



FLOR HIST 3326 A Cultural History of Organized Crime: Italian vs. American Mafia

CAPA FLORENCE PROGRAM

Course Description

The word 'mafia' is one of the most common terms known worldwide, and the aim of this course is to explain the reasons why this socio-criminal phenomenon continues to self-reproduce after more than a century. The course will analyze the history of the mafia from three main perspectives: historical, political, cultural and sociological, and so it will be a specific branch of cultural studies. Then the course will consist of a comparative study between the two societies where the mafia took roots: Italy and USA, what are the differences between the two? What is real, what is a false myth? How much the American mafia differs from the Italian mafia(s)? Deconstructing the mafia "myth" will be achieved through the entire course with a real explanation of what this special type of organized crime implies in terms of real life.

The first part of the course will focus on the conditions which allowed the birth of the mafia(s) before the Unification of Italy (1861), and in those same years, thanks to the first immigration flows, how it could also take roots in the United States. This 'parallel government', how the Mafia is often referred to, is the result of a complex context and, despite different conditions, it grew both in a rural and urban background.

Although the mafia is a secret society, through the years it has been possible to collect an incredible amount of precious material and original contributions which generated an accurate knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon. The term 'mafia' can be considered as a sort of container with different conjugations: Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta and Camorra are the names given to the major crime syndicates which originated in southern Italy and are now present (almost) all over the world. This course will adopt several approaches in order to render a full frame of this phenomenon in a realistic academic analysis.

Course Aims

The main aim of the course is to provide students with the ability of recognizing the mafia as a complex phenomenon, and to distinguish it from any other misuse of the term. In order to be able to achieve this goal, students will be given a general overview of the history of Italy from the XIX century to nowadays, plus several keys of comparison in terms of sociology and relations between the mafia and the 'rest of the world'. What's the link between the mafia and economy? What's the relation between the mafia and the Church? How does it interact with women? Does the political system take benefits from mafia activity? All these questions will be analyzed and developed in order to render a full realistic portrait of the mafia organization. Furthermore, students will gain knowledge of how the mafia persisted for over a century from its origin to the recent times by transforming itself according to the evolution of modern and contemporary society.

The second goal is the so-called "clash of the stereotypes": students will have to focus on the most common ideas on the Mafia, and by the end of the course they will be able to analyze and to demonstrate whether they are real or fake. In this part it will become very important to analyze how both Hollywood and Cinecittà studios portrayed the mafia from Neorealism to the most recent blockbusters.

Last but not least, students will be aware of the history of the Mafia in the USA, how it interacted with the Italian mafia, how it affects the civil society, what's its impact on democratic dynamics, and how it differs from the Italian mafia.

Specific focuses will regard:

1. *Mafia VS Women - Mafia VS Religion - Mafia VS Trade Unions*
2. *Money laundering, corruption, white-collars activity and the linkage between the economy and illicit enterprises.*
3. *Cultural codes of the mafia: symbolism, codes, aspects of any mafia.*
4. *Ethnic enclaves in the USA: the struggle for power between Jews, Irish and Italians.*
5. *26 cities of mafia: the reasons of mafia settling in the USA. The birth of LAS VEGAS*
6. *Cinema: Hollywood mystification: from Public Enemy to Boardwalk Empire through The Godfather, Goodfellas and The Sopranos VS the true portrait by Italian cinema.*
7. *MAFIA CAPITALE: a focus on the specific shape of organized crime in Rome.*

8. *Compared studies: mafia vs narcos, mafia vs organized crime.*

9. *Big names in the mafia: John Gotti, Lucky Luciano and Al Capone. the true story of these mafia "icons".*

10. *A deep analysis of the 3 main mafias of Italy (Sicily, Campania, Calabria) and their national / international projections.*

Requirements and Prerequisites

A general knowledge about this wide topic is an extra plus, but the course wants to analyze deeply each single aspect by using simple methods of social analysis in order to set up an easy understanding of a complex, evolving socio-criminal phenomenon. At the end of this course, students will have achieved a deep understanding of the mafia and its real characteristics.

Learning Outcomes

- A. Global awareness: the main purpose of this course is to make students able to distinguish clearly between the interpretation of the mafia emerging from fiction books and movies, and the real representation of this socio-criminal phenomenon.
- B. Comparative studies: students will be able to distinguish between the different developing of the mafia according to space/time categories through the classic method of comparison: USA and Italy, countryside and urban environments, modern and contemporary society.
- C. Social dynamics: students will be able to analyze some characteristics typical of the Italian and American societies in order to produce a correct interpretation of both these countries and of the mafia itself.
- D. Historical and sociological study of modern and contemporary Italy: students will be able to describe the history of Italy through the study of illegal powers such as the mafia and others.
- E. Research: students will acquire the ability to do a mini research on selected topics to develop both a deeper comprehension of certain dynamics and of a research method.
- F. Exposing ability: through groups presentations, students will be able to expose their conclusions and to manage eventual observations in public.

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

Class methodology

The professor will use a *powerpoint* presentation as a visible path for the students, who will be committed to take notes. The class will also consist of participations by the students, who will have to endorse their statements to the class with eventual corrections and incentives. A main motive will be the display of videoclips and original documentaries in order to give students a deeper understanding of the real mafia dynamics. Also, students will be having first hand experiences of the anti-mafia presence in Florence, by meeting representatives of this movement and police officers as guest speakers. According to their duties, members of Police forces will come to tell us their experiences in fighting crime, organized crime and mafia. Since they are active members, eventual cancellations of the conference will not equal to the cancellation of the class: another topic will be examined in substitution.

Mid-Term & Final Exams

- The **mid-term exam** consists of several questions with both multiple-choice and open answers about the first half of the course. Questions are focused on "classes + readings" and eventual extra-material given by the professor prior to the examination.
- The **final exam** consists of several questions with both multiple-choice and open answers about the second half of the course. Questions are focused on "classes + readings" and eventual extra-material given by the professor prior to the examination.
- The **class participation** considers the active involvement of students in the themes discussed in class which is the result of personal interpretation and own understanding of the readings assigned and general background.
- The **movies quizzes** regard the movies which students will watch in class with the professor explaining the dynamics which emerge from these movies. On the following lesson, there will be a quiz N. **DISCLAIMER:** these movies are about the mafia and so do contain explicit content.

Assessment/Grading Policy

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|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • <u>Class participation</u> | 20% |
| • <u>Mid-term Exam</u> | 30% |
| • <u>Quizzes</u> | 20% |
| • <u>Final Exam</u> | 30% |
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Overall grade	100%
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Final Grade Breakdown

TASK	PERCENTAGE	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)
Active class participation	20%	All
Mid-term exam	30%	All
Quizzes	20%	All
Final Exam:	30%	All

DESCRIPTOR	ALPHA	NUMERIC	GPA	REQUIREMENT/EXPECTATION
Outstanding (High Distinction)	A	93+	4.0	Maximum grade: In addition to description for grade "A-", the student shows detailed understanding of materials about which he or she can show independent analytical ability. This means the ability to question an issue from different perspectives and evaluate responses in an objective manner.
Excellent (Distinction)	A-	90 - 92	3.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook/class hand-outs/class notes, and the work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for evaluation.
Very good (High Credit)	B+	87 - 89	3.3	Shows evidence of a capacity to generalise from the taught content, or the material in literature, or from class lectures in an informed manner. Also, the work demonstrates a capacity to integrate personal reflection into the discussion and an appreciation of a range of different perspectives.
Good (Credit)	B	83 - 86	3.0	The work is well organised and contains coherent or logical argumentation and presentation.
Good (Credit)	B-	80 - 82	2.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook and/or notes, and, there is evidence of additional reading.
Average (Good Pass)	C+	77-79	2.3	The work demonstrates a capacity to integrate research into the discussion and a critical appreciation of a range of theoretical perspectives. Also, the work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question and its theoretical implications and demonstrates evidence of additional reading.
Adequate (Pass)	C	73 - 76	2.0	Shows clear understanding and some insight into the material in the textbook and notes, but not beyond. A deficiency in understanding the material may be compensated by evidence of independent thought and effort related to the subject matter.

Below Average (Borderline Pass)	C-	70-72	1.7	Shows some understanding of the material in the text-book and notes. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought related to the subject matter.
Inadequate (Borderline Fail)	D+	67 - 69	1.3	Fails to show a clear understanding or much insight into the material in the textbook and notes
Poor (Fail)	D	60 - 66	0.7 - 1.0	Besides the above for D+, student has not shown interest or engagement in the class work or study.
Poor (Fail)	F	<60	0	Shows little or no understanding of any of the material
Incomplete	I			Please see CAPA policy in the Faculty Handbook.

Course Materials

Due to the Peculiar nature of this class, students will have to study selections from the following chapters, plus copies handled by the teacher during class. In any case, all the material and power point presentations will be updated on the e-reader at the end of each class. For the first part of the class, which focuses on the two “minor” Italian mafia(s), students will find on the e-reader selections from the following chapters; as for the second part of the class, which instead will be structured on a sort of parallelism between the Sicilian mafia in America and Italy, there will be more specific attention dedicated to articles and copies extracted from different books and internet resources, and will be available after the midterm examination according to the predominant interests which will emerge amongst students during the first weeks of the course.

Contents on Canvas

John Dickie – Mafia brotherhoods:

- 1.1 – How to extract gold from fleas
- 1.2 – Co-managing crime
- 1.3 – The redemption of the camorra
- 2.3 – A sect with a life on its own: the mafia’s rituals discovered
- 2.4 – Double vendetta
- 3.2 – An audience of hoods
- 4.1 – Harsh mountain
- 4.2 – The tree of knowledge
- 4.3 – Darkest Africo
- 5.1 – Bankers and men of honour
- 5.5 – The camorra in straw-yellow gloves
- 5.7 – The strange death of the honoured society
- 6.2 – Campania: buffalo soldiers
- 6.4 – Calabria: what does not kill me, makes me stronger
- 6.7 – Sicily: the slimy octopus
- 6.9 – Liberation

John Dickie - Mafia Republic:

- 1.1 – Sicily: threats, terrorism, murder, arson, kidnapping and mayhem
- 1.4 – Naples: puppets and puppeteers
- 1.5 – Gangsterism
- 2.3 – The president of potato prices (and his widow)
- 3.1 – king concrete
- 3.4 – Mafia diaspora
- 3.7 – Mafiosi on the barricades
- 3.9 – The most holy mother and the first ‘Ndranghetawar
- 3.12 – The transatlantic syndicate
- 3.13 – The professor
- 4.1 – Blood orgy
- 5.1 – Mafia terror

- 5.4 – Walking cadavers
- 5.5 – The capital of the anti-mafia
- 5.7 – ‘U maxi
- 6.2 – The collapse of the old order
- 6.3 – Negotiating by bomb: birth of second republic

Recommended Readings for a deeper knowledge of the topics examined in class

Roberto Saviano - *Gomorra, Italy's other mafia*
 Salvatore Lupo – *History of the mafia*
 Alison Jamieson – *The antimafia: Italy's fight against organized crime*
 Thomas Reppetto – *American mafia*
 Lee Bernstein – *The greatest menace, Organized crime in cold war*
 Alan Block – *East side, West Side: Organizing crime in New York 1930 – 1950*
 C. Alexander Hortis – *The mob and the city*
 Selwyn Raab – *Five families*
 James B. Jacobs – *Mobsters, Unions and the Feds: the mafia and the America Labor Movement*
 Jerry Capeci& Gene Mustain - *Gotti, rise and fall*
 John H. Davis - *Mafia dynasty*
 Tim Newark - *Mafia at war*
 Mike Dash - *The first family*
 William F. Roemer - *War of the godfathers*
 Tim Newark - *Boardwalk gangster, the real story of Lucky Luciano*
 Nelson Johnson - *Boardwalk empire*
 Alexander Hortis - *The mob and the City*
 Gus Russo - *The outfit*

Suggested movies for a better comprehension of the difference between fiction and reality (all downloadable from the PC LAB where students have the opportunity to copy them on their hard drives).

- One hundred steps (Cosa Nostra)
 Suburra (Mafia capitale)
 A quiet life (Camorra)
 Il divo (politics, Cosa Nostra e the otherillegalpowers in the Italian history)
 La trattativa (Cosa Nostra)
 Mafia onlykills in the summer (Cosa Nostra)
 Casino (Cosa Nostra in Las Vegas)
 DonnieBrasco (Cosa Nostra in NYC)
 Goodfellas (Cosa Nostra in NYC)
 Lucky Luciano (Cosa Nostra USA ->Italy)

Weekly Course Schedule

WEEK 1	
Lesson 1	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In–class activity	Introduction to the course – Classification and definition of the mafia(s) - Cosa Nostra 1

WEEK 2	
Lesson 2	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In–class activity	Cosa Nostra 2

WEEK 3	
Lesson 3	

Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Cosa Nostra 3

WEEK 4

Lesson 4	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Cosa Nostra 4

WEEK 5

Lesson 5	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Cosa Nostra 5
Lesson 6	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	In-class review pre midterm exam

WEEK 6

Lesson 7	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 7

NO class - SPRING BREAK	
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WEEK 8

Lesson 8	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	'Ndrangheta 1
Lesson 9	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	'Ndrangheta 2

WEEK 9

NO class (absence of the teacher)	
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WEEK 10	
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Lesson 10	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Camorra1

WEEK 11	
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Lesson 11	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Camorra 2

WEEK 12	
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Lesson 12	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Mafia Capitale (Rome) + Compared mafias

WEEK 13	
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Lesson 13	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	Final considerations + In-class REVIEW pre final exam

WEEK 14	
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Lesson 14	
Meet	
Venue	CAPA
In-class activity	FINAL EXAM

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance

CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Students are also expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Attendance is mandatory and is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and ultimately in a F for the course.

Unexcused absences

The instructor for the course may lower the student's participation grade based on the number of absences. For custom programs, some will follow our absence policy (like when CAPA sponsors visa) and some will not; see academic director for details.

Excused absences

Any student seeking to be excused from class on the ground of a verifiable illness (i.e. doctor's note) or a family emergency, must email the DAA (greverdito@capa.org) in advance of their class. The CAPA staff will then email the relevant Faculty member. Note that calling the CAPA Center (055-2466439) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. If a doctor's note is written to excuse a student from class, the student cannot use that time for personal travel. Please note: excused absences will NOT be granted to accommodate visiting friends or family. Students absent due to extenuating circumstances that have been approved by the Director of Academic Affairs in advance of the missed class, including family emergency or verifiable health-related incapacity, remain responsible for meeting all class requirements. Faculty shall offer such students reasonable assistance in making up missed work (e.g. share handouts).

Class Participation

Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from you, the student, a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class

All devices such as laptops, I-pods, I-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Director of Academic Affairs or the Resident Director at the beginning of Term.

Late Submission

Late submission of papers due, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behavior during Examinations

During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.