



**COURSE:** COM 315 - History of Italian Cinema (3 credits)  
**SEMESTER:** Summer Programme 2011  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Gabriele Simoncini (Ph.D.)  
**CLASS LOCATION:** Y  
**CLASS MEETING TIME:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 4:00pm – 7:30pm  
**OFFICE:** P.ZZA S. ANDREA DELLA VALLE, 6 – ROMA  
**OFFICE HOURS:** After class or by appointment  
**EMAIL:** [g.simoncini@richmondinrome.it](mailto:g.simoncini@richmondinrome.it)

**Course Description**

The history of Italian cinema and Italian society as represented in film. Post-war Italian cinema offers a valuable range of films to study. Italian cinema within the context of world cinema to gain an understanding of realism as an aesthetic convention as well as insight into Italian culture and ways of thinking.

The main focus of the course will be on the most significant phases of Italian cinema in connection with the historical and social context of the country. From the early age of cinema until the contemporary period, the course will explore a changing Italian society as it appears filtered through the cinematic eye. Analyzing the works of De Sica, Rossellini, Fellini, Antonioni, together with the films of less known directors, it will be possible to see the peculiar style of Italian cinema, its identity and its relation with the international industry of entertainment. In addition, the course will introduce interesting aspects of Italian culture, such as the concept of family or the importance of beauty. Comedies and dramas will be the instruments for talking about the role of women or love in the society.

**Course Aims and Objectives**

The course aims at illustrating the evolution of Italian cinema as an entertainment industry in connection with the evolution of the Italian society. Much attention will be dedicated to the most famous directors and their works in order to underline the peculiar style of Italian cinema, how it changed during the years, how and if it is different from other nations. The goal is to cover the period from early cinema to contemporary productions, following not only an evolution in the artistic style but also the development of society and people.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Students will study the historical evolution of Italian cinema, together with its social and cultural aspects. By the end of the course students will be able to analyze films and learn the basic concepts about film studies.

In addition, they will acquire first-hand experience about the country they live in for a period and a critical prospective on Italian society, life style and culture.

Finally, the students will gain a general knowledge of international cinema as compared to the Italian one.

### Threshold criteria:

Be able to identify main Italian cinema periods: cinema under fascism, neorealism, golden age, *commedia all'Italiana*, contemporary cinema

Be able to recognize a movie studied in class and relate it to its historical, political and cultural background.

Compare and critically evaluate Italian cinema and international productions.

Evidence of completed reading and class participation.

## **Teaching Method**

The material is presented in chronological order to enable a better understanding of the context in which Italian cinema evolved and flourished. There will be discussions in class about films, history of cinema and Italian society. As part of their preparation, in addition to mid term and final exams, the students will have to participate in a group project. They will be divided into groups and they will give a collective presentation in front of the rest of the class about one of topic to be chosen from a list given to the students during the first week of the course.

## **Attendance Policy**

Successful progress of the Program depends on the full cooperation of both students and faculty members. Most courses at Richmond are taught by means of lectures and classroom discussion, which means that regular attendance and active participation in classes are essential parts of the educational process.

Attendance is required in all courses. Students who accumulate more than the permitted number of absences, regardless of the reason, will receive an attendance failure (grade of F) unless they withdraw from the course.

The last day to withdraw from the course is **Thursday, July 7<sup>th</sup>**.

Students may not have more than two absences.

Students are expected to be in class on time. Lateness of more than fifteen minutes will be counted as half an absence.

Students are expected to treat with maturity attendance and punctuality regulations for all components of the course

No excuse for absence will exempt a student from the completion of all work in a course. The student assumes the responsibility for requesting assistance from faculty members for making up missed work.

During the first week of classes, if a student misses both sessions of a course that meets twice per week or the one session of a course that meets once per week, the instructor has the right to ask the Registrar to drop the student from the course.

N.B: The instructor reserves the right to modify meeting times, places and the monuments visited when and if necessary for the educational benefit of the class or due to constraints imposed by unforeseen circumstances. Communication about such changes will be effected via group email messages or verbally in class prior to the date of the affected class. It is the individual student's responsibility to stay informed of any such changes.

### **Assessment Method Statement**

Your work on this course will be assessed through a variety of ways. The formative assessment approaches we shall use include general class discussion with respect to course issues, reading, visits, videos, and any other material introduced in the course. In addition, students will work together on a group project and present it to the rest of the class.

The summative assessment includes a written essay, mid-term exam and the final exam as outlined below:

#### Mid-Term Exam

##### **Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>**

One section with 20 multiple choice questions (1 point per each correct answer) and a second section with a choice of essay questions (max 10 points). Preparation based on notes taken in class and on the weekly assignment.

#### Final Exam

##### **Wednesday, July 20<sup>nd</sup>**

One section with 20 multiple choice questions (1 point per each correct answer) and a second section with a choice of essay questions (max 10 points). Preparation based on notes taken in class and on the weekly assignment.

#### Film Project

##### **Due on Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>**

The class will watch part of a film and then the students will be required to write the continuation and the ending of the movie. The project will highlight their ability to use both a cinematic language and their imagination (1,000 words ca.).

#### In Class Discussion

Based on the films watched in class.

### **Class Participation**

Students are expected to actively participate and contribute to class discussion. Participation grade requires more preparation and contribution, and if a student is not in class he/she is not contributing or receiving the inputs of his/her classmates and teacher.

Class participation will count for 10%.

*assessment*

*weight*

*likely date assessed*

In Class Discussion	20%	Wednesday, July 20
Mid-Term Exam	30 %	Monday, July 11 <sup>th</sup>
Final Exam	30 %	Thursday, July 21 <sup>nd</sup>
Film Project	20%	Wednesday, July 20 <sup>th</sup>
Total	100 %	

**Please note that according to academic regulation, make up examinations will only be given in the event of medically documented illness or family death.**

**Students leaving the program early will not be granted credit. Please make travel arrangements in accordance with this pre-arranged course schedule.**

### What do the letter grades mean?

A	The candidate has demonstrated that s/he has mastery over the skills and knowledge set out for the course of study. S/he is proficient in his/her coursework. S/he has the ability to apply meaningfully the skills and knowledge to problems, and related issues, as these relate to a wide range of settings. In addition the candidate has demonstrated that s/he has an excellent grasp of the skills and knowledge set out for the course of study. S/he has the ability to apply his/her skills to a wide range of issues. S/he ought to be able to critically evaluate issues.
A –	The candidate has demonstrated his/her ability to grasp complex material. S/he can analyze independently and has a very good ability at applying his/her knowledge and skills to well-defined problem sets. S/he is proficient in his/her coursework.
B +	The candidate has demonstrated his/her ability to grasp material well beyond the reach of the average candidate. S/he can articulate a case very well and has good problem-solving skills for well-defined problem sets. S/he is capable of independent work.
B	The candidate has reached a good overall standard. His/her skills and knowledge set permit him/her to conduct an adequate analysis of many difficult problems within her/his field of study. S/he has demonstrated his/her potential for some independent work.
B –	The candidate displays some ability to do good work. Only with some direction and supervision is it possible for him/her to make a good contribution to his/her field. His/her skills and knowledge set are just adequate to allow him/her to do some independent work in her field.
C +	The candidate's skills and knowledge set are sufficient to allow him/her the opportunity of performing work in his/her field which meets minimum acceptable standards. Ability to perform independent work is limited.
C	The candidate's skills and knowledge set are only sufficient to permit work in his/her field. His/her ability to perform independent work is very limited.
C –	The candidate's skills and knowledge set are barely sufficient to permit work of average quality in his/her field. Ability to perform independent work is very limited.
D +	Whilst quite weak the candidate has demonstrated potential to do work of only average quality. No basis for working independently at a good level.
D	The candidate is too weak to make a meaningful contribution other than under the closest of supervision. Problem-solving skills are not well developed at all.
D –	Really indistinguishable from a failing grade. The candidate has showed just a trace of a relevant skill set thought of as minimum requirements for the field of study.
F	The candidate has failed to reach minimum passing standards.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is *any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual or artistic work of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise.*

Academic dishonesty includes receiving or giving assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally

impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person's work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing an editing service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all of the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts.

Students who are academically dishonest will receive a failing grade on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor.

### **Required Texts**

Peter Bondanella, Italian Cinema from Neorealism to the Present, Continuum, New York, 1994

A reader to be purchased at Cartoleria e Centrocopie Visconti, via di Parione, 24-25 - 00186 – ROMA - email: [visconticartoleria@live.it](mailto:visconticartoleria@live.it); opening times: Monday through Friday, 10:00am to 1.30pm and 3:30pm to 7:30pm.

### **Recommended Reading**

Check the collection of **articles** and **books** kept in the library for further reading.

### **Assistance**

After class or by appointment.

## Course Schedule – Summer School Programme 2011 COM 315

### • Week 1

- Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup> Introduction - **Early Cinema and the Film Industry under Fascism**  
Screening of selected parts of *Cabiria* (Giovanni Pastrone, 1914)
- Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup> **Neorealism**  
Screening of selected parts of *Rome Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945) and *Riso Amaro* (Giuseppe De Santis, 1948)
- Wednesday, June 29<sup>st</sup> Cinema of the economic miracle: **commedia all'italiana**  
Screening of selected parts of *Divorzio all'Italiana* (Pietro Germi, 1961)

Weekly Assignment: LANDY, *Early Italian Cinema of Attractions* (pp. 21-47), BONDANELLA pp. 24-30, chap. 2 and chap. 5 until p.161, VITTI *Riso Amaro*, RHODES *Divorzio all'Italiana*

### • Week 2

- Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup> The Golden Age of Italian Cinema: focus on **Luchino Visconti**  
Screening of *Rocco and his Brothers* (Luchino Visconti, 1960)
- Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup> Focus on **Federico Fellini** and Michelangelo **Antonioni**  
Screening of *La Strada* (Federico Fellini, 1954) and selected parts of *L'Avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960)

#### Review for Mid-Term exam

Assignment: pp. 114-141, pp. 228-252, pp. 196-234 of Bondanella, HUDSON *Rocco and his Brothers*, BONDANELLA *La Strada*, LANDY *Swinging Femininity*

- Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> **MID TERM EXAM**

### Week 3

- Monday, July 11<sup>th</sup> Introduction to the **students' project** – Screening of the film *Diverso da chi?* (Umberto Carteni, 2009)
- Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup> **Spaghetti Western** and the **crisis of cinema in the 1970s**  
Screening of *A Fistful of Dollars* (Sergio Leone, 1964)
- Wednesday, July 13<sup>th</sup> **The 1980s: Crisis and Resurrection of Cinema**  
Screening of *Cinema Paradiso* (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988)

Assignment: pp. 178-195, 318-320, 334-346, 384-396, 414-424, chap. 7 of Bondanella, FRAYLING *A Fistful of Dollars*, WOOD pp.126-128, GIERI *The New Italian Cinema*

- **Week 4**

-Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>      **Cinema of the 1990s**  
Screening of *Mediterraneo* (Gabriele Salvatores, 1991)

**FILMS PROJECTS DUE**

-Tuesday, July 19<sup>st</sup>      The Strange Case of **Nanni Moretti** and **Contemporary Italian Cinema**  
Screening of selected parts of *Aprile* (Nanni Moretti, 1998) and *Mio fratello è figlio unico* (Daniele Luchetti, 2007)

Assignment: chap. 12 of Bondanella, EWA MAZIERSKA & LAURA RASCAROLI, *Surviving Fatherhood* (pp. 74-84), WILLIAM HOPE, *Giuseppe Tornatore: Nostalgia; Emotion; Cognition* (pp. 53-76)

**Review for Final Exam**

- Wednesday, July 20<sup>nd</sup>      **FINAL EXAM**