THE POLITICS OF ORGANIZED CRIME
ITALIAN MAFIAS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Course Proposal

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I. Introduction

What most people know about Italian criminal organizations comes from stereotypical representations in popular culture – films and literature. The analysis of real-world data, such as investigations, proceedings and crime statistics, dismisses many of the accepted myths about Italian mafias over the last decades. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the definitions of this complex phenomenon by demystifying criminal underworld. This course will examine the organization of mafia groups in Italy, their codes and symbols, their activities both in legal and illegal markets, and their relationship to politics and other social institutions. The Italian case will be compared with those countries where Italian mafia groups migrated (such as the United States) and other nations where similar groups operate. Comparisons will enable students to disentangle different types of organized crime and to discover patterns and mechanisms of emergence and persistence across countries. The course will include also a review of the policies designed to control organized crime and of the grassroots initiatives to reduce the risk and combat mafia infiltration into local economy and society.

II. Course Objectives

- To provide the students with an overview of organized crime groups operating in Italy and abroad;
- To understand organized criminal activities both in legitimate and illicit markets in Italy and in the United States;
- To provide an understanding of the origins, growth and persistence of organized crime in Italy and abroad;
- To gain knowledge of the conditions that lead to the expansion and transplantation of Italian mafia groups around the world;
- To allow students the opportunity to assess the impact of mafia groups to democracy, society and development;
- To gain experience with common legal framework involved in the investigation of organized crime and to make a comparative evaluation with grassroots initiatives designed to combat organized crime around the world

III. Method and course grading

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1 The following preliminary syllabus is a general description of the course on criminal organizations. It does not include specific details nor is it the final syllabus for any specific term.
Organized crime is a complex subject that must be made tangible to students. It is also necessary that students understand the everyday importance of the issue and how it relates to their lives both in Italy and in their home country. To do this, the course will present a variety of lessons that capture students' attention through docu-dramas, videos of mafia witnesses and criminal trials against mafia affiliates (the Maxi trial in Italy or the Pizza Connection trial in US) in addition to reading and class lectures.

Special attention will be paid to the infiltration of organized crime into legitimate business both in Italy and the United States. Two special class sessions can be scheduled in cooperation with magistrates from the DNA (Direzione Nazionale Antimafia) and agents from the DIA (Direzione Investigativa Antimafia) in Florence: (1) one session about the infiltration of mafia groups in Tuscany including a guided visit in Prato where Chinese triads operate; (2) a special focus on the terrorist strategy adopted by Cosa Nostra in early ‘90s in Italy including a visit to Via dei Georgofili (Florence) where a car bomb exploded on May 27th 1993 killing 4 people and damaging the Uffizi Museum.

The course would be divided into twelve or more units. The students are expected to keep up with the readings and participate in class discussions. My suggestion is to begin as early as possible and come to class with questions about the readings. The students should also follow one or more issues related to organized crime in current events in Italy, US or Mexico by reading the newspapers and submitting a 4-5 page summary of the issue(s) that they have followed during the course of the semester. There are two exams: a midterm and a final. They may include essay questions and well as multiple-choice and short answer questions. Final grade will be based on attendance and participation (20%), and cumulative performance on exams (midterm 25% + paper 25% + final 30%).

Supplementary reading may be required. Insofar as it is possible, these materials will be distributed as class handouts or placed on library reserve.

IV. Weekly Schedule

Week 1.
Organized Crime: myths, theories and realities
Organized and Disorganized Crime. What is and not a mafia group

Week 2.
Structure, organization and rituals of mafia groups: Italian style
2.1 Case Study: Comparison between the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the Camorra and the Calabrese ‘Ndrangheta
- Calderoni, F. (2010), Where is the mafia in Italy? Measuring the presence of the mafias across Italian provinces, *Global Crime*, 12 (1), 41-69;
Press, Chapter 1 & 2;

Week 3.
Structure, organization and rituals of mafia groups: Russia, Japan, China
3.1 Case Study: The Russian Mafia

3.2 Case Study: The Japanese Yakuza

3.3 Case Study: The Chinese Triads

Week 4.
How Mafias Migrate: conditions and modalities.
What are the conditions conducive to long-term transplantation of mafia groups in new territories? In this class we systematically review a number of factors that facilitate such an outcome and then we explore some cases of transplantation by members of the Sicily-based mafia group to the United States, and by mafia groups to Northern Italy.

4.1 Case Study: La Cosa Nostra in the United States

4.2 Special Event: The migration of mafia groups in Tuscany
- Guest Participant: Magistrates and investigators from the DNA and DIA of Florence

Week 5.
Mafias and Violence: when criminal families are at war

5.1 Case Study: Naples; the Secondigliano War (2004-2005)
- SAVIANO, R. (2007), Gomorrah, New York : Farra, Straus and Giroux, Chapter 4

5.2 Case Study: New York City: the Castellammarese War (1930-1931)
- CRITCHLEY, D. (2009), Chapter 7

Week 6.
Organizing Crime: illicit markets and mafia groups

Week 7.
Legitimate Markets and Mafia groups
This seminar focuses on the infiltration of mafia groups into legitimate business in Italy and US during the past decade with particular attention to the role played by these groups in the management and trafficking of waste and in the construction sector. The analysis of two case studies shows the techniques used to infiltrate the market and the kind of actors involved (traditional mafia-type organisations, corporate entities, legitimate enterprises and businessmen, local authorities and other official actors).
116-139;

7.1 Case Study: The management and trafficking of special waste in Italy

7.2 Case Study: Racketeering in the New York City construction industry

Week 8.
The Nexus of Organized Crime and Politics

8.1 Case Study: Italy

8.2 Case Study: Chicago: Crime and Politics in the 1920s

8.3 Case Study: Mexico

Week 9.
Terrorism and Mafia. The Crime–Terror Continuum The political-mafioso homicides in Italy

9.1 Case Study: Elections and Criminal Violence

9.1 Case Study: The political-mafioso homicides in Italy (1992-1994)
   - Dickie, J. (2004), Chapter 11;
   - Visit in Via dei Georgofili, Florence, where a car bomb exploded on May 27th 1993. Guest Participant: DNA, Tribunale di Firenze (to be scheduled)

III. ANTIFIA: POLICIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Week 9.
Introduction to Antimafia Legislation in Italy and US
In this class we analyze and discuss the nature of institutional efforts to address organized crime group, before and after 1992 in Italy and after the RICO Act in US.
   - Jamenson, A. (2000), Chapter 4

9.1 Case Study. The capture of fugitives: the arrest of Bernardo Provenzano
   - Docu-Drama: *Checkmate Provenzano* (Scacco al re: La cattura di Provenzano), Rai-Fiction, English subtitles, 90m

Week 10.
Bottom-up actions against mafias: civil society and the grassroots antimafia
- JAMIESON, A. (2000), Chapter 3 & 5;
- VACCARO, A. (2011), To Pay or Not to Pay? Dynamic Transparency and the Fight Against the Mafia’s Extortionists, forthcoming in the *Journal of Business Ethics*

19.1 **Special Event. Antimafia associations in Italy**

- Guest Participant: Representatives from “Libera. Associations, names and numbers against mafias” and Avviso Pubblico (Association of Municipalities against Mafia)

**Week 11.**

*Democracy and Mafia: the Impacts of Antimafia Policies and Actions*


**Special event. Antimafia Dinner.** A special dinner of all participants with Libera Terra’s organic foods produced by Libera cooperatives in confiscated lands due mafia’s infiltration.