

Italian Politics and History Through Film European Transformations University of California in Rome—UCEAP

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Italian cinema provides an excellent route for understanding social and political change throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. As arguably the most important artistic medium of modernity, cinema allows one to construct and deconstruct many myths and identities. This course will analyze some of the most relevant Italian film productions of each defined period of history, primarily as socio-historical documents (content). Topics will include the Fascist regime (Bertolucci, Scola); the Second World War (Rossellini); the 50s reconstruction and neo-realism (De Sica), the economic miracle (Olmi, Visconti), the 1970s (Giordana), the Berlusconi Years (Gandini) to Rome of the present day (Sorrentino). Analysis of these films will be contextualized within a thorough grounding in contemporary Italian history.

ROME COURSE REQUIREMENTS & WEEKLY CALENDAR

Lectures, Film Screenings & Study Visits

Students will complete 30 hours of instruction meeting twice a week during the first half of the quarter. Class meetings will last 3 hours per session.

Classes will be divided into two equal parts, not necessarily in this order:

1. Film discussion – that day/week's screening. **See screening schedule on Moodle.**
Students may choose which screening they wish to attend but must sign in.
2. Lecture – essential background for historical contextualization of next film.

In addition, students will meet for the following class/visit:

– Visit to Museum of the Liberation and the Fosse Ardeatine

Meet: Museum of the Liberation, Via Tasso, 9.45am. Tram 3 to Metro Manzoni. Five minute walk from here. See map on Moodle

– Visit to Cinecittà

Meet: entrance to studios, Cinecittà metro stop, Line A, 9:15 meet. See map on Moodle

Class Preparation & Participation

Students will be examined upon preparation and participation in for class discussions.

All UC Rome courses operate under an attendance policy created by the UC Faculty Advisory Committee that oversees the program. According to that policy, each unexcused absence will result in a 3% point deduction from the final raw total for that class. Students who are late to class or leave early will receive an “L” on the attendance sheet. Three tardies (i.e. “L”) automatically convert to an absence. It is a student's responsibility to sign-in before each class. In the case of absences, it is the student's responsibility to find out what information was given in class including handouts or any announcements made. No guests are allowed in any UC Rome course or site visit.

Film Screenings - IMPORTANT

As this is a film class you will be required to watch movies. This is mandatory. You should be aware that you will not however, be watching the films in class. This means that if you chose this

course you will have 10-15 extra hours beyond class time during the five weeks of the course. Please be aware of this and make sure that you are prepared to make this commitment.

Readings and Slides

All class readings and slides will be posted on the course moodle site. Students will not receive readers. See: <http://moodle.eapitaly.it/>
European Transformations Quarter Program, 'Italian History through Film'.

Class preparation and participation – 10%

Students are responsible for completing each week's readings and are expected to come to class with responses, questions and comments in mind. Lectures are intended to provide context for the readings and stimulate class discussions, in which the full participation of all class members will be demanded.

Mid Term Exam – 25%

Students will be asked to respond to a series of ID and short-answer questions relating to the history of Italy and films covered thus far in the course.

Paper – 35%

A screening report/response paper of 10 pages (max), double-spaced, in which students will be asked to contextualize a film from the course (otherwise in agreement with the professor) with Italian history of the period. An electronic copy of the paper must be uploaded to the course moodle site.

Final Exam – 30%

Students will also take a final written exam that will consist of a number of short-answer and longer answer questions. The paper is cumulative and will relate to the entire period of the course. Students will be expected to show a broad knowledge of how film has connected with and reflected the development of modern Italian society.

The in-class examination is individual, and no books or other study materials may be consulted while it is in progress. Once the examination starts, students will not be allowed to leave the room until they have finished their work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to conduct themselves according to the principles and procedures of academic integrity and are held to the standards outlined in the EAP Academic Conduct policy, available at the following URL and on the UC Rome Study Center website:

http://eap.ucop.edu/Documents/_forms/academic_conduct_policy.pdf

ROME WEEKLY CALENDAR

Class One

From Unification to Disintegration

Issues: Italy's formation; the nature of Italy; strengths and weaknesses; Italian identity.

Reading: Duggan, C., *A Concise History of Italy*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, University Press, 2014, pp.118-43.

Class Two

The Rise of Fascism

Issues: Impact of World War I; Fascist roots; Mussolini; Socialism; the rise to power.

Reading: D. Bordwell, *The McGraw-Hill Film Viewer's Guide*, McGraw-Hill, 2004, pp.1-34.

Class Three

The Fascist Dictatorship

Issues: The establishment of dictatorship; culture and leisure time in Fascist Italy; censorship; policing.

Reading: Duggan, C., *A Concise History of Italy*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, University Press, 2014, pp.207-34.

In Class Discussion: How did education change under the regime? What was the role of youth? How was leisure time organized? How was society controlled by the regime? What was the role of the Fascist party in society? What was the role of women?

Film Screening 1: *A Special Day* (Scola)

Questions: What signs of Fascism are there in the film? What sort of people live in the apartment block? Why does Antonietta not go to the parade? What does the film reveal about the role women in Fascist Italy? What was the bachelor tax and why was it enforced? What is confino? Why is Gabriele sent to Sardinia? What was the role of the caretaker?

Class Four

Fascism and Film

Issues: The development of the film industry; the nature of Fascist film; censorship; the role of the state; 'white telephones'; the impact of empire; Fascist audiences; the legacy.

In-Class Discussion: *A Special Day* (Scola)

Class Five & Six

Memories of a Massacre

Site Visit: Museo della Liberazione-The Fosse

(Meet: Museum of the Liberation, Via Tasso, 9.45am. Tram 3 from Viale Trastevere, Bus 51 from Piazza Venezia or Metro A. All means, get off at Metro Manzoni. Five minute walk from here. See map on Moodle You will need your bus/metro tickets. The visit will last 3-4 hours.)

Reading:

Katz, R., *The Battle for Rome. The Germans, the Allies, the Partisans, and the Pope*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2003 (pp. 33-45, 209-18, 249-65)

R. De Felice, 'Hunting Down the Jews' in S.G. Pugliese, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and the Resistance in Italy. 1919 to the present*, Lanham, Rowan & Littlefield, 2004, 200-06

A. Portelli, 'Memory and Massacres', in S.G. Pugliese, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and the Resistance in Italy. 1919 to the present*, Lanham, Rowan & Littlefield, 2004, 307-10.

Film Screening 2: *Rome, Open City* (Rossellini)

Questions: At what point of war is the film set? Describe the Rome presented. How realistic does it seem? How is the Resistance portrayed? Contrast the portrayal of Germans and Italians. In what ways is the Church portrayed? Why did some consider the film scandalous and subversive?

No Class

Class Seven

Selected scenes & discussion from: *Novecento* (Bertolucci)

Questions: Where is the film set? How does this relate to the rise of the regime? How does the Fascist Party rule in the countryside? What is the relationship between the peasants, gentry and the regime; why does Fascism fall? How is Fascism represented? What does this say about postwar Italy?

Reading:

A. Mammone, 'A Daily Revision of the Past: Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and Memory in Contemporary Italy', *Modern Italy*, 11, 2, 2006, pp. 211-226

Class Eight

Fascism, War & Resistance

Issues: Italy's foreign policy; racial attitudes; entry into World War II; the end of Fascism; the Partisans; Liberation; the aftermath.

Reading:

Duggan, C., *A Concise History of Italy*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, University Press, 2014, pp.234-246.

In-Class Discussion: *Rome Open City/Roma Città Aperta* (Rossellini)

Film Screening 3: *The Bicycle Thief/I Ladri di Bicicletta* (De Sica)

Questions: Where do Antonio and family live? Why is his bicycle so important? What is the significance of Antonio's job? What is the relationship between him and his son? Is this comedy or tragedy? What does this film say about Italy in the immediate postwar period? How are the working class presented?

Reading: R. Ben-Ghiat, 'Liberation: Italian Cinema and the Fascist Past, 1945-50', in R.J.B. Bosworth & P. Dogliani (eds), *Italian Fascism. History, Memory and Representation*, Palgrave, London, 1999, pp.83-97.

Class Nine

Reconstruction & The Economic Miracle

Issues: Italy's exit from the war; the Republic; rebuilding the country and economy; the politics of democracy; what was the Christian Democratic Party and what did it stand for? Explaining the economic boom; differing experiences; positives and negatives; impact.

Reading:

Duggan, C., *A Concise History of Italy*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, University Press, 2014, pp.246-71.

Class Ten/Eleven

Site Visit – Cinecittà 10.00-1.00pm

Meet: entrance to studios, Cinecittà metro stop, Line A, 9:15am.

Reading: Ben-Ghiatt, R., *Fascist Modernities. Italy, 1922-1945*, California, 2004, (Chapter 3, 'Envisioning Modernity')

Class Twelve

Guest Lecture 1 & class discussion: *The Bicycle Thief/I Ladri di Bicicleta* (De Sica)

No Class, Easter Monday

Class Thirteen

Mid Term Exam

Film Screening 4: *Il Posto* (Olmi)

Questions: What are the key social and political changes that Italy undergoes following in the period of the film Resistance? How do the postwar lives of Gianni, Nicola and Antonio compare and contrast? What do they represent? What do their relationships with Luciana say? How does the shooting of the film impact upon its content? Is this a film of hope or despair?

Class Fourteen

Selected scenes and class discussion: *Rocco and his Brothers/Rocco e I suoi fratelli* (Visconti)

Reading: J. Foot, 'Cinema and the city. Milan and Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and his Brothers*', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 1999, pp.209-35.

No Class

Class Fifteen

Guest Lecture 2 and Class Discussion, *Il Posto* (Olmi)

Film Screening 5: *Videocracy* (Gandini)

Questions: What is the relationship between media and politics? Do Italians get the media they wanted? Is this American media, Italian style? How is Berlusconi portrayed? What is the role of women in the Italian media? What image of Italy does the film present?

Class Sixteen

Violence and the 1970s

Issues: Violence in the late 1960s and 1970s; Red Brigades, neo-Fascism and Mafia; student riots; the 'hot autumn'; Aldo Moro.

Reading:

Duggan, C., *A Concise History of Italy*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, University Press, 2014, pp.272-87.

Selected scenes and discussion from *The Best of youth/La Meglio Gioventù* (Giordana)

Class Seventeen

Berlusconi's Italy

Issues: State corruption; Tangentopoli and the collapse of the First Republic; the rise of Berlusconi; Media in Italy; Berlusconi in power

Reading: G. Andrews, *Not a Normal Country. Italy after Berlusconi*, Pluto, London, 2005 (pp.17-39).

'The Triumph of Populism', *The Economist*, 5 July 2001,

<http://www.economist.com/node/682010>

In-Class Film Discussion: *Videocracy* (Gandini)

Film Screening 6: *La Grande Bellezza* – *The Great Beauty* (Sorrentino)

Questions: How is Rome portrayed? Is Jep a hero or villain? What is Sorrentino's comment on modern Rome and Italy?

Class Eighteen

**Film Discussion: *La Grande Bellezza - The Great Beauty*
(Sorrentino)**

Reading: J. Hooper, *The Italians*, Penguin, London, 2015, pp.237-46 & 287-93.

Your final paper must be submitted by 7.00pm today.

An electronic copy must be sent to the course moodle site

No Class

Class Nineteen

In-Class Discussion: Italy through the movies.

No Class

Class Twenty

Final exam: In-class

Sample syllabus. Final syllabi will be available on-site.