COMM 274: SYLLABUS
INTRODUCTION TO CINEMA:

DISCOVERING ROME THROUGH THE LENSES OF ITALIAN FILM DIRECTORS

John Felice Rome Center
Spring 2020
Mondays & Wednesdays | 5:15pm - 6:30pm
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Office Hours: Mon., 4:15pm - 5:15pm

Course Description

COMM 274 offers the unique opportunity to study Italian Cinema from the birth of Cinecittà Studios in 1937 to the present, visiting the settings, studios and real locations where some landmark Italian films were shot. The selected movies share the characteristic of having been all filmed in Rome, which can be considered the capital of the Italian film industry. Therefore Rome will be explored through the eyes of some of the most influential film directors and revealed as a source of inspiration for directors such as De Sica, Rossellini, Fellini, Pasolini, Wertmuller, Moretti and Sorrentino. The selected films will be discussed in class through an extensive historical analysis and a critical approach in order to understand the contribution of Italian cinema to the development of world cinema and the role of cinema in shaping Italian society and culture. Students will visit the locations used to shoot the movies analyzed in class in order to understand how they were filmed and learn the specific elements of film language and film techniques utilized by the different directors.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:
- understand the history of Italian Cinema from end of Fascism to present;
- describe the historical, social and economic contexts in Italy and in Rome in which the selected films were produced;
- identify social and cultural implications in the development of Italian cinema;
- analyse a film from an artistic and technical point of view;
- develop critical skills in evaluating movies;
- recognize locations and sites made popular by Italian cinema filmed in Rome;
- explain why and how particular locations were used in filmmaking by different Italian directors.

Required Textbook:


Towards the end of the semester the readings will shift from books to press reviews because we will be analysing contemporary filmmakers whose work and artistic career has not yet become the subject of books or official publications.
Suggested Reading:


Films:

*Roma Città Aperta (Rome open city)* by Roberto Rossellini, 1945  
*Ladri di Biciclette (Bicycle Thieves)* by Vittorio De Sica, 1948  
*La Dolce Vita* by Federico Fellini, 1960  
*Mamma Roma* by Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1962  
*Il sorpasso (The Easy Life)* by Dino Risi, 1962  
*Per un Pugno di Dollari (A Fistful of Dollars)* by Sergio Leone, 1964  
*C'era una volta il West (Once Upon a Time)* by Sergio Leone, 1968  
*Swept Away* by Lina Wertmuller, 1974  
Seven Beauties by Lina Wertmuller, 1975  
*Caro Diario (Dear Diary)* by Nanni Moretti, 1993  
*My Voyage to Italy* by Martin Scorsese, 2001  
*Habemus Papam (We Have a Pope)* by Nanni Moretti, 2012  
*La Grande Bellezza (The Great Beauty)*, by Paolo Sorrentino, 2013  
Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot by Gabriele Mainetti, 2015  
The Hateful Eight by Quentin Tarantino, 2015

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of ONE unexcused absence will be permitted. **Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”.**

Note: course attendance is based on prompt class attendance, preparation and active participation in class discussions.

DETAILS OF REQUIRED WORK:

Film review on movie chosen from a range of films proposed by the professor and research paper on its director *: students will work on different movies and different directors and will summarize their research in a presentation to be delivered in front of the class at the end of the semester.

- Students will analyze the chosen movie from a technical and critical point of view, and will contextualize the movie in its director’s life and artistic career.
Midterm Exam:

Students will be asked to write short answers to a questionnaire on specific movies and topics about Italian Cinema discussed in class.

Final Exam:

Multiple-choice test covering the topics analyzed in class and during the field studies. Short essays on some of the films watched during the course - directors’ poetics, film language used, historical and cultural context, image of Rome and Italian society provided by selected movies.

Assessment Components

Class attendance and participation (20%); oral presentation (max 5 minutes pitch) of at least 1,000 words film review on movie chosen by student and at least 500 word research paper on its director (20%); midterm exam (30%); final exam (30%).

Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.
Course Schedule

Week One


Jan 22, 2019. Italian Cinema after Fascism - From “Realism” to “Neorealism”. Roberto Rossellini and his “cinema of facts”. Screening of selected scenes from Paisà by Roberto Rossellini and Ossessione by Luchino Visconti.


Week Two

Jan 27, 2019. Cinecittà Studios – Field study: visit to Cinecittà studios to discover the secrets of cinema.


Film viewing (before next class): Rome Open City, by Roberto Rossellini

Week Three

Feb. 3, 2019. The locations of Rome, Open City - Field study: visit to Pigneto, the neighborhood where Open City was filmed.


Feb. 5, 2019. An Odyssey through Rome with Bicycle Thieves - Class discussion on Vittorio De Sica’s cinema defined as “a cinema of feelings”. Discussion and analysis of the historical and social context of the movie Bicycle Thieves by Vittorio De Sica.


Film viewing (before next class): Bicycle Thieves, by Vittorio De Sica.
**Week Four**

**Feb 10, 2019. The locations of Bicycle Thieves** - Field study: visit to some of the real locations where *Bicycle Thieves* was filmed.


**Feb 12, 2019. The Golden Age of Italian Cinema** - The most relevant changes in Italian and European society in the 60s represented by Federico Fellini, one of the most well-known Italian directors of all times, winner of 4 Oscars. Presentation and analysis of Federico Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* (1960).


**Film viewing (before next class): La Dolce Vita, by Federico Fellini**

**Week Five**

**Feb 17, 2019. The Locations of La Dolce Vita** - Field study: visit to some of the real locations where *La Dolce Vita* was filmed.

**Film viewing (before next class): My Voyage to Italy, a documentary by Martin Scorsese**

**Feb 19, 2019. Martin Scorsese on Italian Cinema** - Discussion on Martin Scorsese’s documentary *My Voyage to Italy*, the point of view of a great Italian-American director on the Masters of Italian Cinema.


**Film viewings (before next class): Mamma Roma, by Pier Paolo Pasolini.**

**Week Six**

**Feb 24, 2019. The Locations of Mamma Roma** - Field study: visit to the real locations where the film was shot: Quadraro and Parco degli Acquedotti.

**Readings:** Bondanella, Peter. *A History of Italian Cinema*. Chapter 11 “Italian Cinema in the 1980s”, pp.384-424; Chapter 8 “

**Feb 26, 2019. Pier Paolo Pasolini and the political film** - Presentation and analysis of Pasolini’s artistic and intellectual contributions to Italian culture and politics through his films.

**Readings:** Bondanella, Peter. *A History of Italian Cinema*. Chapter 5 “Commedia all’Italiana. Comedy and Social Criticism”, pp.142-195
Week Seven

Mar 2, 2019. Comedy Italian Style: the most popular film genre in Italy - Class discussion on the characteristics of Italian comedy through Lina Wertmuller’s films. Lina Wertmuller portrays Italian society and its take on gender roles with satire and farce. She was the first woman nominated for an academy award for Best Director. Analysis of Wertmuller’s comedy films: Swept Away, 1974 and Seven Beauties 1975.

Assignment: Study for Midterm

Mar 4, 2019. Midterm Exam

SPRING BREAK Mar 6 - 15, 2019

Week Eight

Mar 16, 2019. Sergio Leone and The Spaghetti Western - Presentation of the Italian version of a classic American Genre that launched many international movie stars. Discussion and analysis of the films: Per un Pugno di Dollari (A Fistful of Dollars, 1964) and C’era una volta il West (Once Upon a Time, 1968) by Sergio Leone.


Film viewings (before next class): A Fistful of Dollars and Once Upon a Time by Sergio Leone

Mar 18, 2019. The influence of Italian Cinema on Quentin Tarantino - Quentin Tarantino is a great fan of Sergio Leone’s Spaghetti Westerns and admires the Italian B-movies by Mario Bava and Dario Argento. Analysis of how Tarantino transposes the elements of main Italian film genres into his films.

Film viewing: Hateful Eight by Quentin Tarantino

Week Nine

Mar 23, 2019. Nanni Moretti between sacred and profane - Presentation and analysis of Nanni Moretti’s films: from Caro Diario (Dear Diary, 1993) to Habemus Papam (We have a Pope, 2011) with their independent, opinionated and humorous perspective on Italian Society.

Film viewings (before next class): Caro Dairo and Habemus Papa, by Nanni Moretti.

Mar 25, 2019. Analisys of Habemus Papam by international critics – Class discussion based on online articles.


Week Ten

Mar 30, 2019. The Locations of Caro Diario - Field study: visit to the real locations where the film was shot in the Garbatella neighborhood.

Film viewing (before next class): La Grande Bellezza (The Great Beauty) by Paolo Sorrentino

April 1. The Great Beauty: the resurrection of Italian Cinema at the Oscars 2013 - La Grande Bellezza described as “La Dolce Vita” 2.0 explores the relationships among culture, politics and aesthetics through a kaleidoscopic journey set against the photogenic backdrop of Rome. Analysis of Fellini’s legacy in Sorrentino’s cinema.

Readings: A selection of national and international articles and press reviews on contemporary Italian Oscar Winner director Paolo Sorrentino.

Week Eleven


Film viewing (before next class): They Call me Jeeg by Gabriele Mainetti

April 8, 2019. The rebirth of Italian Film Genre: “The Superhero Jeeg Robot” - Presentation of Lo Chiamavano Jeeg Robot” (They Call me Jeeg, 2016), Gabriele Mainetti’s first feature film that premiered successfully at the Rome International Film Festival in 2016. An original mix of social critique and heroic deeds set in a Rome that resembles Gotham City.

Readings: A selection of national and international articles and press reviews on Italian contemporary film director Gabriele Mainetti.

Week Twelve


April 15, 2019. How to write a Film Review. Presentation of film reviews’ key elements and main styles.

Homework: Write film Review on chosen film and research paper on its director’s bio.
Week Thirteen

April 20, 2019. The Locations of *Jeeg Robot*. Field study: visit to Tor Bella Monaca.

**Homework:** Prepare presentation of film Review on chosen film and research paper on its director’s bio.

April 22, 2019. Oral presentation in class of students’ research papers - Each student will present the 1,500 words research paper to the class. Each student will have 5 min minutes for his/her oral presentation and can use graphs or power points.

Week Fourteen

April 27, 2019. General review

April 29, 2019. Final exam