

CLASSICS OF ITALIAN CINEMA
Rutgers University, Italian Department, Fall 2017
01:560:345
TTh 11:30-12:50

Instructor: Paola Gambarota
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This course provides a historical introduction to Italian cinema, concentrating on examples of classical genres and movements, such as the early silent epic, the classics of neorealism, *auteurs* of the 50's, 60's and 70's, the *commedia all'italiana* (comedy, Italian style), and the spaghetti Western. We will examine issues of representation and production of societal values, e.g., gender, family relations, and national identity vs. local cultures. No knowledge of Italian is required.

Learning Goals:

By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with some of the canonical works of Italian cinema, will be able to critically analyze films according to their textual typologies (e.g., generic codes and conventions), to relate them to the specific socio-historical context and processes of production (e.g. film industry, audience expectations), and to communicate their ideas effectively, both orally and in written form, in modes appropriate to the discipline.

Departmental Goals II and III: Cultural Proficiency and Professional Preparation.

This course satisfies the Core Curriculum Learning Goal: AH (o and p).

Area of Inquiry C: Arts and Humanities Goals o and p:

- o. Examine critically theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and the cultural production related to the topics addressed.
- p. Analyze arts and literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies. Learn more about the SAS Core Curriculum at the linked page: <http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/requirements/core>



Required Texts:

- Readings and films available on SAKAI <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>
- Celli, Carlo and Cottino-Jones, Marga. *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. ISBN # 1403975655.
- Handouts and additional material are posted on sakai: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Reference:

The following books are available for consultation at the Alexander Library (you can use any edition):

- Di Scala, Spencer M. *Italy: From Revolution to Republic, 1700 to the Present*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2004 (on Italian history).
- Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema*. New York: Continuum, 2001 (on general history of Italian cinema)
- Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990. (on film form, elements of cinematography, film genres)
- <http://www.italica.rai.it/cinema/>

Course Requirements and Grade distribution:

Participation, 25%: Regular attendance is mandatory. Highest grades for participation are earned by students who come to class on time having seen the film and read the material assigned for each class, prepare the questions assigned, pose thoughtful questions, offer their insights consistently, communicate their thoughts effectively, and listen respectfully to the contributions of other students. See policies below.

Mid-term examination, 25%: Based on lectures and readings, includes identifications and an essay question. The identifications and the essay are aimed at assessing the student's ability to relate the films to their historical and cultural background as well as to theoretical concepts that are specific to the area of inquiry of the course.

Paper, 25%: Approximately seven pages (1,775-1,925 words, typed and double-spaced) on a topic to be discussed with your instructor. **Due Tuesday, November 14. No late papers will be accepted, no exceptions.** Students are required to analyze and compare at least two films and examine critically at least two other sources concerning their topic. They should demonstrate the ability to synthesize and communicate effectively complex ideas in standard written English.

Final exam, 25%. Based on lectures and readings, includes identifications and one essay question. The final exam assesses the student's progress in the abilities to relate art and literature both to their historical and cultural background as well as to theoretical concepts that are specific to the course. **For the date of our final exam, consult the following link: <http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>**

Attendance, Participation, and Disabilities Policies

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

All students must attend regularly. No more than 3 absences are allowed; use them wisely, for health and other serious issues. Having more than 3 absences, arriving to class late, and engaging in behavior that is distracting to the rest of the class are grounds for a significantly lower mark in class participation.

In case students with disabilities should require any special type of assistance and would like to request accommodations, they must follow the procedures outlined at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu>

Plagiarism

Active collaboration with classmates is encouraged in class discussion and preparation. You may share notes and ideas with other students. However, you may not collaborate with anyone else when taking the examinations. Written work and research must result from your own individual effort. In order to avoid plagiarism (the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own), every quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely when you paraphrase or summarize material from another source (in print, electronic or other medium) in whole or in part in. If you are in doubt, please consult the policy on plagiarism and academic integrity at Rutgers and do not hesitate to ask your instructor.

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Program

Week 1 Introduction to course
Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 1-17

Wagstaff, "Analysis: *Ladri di biciclette*"
Film clips and close-analysis exercises

Week 2 Early Cinema

Film: *Cabiria* (Giovanni Pastrone, 1916, 123 minutes)

Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 19-38
Landy, "Early Italian Cinema. *Cabiria*"

Week 3 Visconti and the Film Noir

Film: *Ossessione/ Obsession* (Luchino Visconti, 1942, 140 minutes)

Readings: Graham, "The Phantom Self"
Paul Schrader, "Notes on film noir"

Week 4 Neorealism and Rossellini

Film: *Roma città aperta/ Rome Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945, 98 minutes)

Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 39-52
Millicent Marcus, "Rossellini's *Open City*"

Week 5 Neorealism and De Sica

Film: *Ladri di biciclette/ Bicycle Thief* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948, 90 minutes)

Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 53-65
Marcus, "De Sica's *Bicycle Thief*"

Week 6 Antonioni's Lesson of Style

Film: *L'avventura/ The adventure* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960, 140 minutes)

Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 83-88; 103-104
Brunette, "L'avventura (1960)"
Antonioni, "Two Statements"

Week 7 **Review**

Thursday, Oct. 19. Midterm examination

Week 8 Fellini's Surrealism

Film: *La strada /The Street* (Federico Fellini, 1954, 148 minutes)

Readings: Marcus, "Fellini *La strada*. Transcending Neorealism"
A New Guide to Italian Cinema, pp. 96-103; pp. 108-110

Week 9 Gender and Spectatorship

Film: *La dolce vita/ The Sweet Life* (Federico Fellini, 1960: 174 minutes)

Readings: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
Bondanella, "La dolce vita"

Week 10 Comedy, Italian Style

Film: *Sedotta e abbandonata/ Seduced and Abandoned* (Pietro Germi, 1963, 125 minutes)

Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 88-93
Marcus, "Germi's *Seduced and Abandoned*"

Week 11 The spaghetti Western

Film: *Per un pugno di dollari/ A Fistful of Dollars* (Sergio Leone, 1964, 95 minutes)

Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 93-95
Frayling, "Fistful of Dollars"

Papers due Tu, November 14

- Week 12 Pasolini and the Cinema of Poetry
Film: *Teorema* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1968, 98 minutes)
Readings: Marcus, "Pasolini's *Teorema*"
Bart Testa, "Advent of the Theoretical Stranger"
- Week 13 Bertolucci's "Psychoanalytical" Cinema
Film: *Il conformista/ The Conformist* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970, 116 minutes)
Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 110-111
Marcus, "Bertolucci's *The Conformist*"
- Week 14 Wertmuller's Comic Mode
Film: *Amore e Anarchia/ Love and Anarchy* (Lina Wertmuller, 1972, 124 minutes)
Readings: *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*, pp. 113-118; 125-126
Marcus, "Wertmuller's *Love and Anarchy*"

FINAL EXAMINATION

For the date of our final exam, consult the following link: <http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Marcia Landy, "Early Italian Cinema. Cabiria," in *Italian Film*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Allison Graham, "The Phantom Self: James Cain's Haunted America in the Early Neorealism of Visconti and Antonioni," in *Film Criticism*, 9, 1 (1984).
- Paul Schrader, "Notes on film noir," in *Film Comment* (Spring 1972).
- Millicent Marcus, "Rossellini's *Open City*," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Millicent Marcus, "De Sica's *Bycycle Thief*," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Christopher Wagstaff, "Analysis: *Ladri di biciclette*," in Forgacs and Lumley, *Italian Cultural Studies*, Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Peter Brunette, "L'avventura (1960)," in *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Michelangelo Antonioni, "Two Statements," in Chatman and Fink, *L'avventura: Michelangelo Antonioni Director*, Rutgers University Press 1989.
- Millicent Marcus, "Fellini *La strada*. Transcending Neorealism," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Peter Bondanella, "La dolce vita," in *The Films of Federico Fellini*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, eds. Braudy and Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Millicent Marcus, "Germi's *Seduced and Abandoned*," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.

Christopher Frayling, "Fistful of Dollars," in *Sergio Leone: Something to Do With Death*, Faber and Faber, 2000.

Millicent Marcus, "Pasolini's *Teorema*," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.

Bart Testa, "Advent of the Theoretical Stranger," in Patrick Rumble and Bart Testa eds. *Pier Paolo Pasolini. Contemporary Perspectives*. University of Toronto Press, 1994.

Millicent Marcus, "Bertolucci's *The Conformist*," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.

Millicent Marcus, "Wertmuller's *Love and Anarchy*," in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, 1986.