Landscape and Architecture in Antonioni, Pasolini, and Rosi

From at least as early as the 1930s, Italian cinema has used urban or rural settings to convey the moral status of its characters (the immoral "femme fatale", the hapless peasant, the urban swindler). With the advent of post-World War II neorealism, “the city” emerged as a character in its own right. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine the films under consideration in this course (by Antonioni, Pasolini, and Rosi) without taking into account how architecture (or its stark and emphatic lack) informs the cinematic frame. Taking its inspiration from filmmakers and theorists who address how cinema, like architecture, structures vision and belief, this course examines how Antonioni, Pasolini, and Rosi both utilize and theorize the encounter between space and human experience. Themes to include: the southern question, urbanization and industrialization in postwar Italy, globalization and ecology.

Participation: 35%

Regular attendance and active participation are required. Students who make the most of the seminar time by posing thoughtful questions, engaging directly with the texts assigned, and listening attentively to their classmates will receive excellent participation grades.

4 in-class close readings/analyses/responses: 20%

Over the course of the semester, each student will be responsible for two brief (10-15 minute) close readings/analyses and two brief (10-15 minutes) responses to a student presentation. Presenters will select a film frame, sequence, or technique for in-class analysis and discussion that considers the readings for the week (or, alternatively, from weeks past). The goal of this exercise is to hone cinematic close reading skills, and to incite discussion about intersections between film theory and practice. Respondents will listen actively to presentations, and will be asked to engage with the presentation in as detailed a manner as possible, offering questions on the presentation and/or further lines of discussion for the group.
Final paper: 45%

Students will write a 15-page final research paper consisting of a close reading of a film or a film-theoretical essay, drawing from at least one text (film or essay) on the syllabus and relating to at least one of the major topics covered in the course. Students should consult between 3 and 4 secondary sources, and should include a bibliography in MLA format.

Monday, Jan 27. Week 1

- Course introduction

Feb 3. Week 2

- John Agnew, “Space and Place.” *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*
- David Harvey, “Postmodernism in the City: Architecture and Modern Design.” *The Condition of Postmodernity* (*print only pp. 73-105 of the PDF on Sakai*)

Feb 10. Week 3

Michelangelo Antonioni, *Gente del Po* (1942/47)
Antonioni, *N.U.* (1948)

- Karl Shoonover, “Antonioni’s Waste Management,” *Antonioni. Centenary Essays*
- Leonardo Quaresima, “Making Love on the Shores of the River Po: Antonioni’s Documentaries,” *Centenary Essays*

Feb 17. Week 4

Antonioni, *L’avventura* (1960)

- Rosalind Galt, “On *L’avventura* and the Picturesque,” *Centenary Essays*
- Thomas Harrison and Sarah Carey, “The World Outside the Window--Antonioni’s Architectonics of Space and Time*
* SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23 - INDEPENDENT ITALIAN FILM SERIES *

Feb 24. Week 5

Antonioni, *La notte* (1961)
- Sergei Eisenstein, “Montage and Architecture,” *Assemblage*

Mar 3. Week 6

Antonioni, *L’eclisse* (1962)
- Jacopo Benci, “Antonioni and Rome, 1940-62,” *Centenary Essays*
- John David Rhodes, “Rome’s EUR from Rossellini to Antonioni.” *Taking Place*
- Anthony Vidler, “Metropolitan Montage: The City as Film in Kracaeur, Benjamin, and Eisenstein,” *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*

Mar 10. Week 7

Antonioni, *Deserto rosso* (1964)
- Karen Pinkus, “Antonioni’s Cinematic Poetics of Climate Change,” *Centenary Essays*
- Pier Paolo Pasolini, “The Cinema of Poetry,” *Heretical Empiricism*
- Michelangelo Antonioni, *The Architecture of Vision* (selections)

March 15-23. SPRING BREAK

Mar 24. Week 8

- John David Rhodes, “Scandalous Desacration. *Accattone* against the Neorealist City”
- PPP, “The Written Language of Reality”
- Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City.” *The Practice of Everyday Life*

* SUNDAY, MARCH 30 - INDEPENDENT ITALIAN FILM SERIES *
Mar 31. Week 9

- John David Rhodes, “*Mamma Roma* and Pasolini’s Oedipal (Housing) Complex”
- Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”

Apr 7. Week 10

Pasolini, *Uccellacci e uccellini* (1966)
- Mitchell Scwharzer, “Introduction.” *Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media*

Apr 14. Week 11

Pasolini, *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (1964)
- Giorgio Bertellini, “The Picturesque Italian South as Transnational Commodity,” *Italy in Early American Cinema*

Apr 21. Week 12

Francesco Rosi, *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962)
- Martin Lefebvre, “On Landscape in Narrative Cinema”
- Angelo Restivo, “Tropes of Modernization: The Bandit and the Road” ; “Spatial Transformations: Mapping the New Italy.” *The Cinema of Economic Miracles. Visuality and Modernization in the Italian Art Film*

*SUNDAY, APRIL 27 - INDEPENDENT ITALIAN FILM SERIES*

Apr 28. Week 13

Rosi, *Le mani sulla città* (1963)
- Iain Chambers, “Architecture, Amnesia, and the Emergent Archaic.” *Culture after Humanism: History, Culture, Subjectivity*
• Giuliana Bruno, “City Views: Filmic Cityscape, Artistic Perspective, and Touristic Travel.” *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*

May 5. Week 14

Rosi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (1979)

• Millicent Marcus, “Rosi’s *Christ Stopped at Eboli*: A Tale of Two Italies.” *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism.*

• Giovanna Faleschini-Lerner, “Francesco Rosi’s *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*: Toward a Cinema of Painting”

Bibliography


--- “The Picturesque Italian South as Transnational Commodity,” *Italy in Early American Cinema* (2010)


Harrison, Thomas and Sarah Carey, “The World Outside the Window--Antonioni’s Architectonics of Space and Time.” *Italian Culture* (2011)


Marcus, Millicent. “Rosi’s *Christ Stopped at Eboli*: A Tale of Two Italies”; *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (1986)


-- “Rome's EUR from Rossellini to Antonioni.” *Taking Place. Location and the Moving Image* (2011)


Vidler, Anthony. “Metropolitan Montage: The City as Film in Kracaeur, Benjamin, and Eisenstein,” Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture (2000)