

## Ital 223 A – Intro to Italian Cinema



Colgate University - Spring 2018  
Prof. Monica Facchini  
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*Class Time:* TR 1:20-2:35 PM, Lawrence Hall 210  
*Film Screening:* T 7-10 PM, Lawrence Hall 20  
*Office Hours:* TR 2:40-4:10PM, Lawrence Hall 208

*This course counts toward the FMST minor.*

### **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to major works of Italian cinema from Neorealism to contemporary productions. We will watch some of the groundbreaking films by Italian directors such as Rossellini, Fellini, Antonioni, Pasolini, Visconti, Benigni, and more. Through a formal and content analysis of these films, we will investigate the various representations of Italian history and culture on the screen from WWII to the present. Major topics will be: space/composition, time/narrative, fashion/form, and genre/gender.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will be able to analyze a film using specific theoretical approaches. They will learn to discuss films' technical and aesthetic aspects as well as their social, political and cultural contributions in the socio-historical context of Italy. During this course, students will improve their knowledge of Italian culture and their critical skills through the analysis of the content and the form of major Italian films.

### **Required Texts**

- ❖ Millicent Marcus. *In the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton University Press: Princeton University Press, 1986)

- ❖ Maria Pramaggiore, Tom Wallis. *Film. A Critical Introduction* (Pearson, Third Edition, 2011) ISBN: 978-0-205770-77-9 [If you decide to buy this online, please make sure you buy **this edition**, by using the ISBN number.]

Extra readings, essays and articles will be distributed during class or on moodle (<http://moodle.colgate.edu/>).

## **Requirements**



**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory in this course, only **two** unexcused absences are allowed – more absences will affect your final grade. Students are expected to be **on time** – two late arrivals will be considered as an absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out the material covered that day and the assignments for the next class. Please be sure to get notes from a fellow student.

**Participation:** This course is student-centered and discussion-based, so participation is crucial. Volunteering and divergence of opinions are indispensable to your and your peers' learning process. By critically engaging in dialogue with the material and your peers, you will reinforce your knowledge, improve your critical skills, and develop your own perspectives. Students are expected to contribute at least one thought or question to discussion each class meeting. **Participation will be evaluated on a daily basis. For each class you will be expected to select a passage from the reading(s) and a scene from the film and comment on them.** On Moodle you will find a rubric on how your participation is evaluated in this course. **Considered the collaborative nature of the course, laptops or any other electronic device are not allowed in the classroom.**

**Homework and Assignments:** Students will need to complete all the readings and carefully watch the film before class. Students are expected to take notes during the screenings. See the film screening etiquette at the end of the syllabus. During the semester, you might be asked to write short response papers and/or contribute online posts to class forums. This will help you reflect on films and reading materials on a regular basis. Detailed assignments and extra readings will be posted on Moodle.

**Papers:** Students will submit two papers for this course. For your first paper, you will write a 4-5-page scene analysis of a film we discussed in the first half of the semester. In your second paper (6-7 pages), you will engage in the analysis of a whole film. You can find more detailed guidelines, instructions and tips on Moodle. I would strongly encourage to write a draft of your paper at least a week in advance and take advantage of the Colgate's Writing Center for reviewing it (see below for more information about the center).

**Presentations:** Throughout the semester, students will present on one film, providing questions and original perspectives to further class discussions and a deeper understanding of both the film and the relevant readings. Students' presentations should include, among other things, a socio-historical context of the film, references to course readings, analysis of films' form and content. After each presentation, students will have **at least 3 questions** for the class. **Make sure your approach to films and readings has a point.** Use your notes taken during the film and film clips to assist you in recalling and conveying information and thoughts. Before starting working on your presentation, please read the "Film Presentation Guidelines" and "Rubric" on Moodle > Guidelines.

### **Grade breakdown:**

Participation:	20%
Presentations:	10%
Scene-Analysis Paper :	15%
Film-Analysis Paper:	20%
Mid-term Exam:	15%
Final Exam:	20%

### **Grading Scale**

100-97% = A+	82,9-80% = B-	66,9-63% = D
96,9-93% = A	79,9-77% = C+	62,9-60 = D-
92,9-90% = A-	76,9-73% = C	
	72,9-70% = C-	59,9-0% = F
89,9-87% = B+		
86,9-83% = B	69,9-67% = D+	

### **The Writing and Speaking Center (208 Lathrop Hall)**

Regardless of ability, all writers benefit from having someone else read their essays and offer feedback. At the Writing and Speaking Center, consultants can help native and non-native speakers alike with a paper's focus, development, organization, clarity, or grammar. If you're preparing a speech or oral presentation, speaking consultants can help you organize your content and improve your delivery, including fine-tuning your pronunciation. All meetings are confidential, and you may visit at any stage of your process, from outlining your ideas to reviewing a final draft or practicing an oral performance. See <http://www.colgate.edu/writingcenter> for more information or to reserve an appointment.

### **Code of Student Conduct and Academic Honor Code**

Every student in this course is expected to abide by the Colgate University Code of Student Conduct and Academic Honor Code. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Students are allowed to get feedback from others on their written assignments, provided that the input of others is explicitly acknowledged. Violation of the Code of Student Conduct or Academic Honor Code can lead to a grade of zero on an exam or assignment; it can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. For more information on the University Standards and Student Conduct see: <http://www.colgate.edu/offices-and-services/deanofthecollege/universitystandardsandstudentconduct>

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please feel free to contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please also consider contacting Lynn Waldman, Director of Academic Support and Disability Services at 315-228-7375 in the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research. Lynn reviews documentation to determine and help coordinate reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

## WEEKLY SYLLABUS\*



\**Nota bene*: This is a tentative syllabus and may be subject to change.

### Week 1: Fascist cinema

Mon, Jan 22– First-day of class – Intro to the course (half-schedule)

Tue, Jan 23 - *Film. A Critical Introduction* [from now on **Film**], CH.1 &2, pp. 3-30.

Screening: Mario Camerini, *Gli uomini che mascalzoni!* (What Scoundrels Men Are! 1932, 67')

Th, Jan 25 – Peter Bondanella, “The Coming of Sound and the Fascist Era.” (moodle)

### Week 2: Neorealism and the Stain

Tue, Jan 30 – André Bazin, “An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of the Liberation)” (moodle);

Cesare Zavattini, “Some Ideas on the Cinema.” *Sight and Sound*, 23:2 (moodle)

Screening: Roberto Rossellini, *Roma città aperta* (Rome Open City, 1945, 99')

Th, Feb 1 – M. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* [from now on **Marcus**], Introduction and Ch1.

### Week 3: Pink Neorealism

Tue, Feb 6 – *Film*, Ch. 4 NARRATIVE FORM.

Screening: Luigi Comencini, *Pane, amore e fantasia* (Bread, Love and Dreams, 1953, 92')

Th, Feb 8 – Marcus, Ch.5

### Week 4: Comedy, Italian Style

Tue, Feb 13 - M. Gunsberg, “Commodifying Passions: Gender and Consumerism in *Commedia all'italiana*” (moodle)

Screening: Mario Monicelli, *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*, 1958, 111')

Th, Feb 15 – Debora Young, Mario Monicelli, “Poverty, Misery, War and Other Comic Material: An interview with Mario Monicelli” (moodle)

**Week 5: Borgata Blues: Pier Paolo Pasolini’s Periphery**

Tue, Feb 20– *Film*, Ch. 6 CINEMATOGRAPHY.

Screening: Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Mamma Roma* (1962, 95')

Th, Feb 22 – Maurizio Viano, “Mamma Roma and the Conflicted Passions of Pier Paolo Pasolini <http://sensesofcinema.com/2013/cteq/mamma-roma-and-the-conflicted-passions-of-pier-paolo-pasolini/>

**Week 6: The Italian Art Film**

Tue, Feb 27– *Film*, Ch. 14 FILM AUTHORSHIP.

Screening: Federico Fellini, *La dolce vita* (1960, 174')

Th, Mar 1– P. Bondanella, “*La dolce vita*. The Art Film Spectacular” (moodle)

**Week 7: Modernism and Malaise**

Tue, Mar 6 – *Film*, Ch. 5 MISE EN SCÈNE.

Screening: Michelangelo Antonioni, *Deserto rosso* (*Red Desert*, 1964, 120')

Th, Mar 8 – Marcus, Ch. 8

**Friday, March 9.** Submission of your scene analysis on moodle. Upload your paper as a word file (no pdf files) saved as “LastName\_scene\_analysis”

**Mid-term recess, MAR 10-18**

**Week 8: Mid-Term Exam**

Tue, Mar 20 – Review for the exam

Th, Mar 22 – Mid-Term Exam

**Week 9: Looking Afar: Italian Westerns**

Tue, Mar 27 – *Film*, Ch. 13 GENRE

Screening: Sergio Leone, *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo* (*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, 1966, 177')

Th, Mar 29 – Christopher Wagstaff, “A Forkful of Westerns: Industry, Audiences and the Italian Western” (moodle);  
Gian Piero Brunetta, “A Fistful of Pasta” (moodle)

**Week 10: From the Page to the Screen**

Tue, April 3 – Robert Stam, “The theory and practice of adaptation.” Robert Stam, Alessandra Raengo, *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*. (moodle)

Screening: Giuseppe Tornatore, *La Leggenda del Pianista sull'Oceano (The Legend of 1900, 1998, 125')*

Th, April 5 – Alessandro Baricco, *Novecento* (moodle)

**Week 11: Operatic Cinema**

Tue, April 10 – *Film*, Ch. 8 SOUND

Screening: Luchino Visconti, *Senso* (1954, 117')

Th, April 12 – Marcus, Ch. 7

**Week 12: Italian Mafia Movies**

Tue, Apr 17 – Dana Renga, “Beyond the Godfather” (moodle)

Screening: Marco Tullio Giordana, *I cento passi* (One Hundred Steps, 2000, 114')

Th, Apr 19 – Millicent Marcus, “In memoriam: the neorealist legacy in the contemporary Sicilian anti-mafia film” (moodle)

**Week 13: Italian Representation of the Holocaust**

Tue, Apr 24 – *Film*, Ch. 7 EDITING.

Screening: Roberto Benigni, *La vita è bella (Life is Beautiful, 1997, 120')*

Th, Apr 26 – M. Marcus, “‘Me lo dici babbo che gioco è?': The Serious Humor of *La vita è bella*” (moodle)

**Week 14: The Great Beauty**

Mon, May 1 – *Film* Ch. 3 WRITING ABOUT FILM, pp. 46-57.  
Class discussion of final paper proposals.

Screening: Paolo Sorrentino, *La grande bellezza* (The Great Beauty, 2013, 142')

Wed, May 3 – M. Facchini, “A Journey from Death to Life: Spectacular Realism and the “Unamendability” of Reality in Paolo Sorrentino’s *The Great Beauty*.” (moodle)

**Friday, May 4:** Submission of final paper on moodle. Save your paper as a word file (no pdf files) as follows: “LastName\_film\_analysis”



# Academic Film Screening Etiquette

Film and Media Studies Program, Colgate University

Over the course of this semester, we will be watching films for scholarly study. This means that films should be treated as texts *per sé*: we will not only watch them, but we will *close read* them, i.e. we will analyze their formal and content elements, look for the main message they carried, comment on how effectively they talk to us, and in what ways they contribute to our perspective on specific topics. This kind of viewing requires a heightened level of attention and consideration for the audience members around you. Here below is an explanation of how our screenings this semester will be conducted and the guidelines we ask FMST students to follow.

1. **Prepare for the screening** each week. Check the screening duration and plan your work and activities accordingly. You will enjoy the film and learn more from it if you make a point to come with a relaxed, alert and open mind, stress- and distraction-free.
2. **Note-taking is required.** Be sure to jot down characters' names, important plot points, interesting film form and any links you notice to readings or other films.
3. **Opening and closing credits** hold key information about where, how and with whom a film was made. Sometimes they also contribute to the story being told through their graphic design or by short scenes interspersed amidst them. They honor the many people it takes to put together a commercial feature. For all of these reasons, students are required to stay seated and attentive from the opening credits until the closing credits have finished.
4. It's OK to find an assigned film confusing, boring or just plain bad. It's OK to love the film so much you want to watch it every day for the rest of the semester. Whatever your feelings about the film, you must stay focused and engaged so that you can discuss
  - a. the **film's themes and potential meanings**
  - b. how meaning was conveyed through **specific formal elements** (sound, camera movements, acting, etc.)
  - c. your **reactions** to it and how those reactions were provoked.
5. **No food or drink** are allowed in the Auditorium.
6. Cell phones must be turned off. The light from cell phones and laptops is distracting to other viewers. **All electronic devices must be put away** during the film.
7. Please be extremely mindful of the **noise** you make during the film. Minimize the disturbance it causes to your neighbors in every possible way. Do not talk or whisper during the screening.
8. If you must exit and re-enter the auditorium during the screening, duck so that your head doesn't block the projection beam or the view of others. Open and close the doors slowly and quietly.
9. If you are viewing an assigned film at home, please try to recreate these conditions. Watch the film without interruption. Minimize the distractions around you.

Nota Bene: Remember to sign the appropriate sign-in sheet at the beginning of the screening for attendance credit.

Thank you!