

**History on Screen: How Movies Tell the Story of Italy**  
**ITAL 1900-401**  
CIMS 1900;  
**FALL, 2022**  
**M-W 3:30-5 DRLB A6 (David Rittenhouse Lab)**

---

**Prof. Dr. Carla LOCATELLI**

[carlaloc@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:carlaloc@sas.upenn.edu)

Office: Williams Hall 548.

Office hours: Monday 2-3.30 p.m. and by appointment

Grader: Lourdes Contreras

Grader Office hours: Wednesday 2-3.30 and by appointment.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we will study Italy's rich and complex past and present. We will focus on: the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Baroque Period, The "Age of Enlightenment", Unification, The Turn of the XX Century, The Fascist Era, World War II, post-War, and Contemporary Italy. We will read historical texts and carefully watch films, in order to attain an understanding of Italy that is as varied and multifaceted as the country itself. Discussions and readings will allow us to examine problems and trends in the political, cultural, and social history of Italy, from ancient Rome to the present, and we will explore different genres of the historical and political film.

Students must view one film per week. The movies will be available at the Rosengarten Reserve Desk and on streaming when allowed.

All students are expected to see all films and be critically informed (through textbook and suggested reading material) so that they can participate insightfully in in-class discussion and submit their own comments in the form of Reading Notes. Their "Reading Notes" must come in with personal critical questions or comments -in printed form- every other week. Students must discuss one film and the related history period from the previous two weeks of class according to their choice.

- . Questions and comments on BOTH history and film will be collected every other Monday (or every other Wednesday, depending on week schedule), and returned the following week. Comments and questions must be very brief but to the point (**max one page**)

**double spaced -300 words ca.).** Papers exceeding 300 words will not be evaluated beyond the required length. They will be evaluated in terms of how much they are relevant to the topic at stake, and how they demonstrate a critical approach to it. Synthesis and focus are important traits and will be rewarded. Highlighting how the films relate to history is the main point of students' comments.

Class will primarily be a discussion of assigned readings and films, led by the instructor.

The course is taught in English; films are either dubbed or with English subtitles, all readings are available in English. No knowledge of the Italian language is required.

Please keep referring to Canvas because changes may occur in the Syllabus Schedule.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**CLASS DEMEANOR-** Cell phones, laptops, tablets, and computers are *not* to be used for any reason during class time. No electronic device is allowed in class.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** - Regular attendance is required. You are permitted to miss the equivalent of one week of class (two meeting sessions). After these absences, if no relevant evidence for absence is provided, your grade may be lowered by one grade for each additional single absence.

**Active participation** in class is a fundamental part of your final grade. Both written comments and participation in class discussion will contribute to your final grade.

### **I) WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

- Anything related to class work must be **printed** beforehand and brought to class.
- Films must be viewed and texts must be read before the day they appear on the syllabus.

You will be given **study questions** that will guide your reading and facilitate your critical viewing of films.

**Keep ALL your corrected weekly comments in a folder and turn them in at the end of the course.** Missing comment or comments not in the original (i.e., with the instructors' comments) will negatively impact the final grade.

### **Grading Scale for Weekly Assignments:**

You *must* make *specific* references to historical and cinematic readings, to each topic we discuss, and to each film that we see. Please quote texts and films appropriately (author's name, page number, website, etc.). Use of books, articles and online material is allowed and even encouraged but must be properly cited (with specific quotations in inverted commas and

precise reference to sources. Reference to sources is also needed when you are referring to someone's ideas).

Each critical response will be evaluated according to the following scale:

- 1) **A+ to A-:** your response is relevant to the topic at stake; it is thoughtful and insightful, and demonstrates a critical approach to the topic.  
**A+ 100**  
**A 94-99**  
**A- 93-91**
- 2) **B+ to B-:** your response lacks any particular insight or a thoughtful critical approach, BUT it is pertinent to the topic and demonstrates a careful study and understanding of the topic.  
**B+ 88-90**  
**B 82-87**  
**B- 81-83**
- 3) **C+ to C-:** your response is either very superficial, or not pertinent to the topic. If you limit your response to just a summary of the plot of the film or to statements such as “I really liked this film because it explains a part of Italy’s history”, without any kind of analytical meditation relating the film to specific historical events or ideas, that response will be certainly evaluated as a “minus”.  
**C+ 79-80**  
**C 74-78**  
**C- 70-73**

The final grade for your bi-weekly comments will be based on the responses to the 8 weeks films included in the syllabus.

WEEK	DUE DATE	FILM
3	Monday, Sept. 12th	<i>My Voyage to Italy</i>
5	Monday, Sept. 21 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Cabiria / Decameron</i>
7	Monday, Oct. 5 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Age of Medici pt. 1 / Age of Medici pt. 2</i>
9	Monday, Oct. 12 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Galileo /</i>
11	Monday, Oct. 26 <sup>th</sup>	<i>1860. I Mille/Il Gattopardo</i>
13	Monday, Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>L'albero degli zoccoli/Nuovomondo</i>
15	Monday, Nov. 28th	<i>Paisan/A special Day</i>

16	Friday, Dec. 9th  Monday Dec. 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b> - HARD COPY DELIVERED TO WILLIAMS, LETTER BOX PROF. LOCATELLI Last class and films: <i>Piazza Fontana: The Italian Conspiracy/ Shun Li and the Poiet</i>
----	--	--

**NOTE: Pop quizzes may be given, unannounced. The results of such quizzes will impact the final grade.**

## **II) FINAL PAPER**

Your final evaluation will be:

- . 1) **the collection of all your weekly comments**, and
- . 2) **a paper of about 1800 words (including Bibliography)**, which re-works and re-visits a topic, a period, some prominent figures, or one specific film , etc. **The paper should demonstrate your acquired competence on a specific subject**, after class participation and personal readings. You must include a precise bibliography, of at least 4 more academic/qualified sources not used in the course. References to this bibliography must be quoted appropriately in the final version of your paper. Papers exceeding 1800 words will not be evaluated beyond the required length.

Lack of indications of quoted material will be considered plagiarism, and negatively impact the result of the final evaluation, or even produce a failing mark.

All handed in material must be printed at all times.

## **GRADE BREAK DOWN:**

Attendance & Participation and Weekly comments 50% Final Paper: 50% (**due by DECEMBER 9th**).

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- ☐ Duggan, Christopher. *A Concise History of Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Please use a printed copy for class use, in order to access the text in class.
- ☐ Further readings and material will be supplied on the course Canvas page. Documents posted on class webpage in weekly folders are to be printed, read carefully, and (brought to class. (

□ Study questions posted on Canvas are to be prepared for in-class discussion. (

- **CANVAS: Please refer to Canvas regularly, and pay close attention also to announcements made in class or emails sent you by your instructor and Grader** throughout the semester to be sure that you are up to date with all reading and film assignments. (On Canvas, in Modules, you will find folders with texts to be read in addition to those listed below and films on stream. You will also find study questions to guide your readings and film viewings.

- **CLASS SCHEDULE**

**August 31<sup>st</sup> Wed.:** First Class ((Course Introduction).

**Mon. Sept. 5: Labor Day (No Class)**

**Wed. Sept 7:** Our Voyage to Italy: The Peninsula's History and Cinematic Past Reading: Duggan, "Introduction," pp. 1-8. Film: *My Voyage to Italy*, dir. Martin Scorsese, 2001. 246 minutes.

**Mon. Sept. 12 and Wed. Sept. 14:** Italy in its Classical Past. Reading: Duggan, "The Geographical Determinants of Disunity," chap. 1, pp. 9-30. Film: *Cabiria*, dir. Pastrone, 1914, approx. 120 minutes.

**Mon. Sept. 19 and Wed. September 21:** The Middle Ages. Reading: Duggan, "Disunity and Conflict: From the Romans to the Renaissance," chapter 2, pp. 31-46. And T.J. Corrigan "A short guide to writing about Film" (Chapter 4). Film: *Il Decameron*, dir. Pasolini, 1971. 112 minutes.

**Mon. Sept. 26 and Wed. Sept. 28:** The Renaissance 1. Reading: Duggan, "Stagnation and Reform," Chapter 3, pp.46-65. Marcia Landy, "Introduction" to *The Historical Film, History and Memory in Media*, pp.1-24. Film: *The Age of Medici* (Part I), dir. Rossellini, 1973.

**Mon. October 3 and Wed. October 5:** The Renaissance 2. Film: *The Age of Medici* (ALL OF IT), dir. Rossellini, 1973. See also Canvas Posting and be ready for a possible quiz!

**Mon. Oct. 10- and Wed. Oct. 12:** The Baroque and the Scientific Revolution. Reading: Duggan, "Social and Economic Development in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries", pp. 65-75. AND "The 18<sup>th</sup> Century: The Era of Enlightenment Reforms", pp. 75-92. Film: *Galileo*, dir. Cavani, 1968. 91 minutes. NOTE: Only One film for the Reading Notes due October 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Mon Oct. 17 and Wed. Oct. 19:** The Risorgimento. Reading: Duggan, pp. 92-117. Film: *1860: I Mille di Garibaldi*, dir. Blasetti, 1934, 80 minutes.

**Mon. Oct. 24 and Wed. Oct. 26:** The Unification. Reading: Duggan, “Italy United”, pp. 118-142. Film: *Il Gattopardo/ The Leopard*, dir. Visconti, 1963. 165 minutes.

**Mon. Oct. 31 and Wed. November 2<sup>nd</sup>:** The Turn of the Century. Reading: Duggan, “The Liberal State and the Social Question,” chap. 6, pp. 144-172. Film *L'albero degli zoccoli / The Tree of the Wooden Clogs*, Dir. Ermanno Olmi, 1978.

**Mon. Nov. 7 and Wed. Nov. 9:** The Fascist Empire in Lybia, 1929-1931. Reading: Duggan, “Giolitti, the First World War and the Rise of Fascism,” chap. 7, pp. 173-196. Film: *Nuovomondo/Golden Door*, dir. Emanuele Crialese, 2007 (118 minutes).

**Mon. Nov. 14 and Wed. Nov. 16:** Fascism and WW II. Reading: Duggan, pp. 197-216. Film: *Paisà/ Paisan*, dir. Rossellini, 1946, 120 minutes. Additional Reading: Millicent Marcus, National Identity by Means of Montage in Roberto Rossellini's *Paisan*, ” in *After Fellini: National Cinemain the Postmodern Age*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, pp. 15-38.

**Mon. Nov. 21 (No class 23!) and Mon. November 28:** Fascist Laws. Reading: Duggan 216-241. Film: *Una giornata particolare/ A Special Day*, dir. Ettore Scola, 1977 (107 minutes). Additional Reading: “Memory on the Margins: Reflections on Italy (1938-1943) in Scola's *Una giornata particolare* & Ozpetek's *La finestra di fronte*,” Ch. 22 in New Approaches to Teaching Italian Language and Culture. Case Studies from an International Perspective, Emanuele Occhipinti ed. Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2008, pp. 519-530.

**Wed. Nov. 30- and Mon. Dec. 5:** Terrorism and “The Strategy of Tension”. Reading: Duggan, pp. 241-288. Film: *Romanzo di una strage/ Piazza Fontana: The Italian Conspiracy*, dir. Giordana, 2012. 129 minutes.

**Wed. Dec 7 and Mon. Dec 12** Italy Today

**Remember: FINAL PAPER DUE by FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9th (morning, till 12).**

Reading: Duggan 288-306. Film: *Io sono Li/ Shun Li and the Poet*, dir. Segre, 2011. 100 minutes.

### ***Vittorini Awards***

*In the spring of 1979, the Vittorini Fund was established in honor of the memory of Professor Domenico Vittorini, a long-time member of the Italian Faculty, to offer prizes for outstanding achievement in Italian course work at the University of Pennsylvania. The Vittorini Fund is administered by the America-Italy Society of Philadelphia, whose representative gives out the awards at an annual ceremony held at the end of the spring semester. Marked by the participation of the consul General of Italy in Philadelphia, the Vittorini reception is an occasion for all Italian students and faculty at Penn as well as members of the America-Italy Society, to celebrate academic excellence and reaffirm the warm relationship between the*

University and a major Italian-American cultural organization of the community. At the ceremony a cash prize is awarded for excellence in the first year of the study of Italian, in the second year, at the 200 level and for the best essay written in an Italian Literature or Culture course at the 300 level. The Vittorini Fund may also make available a scholarship for an outstanding major in Italian or Italian Studies who plans to undertake further study in Italy.

---

### **Further Recommended Films you might want to see for your final paper:**

#### Middle Ages and Renaissance

*Francesco giullare di Dio/ The Flowers of Saint Francis*, by Rossellini, 1950. *Fratello sole, sorella luna/ Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (Life of Saint Francis), Zeffirelli, 1972 *Il mestiere delle armi*, dir. Olmi, 2003. *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (on Michelangelo), by Reed, 1965. *Vita di Leonardo da Vinci*, by Castellani, 1971.

#### Risorgimento

*Senso*, by Visconti, 1954 *I Vicerè*, by Faenza, 2007 *Noi credevamo* by Martone, 2010

#### First World War, Fascism and World War II

*La grande guerra/ The Great War* by Monicelli, 1954 *Uomini contro / Many Wars Ago*, by Rosi, 1970 *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli / Christ Stopped at Eboli*, by Rosi, 1979 *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini / The garden of the Finzi-Contini*, by De Sica, 1970 *Il conformista / The Conformist* by Bertolucci, 1970 *Porte Aperte / Open Doors* by Amelio, 1990, *La ciociara/ Two Women* by De Sica, 1960 *Il Generale della Rovere, Mediterraneo*, by Salvatores, 1991 *La vita è bella / Life is Beautiful*, by Benigni, 1997 *L'uomo che verrà / The Man who will come* by Diritti, 2009.

#### Post-war period and contemporary Italy

*Umberto D* by De Sica, 1952 *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/ Rocco and His Brothers* by Visconti, 1960 *Mani sulla città/ Hands over the City* by Rosi, 1963 *Il sorpasso / The easy life* by Risi, 1962 *Comizi d'amore / Love meetings* by Pasolini, 1964 *I pugni in tasca / Fists in the pockets* by Bellocchio, 1965 *I Cannibali / The cannibals* by Cavani, 1970 *Padre Padrone / My Father, My Master* by Taviani Brothers, 1977 *Buongiorno notte / Goodmorning night* by Bellocchio, 2003 *La sconosciuta / The unknown woman* by Tornatore, 2006 *Gomorra / Gomorrah* by Garrone, 2008 *Il divo* by Sorrentino, 2008.