



LT 328 INVESTIGATING THE MAFIA IN LITERATURE, CINEMA, AND THE MEDIA

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

The Mafia and the Italian State originated in the same period, the end of the 19th century, and from then on their histories have always been closely related. From Sicily, the “octopus” (piovra), as the Mafia is called in Italy, has spread throughout Italy, and has pervaded almost every facet of Italian life, including cultural life. It has exerted an enormous appeal on literature, cinema and the media in general. This course presents a selection of the long-standing tradition of fiction and non-fiction texts that scrutinizes the Mafia from distinct intellectual and creative angles of vision. The selection of novels, films, testimonies and TV series will offer different representations of the Mafia: its ethics; its relation with politics, religion and business; its ideas of friendship, family, masculinity and femininity. It will challenge some of the clichés around the Mafia and will offer interesting insights on the Italian cultural identity. A section will be dedicated to the Mafia in Milano.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None. No previous Italian literature background is necessary. More advanced students, such as Italian Language Majors, will receive assignments personally tailored to their level and interests.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The course will alternate lectures from the instructor, class discussions, readings, screenings of films and student presentations. Great emphasis will be given to the active participation of the student.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation – 25%
- Midterm Exam – 25%
- Final Exam – 25%
- Assignments – 25%

Course Participation

Students are expected to give presentations to the class on the assigned weekly readings to show their ability to communicate what they have read and elaborate upon it.

Midterm Exam

Organized as a series of brief questions to evaluate the students’ reading and comprehension ability, and one essay question to evaluate students’ critical thinking ability

Final Exam

Organized as a series of brief questions to evaluate the students’ reading and comprehension ability, and one essay question to evaluate students’ critical thinking ability

Assignments

Each student will be asked to complete two assignments based on the information collected in the readings and screenings presented in class, and from their personal research. These assignments could include an annotated bibliography, research conducted in local libraries, or close readings of significant passages. The assignments will allow students to show their competence in organizing and interpreting the information they collect from both during the course, and from outside resources (libraries, scholarly papers and newspaper articles, etc.). Students will also design a geographical, historical, and cultural map of the Mafia phenomenon in Italy.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- Be familiarized with a number of important works of Italian literature and cinema
- Critically analyze Italian literature according to their textual typologies
- Synthesize historical, cultural, and literary backgrounds by gathering information from lectures, readings, and personal research
- Organize gained knowledge in a critical way through an original paper and an oral presentation to the class

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend classes each day, including course-related excursions. 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 the 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 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
Week 1 <i>Session 1</i>	Introduction to the course	
<i>Session 2</i>	The Origins of the Mafia, the Myth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Leopard</i>, ch. 1
Week 2 <i>Session 1</i>	Old Men vs New Men, Old Women vs New Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Leopard</i>, ch. 2-3
<i>Session 2</i>	North vs South. Men of Honor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Leopard</i>, ch. 4-5
Week 3 <i>Session 1</i>	The Ball and the Death of the Prince	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Leopard</i>, ch. 6-8
<i>Session 2</i>	The Mafia Goes to America 1. Coppola's film <i>The Godfather</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Dickie, <i>Cosa Nostra</i>, pg. 92-106

Week 4 <i>Session 1</i>	Mafia and WW2 1. <i>In guerra per amore</i>	
<i>Session 2</i>	Mafia and the State 1. <i>The Day of the Owl</i> (circa half)	
Week 5 <i>Session 1</i>	Mafia and Politics 1. <i>The Day of the Owl</i> , and general review	
<i>Session 2</i>	Midterm Exam	
Week 6 <i>Session 1</i>	Men Against the Mafia, Faclone and Borsellino: Alexander Stille, <i>Excellent Cadavers</i> 1. Coursepack 2. <i>In un altro paese</i> – documentary	
<i>Session 2</i>	<i>La mafia uccide solo d'estate</i> by Pif 1. Screening of the film <i>La mafia uccide solo d'estate</i> Mafia and Humor 1. <i>The Sopranos</i> , Episode 1, Season 1	
Week 7 <i>Session 1</i>	The Mafia goes North 1. Milan and the Ambrosoli Case 2. <i>Gomorra</i> , the TV series, Episode 5	
<i>Session 2</i>	The New Geography of the Mafia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roberto Saviano, <i>Gomorra</i>, “The Port”
Week 8 <i>Session 1</i>	The Mafia and the Fashion Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Saviano, <i>Gomorra</i>, “Angelina Jolie,” and “The System”
<i>Session 2</i>	The New Mafia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Saviano, <i>Gomorra</i>, “The Secondigliano War”
Week 9 <i>Session 1</i>	Women in, against, and around the Mafia 1. <i>Gomorra</i> , the TV series, Episode 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Saviano, <i>Gomorra</i> “Women” • Testimonies (course pack)

Session 2	Mafia and Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Saviano, <i>Gomorra</i>, “Land of Fires”
Week 10 Session 1	Mafia and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niccolò Ammaniti, <i>I’m Not Scared</i> (circa half)
Session 2	Mafia and Children 1. Niccolò Ammaniti, <i>I’m Not Scared</i> FILM and book	
Week 11 Session 1	General Review	
Session 2	General Review	
Week 12 Session 1	Final Exam	

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard* (Pantheon, 2007)
- Leonardo Sciascia, *The Day of the Owl* (NYRB Classics, 2003)
- Niccolò Ammaniti, *I’m Not Scared* (Anchor, 2004)
- Roberto Saviano, *Gomorra: A Personal Journey into the Violent International Empire of Naples’ Organized Crime System* (Picador, 2008)
- Course-pack

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Alexander Stille, *Excellent Cadavers: The Mafia and the Death of the First Italian Republic* (Vintage, 1996)
- John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)
- Paul Ginsborg, *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civic Society, State* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- Robin Pickering-lazzi, *Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature* (University of Toronto Press, 2007)
- Salvatore Lupo, *History of the Mafia* (Columbia University Press, 2011)
- Barbara Pezzotti, *The Importance of Place in Contemporary Italian Crime Fiction: A Bloody Journey* (The Fairleigh Dickinson University Press)
- Dana Renga, *Mafia Movies: A Reader* (University of Toronto Press, 2013)
- Federico Varese, *Mafias on the Move: How Organized Crime Conquers New Territories* (Princeton University Press, 2013)
- Federico Varese, *Mafia Life: Love, Death and Money at the Heart of Organized Crime* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

**FILMOGRAPHY:**

- Luchino Visconti, *Il gattopardo* (1963)
- Francis Ford Coppola, *The Godfather* (1972)
- Damiano Damiani, *The Day of the Owl* (1968)
- Gabriele Salvatores, *Io non ho paura* (2003)
- Matteo Garrone, *Gomorra* (2008)
- Marco Turco, *In un altro paese* (2005), documentary
- Pif, *La mafia uccide solo d'estate* (2013)
- Pif, *In guerra per amore* (2016)

RECOMMENDED FILMS AND TV SERIES:

- Francesco Rosi, *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962)
- Francesco Rosi, *Le mani sulla città* (1963)
- Elio Petri, *We Still Kill the Old Way* (1967)
- Michele Placido, *Un eroe borghese* (1995)
- Marco Tullio Giordana, *I cento passi* (2000)
- *The Sopranos*, *La piovra*, *Montalbano* (tv series)