FLOR FILM 3316
Contemporary Italian Cinema: Contemporary Italy on the Screen

CAPA FLORENCE PROGRAM

Please note: This syllabus is for the in-country version of this course. It will be modified as appropriate for online learning, including the addition of co-curricular activities including virtual My Global City events. The updated syllabus will be available by June 15. Please contact CAPA with any questions about choosing your courses at 800.793.0334.

Course Description

The objective of this course is to give students the opportunity to better understand contemporary Italian society through the image that some of the most valuable Italian filmmakers of the youngest generation have given of cultural, political and working environment they live in. Through a multidisciplinary approach, this course will explore how contemporary Italian cinema has followed, mirrored, and sometimes even anticipated cultural and social transformations in Italian society. 20 Italian films released between the late '90 to the present will be examined from the point of view of 20th century Italian social, political, and cultural history in order to understand the various social and ethical concerns exemplified by the movies. The films are grouped into the following thematic clusters:

1. <u>Social Changes and contemporary Issues</u>: an examination of how the Italian society has changed in the last few years in all its most important facets.
2. <u>Diversity, immigration and integration</u>: the deepest changes in immigration in the last 30 years in Italy from the Eastern waves in the late '80' to the desperate sea journeys from the southern third world of nowadays, and the *dream* of integration in a society unprepared to multiculturalism. But also *diversity* in all its facets in a society substantially unprepared to the radical changes lately imposed by the unexpected and massive appearance of new social agents on the stage.
3. <u>Organized crime and civil society</u>: the stereotyped and out-of-time idea of organized crime as shown in the past Italian film production and its actual penetration at every social and geographical level.
4. <u>Work Scene and Workplace</u>: varying employment conditions, recent recession and widely spread unemployment, continuing gap between earnings, unbalanced conditions of women in all job sectors, and changed work scenarios have shaped the Italian work scene in a very peculiar way that contemporary Italian cinema has promptly reflected in its production.

Course Aims

- To introduce Italian contemporary culture through the medium of film
- To provide an overview of the history of contemporary Italian cinema through the screening of a series of important Italian films
- To become familiar with the interpretation by different contemporary Italian directors of today's Italy
- To consider the films in relation to the social and ethical concerns exemplified by the movies
- To broaden this understanding with selected cultural, and cinematic readings
- To write critically about the films screened by describing and analyzing them and the assigned readings in clearly focused short essays and a final paper.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students should be able to:
a. analyze films, showing awareness of their relation to the generic context in which they were produced
b. apply and evaluate critical approaches to the material under analysis
c. argue about different cinematic and cultural aspects of a film, supporting the argument with evidence from the text and, where appropriate, with opinions from secondary literature
d. apply critical skills in their analysis of film texts and place Italian contemporary cinema within its cultural context

On top of these learning outcomes directly related to the course subject, through the films watched in class and the presentations given on films watched in groups at home, students are expected to:

e. engage with some of the main issues currently existing in Italian contemporary society.

At this regard one of the key *foci* of the course will be the perception of:
   f. <u>diversity</u>
   g. <u>social dynamics</u>

in different aspects and at different levels of everyday life as depicted in the vast majority of films watched. Students will be asked to reflect on racism and intolerance, homophobia and sexual diversity in Italian society as well as on social policies and economic realities and their impact on individuals and families. As a <u>**key**</u> section of the Final Exam in Week 14 students will be asked to fill a short open answers questionnaire regarding those aspects.

Class methodology

Two-hour class contacts per week in which lectures, class discussions, students' presentations and GNL-connected activities will alternate. Every short lecture will serve to introduce the films taken in consideration for every thematic cluster and to place them in their historical, social and cultural context. Lectures will be followed by a class discussion on the films watched at home in which students will have to mandatorily participate in an active and proactive way. In the group presentations all the issues arising from the films for consideration will be investigated and discussed. Faculty will divide class in groups (depending on enrollment rate) in order to encourage students to work and even possibly watch films in groups. Each of the group will be analyzing — in front of their peers — a film dealing with one of the many issues touched upon in one of the four thematic clusters mentioned above.

There will also be a *Global Networked Learning* collaboration with the students of the Cinema class in the Sydney CAPA centre. *Globally Networked Learning* (GNL) connects students to a global network of learners to gain transnational perspectives on specific topics. This collaborative creative project will be conducted mostly online between the students at the particular centres, who will then report back on their experiences and deliver their work to their home classes. See further on for more details at this regard.

Field Component(s)
CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in the field activity(s) for this course is required. You will <u>**actively**</u> explore the Global City you are currently living in. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) for this course are:
Faculty will accompany students to participate in two evening events at the *Italian Identities Film Festival* organized by the *New York University* and the *Comune di Firenze* at the cinema *Spazio Alfieri* (nearby CAPA center). Dates, times and film titles will be provided as soon as available. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in <u>co-curricular</u> program activities, among which faculty will suggest some of particular interest because of their relevancy to the course contents.

Films to watch at home
Students will have to <u>**mandatorily**</u> watch on their own <u>**ALL**</u> the following films:

- 🎙 *9 films* for in-class discussion
- 🎙 *1 film* to be watched in class for the Mid Term Exam
- 🎙 *8 films* presented in class by the groups created by faculty
- 🎙 *2 films* that will be watched during the out-of-class activities (depending on the Festival Schedule)

Assignments

Students are expected to actively participate in <u>class discussion</u> about the films watched on their own and those presented in class by groups. Each student is expected to:

➡ Give **one** <u>presentation in small groups</u> (size depending on enrollment) about films watched at home. Presentations **MUST**:
   1. be mandatorily in *Office PowerPoint* format or similar open source software
   2. be emailed to faculty the day before due time
➡ write **one** <u>film review</u> that must be about one of the movies watched during the out-of-class activities or about one of the films presented by groups in class (no one can write on a film that she/he has presented on). Your Film Review **MUST**:
   1. be mandatorily written in *Office Word* format or similar open source software
   2. be emailed to faculty by the end of **Week 13** (that is **12th April**)
➡ Watch **ALL** the previously mentioned films
➡ Engage as well and productively as possible in the **Global Networked Learning** collaboration project with the Cinema Sydney course colleagues. For a detailed description of the project see below

Global Networked Learning project (GLN)

Collaborating Teams

Students from Florence and Sydney Cinema Classes will be sorted in groups of two from Florence and one from Sydney by their teachers:
- Dr. Richard James Allen (Sydney)
- Dr. Guido Reverdito (Florence)

Global Networked Learning (GNL) task

Your collaboration with your fellow students in Sydney will be a creative one informed by sharing your study and research of the national cinemas you will be studying. To begin, please note the following THEMES and TROPES.

Key *themes* resonating with each national Cinema:
- gender and sexuality
- the environment
- indigenous and marginalized groups
- the position of women in society
- images of masculinity
- immigration and emigration
- globalization
- national stereotypes
- racism and struggle for integration
- political authority and violence

Key *tropes* of Italian Cinema
- family and the crisis of one the traditional pillars of Italian society
- penetration of organized crime in every day's life
- the struggle of new immigrants to integrate in contemporary Italian society
- we are racist but we are trying to give up
- *diversity* in a traditional society that is changing more and more every day
- once we were terrorist: what is left of that dark era?
- creative ways to cope with the economic crisis and growing unemployment rate
- the heritage of the glorious 'commedia all'italiana' (comedy the Italian way) of the 60s: picturing reality through the strength of the stereotypes is still a way to depict society?

Key *tropes* of Australian Cinema
- the transforming power of the bush
- enclosure, restriction and entrapment
- heroic failure against impossible odds
- learning to accept the status quo rather than attempt to effect change
- larrikin and illegal activity as an attempt to get out from uner from the oppressive inherited mother culture
- quirky characters finally breaking out of constricting familial and social conditions
- a brash style that rewires cultural inheritances in a celebration a postmodern cultural pastiche and parody

In each of the designated groups, students pick at least one of the assigned THEMES (they may choose more), and work together on the following collaborative exercise, using preferably the **Discussion** space, the built-in **Kaltura** application and the **Media Gallery** available in the CANVAS platform. They are requested to:

1. Report on their progress to their faculty and classmates at designated times before final delivery, giving a brief summary of the idea and the development of their collaboration. Take on board feedback and seek assistance as (and if) needed.
2. Write up the collaborative treatment and make also a short video presentation of your idea: 3 to 5 minutes for every group, with each student taking an equal part. If there are more students in a group, the video should be proportionately longer.
3. The video **might** be:
   - 🐭 a summary of the story (but It is respectfully suggested NOT to read the script in a rather dry and boring fashion staring at the built-in camera of a computer!)
   - 🐭 an introduction to the main features of your treatment
   - 🐭 a description of how the themes and tropes work
   - 🐭 a description of how this idea would be realized cinematically
   - 🐭 a trailer (for the most skilled)
   - 🐭 in an ideal world, all of the above - however you may spread your delivery of ideas across the platforms of the video, the treatment and your live presentation without duplication.
4. The films will be screened and discussed in class, introduced by the relevant student, who must also respond to questions from their faculty and class. Videos must be uploaded to Canvas before the due dates for the final presentations. Thereafter they may be re-uploaded to take on board relevant feedback. (Please check that the films are in the correct Canvas Media Gallery and that they play back easily. And please make it clear if you are re-uploading your work for final assessment after in class feedback from your presentation.)

GNL Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, within the GNL project, students should be able to:
- 🐭 Show their understand of the basics of cinematic storytelling and grammar by creating a **three-page film treatment** for a feature film, set on the background of a particular story world, which unfolds a clear dramatic conflict between a protagonist and an antagonist and includes a range of supporting characters whose actions reflect a spectrum of points of view around the central themes being debated.
- 🐭 Show how the THEME (or themes) that they have selected from the assigned list is (are) relevant to the history of both national cinemas involved by weaving into the above 3-page film treatment at least 2 of the listed TROPES of each national cinema tradition (at least 4 altogether).
- 🐭 Show that they are able to create a short video presentation of their idea (with each student taking an equal part) including the following elements:
  - 🖋 A synopsis of the story
  - 🖋 Its relationship with themes and tropes
  - 🖋 How they would imagine their story in practical filmmaking terms
- 🐭 Show through the writing of the *Film Treatments* and the making of the videos that students can synthesize their understanding of both national cinema traditions

Globally Networked Learning Methodology

In-class Introduction to the GNL Project:
- 🐭 Faculty in both locations will to go over the main GNL collaborative task, including discussing the broad ideas about cinematic conventions being brought up in the exercise, as well as what is a *treatment* and what are students expected to produce with their video presentations

Check-ins:
- 🐭 in the CANVAS **Discussion** space (and/or in class) students must briefly report on the status of their GNL collaboration to the teacher (and the class) and take on board any feedback.
- 🐭 These will be the dates of the check-ins:
  - ⓘ **weeks 4, 5 and 10 (Sydney)**
  - ⓘ **weeks 5, 6 and 11 (Florence)**

Presentations of Final Projects:
- ⓘ **weeks 11 and 12 (Sydney)**
- ⓘ **weeks 12 and 13 (Florence)**

Voting for top three projects that will be awarded extra credits:
- ⓘ **week 13 (Sydney)**
- ⓘ **week 14 (Florence)**

Peer to peer and faculty assessment:
- ❧ Students will be asked to evaluate and critique in class their peers' treatments and video presentations.
- ❧ Faculty will issue final grades taking into account students' feedback.

Assessment and Grading of the GNL Component of the course

The whole GNL collaboration will weigh **25%**.
The *Film Treatments* are meant to be group products. Students though will be graded individually by their local faculty for their contribution to the group projects. At such regard will be taken in account the following components:

- ❧ the ability to use the tools of cinematic storytelling in a compelling way.
- ❧ the creative and imaginative synthesis of themes and tropes of two national cinemas.
- ❧ the quality of presentation skills and organisation - on film, in person, in treatment.
- ❧ the quality of the group's GNL collaboration - with the *caveat* that faculty will judge what each particular student was able to achieve given cooperation of particular partners and the working within the challenges a prototype project - so effort is as important for this assignment as achievement

Materials

In the GNL CANVAS space dedicated to the course students will have access to the following useful pages with instructions on:

- ✎ how to create a character
- ✎ how to structure a story according the so called *Three Acts Structure* used by the vast majority of professional screenwriters
- ✎ some practical examples of Film Treatments written by professionals
- ✎ Film Treatments and samples of video presentations from previous Cinema GNL students

Mid Term & Final Exams

<u>The mid-term exam</u> (in Week 6) consists of two parts:
1. <u>Screening</u> of a film strictly related to one of the thematic clusters covered in class up to that point (2 hours approximately)
2. <u>Writing</u> of a film analysis of the movie watched in class

<u>The final exam</u> (in Week 14) consists of three parts:
- A. <u>Questions with short open answers</u> related to all the films watched for in-class discussion
- B. <u>Questions with multiple choice answers</u> on all the films presented in class
- C. <u>Short open answers questionnaire</u> as above mentioned in the paragraph dedicated to the Learning Outcomes

Final Grade Breakdown

TASK	PERCENTAGE	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)
Group discussion/class participation	5%	All
Mid-term exam	20%	All
One group presentation in class on Italian films	10%	All
GNL creative collaborative activity with Sydney	25%	All
Film review	10%	All
Final Exam: ➲ Questions　　25% ➲ Questionnaire　　5%	30%	All

Grading Scheme

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 textbook 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.

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Refer to the *Academic Handbook* for a complete outline of all academic policies. This page contains a summary only.

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.

Technology

All students are expected to use a laptop or other appropriate electronic device with a reliable internet connection and a camera for participation in all classes, group activities, and co-curricular events. All courses use Zoom and Canvas (LMS) technology. If you require an accommodation regarding your use of electronic equipment, please speak with the faculty member or Academic Affairs.

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