

Fall 2024
ITAL 1900; CIMS 1900
“Italian History on Screen”



Course Description:

What is the connection between Italian history and cinema? Can cinema serve as a source of historical knowledge or even be considered an active participant in shaping history? This course will delve into the exploration of how cinema interacts with Italy's intricate past and present, while also delving into theoretical inquiries regarding the interplay between cinema and history. Commencing with Italy's emergence as an independent nation state in the 19th century, we will scrutinize how Italian cinema has depicted pivotal historical events of the 20th century. This includes examining portrayals of the rise of fascism, both World Wars, the emergence of gossip culture in the 1960s, the surge of mafia and terrorism in the 1970s, and concluding with a focus on the migratory crises in the Mediterranean.

Films, dubbed or with English subtitles, will be available in streaming on Canvas, when possible and permitted by copyright. This course will be taught in English, and all readings will be available in English. There are no prerequisites.

Assignment

Participation & Attendance
Reading Responses
Blog Post
In-class Exam
Final Paper

Due Date

throughout semester
throughout semester
Once: see calendar
See Calendar
See Calendar

Grade %

20%
20%
20%
20%
20%

Outline of Assignments & Assessments

- *Attendance and active participation in class discussion:* students are expected to participate to attend all the sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays having read all the readings for the day, and to participate actively and with a spirit of collective collaboration to the discussions.
 - *Readings Sample for a Week:*
 - Watch: Roberto Rossellini, *Rome, Open City*
 - Read: David Forgacs, “Space, Rhetoric, and the Divided City in *Roma città aperta*” (around 20 pages)
- 1) *Blog post:* Once during the semester, students will have to write and post a blog post on our class website on Wordpress (around 500 words). This online response, to be presented orally in class on the following day, will perform a close reading of a sequence/image taken from the weekly film. The students who are not assigned to write the post on that week will be responsible for responding to the post in the form of a (100-word) **Comment** to be published on the blog. This is going to be the foundation of our class discussion.
 - 2) *Response Comment:* Students will be asked to write response comments on the discussion board/class blog on the day before class each time we discuss a film on Thursday. This is going to be a paragraph length (250/300 words) in the form of a response to one of the questions on the movie that I will post weekly on Tuesday.
 - 3) *In-class exam:* To evaluate your comprehension of Italian history, an in-class exam will be administered in class before the Thanksgiving break. The examination is designed to assess your understanding of historical events, their societal and political ramifications in the contemporary context, and the significance of the public figures we have covered in our studies.
 - 4) *Final Paper (10-12 pages):* end of the semester. In this paper, you will work through an aspect of course providing an original reading of one or two film discussed in class. We will provide prompts and specific instructions regarding format and citations for the paper a few weeks in advance of due dates.

Required Texts

- All the films and the required readings will be uploaded on Canvas before the beginning of the semester.

If you have any specific questions about this course email to the instructor:

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