

**Italian Films, Italian Histories**  
**Oklahoma Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program**  
**February 22-26, 2012**

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### **Description**

This course explores the relationship of Italian history and Italian film from Unification to the present day. What are the possibilities and limitations of feature films as a medium for the representation of history? How has cinema functioned with respect to canonical national narratives and dominant systems of power in Italy? Put simply, what happens when history becomes cinema and when the cinema takes on history?

Each session will consist of a lecture and an in-class screening, with discussions and student presentations scheduled throughout the day. Please note that seeing the films together is an integral part of the course and not occasions to text, tweet, FB, or sleep. No knowledge of Italian is required for this course; all readings and lectures will be in English, and all films shown in class will have English sub-titles.

[Course readings are contained in a course packet which can also be accessed on Desire2Learn. Full citations for works are given in the bibliography]

### **Course Requirements**

Prepared attendance is crucial to the success of the course, and you should come to class each day ready to analyze the material, pose questions, try out new ideas, and listen to and challenge the ideas of your classmates and teachers. The grades "S" and "U" (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) will be used for this seminar. An "S" is the equivalent of at least a B (not a C). Your grade in the class will be based on your preparation for the class, your participation in the discussions (both quality and quantity), your written work both before and after the class meetings, and your participation in all class activities. Your final paper, 8-10 pp. will be due on March 12. The paper can discuss one or more of the films we see during the week or your individual choice film. OSLEP classes are kept small in order to encourage discussion. Your contribution is essential to the success of the seminar.

Students taking the seminar for graduate credit will be required to do additional research and to write an analytical paper approximately 30-40% longer than that

required for undergraduates. How much additional reading and the exact length of the paper will be determined by the faculty resource person and the student.

**Pre-Seminar Assignment (we will refer to these readings throughout the course):**

**Read:** Rosenstone, "Introduction"  
Sorkin, "How to Look at an Historical Film"

**Watch:** An Italian film of your choosing. You will present this film in the course on 2/25. Films are accessible on the MLLL Language Lab website. To access the site go to <http://mllab.ou.edu/labinfo/?info=about> Put your user name and password in the box at the top left and click login. Non-OU students will receive log-in instructions that work for both this and Desire2Learn. OU students use your Sooner ID and password. Then either choose video player or video catalog from the menu bar at the top. Choose Italian in the drop down language menu and select a film.

**Write:** A 2-3 page response essay about the film, and discuss how it might reflect any insights from the Rosenstone & Sorkin readings. Some questions to consider (these are suggested thinking points and do not all need to be answered in your response): In what ways is the film a 'document of social history'? What was the historical context in which this film was made? Whose ideas are being expressed through the film and for whom is it intended? In your opinion, how might your own personal histories affect your viewing of the film? Last, how might all of these "histories" interact in your analysis of film?

*The essay is due at the beginning of class on February 22.* Please email Prof. Hom (smh@ou.edu) if you have questions about it or anything else before the seminar begins.

**Schedule of Meetings and Readings**

**Pre-Seminar Assignment (we will refer to these readings throughout the week):**

Rosenstone, "Introduction"  
Sorkin, "How to Look at an 'Historical Film'  
And watch an Italian film which you will present on Feb 25.

**Wed. Feb 22**

- 8:30-11:30 Introduction**  
Clark, 1-10  
Film: *La famiglia/The Family* (Scola, 1987)
- 11:30-1:00 Lunch**
- 1-2:30 Discussions and presentations on film and readings**
- 2:30-3:00 Break**
- 3:00-6:00 Unification/Sites and Sounds of Ideology**  
Duggan 117-142  
\*Cannon, "Blasetti's 1860 and the Construction of an Italian National Identity"  
Film: *1860* (Blasetti, 1933)

**Thurs. Feb 23**

- 8:30-11:30 The Liberal Nation and its Enemies/Historical Recreations**  
Clark, 48-55, 69-78, 108-112  
Review Sorlin  
Film: *I compagni/The Organizer* (Monicelli, 1963)
- 11:30-1:00 Lunch**
- 1-2:30 Discussions and presentations of film and readings.**
- 2:30-3:00 Break**
- 3:00-6:00 Fascism /Staging Trauma**  
Clark, 230-36, 242-247, 251-262  
Benadusi, "Private Life and Public Morals," 173-181, 186-190  
Marcus, 285-312  
Film: *The Conformist* (Bertolucci, 1970)

**Fri. Feb 24**

- 8:30-11:30 World War Two/Realisms in Transition**  
Clark, 280-289, 302-307, 310-316  
Rossellini, "A Few Words about Neo-Realism"  
Marcus, 33-53  
Film: *Roma citta aperta/Rome Open City* (Rossellini, 1945)
- 11:30-1:00 Lunch**
- 1-2:30 Discussions and presentations of film and readings**
- 2:30-3:00 Break**
- 3:00-6:00 Reconstruction/Film as an Innocent Eye?**  
Duggan 244-255

Marcus, 54-75

De Sica, "Why *Ladri di biciclette*?"

Film: *Ladri di biciclette/The Bicycle Thieves* (De Sica, 1946)

### **Sat. Feb 25**

#### **8:30-11:30 Revolution and its Limitations/ Gender and the Filmic Gaze**

Clark, 374-390

Lupo, "The Mafia,"

Film: *Mimi metallurgico/The Seduction of Mimi* (Wertmuller, 1974)

#### **11:30-1:00 Lunch**

#### **1-2:30 Presentations on individual choice films**

#### **2:30-3:00 Break**

#### **3:00-6:00 Media Politics and Postmodernity/History as Clip**

Ginsborg, *Berlusconi*, 32-48

Jaehne, "The Icicle Thief,"

Film: *Ladri di saponette/The Icicle Thief* (Nichetti, 1988)

### **Final Paper**

Your paper of 8-10 pp. which will be due on March 12<sup>th</sup> in the Desire2Learn drop box. The paper can discuss one or more of the films we see during the week or your individual choice film.

### **Bibliography**

Benadusi, Lorenzo. "Private Life and Public Morals," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* (Vol. 5, No. 2, Autumn 2004), pp. 171-204 (we read 173-181, 186-190).

Cannon, Jo Ann. "Blasetti's 1860 and the Construction of an Italian National Identity" *Italian Culture* 18.1 (2000): 141-54.

Clark, Martin. *Modern Italy, 1871 to the Present* (London, 2008).

De Sica, Vittorio. "Why *Ladri di biciclette*?" in *Springtime in Italy. A Reader on Neo-Realism*, ed. David Overbey (New York, 1979), pp.87-88

Duggan, Christopher. *A Concise History of Italy* (Cambridge, 1994).

----- . "Introduction" in *Italy in the Cold War*, eds. Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff (Washington D.C., 1995).

Ginsborg, Paul. *Berlusconi. Television, Power, and Patrimony* (London, 2004),

Jaehne, Karen. "The Icicle Thief," *Film Quarterly* (Spring 1990): 34-38

Lupo, Salvatore. "The Mafia," in *Italy since 1945*, ed. Patrick McCarthy (Oxford, 2000) pp. 153-170

Marcus, Millicent. *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Austin, 1986).

Rosenstone, Robert. "Introduction" to *Revisioning History*, ed. Rosenstone (Princeton, 1994).

- Rossellini, Roberto. "A Few Words about Neo-Realism" in *Springtime in Italy*, ed. David Overbey, pp.89-91, 93-98
- Sorlin, Pierre. "How to Look at an 'Historical Film'," in Sorlin, *The film in history* (London, 1980).