ITALIAN FILM GENRE (LITR 264)
- AN ITALIAN GENRE: COMEDY ITALIAN STYLE -
SPRING 2018

Tuesday 7:00-9:30 PM - Conference Room 2
Thursday 11:00 AM-12:15 PM or 5:00-6:15 PM – Sala Addis (Conf. Rm2)

Professor: Dr. Flaminio Di Biagi  Office: Rm 127 (Tel. 333; E-mail: fdibiag@luc.edu)
Office Hours: Tue. 6:00-7:00 PM - Thu. 12:15-1:15 PM (and by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is a study of the Italian Comedies of the 1960’s and 1970’s, known as “Commedia all’italiana”: they were apparently commercial, popular, average products of the movie industry that eventually came to represent a collective, but ironic portrait of Italy and its cultural transformations during (and after) the “economic miracle” (1958-1963). The course is therefore specifically based on Italian movies: starting with the early silent half-reelers, the outline/development of comic films in Italy will be followed, and major Italian Style comedies will be presented as “samples” and analyzed in class, in a chronological order. Class discussions focus mostly on a “textual” analysis of the films, but they imply an analysis of the culture that produced them, and indeed, the course maintains a historical/sociological perspective in its setting. Offered in English. No knowledge of Italian is required, yet all films are in Italian with English subtitles.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Watching our movies hopefully will: 1) provide a deeper knowledge both of the Film Industry & of Film as an artistic form of expression in Italy; 2) give a general, background understanding of Italy (with information about its history, lifestyle, culture, politics, economic situation and social transformations in the 20th Century); 3) expand our ability to investigate and critically read movies as literary texts, as an art form capable to go beyond entertainment, to achieve a stance, a political outlook, & communicate a personal vision.

CLASSWORK
Attendance is a must (at every single lesson there will be an official sign-up sheet). Students are expected to come to every class well prepared, and having read textbooks. Any assigned material should be read thoroughly for the class day indicated. During projects all are expected to pay attention to the film, and then contribute to the following in-class discussion. Films will be only shown once, in class, usually on Tuesdays, but times may vary, according to length of movies (expect subtitles, some extra-long, challenging movies, some simultaneous translations in class)! Screenings will be introduced & followed by lectures and class discussions (usually on Thursdays), with comments, questions, etc. Each screening will provide: a) background information on the content; b) historical, political, cultural perspectives; c) textual analysis of the film. Class discussions will focus on a narrative-literary-formal-thematic-aesthetic-stylistic analysis of the film. This course satisfies Core Artistic Knowledge and Experience requirement.

TEXTBOOKS
There is no specific textbook available. Students are requested to get from the JFRC bookstore -for a very reasonable fee- a set of “Selected Readings” (photocopied materials on the movies to be seen in class); some other photocopied handouts will be distributed in class, or available on Sakai, and these will also be considered study texts. Optional supports will be available in the JFRC library. Students should often refer to such texts: Peter Bondanella, A History of Italian Cinema; Louis Giannetti, Understanding Movies;
Christopher Duggan, A Concise History of Italy; John Moscowitz, Critical Approaches to Writing About Film; Ira Konigsberg, The Complete Film Dictionary. Useful web sites on It. Film are: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Italy, or the British Film Institute (http://www.bfi.org.uk), or the RAI [It. TV] (http://www.italica.rai.it/eng/cinema), etc.

**GRADING**

Final Grade is actually the result of reading texts, attending classes, studying, “being alive and thinking”. The following scale and percentages will be used to determine the student’s grade: SCALE: A=100-93  A-=92-89  B+=88-86  B=85-81  B-=80-78  C+=77-75  C=74-71  C-=70-68  D+=67-64  D=63-62  D-=61-60  F=Below 60; PERCENTAGE: Midterm exam: 25% -Final exam: 30% -Reviews: 10% -Take-home exam: 15% -Oral Report: 5% -Extra Film Review: 5% -Class Discussion: 10%. [NOTE: absences will lower the total sum!]

**EXTRA INFORMATION:**

**Exams:** will require tasks such as: identifications, definitions, questions, control of data, writing brief essays. Midterm and Final Exam will include and cover: textbooks, reading materials, the films, and all topics presented or discussed during lectures. To perform well on these exams, students must make an effort to come to class regularly. **Film reviews:** must be 2 pages long (Times New Roman, font 12, double-spaced). Students are requested to use a proper academic vocabulary, and apply the technical terminology (refer to Understanding Movies and The Complete Film Dictionary). Reviews should not be a summary of the film, but a personalized “reading” (i.e. a critical interpretation and evaluation). Criticism must always be grounded on specific scenes, events, lines, characters, images, acting skills, cinematic styles, camerawork, director’s point of view, etc. of the film reviewed. When using some scholar’s idea in building their criticism, students must directly refer to their source, by quoting the author’s name, title of the book, date, page. Last film review will be on an extra movie to be found “on reserve” (your choice). **Final paper:** this is to be a personal research paper, and should develop a specific analysis in at least six pages (Times New Roman, font 12, double-spaced). Students can study a genre or a director, analyzing and comparing in a proper cultural/historical perspective one or two more of his films. In finding a topic, students are requested to consult and discuss with the instructor before final approval of a basic one-page outline. **Class participation:** active participation is very important for the success of a course such as this, therefore students are encouraged to discuss, and intellectually interact with the instructor and all the other colleagues in class. Attendance is required, especially since our “texts” are films presented only in class, once. Please be aware that your absence will not only weaken your performance, but also influence your grade: unexcused absences will lower your final grade by 2% for each missed class. Students should be familiar with the honor code of University life, abide by its standards at all times, and expect similar behavior from their peers. **Note:** all classes, whether on Tuesdays or Thursdays, can be used for projections (check program below).
PROGRAM

January 17, tue: Intro./syllabus/policies/tools/requirements/technical terms/definition of comedy/beginnings/1st comic gag: *The Sprinkler Sprinkled* (Lumière, 1895)
January 19, thu: early Italian comics [clips], the Italian cinema (Fascism/Neo-realism)
January 24, tue: *Bicycle Thief* (De Sica, 1948)
January 26, thu: class discussion, Neorealism
January 31, tue: the Fifties, social background, Totò (clips from *Totò cerca casa, Totò cerca moglie, Totò a colori, I pompieri di Viggiù*, etc.), the “boom”
February 2, thu: Alberto Sordi, *An American in Rome* (Steno, 1954 [clips]), the Sixties, the “boom” (58-63) (clips from documentaries)
February 7, tue: *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Monicelli, 1958)
February 9, thu: class discussion, (the “boom, clips from documentaries [*Miracolo economico, In Calabria, The Anti-Miracle* (1963), etc.], clip from *Walter & his cousins*, 1961), clips from *Carosello* (TV show, commercials)
February 14, tue: *Divorce Italian Style* (Germi, 1961)
February 16, thu: class discussion
February 21, tue: *The Easy Life* (Risi, 1962)
February 23, thu: class discussion ←[first film review due]
March 2, thu: Midterm Exam

March 3 - 12: SPRING BREAK

March 14, tue: *Mafioso* (Lattuada, 1962)
[March 20, Monday night: possible EXTRA film: *The boom* (De Sica, 1963) with Alberto Sordi]
March 21, tue: *The Monsters* (Risi, 1963)
March 23, thu: individual oral reports
March 28, tue: *Pane e cioccolata* (Brusati, 1974) [individual oral reports?]
March 30, thu: class disc., [or.reps?], *The Prophet* (Risi,'67), or *The visit* (Petri,'63) [clips?]
        April 4, tue: *Swept Away* (Wertmüller, 1974)
        April 6, thu: class discussion ←[Take Home Exam due]
        April 11, tue: *We All Loved Each Other So Much* (Scola, 1975)
        April 13, thu: class discussion

        April 14 – April 17: EASTER BREAK

April 18, tue: final developments of Com.It.St., *In the Name of the Pope King* (Magni,1977)
        April 20, thu: discussion, recap, conclusions, evaluations ←[extra film review due]

Final Exam: April 27, Thursday Sala Addis (Conf.Rm2), 9:00 –11:00 AM or 3:00–5:00 PM)