

ITALIAN CINEMA

Course description:

The course on Italian cinema follows the development of this world-famous tradition from the beginning to the first decade of the 21st century and presents its great masters, from neorealism to contemporary directors. This course sometimes prescribes and often suggests movie screening and provides a critical and theoretical framework for the study of them. This includes the study of some aspects of 20th century Italian history and literature, which form its natural and historical matrix. The course is completed by the writing of a long critical essay on one director or one aspect or field of production. Weekly assignments include shorter essays, reviews and questions on cinema or on selected literature.

As far as the movies are concerned, titles are given in Italian unless the film is in English or has come to be known with its English or other name (i.e. Visconti, *Conversation Piece*). In any case, it is recommended that films be watched in original (not dubbed) versions. This is especially the case for Visconti's *Gattopardo*, the American version of which is considerably shorter thus different from the original.

Upon conclusion of this course, the student will have a sound theoretical knowledge of the history of Italian cinema, its themes and protagonists. Having seen and studied approx. 55 different movies and approx. 25 directors, he will be able to discuss and compare them in critical writing, as well as to place them in a historical perspective. (The course is divided into 14 lessons; it is recommended to take all time needed to complete it.)

Course content:

UNIT ONE (weeks 1-3): The first unit describes the origins of Italian cinema, the establishment of Cinecittà and the relations with the fascist regime. It pursues the historical overview after the Second World War with the emergence of neorealism, its crisis and the success of the Italian comedy and the Spaghetti-western.

1. The Beginnings of the Italian Cinema
2. The triumph of Neorealism
3. Boundaries and Crises of Neorealism : The Fifties

UNIT TWO (weeks 4-8): This unit is an introduction to the great classics of Italian cinema: Rossellini, Visconti, Fellini, Antonioni, De Sica, Pasolini, Leone, Bertolucci, Rosi, Scola and others. We will later (in Unit 4) treat some great divas as well, who worked with them: Totò, Magnani, Loren, Mastroianni and Cardinale. A different outlook is still provided by international collaboration, which will gradually become the standard way of

movie-making. From a structural and historical viewpoint, this unit is the central section of the course.

4-5. Focusing on Rossellini, Visconti, Antonioni, Fellini and Pasolini

6-8. Meet the Classics

UNIT THREE (weeks 9-11): from the Eighties, new filmmakers and new actors appear on the scene. A number of them will be treated here: Amelio, Tornatore, Moretti, Verdone, Avati, Özpetek. Attention will be paid as well to successful serials as *La piovra*, *Corleone* and *Romanzo criminale*.

9-10 . Contemporary Cinem

11. Successful Serials

UNIT FOUR (weeks 12-14): This section concentrates on books and movies. Many movies are based on books, and many highlights of Italian literature have been made into films. The role of Alberto Moravia will be treated in this respect. Furthermore, famous films and books as Tomasi's & Visconti's *Il Gattopardo* and Bassani's & De Sica's *Garden of the Finzi Contini's* will be analysed. For these lessons, reading the corresponding novels is essential. The last lesson will deal with some of the Italian cinema's divas. It is to them as well that this great cinema owes its local and international success.

12. Adaptations : Literature and Film in interaction

13. Alberto Moravia and The Cinema

14. The Divas

About the tutors:

Dr. Raniero M. Speelman studied Italian, Humanistic Latin and History of Art at Leyden University and has been working since 1987 at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, as Assistant Professor. He is a specialist on Renaissance culture as well as on travel literature and Italian literature. He published books, critical text editions and articles on Pietro Della Valle, Primo Levi and others. He was the first Erasmus guest lecturer at Hacettepe University's Art History Department and is a frequent guest lecturer at Ankara University, Turkey. He is as well a lecturer at the EYE, the Netherlands Institute of Movie Education and at the HOVO (Higher Education for Elderly People) at Utrecht.

Dr. Nevin Özkan studied Italian language and literature at Ankara University and has been working there since 1982, ultimately as full professor and Head of the Italian Department. She is a specialist on travel literature and Italian literature. She translated works by Pier Paolo Pasolini, Primo Levi, Marco Lodoli, Edmondo de Amicis and other contemporary Italian authors and published books and articles on travel writing and on Turkish documents in the Modena archives.

General instructions:

The course is divided into subjects that should be treated in one week (in some cases, two or three weeks). A short introduction is given for each subject area. Bibliography is specified for each subject. The questions listed for most subjects should serve as

guidelines for the writing of a small essay of 5-6 pp. (1200-1500 words). It is considered important that a personal view is expressed, not that only facts are reproduced.

The course aims at ca. 12 hours of study and assignments a week, not including movie screening. This necessarily means that the average student should not be upset by watching many films in a short period of time.

UNIT ONE: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ITALIAN CINEMA: FASCISM AND BEYOND

1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ITALIAN CINEMA

Recommended for quick reference:

There exist many Encyclopedias on the field of movie production and they might prove quite useful.

Wikipedia has often well-prepared materials, including bibliography and criticism.

For films that are not necessary to be seen from beginning to end, fragments are often found on Youtube.

Of course, pictures should be approached in an interdisciplinary way, by taking into account photography, composition, acting, scenario, editing (montage), sound and soundtrack, as well as any relationship with the original work, If the film is an adaptation.

A good illustrated handbook for the study and appreciation of movies is:

L. Giannetti, *Understanding Movies*, Prentice Hall 1996 (or last edition).

A good and recent general history is: G.P. Brunetta, *History of the Italian Cinema*, Princeton UP 2009.

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

The first Italian films (silent movies produced before the end of World War I) bring together patriotism, love of antiquity and literature. It is the case of Caserini's *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei*, Guazzoni's *Quo vadis?* And one of the most famous of early films, Pastrone's *Cabiria*, with texts by the great poet Gabriele d'Annunzio. Soon after, Fascism manages to make use of the media for propaganda purposes, including the creation of a national and popular culture. Films enjoy the attention of the futurist movement and of Luigi Pirandello, who makes a cameraman the principal character of his *Serafino Gubbio*.

Until Fascism comes into power, the Italian State is slow in recognizing the importance of movie industry. In the '30ies, however, film making and distribution is firmly linked to official cultural channels. In 1935 Cinecittà is opened, and has been active to this day.

b. Read the following texts:

Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema. From Neorealism to the Present*. Ungar, N.Y. 1983, Chapter 1: p. 1-30.

M. Landy, *Italian film*, Cambridge UP 2000, Chapter 1: Early Cinema Attractions (pp. 21-48). This book may come in useful in the whole course.

G. Nowell-Smith, *Visconti*, Secker and Warburg 1967 / Viking 1973. Chapter I. *Ossessione* (pp. 14-32).

c. **This week's film:** *Ossessione* (Visconti, 1943).

d. **Make a list of movies from the first period based on Bondanella and check if the films or fragments of them are still to be found on Youtube and elsewhere.**

d. **Answer the following questions (150-250 words)**

- Why was D'Annunzio's role important for the Italian cinema?
- Explain how Blasetti influenced the advent of neo-realism.
- What other sources influenced neo-realism, in the cinema and in literature? What do they have in common?
- Why did Fascism tolerate works like *Ossessione*? How could Visconti dare to make it?
- Why were many great talents as De Sica and Magnani able to begin their careers during Fascism?

2. THE TRIUMPH OF NEOREALISM

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

The later war years and the second half of the '40ies produced some of the finest all-time works of Italian cinema, all under the umbrella of neorealism. This lesson primarily focuses on Rossellini and on his *Roma città aperta*.

b. Read the following texts:

Bondanella 1983: Chapter 2: pp. 31-102.

R. Rossellini, *My method*, NY, Marsilio 1987, Chapter: Ten Years of Cinema (pp. 58-77)

M. Landy, "Diverting Clichés: Femininity, Masculinity, Melodrama and Neorealism in *Open City*", in: S. Gottlieb (ed.), *Roberto Rossellini's Rome Open City*, Cambridge UP 2004, p. 85-105.

D. Forgacs, "Rhetoric, and the Divided City in *Roma città aperta*", in Gottlieb 2004, p. 106-130.

Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy. 1983-1980*. Penguin Books, 1990. Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 72-139. (This book will provide you with the historical background, but you are not supposed to know it into detail!)

G. Nowell-Smith 1973, Chapter 2: *La terra trema* (pp. 33-54).

c. This week's films: Rossellini, *Roma città aperta* (1945), De Sica, *I ladri di bicicletta* (1948), De Santis, *Riso amaro* (1949), Visconti, *La terra trema* (1948).

c. and d. Answer 5 of the following questions, at least 2 of which on Rossellini (each in 250-300 words)

- Illustrate how *Roma città aperta* was created on the spot with minimal means but with great impact. How was Rossellini's career influenced by this work? Do you think his subsequent works reach or surpass the artistic level of this work?

- What does Landy mean by "diverting clichés" in *Roma città aperta*?

- What is strange, or incorrect, in Rossellini's picture's title?

- What techniques did Visconti use to make *La terra trema* an unforgettable masterpiece and how does he distinguish himself in this work from contemporary cineastes?

- Why could *Riso amaro* become a success whereas many other films did not?

- *I ladri di bicicletta* is considered one of the icons of neorealism. Explain De Sica's secret in obtaining this success.

3. BOUNDARIES AND CRISIS OF NEOREALISM: THE Fifties

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

When neorealism became a school, its masters started exploring its boundaries and possibilities. On one hand, war and social problems are still favourite topics, on the other, the Italian comedy lives one of its finest hours, in works of Comencini, Risi and others (some later examples of these films will appear in the chapter on divas).

b. Read the following texts:

Bondanella 1983: Chapter 3: *Exploring the Boundaries of Neorealism* and Chapter 4: *The Break with Neorealism* (p. 74-141).

Ginsborg 1990: Chapters 5 & 6, pp. 141-209.

M. Stirling, *A Screen of Time. A study of Luchino Visconti*, NY, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1979 (you may concentrate yourself on the chapters referring to the movies selected (for the two pictures studied, chapters 10 & 12; reading the account of Visconti's life in this period and his activity as a theatre director will prove very useful).

G. Nowell-Smith 1973, Chapter 3: *Bellissima* and Chapter 5: *Senso* (pp. 55-68 and 80-99).

c. **This week's films:** Zavattini and others, *Amore in città* (1953), Visconti, *Bellissima* (1951) e *Senso* (1954).

d. Take the following questions as a point of departure for an essay of 5-6 pp. on either Visconti or Zavattini productions (1200-1500 w)

- *Senso* is really a book adaptation of a 19th century short novel by Camillo Boito. Visconti and his team of screenplay writers, some of them very famous, use it for the purpose of social analysis. What analysis? The movie triggered a discussion on the passage from neorealism to realism. What this the critics mean by this?
- *Bellissima* explores the boundaries of neorealism in a completely different way. How?
- *Amore in città* presented some new techniques of film making. Discuss two of them. Why didn't it have any success?
- The film produced by Zavattini brought some future celebrities of Italian cinema together. Analyse two episodes against the background of what you already know about the directors of these stories.
- Give your opinion on the question is *Amore in città* is representative for the (a?) crisis of neorealism.

UNIT TWO: MEET THE CLASSICS!

Program for two weeks. It is suggested to equally divide its contents over this period, examining every week 3 or 4 directors and their works

4-5. FOCUSING ON ROSSELLINI, VISCONTI, ANTONIONI, FELLINI AND PASOLINI

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

It proves to be difficult to define a classic director of the Italian cinema between ca. 1960 and 1990. When experienced directors still created great movies, they were joined by younger and talented colleagues, sometimes by their own former assistants, who would become equally famous.

We might agree to include in the canon of this period's Italian classics at least the following of the older generation: Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti, Antonioni, Comencini, Fellini, Pasolini, and, slightly later, in alphabetical order: Bellocchio, Bertolucci, Bolognini, Cavani, Damiani, Ferreri, Leone, Monicelli, Olmi, Petri, Pontecorvo, Risi, Rosi, Scola, Taviani, Wertmuller, Zeffirelli (directors who will be the subject of week 6, 7 and 8). Their works are just as varied as their personalities, their artistic aims and their methods.

b. Read the following texts:

Bondanella 1983: Chapter 5; A Decisive Decade and Chapter 6 The Mature Auteurs (p. 142-252)

Ginsborg 1990: Chapters 7, 8 & 9, pp. 210-347.

P. Bondanella, *The films of Federico Fellini*, Cambridge UP 2002. Chapter 1: A life in the Cinema (pp. 7-41), Chapter 3: *La dolce vita* (pp. 64-92) and Chapter 4: *8 ½* (pp. 93-115).

F. Burke, *Fellini's Films. From Postwar to Postmodern*. Twayne Publishers (Simon & Schuster Macmillan) 1996. Pp. 98-112 (and paragraphs relevant for the film you choose).

M. Cottino-Jones (ed.), *Michelangelo Antonioni, The Architecture of Vision*, University of Chicago Press 2007 (former edition: Marsilio 1995).

G. Nowel-Smith, *L'Avventura*, Palgrave Macmillan 1997 (repr. 2008).

Relevant passages of Stirling 1979 (see above)

G. Nowell-Smith 1973, Chapter 9: *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (pp. 158-78).

Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teorema_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teorema_(film)).

G. Flatley, *Interview with Pasolini*, in:
<http://www.moviecrazed.com/outpast/pasolini.html> (12-12-2012).

c. Watch three movies of Visconti, Antonioni, Fellini and Pasolini. Obligatory are: *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (1960), *Ludwig* (1972), *L'Avventura* (1960), *La notte* (1961); *La dolce vita* (1960), *8 ½* (1963); *Mamma Roma* (1962), *Teorema* (1968). You are free to choose the remaining movie. It is not allowed to choose films already seen in week 1-3, or that will be prescribed at a later stage, such as *Il Gattopardo* or *Decameron*.

d. Answer the following questions (200-250 w) :

- Name three elements of *L'avventura* that can be considered as essential for Antonioni's oeuvre.

- Do you agree with Barthes that "the artist is in a position no longer supported by the good conscience of a great sacred or social function" (Nowel-Smith, p. 68)?

- Of all classics, Visconti underwent the strongest development from his *Ossessione* until his later works (of which *Death in Venice* and *Ludwig* are examples). Are there circumstances that can help us explain his metamorphosis?

- Do you think Rome is a functionally important element in *La dolce vita*?

- How is Fellini's interest in psychoanalysis treated in *8 ½*? What does he tell about himself in the film?

- Pasolini's *Teorema* raised a scandal because of the role sexuality played in it. Compare the interpretations and criticisms given on Wikipedia and read the interview with Guy Flatley. Which interpretations do not make much sense? And which do? What role does religion play in the film, according to you?

e. Compare the films you have seen of two of the classics of c) here above in an essay of 6-8 pp. (1800-2500 w). Please pay attention to story, screenplay, actors, acting, camera, décor, special effects and critical fortune.

6-8. MEET THE CLASSICS (2)

Program for *three* weeks. It is suggested to divide equally its contents over this period, examining every week 5 or 6 directors and their works.

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

We'll be dealing now with Bellocchio, Bertolucci, Bolognini, Cavani, Damiani, Ferreri, Leone, Monicelli, Olmi, Petri, Pontecorvo, Risi, Rosi, Salce, Scola, Taviani, Wertmuller, Zeffirelli, who will be at the centre of these two weeks' screening and assignments. Generally less famous than Fellini or Visconti, they are still reputed among the best – and most discussed - masters of their epoch. Please note that some of these directors are still active.

b. Read the following texts:

Bondanella 1983, Chapter 7 (pp. 253-274), Chapter 8 (275-317, only as far as relevant for Bertolucci) and Chapter 10 (pp.347-383).

R. Cumbow, *The Films of Sergio Leone*, Scarecrow Press, 2008: Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 47-81).

H. Lauton, "Enrico Mattei: the man who fell to earth", in Carlo Testa (ed.), *Poet of Civic Courage: the Cinema of Francesco Rosi*, Trowbridge, Flicks Books, 1996, pp. 60-86.

c. Watch and study 6 of the following 8 films:

Leone, *Once upon a Time in the West* (1968) and *The good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1968); Salce, *Fantozzi* (1975); Scola, *Una giornata particolare* (1977); Bertolucci, *Novecento* 1 and 2 (1976); Taviani, *Kaos* (1984); Rosi, *Il caso Mattei* (1972).

d. In addition to these films, choose any 3 from other directors on these weeks' list or another film by Scola. Two of them will have to be compared in a short essay, see under e). You are not allowed to choose films prescribed for later lessons.

e. Answer 8 out of the following 11 questions (150-250 w each)

- What makes the difference between an 'ordinary' western and Leone's films?
- Leone uses clear artistic techniques to make his work effective. Which techniques does he use?

- Irony is a strong style mark in both *Once upon a Time in the West* and *The good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Show how it is used.

- Scola, a director who became famous in the "commedia all'italiana", at this point leaves behind all residues of his precedent activity. Explain how he manages to give a new and striking comment on daily life in fascist Italy without touching politics.

- What does Bondanella mean by "New Italian Comedy"? Do you think the rules and ingredients have changed since the Sixties?

- *Fantozzi* was the first of a long series of comedies around a character invented and played by Paolo Villaggio. Is there a point Villaggio is trying to make as to capitalist culture in the decades of the "economic miracle"?

- *Kaos* is famous for its typical Sicilian background and can be seen as a homage to the island and a comment on its history and problems. Show this by giving examples.

- Bertolucci's epic on 20th century history is set against a background of strong social contrasts and class struggle. Do you think this fact obscures or rather enforces its poetry?

- Analyse the role of women in *Novecento*.

- Bertolucci is interested in breaking the taboos on sexuality. Illustrate with examples from Bondanella how he does this.

- How are politics described in Rosi's work? Why "Asking questions instead of giving answers" can be a good method for truth-finding?

f. Write a set of two reviews, one for a newspaper (300-400 words), one for a movie magazine (900-1200 words) of two different films of your choice of assignment d).

UNIT THREE: THE CINEMA FROM THE EIGHTIES UNTIL TODAY

9-10 .

- program for two consecutive weeks -

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

With Pasolini murdered in 1975, the end of the career of several great directors in the Eighties and Nineties such as Visconti and Fellini brought a new generation to the fore. Even if so personal a style as Fellini's or Antonioni's cannot always be seen in their films, these younger directors, as well as the actors they chose to work with, have achieved notable results. Amelio, Archibugi, Avati, Benigni, Cristina Comencini, Costanzo, Ferrario, Garrone, Giordana, Luchetti, Moretti, Özpetek, Placido, Salvatores, Soldini, Sorrentino, Tornatore, Verdone, Virzi have realized real masterworks ranking from fine comedies to intense psychological studies and from social and political analysis to impressive portraits of family life or shocking images of individuals lost in contemporary society. Even if we can hardly speak of a school, all these filmmakers prove firmly that cinema is an Italian artistic tradition.

b. Study the following films:

G. Tornatore, *Nuovo Cinema paradiso* (1988), G. Salvatores, *Mediterraneo* (1991), F. Özpetek, *Il bagno turco (Hamam)* (1997), P. Sorrentino, *Il Divo* (2008), S. Costanzo, *La solitudine dei numeri primi* (The solitude of prime numbers) (2010).

c. Try to make critical dossiers on 2 of the pictures you have seen (not always, books will be easy to find in the libraries; film magazines and Wikipedia might be of some help).

d. Choose 3 other films from the list above (you're not allowed to choose films you have to see for the following chapters' assignments).

e. Write a lecture-essay of 6-8 pp. (1500-2000 w) on Italian cinema from the Eighties to the present day, in which you refer to at least 5 of the films of groups c) and d). This essay is meant to address a film club as its target: it should preferably be panoramic, avoiding lists of names and titles. You may include references to selected scenes, in the format: DVD [.....] 13'20".

11. SUCCESSFUL SERIALS

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

In the Nineties and in the first years of the 21st century, millions of Italians watched a number of highly successful serials that dealt with their country's criminal organizations and the authorities' struggle with it. The first was *La piovra* (The Octopus, here: LP), which dealt with the charismatic chief inspector Corrado Cattani's fight against crime. After Michele Placido, who played Cattani, decided to pursue a career as a movie director, Cattani dies (in serial nr. 4) and others take his place in what was gradually becoming a rather mechanic chain of events. As a conscience-raising monument for the Italian police and magistrates, *La piovra* had an enormous impact and helped to realize a shift in public sensibility, as well as in explaining how organized crime works and has, in fact, become an international business. Less revolutionary, but devoid of some of *La piovra's* sentimentality, *Corleone* describes the life and criminal career of Italy's mafia icon Totò Riina. *Romanzo criminale* (RC) based on a novel by De Cataldo, is based on the story of Rome's Magliana gang and is an excellent example of a well-made modern criminal serial.

b. Read the following texts:

Ginsborg 1990: Chapters 10 & 11, pp. 348-424.

c. Watch either *La piovra 3* (director: L. Perelli, 1987) or *Romanzo criminale* (1st season, directed by S. Sollima, 2008-2009). Analyze how the relations between organized crime and public life/politics are exposed in the serial. Then try to incorporate this analysis and the answer to the following questions in an essay of 2000-3000 words. Try to find suitable documentation for your point in Ginsborg. *La piovra 3*: How is the role of banking treated in *La piovra 3*? How is the collaboration between magistrates and the police described? Which elements seem realistic and which do not? Is psychology being applied to the characters, and to what extent? *Romanzo criminale*: Which major political event is touched upon in the serial and how is it done? What is being suggested in *Romanzo criminale* regarding the role of the Italian secret service in the events of the '70ies and early Eighties? What use is made of Rome as the serial's scene? Why is violence being emphasized so strongly?

UNIT FOUR: FILM ADAPTATIONS AND DIVAS.

In the fourth and last part of this course, attention will be focused on the relations between literature and cinema. They will be studied diachronically.

12. ADAPTATIONS: LITERATURE AND FILM IN INTERACTION

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

Film adaptations of books enjoy great popularity, and have done so for a long time - we may recall that one of Italy's first movies was *Quo vadis?*, based on the novel by Sienkiewicz. In the years of neorealism, both artistic expressions had the same aims and nearly the same target. It may not surprise, therefore, that many great successes of Italian cinema were, in fact, based on successful books. In due time, it became standard praxis to adapt important novels to the cinema. The advantage is clear: a gripping story is already there, the author can earn quite easily by selling the rights and the book's readers are drawn to the cinema (and lazy consumers can show off their knowledge of the book by just seeing the film). Of course, adapting a book to the cinema in a process that in translation studies is called 'intersemiotic translation' is no easy job and requires intelligent re-writing, re-ordering details, adapting the literary strategies to the combination of visual effects, dialogue and music, and so on. The choice of actors can greatly influence the movie's "reading": Visconti's *Gattopardo* owes as much to Burt Lancaster in his role of the Prince as Annaud's *The name of the rose*, based on Umberto Eco's well-known novel, does to Sean Connery. The subject of this unit's last lesson will be where the diva factor comes in.

b. Read the following texts, as specified - of course, students with some knowledge of Italian are encouraged to read the books in Italian - , and watch the movies based on them:

B. Osimo, "Intersemiotic translation", in: http://courses.logos.it/EN/1_36.html and http://courses.logos.it/EN/1_37.html

G. Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*, NY, Pantheon Books/ London, Collins; especially the chapters I, I and III / L. Visconti, *Il gattopardo* (1963).

G. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Introduction and stories II, 5; III, 1; VII,2: I,1; VI,5; V, 34; IV, 5; IX, 10; VII, 10 (this is the order of appearance in the film) / P.P. Pasolini, *Decameron* (1971).

G. Bassani, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, Atheneum books / V. De Sica, *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contin* (1970).

N. Ammaniti, *I'm not scared*, Cannongate, Edinburgh 2003 / G. Salvatores, *Io non ho paura* (2003).

C. Levi, *Christ stopped at Eboli*, various editions / F. Rosi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (1979).

c. Answer the following questions (500-1000 w each), treating all questions as essay questions.

- Do you think Visconti gives an interpretation that follows the original literally? Why (not)? Give some examples of what is left out, and some examples that seem to stress the original by adding a visual dimension to it. Which political ideas are embodied in the book and in the novel?

- Pasolini changed his picture's setting to Naples. Why did he do this and what justification could he possibly find in the original text? Another change is the framework, how and why was it changed too? Do you agree with it? What autobiographical elements contain both versions of the *Decameron*?

- The differences between the original and the film made Bassani withdraw his acknowledgements for De Sica's work. Treat two major differences. Please comment as well on the film's casting.

- Ammaniti and Salvatores closely worked together in realizing *Io non ho paura*. Still, one might notice different viewpoints and solutions that make the film a masterpiece in its own way. Please explain this.

- How is Carlo Levi's personal experience of the peasant world translated into movie language? And how does Rosi, a director generally associated with strong political interest, deal with Fascism?

13. ALBERTO MORAVIA AND THE CINEMA

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

Alberto Moravia (1907-1990) was one of the most productive 20th century Italian authors. He wrote short stories, novels, plays, travel accounts, essays and pieces of criticism. He was extremely interested in film as a medium and has been actively involved in film adaptations of his works. We know at least 25 films based on his works. Among the many directors who made these movies are Bertolucci, Blasetti, Bolognini, Brass, Damiani, De Sica, Godard, Salce, Soldati and Zampa. Even Moravia's partner Dacia Maraini made one (*L'amore coniugale*). Moravia's language is considered not too difficult and devoid of any dialect, his main attention is for dialogue and psychology.

b. See and study the following books and the corresponding films:

A. Moravia, *Two Women*, Secker & Warburg - Penguin books 1961 – Steerforth Press 2001 / *La ciociara* (1960) by Vittorio de Sica.

A. Moravia, *Boredom*, New York Review of Books 1999 / *La noia* (1963) by Damiano Damiani.

A. Moravia, *Time of Indifference*, Steerforth Press 2000 / *Gli indifferenti* (1964) by Francesco Maselli.

A. Moravia, *The Conformist*, Farrar Strauss & Giroux 1951 / Steerforth Press / *Il conformista* (1970) di Bernardo Bertolucci.

c. Answer the following questions on the films (ca. 500 words each):

- *La ciociara* has a background that differs from the other three: proletarian instead of bourgeois. What differences brings this fact about on other levels, including that of adaptation?

- Moravia used to say that he had repeatedly written the same novel: 'indifference' would thus have the same meaning as 'noia' (spleen). Does comparison of the film adaptations by Damiani and Maselli give you the same idea?

- Do you have any suggestions why both *La noia* and *Gli indifferenti* are in black and white?

- *Il conformista* is based on the murder of the Rosselli brothers, cousins of the author, by the fascist secret police in France. The book tells the story of a latent homosexual who is prepared to do everything to become a normal citizen – even to commit murder. Analyze the way fascism is visually represented by Bertolucci.

- Although Bertolucci remains close to Moravia's novel, he introduces some changes and adds a character. He changes some names as well. Other changes include the structure of episodes and the end. Analyse all these changes.

14. THE DIVAS.

a. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

In this last lesson we'll examine some of the protagonists of Italian cinema from the Forties to the present. Although Italy has had many talented actors and actresses, some of them deserve special mention and treatment. Of some (Magnani, Loren, Cardinale, Mastroianni) you have already seen some films. Others will be suggested here for further study: Totò, Gassman, Sordi and Benigni.

b. See and study the following films (there is no additional bibliography):

Totò, Peppino e ...la malafemmina (English: *Totò, Peppino and the Hussy*), directed by Camillo Mastrocinque (1956), is maybe the finest comedy starring Antonio De Curtis ("Totò") and contains some of his funniest scenes, that are still famous even with the present-day public.

M. Monicelli, *I soliti ignoti* (English: *Big Deal on Madonna Street*). This extremely successful work from 1958 is considered a masterpiece of Italian comedy and shows some of the period's most famous actors, including a tiny role for young Cardinale.

L. Zampa, *Il vigile* (English: *The Traffic Policeman*), is a 1960 film starring the great Roman actor – who was a movie director and a singer as well – Alberto Sordi, together with De Sica. It is one of the best roles performed by Sordi, who would manage to hide till after his death his impressive philanthropic activity and whose funeral would be attended by hundreds of thousands of citizens.

D. Riso, *I mostri* (1963) gives a mosaic of Italian society in a series of episodes starring, among others, Vittorio Gassman and Ugo Tognazzi (his son Ricky also appears in the film).

R. Benigni's *La vita è bella* (1997) proved that Italian comedies can still attract the international public and become an Oscar-winning production (it won three Oscars). It triggered as well a discussion on Holocaust representation: if a comedy partly set in a concentration camp is admissible or sacrilegial.

c. Now answer 3 of the following questions (ca. 400-500 words each):

- *Totò, Peppino e ... la malafemmina* makes fun of the different life styles in Southern and Northern Italy. Explain how and with which sort of jokes.
- What makes *I soliti ignoti* so successful?
- Corruption and favouritism are being made fun of in *Il vigile*. Show how.
- *I mostri* has a mostly ironic, and sometimes even cynical dimension. Analyze the portrait that Risi gives of Italy in the early Sixties.

- Study the discussion on *La vita è bella* (there are various reviews on the internet and in papers). Try to express your viewpoint on the film, its homogeneity and its approach of history.

FINAL ESSAY

The final essay will develop one of the subjects treated in this course, on prior approval by the tutor. In any case, the essay should present an interdisciplinary approach. It has to be strictly original and written in correct English (Italian, German and French may be proposed as well). It should possibly represent the personal opinion of the student and reflect his personal movie watching, reading and research. A creative dimension might be appreciated.

A typical essay could concentrate on the oeuvre of one director and analyze a representative choice of his works and ideas. For instance: *The political dimension of Marco Bellocchio's films*. It may compare two or more films: *The politicians Andreotti and Berlusconi according to Sorrentino and Moretti*. It may treat a genre, such as *Italian Road Movies* or *Dario Argento's horror movies*. Or it could consider a famous actor, such as *Vittorio Gassman's comic roles*, or *Alberto Sordi's Roman characters*. It might even approach pictures from the viewpoint of their making of artists involved in this process, such as in *Tonino Delli Colli's collaboration with Pasolini* or *Nino Rota's soundtracks*. The essay may tackle film criticism (*Five major studies on Fellini compared; Pasolini and his American critics*) In most cases, though, the student should prepare appropriate visual and audio materials.

Total suggested length is 3000-5000 words, not counting foot notes, bibliography, index and title page, which are all mandatory elements and should follow international (American or Italian) quotation standards.

Syllabus

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the major developments and texts found in the subject of the course.
2. Identify unique theoretical underpinnings and influential thinkers in the course topic.
3. Analyze the relationship between historical texts and the particular social, cultural, and biographical contexts of their production.
4. Research and critically evaluate historical, social, cultural, or biographical criticism relevant to the analysis of specific events.
5. Use secondary sources and close reading skills to produce a substantive critical essay relating a one or more specific historical texts to the economic, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of its production.
6. Demonstrate a balanced perspective and a deepened understanding of the cultures, times, people, and situations that produce these works.

7. Write coherent historical arguments that explore the relationships of various concepts and texts, and which provide a clear synthesis.

Course Goals:

1. To provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to world history and an understanding of the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.
2. To provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse historical and interdisciplinary traditions the course focus and to express this deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.
3. To provide an overview of historical analysis and interpretation methods and help students apply these skills in writing essay examinations and a critical essay.
4. To read widely and critically in a variety of historiographic and historical texts and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in essay examinations and a critical essay.
5. To do library research on a particular trend, event, concept, an individual theorist, or an issue in the area of history studies and to write a critical essay which incorporates this research.

Course Content:

1. Historical events and texts that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.
2. Discussion of the theoretical, social, cultural and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.
3. Historical movements in various periods.
4. Discussion of the historical issues and questions related to theoretical, social, cultural, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.
5. Key ideas about how to evaluate and interpret historical events, texts, and approaches.
6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in literature.
7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary global issues.
8. Critical analysis and interpretation of history.
9. Conducting scholarly research on and off-line.

Course Outline:

For the detailed course outline, please see the study guide.

Course Readings:

The course readings for this course will be available through the Online Library, which will provide students access to selected journal articles, book chapters, and reference materials.

Course Preparedness:

This course is a history course which requires analysis, research, and writing. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in history and does not address remedial writing issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level. The California Department of Education "English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools" offers context for understanding the standard for writing at the college level. Students who do not meet the standards outlined in the "English-Language Arts Content Standards" will not pass this course.

In short, this course assumes that students already "write with a command of standard English conventions, write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument, and use clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies" (California Standards, Grades Nine and Ten). This course focuses on texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

Course Workload:

In accordance with accreditation standards, requires approximately two hours of outside work for every contact hour. For a 3-hour course, there are 48 contact hours, plus a minimum of 96 hours outside work. For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 6 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework.

Grading Factors:**Discussion Board (20%)**

The Discussion Board provides the learner a place to respond to questions on the topic and to exchange ideas, reactions and analyses of the texts. Discussion questions concentrate on ideas, themes, and characters in literary works. There will be one question per week. Discussion Board questions will be responded to by all learners in the course and will be evaluated by the instructor. The Discussion Board is not available for OCW courses.

Journal (20%)

Your journal consists of your responses to questions in the Study Guide. These questions require you to reflect on the material and to write a one to two-paragraph response. At

the end of the course, you will gather together all of your Study Guide responses and will turn them in as a final portfolio.

Essay (20%)

You will write an essay on one of the topics provided to you by your instructor in which you apply a critical paradigm from theorists or issues raised by the Study Guide questions. You should start your paper with a succinct thesis statement, describe the critical paradigm and the text(s) being analyzed. Be sure to cite critical passages to demonstrate support for your argument.

Length: 1,000—1,500 words. Essay topics will be assigned by the instructor and will reflect material covered in the Study Guide and the readings.

Exam (40%)

Students must complete the assignments, submit them, and take the proctored exam.

Definition of Grades:

Graduate Courses

- A** Outstanding Achievement
- B** Commendable Achievement
- C** Marginal Achievement
- D** Unsatisfactory *
- F** Failing *

* Students receiving this grade in a course that is required for his/her degree program must repeat the course.

- I Incomplete** A grade given at the discretion of the instructor when a student who has completed **at least two-thirds of the course class sessions** and is unable to complete the requirements of the course because of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey these circumstances (preferably in writing) to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If an instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" to the student in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the "Incomplete" is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. An "Incomplete" is not assigned when the only way the student could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when next offered.

An "I" that is not removed within the stipulated time becomes an "F." No grade points are assigned. The "F" is calculated in the grade point average.

- W Withdrawal** Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. **Students who wish to withdraw must notify their admissions advisor before the beginning of the sixth class session in the**

case of graduate courses, or before the seventh class session in the case of undergraduate courses. Instructors are not authorized to issue a "W" grade.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Catalog, which may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following is one of many websites that provide helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and faculty:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Use of the internet and e-mail may also be required.

Diversity:

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

Civility:

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations
- There are to be no offensive comments, language, or gestures

Students with Disabilities:

Students seeking special accommodations due to a disability must submit an application with supporting documentation, as explained under this subject heading in the General Catalog. Instructors are required to provide such accommodations if they receive written notification from the University.

Writing Across the Curriculum:

Students are expected to demonstrate writing skills in describing, analyzing and evaluating ideas and experiences. Written reports and research papers must follow specific standards regarding citations of an author's work within the text and references at the end of the paper. Students are encouraged to use the services of the University's Writing Center when preparing materials.

The following website provides information on APA, MLA, and other writing and citation styles that may be required for term papers.

Online Library:

Our Online Library supports academic rigor and student academic success by providing access to scholarly books and journals electronically.