples: Submitting, as one's own, the work of another writer or commercial writing service; knowingly buying or otherwise acquiring and submitting, as one's own work, any research paper or other writing assignment; submitting, as one's own, work in which portions were produced by someone acting as tutor or editor; collaborating with others on papers or projects without authorization of the instructor. In addition to oral or written work, plagiarism may also involve using, without permission and/or acknowledgment, computer programs or files, research designs, ideas and images, charts and graphs, photographs, creative works, and other types of information that belong to another. Because expectations about academic assignments vary among disciplines and instructors, students should consult with their instructors about any special requirements related to citation."
(<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>)

Penalties for plagiarism: In case a student's paper is found violating these rules, the paper/exam will be a graded as a "zero" and an academic integrity incident report will be filed according to the Academic Integrity Policies of Western Illinois University.

WIU Film Club

The Film Club shows a selection of films (national and international) and offers thought-provoking discussions on a wide range of issues and topics. Students are highly encouraged to attend these screenings. Further information about this students' organization will be given the first week of class. The FILM CLUB President is: Dan Pourroy (dj-pourroy@wiu.edu) and the treasurer is Thomas Franklin (t-franklin2@wiu.edu). Check the Film Club on Facebook and on http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english_and_journalism/filmclub.php

Extra credits: throughout the semester, I will announce various film related events and films screenings which allow students to earn extra credits points. In such cases, the student must attend the event and write a two-pages critical review (double-spaced). A max of 40 points for the semester (max 10 pts for each review) will be given. The review must be submitted the week after the event.

The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. Call for an appointment (298-3512) and be sure to bring a copy of your writing assignment.

Special Accommodation and Disabilities:

“In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services.”

Additional Information: to get important factual information about films (characters' name, cast, awards), check www.imdb.com. Be careful though with the “on-line interviews” and other material you find online. Remember, plagiarism is a very serious matter. It is also essential to take notes during the screenings. Therefore it is highly recommended to buy a penlight, a ballpoint pen with an illuminated tip, to facilitate writing in the dark.

ABOUT Wikipedia: Students may consult, if they wish, the site for information on the film/director but I highly discourage to refer to Wikipedia as the ***only*** critical source for their writing assignments. Students can get bibliographic information there but they must always consult the source to verify its validity.

Course schedule*

*The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course but some changes may be necessary. Students will be informed in class of any changes to the assigned schedule.

Week 1:

January 20 (T): Course Introduction. **Screening: *Assunta Spina* (dir. Francesca Bertini and Gustavo Serena, 1914. 62 m).**

Readings for Wednesday: introd. Bondanella and chapter 1 (*The Italian Cinema Book*)

Jan. 21 (W): discussion on the film and readings.

Readings for next Monday:

Introduction 1-5, by Bondanella (*The Italian Cinema Book*); chapter 1 (Bertellini, "Silent Italian Cinema: An International Story"); chapter 2 (Welle, "The Beginnings of Film Stardom and the Print Media of Divismo"); chapter 3 (Dalle Vacche, "The Diva Film")

Readings for Wednesday: chapter 5 (Forgacs, "Fascism and Italian Cinema"); chapter 6 (Landy, "Italian Matinee Idols in the Era of the Talkies")

Week 2:

January 26 (M): discussion on the readings. Bring passages (at least 4) of your choice for a discussion on Silent Italian Cinema (*cinema muto*)

Readings for W: introduction by Bondanella, p 75-76; chapter 9 (Gundle, "Neorealism and Left-wing Culture"); chapter 10 (Shiel, "Cityscape and Cinematic Space")

January 27 (T): **Screening: *Roma città aperta* (Rome, Open City, dir. Roberto Rossellini, 1945. 100 m)**

Jan. 28 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Readings for next M: chapter 8 (Bonsaver, "Censorship from the Fascist Period to the Present")

Week 3:

Feb. 2 (M): cont. discussion on the films and readings.

Readings for W: chapter 11 (Haaland, "Dislocating Spaces for New Thought")
Feb. 3 (T): **Screening: *Ossessione* (dir. Luchino Visconti, 1943. 144 m)**

Feb. 4 (W): **cont. screening and discussion**

Readings for M/W: chapter 13 (Hipkins, "Italian Cinema from the Perspective of Female Friendship"); chapter 17 (Van Order, "Italian Film Music"); chapter 26 (Sorlin, "How the Italians Happened to Cherish and Then to Disdain Their Cinema")

Week 4:

Feb. 9 (M): discussion and in-class activities. **PAPER N. 1 DUE**

Feb. 10 (T): **Screening: *Riso Amaro* (*Bitter Rice*, dir. De Santis, 1949. 108 m)**

Feb. 11 (W): **Discussion on the readings/film**

Reading for next W: chapter 15 (Gordon, "Hollywood and Italy"); chapter 29 (Angelucci, "Scriptwriting, Italian Style"); chapter 38 (Bondanella, "Fellini and Contemporary International Cinema")

Week 5:

Feb. 16 (M): **begin screening *La Dolce Vita* (1960, dir. Federico Fellini, 180 m)**

Feb. 17 (T): cont. *La Dolce Vita*

Feb. 18 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 1**

Readings for next M: chapter 14 (Small, "The Maggiorata or Sweater Girl of the 1950s")

Week 6:

Feb. 23 (M): discussion on the readings

Feb. 24 (T): **Screening: *Ieri, Oggi, e Domani* (*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, dir. Vittorio de Sica, 1963. 119 m)**

Feb. 25 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 2**

Readings for next week: chapter 22 (Fournier-Lanzoni, "Chronicles of a Hastened Modernisation")

Week 7:

March 2 (M): **PAPER N. 2 DUE.**

March 3 (T): **Screening: *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*, 1959, dir. Mario Monicelli. 106 m)**

March 4 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 3**

Reading for next week: chapter 24 (Koven, "The Giallo and the Spaghetti Nightmare Film"); chapter 36 (Wood, "Italian Film Genres and Mario Bava")

Week 8:

March 9 (M): discussion on the film/readings

March 10 (T): **screening: *La maschera del demonio (Black Sunday, 1960, dir. Mario Bava. 87 m)***

March 11 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 4**

Readings for W after the break: chapter 21 (Brizio-Skov, "Spaghetti Westerns and Their Audience")

Week 9:

SPRING BREAK

Week 10:

March 23 (M): **PAPER N. 3 DUE.** In-class activity (Clips from Spaghetti Westerns, Corbucci and Leone)

March 24 (T). **Screening: *Per un pugno di dollari (A Fistful of Dollars, dir. Sergio Leone, 1964. 101 m)***

March 25 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 5**

Reading for next week: chapter 18 (Wagstaff, "Production around 1960")

Week 11:

March 30 (M): Discussion on the film/readings

March 31 (T): **Screening: *Accattone (1961, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini, 116 m)***

April 1 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 6**

Reading for next week: chapter 23 (Marrone, "The Political Film")

Week 12:

April 6 (M): discussion, in-class activities

April 7 (T): **screening: *Il Conformista (The Conformist, dir. Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970. 111 m)***

April 8 (W): **PRESENTATION N. 7**

Reading for next week: photocopies to distribute; re-read chapter 17 (on music); chapter 25 (Gili, "European Co-production and Artistic Collaborations")

Week 13:

April 13 (M): discussion on the readings. **PAPER N. 4 DUE**

April 14 (T): **Screening: *Allegro non troppo (dir. Bruno Bozzetto, 1976. 85 m)***

April 15 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Readings for W: Chapter 28 (Renga, "Modern Mob Movies")

Week 14:

April 20 (M): **Begin screening *Gomorra (Gomorra, dir. Matteo Garrone, 2008. 137 m)***

April 21 (T): cont. screening

April 22 (W): discussion on the film/readings

Readings for next M: chapter 34 (Rascaroli, “Italian Cinema in the Post-National Age”); chapter 35 (O’Healy, “Post-colonial Theory and Italy’s Multicultural Cinema”)

Readings for next W: chapter 39 (Brunetta, “The Heritage of the Past and New Frontiers for the History of Italian Cinema”)

Week 15:

April 27 (M): discussion on the clips about multicultural Italy/cinema (from *Bianco e Nero*, 2008)

April 28 (T): **Screening: *Pranzo di ferragosto* (Mid-August Lunch, dir. Gianni Di Gregorio, 2009. 95 m)**

April 29 (W): Discussion on the film/readings. Students’ evaluations

Week 16:

May 4 (M): **PRESENTATION DRAFT FINAL PAPERS.** Begin screening: ***La Grande Bellezza* (The Great Beauty, dir. Paolo Sorrentino, 2013. 142 m)**

May 5 (T): Cont Screening.

May 6 (W): discussion on the film. Final considerations

Week 17:

Final paper due in my office May 13, WEDNESDAY at 9:00 am