

# Rome in Cinema: Representations of The Eternal City in Italian and American Cinemas



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**Course Description:** In this course we will look at the different ways in which Rome's cityscape has been represented in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Italian and American cinemas, intersecting with historical events such as the rise of Italian fascism, WWII, the 1960s economic boom, as well as the political impact of the current migratory crisis in the Mediterranean Sea. Why is Rome often referred to as "The Eternal City"? In what ways has the myth of Rome's eternity been politically exploited throughout Italy's modern history? Students will acquire technical vocabulary to improve their visual interpretation skills, as well as knowledge of some of the most impactful historical and cultural events of last century. Requirements will include readings in cultural and film history, an analytical essay, a research paper, weekly blog posts, and active participation in class discussion. Films may include *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953), *La Dolce Vita* (Federico Fellini, 1960), *Accattone* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1961), *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Anthony Minghella, 1999), *The Great Beauty* (Paolo Sorrentino, 2013).

## Course Requirements:

- 1) **Participation (20% of grade).** Participation is a substantial part of your grade and is **extremely** important to your success. You are required keep track of our Canvas site and review the week's course material. Watch the film, read the assigned material, and

submit the weekly assignments in a timely fashion (reading and film responses). I'd recommend you to read the assigned readings and watch the weekly movie before the beginning of the next week.

- 2) **Reading Responses (20% of grade).** Upload on Canvas a reading response for each essay marked with an \* on the syllabus. The reading response sheet – valid for all reading responses – can be found on Canvas > Modules > Week 1. The aim of this assignment is to help you coming to class with a clearer idea of the meaning of the assigned readings. You are also expected to contribute to class discussion with your questions about the readings.
- 3) **Blog Posts (20% of final grade).** Three times 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. In your post you are not only expected to produce some original insights about the assigned movie, but also to connect your reading of the movie to the readings of the week. If you fail to connect the blog post to the readings of the week your grade is going to be lowered by 1/2 letter grade. 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 (105-word) **Comment** to be published on the blog. This is going to be the foundation of our class discussion.
- 4) **Midterm Paper (20% of final grade).** In this paper, you will work through an aspect of the first half of the 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.
- 5) **Final Exam (20% of final grade).** Exam is composed of True and False statements, short questions, film analysis and essay questions. The exam questions can include the history of the mafia, the films analyzed, as well as all the readings discussed throughout the semester. It's essential that you keep up with the readings and watch the films throughout the semester.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Grade %</u>
Participation & Attendance	throughout semester	20%
Reading Responses	throughout semester	20%
Blog Posts	Weekly	20%
Midterm Paper	TBD	20%
Final Exam	TBD	20%

### **Grading:**

We will base your grades on your class participation, the quality of your writing, and your responses to the work of others, both written and oral. Assignment guidelines and grading criteria will be available on Canvas. Please note that grades cannot be changed without a rewrite (allowed only for grades of C or lower unless otherwise stated). Final grades will be determined on the basis of the rubric below. I will be using the plus/minus system for final grades. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999. A+ is only

given for truly outstanding, exceptional work.

A+ = 99-100	A = 94-98	A- = 90-93	B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79	C = 74-76	C- = 70-73	D+ = 67-69	D = 64-66	D- = 60-63

### **Late Submission of Work Policy**

All course work (reading responses, blog posts, midterm paper, final exam) must be submitted on due time and date, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor, and a new date is established. Late work will be penalized 1/3 letter grade for every day that it is late. Unless agreed upon beforehand, if you miss a presentation, you cannot reschedule it. Please utilize office hours if you are struggling with this course, particular assignments or simply want to talk about a paper topic.

**Plagiarism results in failure for the course and action by the university; if you are unclear about what it is please consult Chapter 14 of *TFE* and the SAS policy on plagiarism.**

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Week 1 – The Eternal City**

Read:

- Stephanie Malia Hom, “Consuming the View: Tourism, Rome and the Topos of the Eternal City”
- Alberto Zambenedetti, “Roman Holidays: Rome as an International Destination On-Screen”
- Tim Corrigan and Patricia White, “Elements of the Mise-en-scene”

Watch:

- *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953)

#### **Week 2 – Rise and Fall of Fascism**

Read:

- John Agnew, “Ghosts of Rome: The Haunting of Fascist Efforts at Remaking Rome as Italy’s Capital City”

Watch:

- *The Conformist* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970)

#### **Week 3 – Fascism and Its Others**

Read:

- Brian Tholl, “Italy Must Be Defended. Surveillance and Biopolitics in *Una giornata particolare*”

- Dana Renga, “Screening *Confino*: Male Melodrama and Exile Cinema”
- Sandra Ponzenesi, “Queering European Sexualities Through Italy’s Fascist Past”

Watch:

- *A Special Day* (Ettore Scola, 1977)

## **Week 5 – World War II**

Read:

- Tim Corrigan and Patricia White, “Elements of Editing”
- David Forgacs, “Space, Rhetoric, and the Divided City in *Rome, Open City*”

Watch:

- *Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945)

## **Week 6 – The Age of Neorealism**

Read:

- Peter Bondanella, “Italian Neorealism. The Postwar Renaissance of Italian Cinema”
- Helio San Miguel, “Neo-realist Rome: The Gritty Side of the Eternal City”

Watch:

- *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)

## **Week 7 – Gender in the City**

- John David Rhodes, “Watching Italians Turn Around: Gender, Looking, and Roman/Cinematic Modernity”
- Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

Watch: *Bellissima* (Luchino Visconti, 1953)

## **Week 8: Midterm Exam**

## **Week 9 – Peripheral Margins**

Read:

- John David Rhodes, “A Short History of the Roman Periphery”
- John David Rhodes, “Scandalous Desecration: *Accattone* against the Neorealist City”

Watch:

- *Accattone* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1961)

## **Week 10: Boom and Ennui**

Read:

- Eugenia Paulicelli, “Reframing History: Federico Fellini’s Rome, Fashion and Costume”
- Manuela Mariani and Patrick Barron, “Cinematic Space in Rome’s Disabitato: Between Metropolis and Terrain Vague in the Films of Fellini, Antonioni, and Pasolini”

Watch:

- *La dolce vita* (Federico Fellini, 1960)

### **Week 11: American Fantasies**

Read:

- Jacqui Miller, “An American in Europe: US Colonialism in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*”
- Tim Corrigan and Patricia White, “Elements of Sound”

Watch:

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (Anthony Minghella, 1999)

### **Week 12: 1970s Terrorism**

Read:

- Alan O’Leary, “Italian Terrorisms/Italian Film”
- Allison Cooper, “Romanzo criminale: Roma Caput Violandi”

Watch:

- *Romanzo criminale* (Michele Placido, 2004)

### **Week 13: Queer Rome**

Read:

- Derek Duncan, “Stairway to Heaven: Ferzan Özpetek and the Revision of Italy”
- Millicent Marcus, “The Present through the Eyes of the Past: Ferzan Ozpetek’s *La finestra di fronte*”

Watch:

- *Facing Windows* (Ferzan Özpetek, 2004)

### **Week 14: Postmodern Rome**

Read:

- Dom Holdway and Filippo Trentin, “Rome, Postmodern Narratives of a Cityscape”

Watch: *Roma* (1972, F

## **Week 15: Writing Workshop**