



History of Italian Cinema

Course Number

ICINE-UT 1103 F01

Instruction Mode:

In-person

Brightspace course site<https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/164422>**Spring 2022**

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Study Away student for NYU Florence, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact florence.academicssupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: 26 January 2022

Lecturer Contact Information

TBA

Prerequisites

None

Units earned

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Course Details

- Monday from 3:30pm to 6:15pm
- All times are Central European Time (CET) Please note that there is a gap in when Daylight Savings Time (DST) begins in Europe and the U.S. In the U.S., DST begins on Sunday, 13 March 2022 when clocks will be set 1 hour forward. In Europe, DST begins Sunday, 27 March 2022.
- Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.
- Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide you with the Zoom link via NYU Brightspace.



- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Florence community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority.

Course Description

This course explores Italian cinema from its origins to the present time, within the socioeconomic and historical context of Italian culture and society. Classes will focus on some of the major works of key directors, as well as at the most important genres of popular cinema, giving particular attention to the historical, cultural, and literary matrix of each movie. Students will be encouraged to understand the possibilities of film both as works of art and as testimonies and documents of Italian culture and society. Italian film has had a remarkable international history. Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria* (1914) was the first film shown on the lawn of the White House, and impacted D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916). "Diva" films created a standard modern drama with a female star. Neorealist films became influential worldwide, arguably the most important film "movement" in the history of cinema, at the time. Such names as Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Luchino Visconti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Bernardo Bertolucci were in the vanguard of the 1960s international arthouse film, while the 'Comedy Italian Style' showed a lighter vein of international cinema also popular during the period. From the end of World War II to the 1970s, many influential films and stylistic trends were produced and promoted by Italian cinema. The concept of "impegno" (= political commitment) defined the genre of the instant movies and fits the ideological issues of the political turmoil during the so-called Years of Lead. The "nostalgia narrative" of the 1980s and 1990s has kept emphasizing the cultural uniqueness of the Italian cinema of the past. From the 1990s experiences of the coming-of-age stories to the films of the new millennium, historical traumas, intertextuality, and a vocation to the social will be the main answer to the crisis of film production. Culture and cinema are intertwined through the course, that aims at addressing government policies, influences, and both implicit and explicit censorship during Italian film history. Through cinema, students are encouraged to discover ethical and political challenges, besides Italian cultural peculiarities.

The course comprises lectures and discussions, accompanied by PowerPoint slides and guided film watching. Note-taking is mandatory, and individual study of the notes, readings, and films at home is required after every class.

Course Objectives

On completion of this course, students should:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of the evolution of Italian film history, including themes, genres, key directors and key films;
- understand the ways in which films explore political and social issues in Italy;
- investigate the artistic, social and political influences on (and of) arthouse films.

Assessment Components



- Academic Commitment**: 10%
- Pop Quizzes: 5%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Research Paper (1500/2000 words – 4 pages single-spaced): 30%
- Final Exam: 30%

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Attendance Policy

In order to keep each other safe, if you are not feeling well, we encourage you to remain in your residence and, if possible, attend class remotely.

Please make sure to inform your professor in advance so that they can turn on Zoom. Remote attendance is counted as regular attendance. You will not be marked absent.

For a detailed explanation of the global attendance policy, see the NYU Florence [Present vs. Absent Flowchart](#).

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation.

The Global Attendance Policy is posted in the Academic Policies tab in [Brightspace](#), on the [NYU Florence Student Portal](#) website, and is posted around campus.

After you have read and reviewed the policies, if there is anything that still needs further clarification or raises a question, please reach out to florence.academicssupport@nyu.edu.

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work

Please refer to Academic Policies in [Brightspace](#).

Teaching & Learning Philosophy

Students are encouraged to express their autonomous and independent thinking, to respect the others and to ask for clarifications every time they need.

Required Text

- Bertellini, Giorgio (ed.). *The cinema of Italy*. London: Wallflower Press, 2007.

Required Readings

- Celli, Carlo, and Cottino-Jones, Marga. "Remote History". *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: xi-xiv.



- Bertellini, Giorgio. "Silent Italian Cinema: A New Medium for Old Geographies." In Burke, Frank (ed.). *A Companion to Italian Cinema*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
- Dalle Vacche, Angela. "Introduction: Mater Dolorosa." *Diva: Defiance and Passion in Early Italian Cinema*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008: 1-21.
- Gottlieb, Sidney. "Rossellini, Open City, and Neorealism." *Roberto Rossellini's Rome Open City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 31-42.
- Di Carmine, Roberta. "Comedy 'Italian Style' and *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*, 1958)." In Horton, Andrew, and Rapf, Joanna E. *A Companion To Film Comedy*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013: 454-473.
- Celli, Carlo, and Cottino-Jones, Marga. "The Later 1960s". *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: 97-111.
- Minuz, Andrea. "La Dolce Vita and Its Relevance Today." *Political Fellini: Journey to the End of Italy*. New York: Bergahn Books, 2015: 58-77.
- Greene, Naomi. "The End of Ideology." *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Cinema as Heresy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990: 60-67 (the full chapter is 53–91).
- Vahdani, Alireza. "[Nuovo Cinema Paradiso: A Reflection of Italian Society](#)." *Offscreen* (2011), Internet resource. Accessed 31 January 2022.
- Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "The Secret Histories of Roberto Benigni's 'Life is Beautiful'." *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14:1 (2001): 253-266.
- Antonello, Pierpaolo. "Il divo. Sorrentino's spectacle of politics." In Lombardi, Giancarlo, and Christian Uva (eds). *Italian Political Cinema: Public Life, Imaginary, and Identity in Contemporary Italian Film*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2016: 291-304.
- Haskell, Molly. "[The Traitor](#)." *Film Comment*; 56:1 (Jan/Feb 2020): 68-69. Internet resource. Accessed 31 January 2022 .
- O'Leary, Alan. "[What is Italian Cinema?](#)" *California Italian Studies*, 7:1 (2017). Internet resource. Accessed 31 January 2022 .

All readings are available online on the NYU Brightspace course site. Hard copies of some textbooks are available for consultation and semester-long loans in the [Villa Ulivi Library](#). Please email florence.library@nyu.edu to reserve a copy. To request scans from books on reserve please fill out the [Ulivi Library Book Scan Form](#).

Session 1 – 31st January 2022

Presentation of the course: introduction to Italian cinema. Explanation of the syllabus. Guidelines on readings, screenings, assignments and exams.

Screening: clips from *My Voyage to Italy* (Scorsese, 2002)

Assigned reading: Celli, Carlo, and Cottino-Jones, Marga. "Remote History". *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: xi-xiv.

**Session 2 – 7th February 2022**

Early cinema, historical epics, “diva” films, Avant-garde.

Screenings: clips from early cinema (Edison, Lumière), *La presa di Roma* (Alberini, 1905), *Troppo bello* (Deed, 1909), *Cabiria* (Pastrone, 1914), *Assunta Spina* (Serena, 1915), *Thais* (Bragaglia, 1916).

Assigned readings: 1) Bertellini, Giorgio. “Silent Italian Cinema: A New Medium for Old Geographies.” In Burke, Frank (ed.). *A Companion to Italian Cinema*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017; 2) Dalle Vacche, Angela. “Introduction: Mater Dolorosa.” *Diva: Defiance and Passion in Early Italian Cinema*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008: 1-21.

Session 3 – 14th February 2022 [FIELD TRIP]

Field trip 1: Florentine cinematic tour. No homework due

Session 4 – 21st February 2022

The Fascist Years and the movies.

Screenings: *1860* (Blasetti, 1934), *Men, What Rascals!* (Camerini, 1932)

Assigned readings: Textbook, chap. 1-2 (pp.11-30).

Session 5 – 28th February 2022

World War II: The Birth of Neorealism. **Review** for Midterm Exam.

Screenings: *Obsession* (Visconti, 1943), *Paisan* (Rossellini, 1946), *Rome, Open City* (Rossellini, 1945)

Assigned readings: 1) Textbook, chap. 3 (pp. 31-42); 2) Gottlieb, Sidney. “Rossellini, Open City, and Neorealism.” *Roberto Rossellini's Rome Open City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 31-42.

Session 6 – 7th March 2022**MIDTERM EXAM****14th March 2022 - 20th March 2022 [MIDTERM BREAK - No Class]****Session 7 – 21st March 2022**

Reconstruction and the late 1940s.

Deadline to submit **research paper topic** for approval.

Screenings: *The Earth Trembles* (Visconti, 1947), *The Bicycle Thief* (De Sica, 1948)

Assigned reading: Textbook, chap. 4 (pp. 43-50)

Session 8 – 28th March 2022

The 1950s: after the Neorealism.

Screenings: *The Gold of Naples* (De Sica, 1954), *Senso* (Visconti, 1954), *La Strada* (Fellini, 1954)

Assigned readings: Textbook, chap. 6-7 (pp. 63-82).

**Session 9 – 4th April 2022**

The Economic and Cinematic Boom of the 1960s. #1 Comedy Italian Style, “Spaghetti” Western and “Spaghetti” Nightmare.

Screenings: *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (Monicelli, 1958), *Easy Life* (Risi, 1962), *A Fistful of Dollars* (Leone, 1964), *Black Sunday* (Bava, 1960).

Assigned readings: 1) Textbook, chap. 16 (pp. 163-172); 2) Di Carmine, Roberta. “Comedy ‘Italian Style’ and *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*, 1958).” In Horton, Andrew, and Rapf, Joanna E. *A Companion To Film Comedy*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013: 454-473.

Session 10 – 11th April 2022

The Economic and Cinematic Boom of the 1960s. #2 Arthouse cinema and authorship.

Screenings: *La dolce vita* (Fellini, 1960), *8 ½* (Fellini, 1963), *The Adventure* (Antonioni, 1960), *Blow Up* (Antonioni, 1966), *La ricotta* (Pasolini, 1962).

Assigned readings: 1) Textbook, chap. 14 (pp. 143-152); 2) Celli, Carlo, and Cottino-Jones, Marga. “The Later 1960s”. *A New Guide to Italian Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: 97-111; 3) Minuz, Andrea. “La Dolce Vita and Its Relevance Today.” *Political Fellini: Journey to the End of Italy*. New York: Bergahn Books, 2015: 58-77; 4) Greene, Naomi. “The End of Ideology.” *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Cinema as Heresy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990: 60-67 (the full chapter is: 53–91).

Session 11 – 15th April [FIELD TRIP]

Field trip 2: Cineteca di Bologna and Home Movies archive. No homework due

18th April 2022 [HOLIDAY – NO CLASS]

No homework due

Session 12 - 22nd April 2022 [FRIDAY MAKE UP for 18th April]

Political films in the Years of Lead. The “Giallo”.

Screenings: *Love and Anarchy* (Wertmuller, 1973), *The Conformist* (Bertolucci, 1970), *The Working Class Goes to Heaven* (Petri, 1971), *Deep Red* (Argento, 1975)

Assigned readings: Textbook, chap. 17-18 (pp. 173-191); chap. 21 (pp. 213-222)

25th April 2022 [HOLIDAY – NO CLASS]

No homework due

Session 13 – 29th April 2022 [FRIDAY MAKE UP for 25th April]

Working on national memory: media and nostalgic narrative in 1980s.

Research Paper due.

Screening: *Cinema Paradiso* (Tornatore, 1988), *Ginger and Fred* (Fellini, 1989)

Assigned reading: Vahdani, Alireza. “[Nuovo Cinema Paradiso: A Reflection of Italian Society.](#)” *Offscreen* (2011), Internet resource. Accessed 31 January 2022 .

Session 14 – 2nd May 2022

The 1990s as a new Italian cinematic Renaissance. The digital editing and the coming of age stories.



Screening: *The Sheltering Sky* (Bertolucci, 1990), *Lamerica* (Amelio, 1994), *Life is beautiful* (Benigni, 1997), *But Forever in My Mind* (Muccino, 1999)
Assigned reading: 1) Textbook, chap. 24 (pp. 245-254); 2) Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "The Secret Histories of Roberto Benigni's 'Life is Beautiful'." *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14:1 (2001): 253-266.

Session 15 – 9th May 2022

The 2000s and 2010s: global media, trauma narrative and postmodern retrospectives.

Review for Final Exam.

Screening: *The Golden Door* (Crialesi, 2006), *The Divine* (Sorrentino, 2008), *The traitor* (Bellocchio, 2019), *Freaks Out* (Mainetti, 2021).

Assigned reading: 1) Antonello, Pierpaolo. "Il divo. Sorrentino's spectacle of politics." In Lombardi, Giancarlo, and Christian Uva (eds). *Italian Political Cinema: Public Life, Imaginary, and Identity in Contemporary Italian Film*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2016: 291-304; 2) Haskell, Molly. "[The Traitor](#)." *Film Comment*; 56:1 (Jan/Feb 2020): 68-69. Accessed 31 January 2022; 3) O'Leary, Alan. "[What is Italian Cinema?](#)" *California Italian Studies*, 7:1 (2017). Internet resource. Accessed 31 January 2022.

20th December 2021

FINAL EXAM

Required Co-curricular Activities

Field trips: 1) Florence "cinematic" tour

This first field trip will consist in a walk around Florence, with a very informal talk about the city and its cinema, including both Italian and foreign productions throughout the history of the twentieth century and beyond. The tour follows the path of a virtual tour that I have prepared on Google Earth, which will accompany the site-seeing walk; every student will be asked to download the Google Earth app, then select the "Presentation" function associated to the link that will be sent, and then move through the locations with the arrows. All the content, images, texts, and links will be in the lower side of the view, by scrolling down.

Many films have been set in Florence. The city gives an urban landscape that is still full of history, which crosses past and future as an open-air film set; a priceless vision for the world audiences. But this valuable picturesque setting is not only a beautiful and vibrant scenography for cinema; Florence, the cradle of the Renaissance, holds a heritage that intertwines the rise of the moving images into an epistemological paradigm deep-rooted into its tradition in humanities, fine arts and optical sciences.

The main goal of this site visit is to engage students' interaction with the city of Florence, through its incredible heritage in visual arts and sciences, also reflecting on media and popular culture. This would enhance their study-abroad experience by improving their involvement with Florence, and will help students connect different disciplines in an inter-semiotic approach.

2) Cineteca di Bologna and Home Movies archive

The second field trip will take place in Bologna, where the students will have the chance to see the collections of the Bologna cinemathèque (Cineteca di Bologna), a pivotal institution for the history of Italian film heritage, and The Italian Amateur Film Archive (Home Movies), the main Italian archive for small-gauge, amateur and family films.

Cineteca di Bologna, created in 1963 as a municipal institution, is deeply rooted in the Bolognese local culture, and at the same time devoted to an international network. Since 1989 the Cineteca di Bologna is member of the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAPF) and of the Association des Cinémathèques Européennes (ACE). Its yearly festival, 'Il



Cinema Ritrovato,' is one of the central events for scholars in the field of film heritage and film restoration worldwide, but also for all kinds of audience, since it includes sections dedicated to kids and entertainment. Thus, the Cineteca di Bologna holds a large film and non-film collection, including a rich library, and promotes exhibitions and workshops. Moreover, its building is located very close to the University of Bologna's department of Performing Arts and Communication Sciences, ensuring a strong connection with the city's educational institutions. Its library, dedicated to Renzo Renzi who was among the founders of Bologna's Commissione Cinema, supports the idea of the cinematheque as a research center.

Home Movies was born in 2002, with the mission to collect and preserve amateur and family film, an audiovisual heritage that is still hidden and largely inaccessible. The Archive was founded and is managed by the Home Movies Association, a research group aimed at promoting and organizing the study, storage and upgrading of amateur and family film. Home Movies has currently opened a new Experimental and Art Film section, giving large room to experimental and artist's cinema, as a look at the visual revolution of 1960s and 1970s.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities

Please, check the NYU Calendar of events. Suggested optional co-curricular activities will be announced in class and/or via email by the professor throughout the semester, since Florence usually hosts film festivals and events of international interest.

Your Lecturer

Rossella Catanese is currently Postdoctoral Researcher at University of Udine (Italy) for the international HERA project *Visual Culture of Trauma, Obliteration and Reconstruction in Post WWII Europe (ViCTOR-E)*. Previously, she has been selected for a postdoctoral research position at IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca (Italy). In 2018, she has received the habilitation as Associate Professor by the Ministry of Education, University and Research in the field of Film Studies. She also got teaching positions at Sapienza University of Rome, and Polimoda Fashion School in Florence. Her publications focus on film restoration, cinematheques, film history, experimental cinema, avant-garde, non-fiction films.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "Academic Integrity for Students at NYU" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an



overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer and Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Florence.



Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- Local Telephone: 055 5007277