AN/SO 360 BANDITRY AND MAFIAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
IES Abroad Barcelona

"Preveo que el hombre se resignará cada día a empresas más atroces; pronto no habrá sino guerreros y bandoleros" (I foresee that man will resign himself to ever greater atrocities; soon there will be no one left but warriors and bandits) Jorge Luis Borges, *El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan.*

DESCRIPTION: Bandits populate the legends of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea, often in the guise of saviours of the common people against tyranny. Mafias too, with their characteristic blend of ruthlessness, secrecy and codes of honour, have worked their way into the collective consciousness, producing ambiguous feelings of rejection, fascination and admiration. Both have been romanticized, and at the same time represented as aberrant (and abhorrent) actors at the margins of society. But neither of these visions tells us very much about the reality of these phenomena. What exactly is banditry? Why, where and when does it occur? How does it vary across time and space? Why has it been so ubiquitous and persistent in the Mediterranean region? Does it still exist? And how about the Mafia? Are mafia-type organizations a contemporary evolution of banditry, or are they something quite different? Is the mafia synonymous with organized crime? Why do mafias develop in some societies and not in others? Are they a cause or a result of social dysfunctions? Who becomes a bandit, or *mafioso,* and why? And, what can these forms of criminal activity tell us about the structures, values and workings of our society?

In this course, students will explore the phenomena of banditry and mafia-style organizations from a sociological and anthropological perspective. They will examine different perspectives to build a theoretical framework with which to interpret and analyze case studies from around the Mediterranean. A central element of the course’s theoretical focus will be that of violence. Why, and when is violence used in society, and what (and who) determines whether it is legitimate or criminal? The students will be introduced to a number of different perspectives, from classical Marxist and Weberian theory, through anthropological approaches, to contemporary analyses, which will highlight the meaning, and the contradictions, of the concept of the state. At the same time, the course will introduce students to some of the overarching themes in Mediterranean history, such as clashes between empires and religions, the modernization of traditional societies, cultural and economic exchanges, and the effects of globalization and the end of communism.

The course is broadly divided into three sections. The first will examine different theoretical perspectives on banditry, and will introduce the concepts of power, authority, honour and legitimacy. The second section will tackle the issue of mafias, with a particular emphasis on traditional approaches to, and recent findings about the Sicilian *Cosa Nostra,* as well as an examination of the newer, post-communist Balkan mafias. It will return to the discussion of power and authority in relation to the problems of establishing democratic states after the collapse of totalitarian enterprises. The final section will ask how the study of banditry and mafias could help us to further understand one of the most worrying aspects of globalization: international terrorism. Parallels will be drawn between the structures of bandit and mafia groups and terrorist cells.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- **Class discussion:** The majority of each class will consist of discussions of key themes. The students will be provided with the texts to read for each class on Moodle, together with a list of reading questions designed to focus their attention on key points and concepts in the texts. These will form the basis of the class discussions. The theoretical readings will be supplemented with case studies, distributed through Moodle, which will serve to illustrate the elements of the different theoretical approaches.

- **Course-related trips:** There will be a course-related trip to visit locations connected with banditry and terrorism in Barcelona.
- **Lectures:** The professor will supplement the class discussions with lectures to help the students interpret the material provided in the class readings, to tie the readings together, and provide summaries of theoretical approaches to the subject.
- **Film viewings:** There will be two film viewings throughout the course. The films will be screened prior to class. Students will be provided with viewing and discussion questions to be completed on Moodle before the class starts. The films will serve as material for discussion of the theoretical concepts covered in the course.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**
- Essays 35%: Essay 1 (15%) Essay 2 (20%). Students will write two essays, in which they draw on the different theoretical perspectives discussed in class, and use them to analyze case studies from the historical record. The completed essays will be submitted as assignments on Moodle.
- Midterm exam (25%) which will use different formats to assess students’ progress towards the learning outcomes in the first half of the course. The question formats will include essay questions, short answer questions, justified True/False questions.
- Class participation (15%). Students will be expected to come to class prepared, and to participate actively in class.
- Final exam (25%) which will use different formats to assess students’ progress towards the learning outcomes in the second half of the course.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Outline the main characteristics of banditry and mafia-type activities;
- Analyze representations of banditry and mafias in film and literature;
- Compare different theoretical perspectives used to analyze banditry and mafias;
- Analyze particular cases using different theoretical approaches;
- Place explanations of crime and violence within the theoretical context of the State;
- Interpret newspaper reports and other contemporary materials;
- Assess the ideologies and meanings behind popular interpretations of the phenomena studied;
- Use the theoretical tools developed during the course to provide an initial analysis of terrorist violence.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**
Attendance is mandatory for all IES classes, including course-related trips. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than three classes in any course 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven absences in any course will result in a failing grade.

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<td>- De Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel (2004), <em>The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of la Mancha</em>, (First published 1605-1615) Project Gutenberg e-</td>
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**Mintz, Frank (2010) *Anarchism and Workers’ Self Management in Revolutionary Spain* Oakland: AK** |
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**Final Exam**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Turco, Marco (2005) Excellent Cadavers USA: Icarus Films

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Gasparini, Marco (no date) *The Mafia: History and Legend*, Paris: Flamaron