



## FS 330 THE GOLDEN AGE OF ITALIAN CINEMA: IN BETWEEN AUTHORS AND GENRES

IES Abroad Center Milan

### DESCRIPTION:

From the very moment it was invented cinema has played a key role in Italian culture. Indeed, Italian cinema has played a significant role in the world market, influencing even Hollywood, at least in 3 historical moments:

- 1) During the first and second decades of the twentieth century, when Italy was one of the leading countries in the new art-form
- 2) After World War 2 - through the revolution introduced by Neorealism (mid 40s - early 50s)
- 3) In the 60s, through the emergence of a number of great authors who were to become famous and beloved all over the world

Today this last period is known as the Golden Age in Italian cinema, as Bondanella points out: "It was during the 60s that the Italian cinema achieved its greatest results either from an artistic or economical point of view. In the 60s the Italian cinema developed a larger number of trends of evolution and a much higher production which, for a moment, was even able to compete with Hollywood. It was the period of Fellini and it was the moment in which Hollywood moved lots of its production to Rome. As a matter of fact the production of the Italian film industry of the period contains all aspects and all genres the Italian cinema has ever developed, so, studying this period as deeply as possible is, according to me, the best way to approach the History of the Italian cinema."

Following Peter Bondanella's textbook, our course on the History of Italian cinema will deal mainly with the period of its greatest achievements, Neorealism and the 60s, dwelling upon Fellini in particular, but also with more recent and contemporary Italian authors and films, culminating with Sorrentino's award for best picture in a foreign language at the Academy Awards (2014).

To have a paramount view of Italian cinema we will attempt to combine the authors approach with the genre approach ("*spaghetti western*", *Comedy Italian Style*), films that achieved great International critical and commercial acclaim and that had a great influence on the 7th art all over the world.

**CREDITS:** 3

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** none

### METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Two lessons composed of two hours will be dedicated to each author or topic. Each author and movie will be introduced from narrative, historical and aesthetic perspectives and then the films which best represent the author will be analyzed in its narrative structure, *mise en scène* and linguistic style through the screening of clips and weekly discussions. Students will be expected to join in the debate and to bring their own critical points of view into the discussion. You'll also learn how to see reality through a lens, as well as film language, starting from Leonardo da Vinci's treaty on painting, "De pictura" and his comparison between the arts of space and time. The analysis of the visual aspects is fundamental in film studies: in order to deepen your perception, we'll approach the visual aspect of cinema also from the filmmaker's point of view, through the visualization of a story.

### REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

Regular attendance and active participation in class will be fundamental for grade assessment. Students are required to assimilate the film glossary and information presented in class about each filmmaker and film and show how they are able to apply it in the discussions we'll have each week, in the film presentation and written exams.

Students will be required to watch **one film per week** (for a total of **9 mandatory movies**) which will be discussed the following week with the Professor and will be studied in depth for film analysis in your mid-term and final exam. For each discussion there will be a leader among the students (rotating in this role each week).

Students can book DVDs for each film with our TAs, in order to watch the movie at IES, possibly in groups. Students can also watch the movies on their own, but it is crucial that they do it before each film discussion.

Students will be asked to watch at least other **3 optional films** (a list of optional films will be provided during the first week). Each student will **present 1** of the 3 optional **films in class**. This movie will be chosen by the Professor, while the other 2 movies will be chosen by the student, one for mid-term exam, one for final exam.

- Course participation and Film Discussions - 20%
- Film Presentation - 20%
- Midterm Written Exam on issues discussed during the first half of course - 30%
- Final Written Exam on issues discussed during second half of course - 30%

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Know narrative techniques – both tradition and non-traditional
- Know the greatest achievements in Italian cinema during Neorealism, the 60s and contemporary cinema
- Watch a film critically and analyze it, appreciating subtle insights and skillful techniques of the best Italian filmmaking masters
- Know how to see reality through a lens, as well as film language

#### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad Milan allows a maximum of two excused absences per semester. Each further absence will automatically result in a penalty of two points off (2/100) on the final grade. Seven absences per course (including two excused absences) will result in a failing grade for that course. Furthermore, absence on the date of scheduled tests, presentations, or quizzes does not entitle you to recover/reschedule such tests. Failure to attend your Midterm and/or Final exam will result in an automatic F grade on that paper/exam. It is your responsibility to manage your absences during the term. If you are sick, you will need to apply your absence to the two excused absences allowed for the term. If you use up your two excused absences for personal travel and then are sick at the end of the semester, those sick days will not be excused. Please plan wisely!

#### CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Introduction to Cinema and Italian Cinema: film language, cinema as an art form</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Screening of clips of contemporary films</li> <li>2. <i>Rome Open City</i> [FILM 1] (1945) by Rossellini</li> </ol>	
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>Cinema as Business</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The golden age of Italian cinema: Italian Cinema at the beginning of the century and during the fascist regime</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1: "Background: The silent Era and the Fascist Period" (pg. 1-30), Bondanella</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Screening of clips of <i>Cabiria (1914)</i> by Pastrone</li> <li>3. Comments from director Martin Scorsese</li> <li>4. Introduction to the contemporary movie chosen for the field study</li> </ol>	
<b>Week 2</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Guidelines to Film Analysis</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. About and around Neorealism: Roberto Rossellini</li> <li>2. Guidelines to film analysis</li> <li>3. Discussion on <i>Rome open city (Part 1)</i> [MP]</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: "The Masters of Neorealism: Rossellini, De Sica, and Visconti" (focusing on Rossellini, from the beginning, pg. 31- 52) Bondanella</li> <li>• Chapter 3: "Exploring the boundaries of Neorealism" (focusing on Rossellini, pg. 90-93). Bondanella</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>Narrative Techniques</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Archplot, minipolit, antiplot</li> <li>2. More on Neorealism and Roberto Rossellini</li> <li>3. Discussion on <i>Rome open city (Part 2)</i></li> <li>4. Screening of clips <i>Paisa (1946)</i> by Rossellini</li> <li>5. <i>The Bicycle Thief</i> [FILM 2] by De Sica</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4: "The break with Neorealism: Rossellini in transition, early Antonioni and Fellini" (focusing on Rossellini, pg. 103-107). Bondanella</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>About and around Neorealism: Vittorio De Sica</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on <i>The Bicycle Thief</i></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: The Masters of Neorealism: Rossellini, De Sica, and Visconti (focusing on De Sica, pg. 52-66). Bondanella</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>De Sica</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Screening of clips of <i>Umberto D. (1951)</i> by De Sica</li> <li>2. <i>Rocco and his Brothers</i> [FILM 3] (1960) by Visconti</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3: Exploring the boundaries of Neorealism (focusing on De Sica, pg. 93-96). Bondanella</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Luchino Visconti and the passage to Realism</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on <i>Rocco and his Brothers</i></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: The Masters of Neorealism: Rossellini, De Sica, and Visconti (focusing on Visconti, pg. 66 -73). Bondanella</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>More on Visconti</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Screening of clips of <i>The Leopard (1963)</i> by Visconti</li> <li>2. <i>Divorce Italian Style</i> [FILM 4] (1963) by Germi</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3: "Exploring the boundaries of Neorealism" (focusing on Visconti's "Senso", pg. 96-100). Bondanella</li> <li>• Chapter 6: "The mature auteurs: new dimensions in film narrative with Visconti, Antonioni, and Fellini" (focusing on Visconti, from the beginning, pg. 196-210)</li> </ul>

<b>Week 5</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Comedy – Italian Style</b> 1. Discussion on <i>Divorce Italian Style</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study for Midterm</li> </ul>
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>Midterm Exam &amp; Film</b> 1. Midterm Exam (Written in class) 2. <i>A Fistful of Dollars</i> (1964) by Leone [FILM 5]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 5: “A Decisive Decade: Commedia all’italiana, Neorealism’s legacy, and a New Generation” (from the beginning, pg. 142-159)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Sergio Leone and the “Spaghetti” Western</b> 1. Discussion on <i>A fistful of dollars</i>	
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>More on Sergio Leone and the “Spaghetti” Western</b> 1. Screenings of clips from <i>For a few dollars more</i> (1965) by Leone 2. <i>8 ½</i> [FILM 6] (1963) by Fellini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 7: “A fistful of Pasta: Sergio Leone and the Spaghetti Western” (pg. 253-274) Bondanella</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Federico Fellini and the Triumph of Fantasy and Poetry</b> 1. Discussion on <i>8 ½</i>	
<i>Session 2</i>	<b>More on Fellini</b> 1. Film Presentations by students to be scheduled 2. Screenings of clips from <i>The nights of Cabiria</i> (1956) by Fellini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 4: “The Break with Neorealism: Rossellini in transition, Early Antonioni and Fellini” (pg. 113-141) Bondanella</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>Spring Break</b>	
<b>Week 9</b> <i>Session 1</i>	<b>More on Fellini</b> 1. Film Presentations by students to be scheduled 2. Screenings of clips from <i>La dolce vita</i> (1959) by Fellini 3. Screenings of clips from <i>Roma</i> (1972) Fellini	

Session 2	<b>Contemporary Italian Cinema</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Screenings of clips from contemporary Italian films</li> <li>2. <i>Life is beautiful</i> [FILM 7] (1997) by Benigni</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6: “The Mature Auteurs: New Dimensions in Film Narrative with Visconti, Antonioni, and Fellini” (pg. 228-252) Bondanella</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> Session 1	<b>Roberto Benigni</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on <i>Life is Beautiful</i></li> </ol>	
Session 2	<b>Contemporary Italian Cinema</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Film Presentations by students to be scheduled</li> <li>2. <i>Happy family</i> [FILM 8] (2010) by Salvatores</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 12: “The Italian Cinema enters the Third Millennium” (pg. 425-461) Bondanella</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b> Session 1	<b>Contemporary Italian Cinema: Salvatores</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on <i>Happy Family</i></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter: “The films of Matteo Garrone: Italian Cinema is not embalmed” (pg. 175-187) of <i>Italian Film Directors in the New Millennium</i>. Hope, William</li> </ul>
Session 2	<b>Film</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>La grande bellezza</i> [FILM 9] (2013) by Sorrentino</li> </ol>	
<b>Week 12</b> Session 1	<b>Contemporary Italian Cinema: Sorrentino</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Course-Related Trip: Outing to the movie theater to watch the film <i>Io sono tempesta</i>, by Daniele Luchetti</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter: “Character Engagement and Alienation in the Cinema of Paolo Sorrentino” (pg. 161-173) of <i>Italian Film Directors in the New Millennium</i>. Hope, William</li> </ul>
Session 2	<b>Contemporary Italian Cinema: Sorrentino</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on <i>La grande bellezza</i></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study for Final Exam</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	

**COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:**

- Movie Theater to watch: *Io sono tempesta*

**REQUIRED READINGS:**



- Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema from Neorealism to the Present*, F. Ungar Pub. Co., New York (the most recent edition);
- William Hope, *Italian Film Directors in the New Millennium*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010 (chapters on Sorrentino and Garrone)

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Peter Bondanella, *The cinema of Federico Fellini*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey (1992)
- Laurent Tirard, *Moviemakers' masterclass*, Faber and Faber, New York, 2002
- Chris Vogler, *The writer's journey – mythic structure for writers – third edition*, Michael Wiese Productions, Studio City, CA, 2007.
- Robert McKee, *Story – Substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting*, Regan Books, New York 1997
- Steven D. Katz, *Film directing – Shot by shot – Visualizing from concept to screen*, Michael Wiese Productions, Studio City, CA, 1991.

#### FILMOGRAPHY:

- *Rome Open City* (1945) by Rossellini
- *Cabiria (1914)* by Pastrone
- *Paisa* (1946) by Rossellini
- *The Bicycle Thief* by De Sica
- *Umberto D.* (1951) by De Sica
- *Rocco and his Brothers* (1960) by Visconti
- *The Leopard* (1963) by Visconti
- *Divorce Italian Style* (1963) by Germi
- *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) by Leone
- *For a few dollars more* (1965) by Leone
- *8 ½* (1963) by Fellini
- *The nights of Cabiria* (1956) by Fellini
- *La dolce vita* (1959) by Fellini
- *Roma* (1972) Fellini
- *Life is beautiful* (1997) by Benigni
- *Happy family* (2010) by Salvatores
- *La grande bellezza* (2013) by Sorrentino
- *Io sono tempesta* by Daniele Luchetti