



SYLLABUS

Italy in the movies through the eyes of American and Italian Masters of the Cinema

Prof. Elena Vannucci

Contact Hrs: 45

MACERATA, ITALY

Course Content: Italy is present on many levels in American and British film culture, creating an “idea of Italy” which has long had a romantic fascination for film makers and audiences. This course will also study Italian cinema from the postwar period to the present covering various directors and genres. A comparison of the Anglo-American and Italian visions will be made. Through screenings of films, readings and excursions the students will gain insights into Italian history and culture. Weekly writing assignments and discussions will help the students develop skills in the critical analysis of cinema.

Course Objectives: this course is designed to introduce students to the basic skills of film analysis, to develop an appreciation of the contribution of Italian cinema to international film history and to increase the students’ knowledge of Italian history and culture.

Excursions: excursions from Macerata can include trips to Rome, Florence and Venice, which are the locations of many films on Italy and which will also provide opportunities to examine how art, architecture and other elements of Italian visual culture and music are integrated into film.

Instructional methodology: this course will be built around film screenings and class discussion. Also, students will be introduced to the language of the cinema in order to develop the critical vocabulary necessary for film analysis. They will be given regular writing assignments to develop their confidence in analyzing movies.

Method of evaluation/grading: students will be evaluated on the basis of six papers on the films viewed and a mid semester and a final paper at the end of the term. In each paper students will be expected to show increasing skills in the formal analysis of film and an understanding of the ways Italy has functioned in the American cultural imagination.

Course readings/texts: The primary texts will be the films themselves, which we will view as a class. In addition, students will use the following:

R.M. Gollin A Viewer’s Guide to Film (McGraw-Hill, Inc.)

Recommended Advance Reading:

Peter Bondanella Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to Present, N.Y. 1958

Robert Sklear An International History of the Cinema

Proposed Weekly Schedule: in this course, we will study one film a week, by American directors who have used the idea of Italy in interesting ways. The course will also study influential examples of modern Italian cinema, in particular in relation to the neorealist movement, the most important Italian contribution to the history of the cinema.

Through these films students will learn more about the history and culture of modern Italy and will develop a greater understanding of the issues that have mattered in Italian life.

In the first part of the course we will examine films which have helped establish a set of values Anglo-American culture often associated with Italy, such as *Moonstruck*, *Roman Holiday*, *A Room with a View*, *The Wings of the Dove*. The *Godfather* Saga will be used as an exploration of violence and excess which Americans associate to Italy.

In the second part of the course we will examine famous and meaningful works by Italian film makers, starting from that icon of Neorealism which *The Bicycle Thief* is. We will then view *Rocco and his Brothers*, a masterpiece by L. Visconti. Among other things, it will give the students an insight into the reconstruction period after World War II.

A cult movie such as *La Dolce Vita* by Fellini will complete the picture of Italy in the 1960's seen by the keen eyes of one of the most acclaimed Italian auteurs.

The controversial saga of *1900* by B. Bertolucci will give the students the opportunity of knowing the most important events of Italian history in the twentieth century. *Love and Anarchy* by L. Wertmuller or the *Iceberg Thief* by M. Nichetti will analyze recurrent themes in modern Italian film through comedy and parody.