

**History on Screen: How Movies Tell the Story of Italy**  
**ITAL 1900-401 - CIMS 1900;**  
**Spring, 2023**  
**Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-5 Fisher Bennet 138**

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**Prof. Dr. Carla LOCATELLI**

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Office: Williams Hall 548.

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

Grader: Deion Dresser (WILL536) [ddresser@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:ddresser@sas.upenn.edu)

Grader Office hours: TBD (in-person), by appointment (virtually)

**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, suggested study questions and reading material posted on Canvas) so that they can participate insightfully 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 unless otherwise stated.

Questions and comments on BOTH history and film will be collected every other Tuesday (or every other Thursday, 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:

1) how much they are relevant to the topic at stake, 2) 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 presentation of the material by the teacher and a discussion of assigned readings and films, led by the teacher.

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 during the semester (even if all changes will also be announced in class).**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**MASKS ARE REQUIRED IN THIS CLASS AT ALL TIMES.**

**CLASS DEMEANOR- No electronic device is allowed in class unless strictly for class use.**

Use of electronic devices not pertinent to class use will negatively impact class evaluation.

**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.

At any rate, after any absence you must submit to the Grader (Deion Dresser) written answers to at least half the Study Questions posted by the teacher for that class.

### **I) BI-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 before each class**. They will guide your reading and facilitate your critical viewing of films.

**Keep ALL your corrected bi-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 Bi-Weekly Assignments:**

In the Humanities there is no percentage curve, but these are the SCIENTIFIC criteria based on how your submissions are evaluated:

1) 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.). 2) 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 99-96**  
**A- 95-93**
- 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+ 92-89**  
**B 88-85**  
**B- 84-80**
- 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 evidence relating the film, to specific historical events or ideas, that response will be certainly evaluated as a “minus”.  
**C+ 79-76**  
**C 75-78**  
**C- 77-70**

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	Tuesday, Jan. 24 <sup>th</sup>	<i>My Voyage to Italy</i>
5	Tuesday, Feb. 7 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Cabiria / Decameron</i>
7	Tuesday, Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Age of Medici pt. 1 / Age of Medici pt. 2 (3 episodes)</i>
	Tuesday, Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup> / Thursday, Feb. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Quiz on Renaissance (posted Tuesday, due Thursday)
8	Tuesday, Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Galileo</i>
10	Tuesday, Mar. 14 <sup>th</sup>	<i>1860. I Mille/Il Gattopardo</i>
12	Tuesday, Mar. 28 <sup>th</sup>	<i>L'albero degli zoccoli/Nuovomondo</i>
14	Tuesday, Apr. 11 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Paisan/A special Day</i>
16	Tuesday Apr. 25 <sup>th</sup>	(Last Class) <i>Piazza Fontana: The Italian Conspiracy</i>
	Friday, April 28 <sup>th</sup> (12pm noon)	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE - HARD COPY DELIVERED TO WILLIAMS, LETTER BOX PROF. LOCATELLI</b>

**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 based on:

- . 1) **the collection result of all your bi-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. Make sure the web sources you use are scientifically solid. 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 Quiz and Bi-Weekly comments: 50%

Final Paper: 50% (**due by Friday April 28<sup>th</sup>, 12noon**).

### **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 read carefully, and referred to during class discussion.
- 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. Each week you will also find study questions to guide your readings and film viewings.



## **TR January 12th First Class - Introduction to the Course**

**T January 17th and TR January 19th.** Our Voyage to Italy: The Peninsula's History and Cinematic Past. Reading: Duggan, "Introduction" and "The Geographical Determinants of Disunity," pp. 1-30. Film: *My Voyage to Italy*, dir. Martin Scorsese, 2001. 246 minutes.

**T January 24 and TR 26th** Italy in its Classical Past, Film: *Cabiria*, dir. Pastrone, 1914, approx. 120 minutes. Reading: T.J. Corrigan "A short guide to writing about Film" (Chapter 4).

**T January 31 and TR February 2:** The Middle Ages. Reading: Duggan, "Disunity and Conflict: From the Romans to the Renaissance," chapter 2, pp. 31-46. And Film: *Il Decameron*, dir. Pasolini, 1971. 112 minutes.

**T February 7th and TR February 9th :** The Renaissance. Reading: Duggan, "Renaissance Italy 1300-1494", pp.46-59 Film: *The Age of Medici* (ALL OF IT), dir. Rossellini, 1973. There will be a quiz posted on this film and it is required.

**T February 14th and TR February 16th:** The Baroque and the Scientific Revolution. Reading: Duggan "Stagnation and Reform 1494-1789," Chapter 3, "Social and Economic Development in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries", pp. 65-75. Film: *Galileo*, dir. Cavani, 1968. 91 minutes.

**T February 21st- and TR February 23rd:** The 18<sup>th</sup> Century: The Era of Enlightenment Reforms", pp. 75-92 and The Risorgimento. Readings: Duggan, pp. 92-117 and Marcia Landy, "Introduction" to The Historical Film, History and Memory in Media, pp.1-24. Film: *1860: I Mille di Garibaldi*, dir. Blasetti, 1934, 80 minutes.

**T February 28th and TR March 2nd:** The Unification. Reading: Duggan, "Italy United", pp. 118-142. Film: *Il Gattopardo/ The Leopard*, dir. Visconti, 1963. 165 minutes.

## **T March 7th and TR March 9th: SPRING BREAK**

**T March 14th and TR March 16th:** 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.

**T March 21st and TR March 23rd:** The First World War and 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).

**T March 28th and TR March 30th :** Fascism and WW II. Reading: Duggan, pp. 197-216. 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.



**T April 4th and TR April 6th:** Fascist Laws. Reading: Duggan 216-241. 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 Cinema in the Postmodern Age*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, pp. 15-38.

**T April 11th and TR April 13th:** 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.

**T April 18th and TR April 20th:** Italy Today. Reading: Duggan 288-306. Additional Reading David Gilmour The Pursuit of Italy, Chapter 13th (file will be posted on Canvas). Film: *Io sono Li/ Shun Li and the Poet*".

### **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.