The Politics of Organized Crime

Course Number
ANTH-UA 9077 F01 / SOC-UA 9506 F01

Instruction Mode: In-person

Brightspace course site: https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/191739

Summer 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.academicsupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: [Day-Month-Year]

Lecturer Contact Information
Salvatore Sberna
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Office Hours: By appointment only, Wednesdays, 12:45pm-13:30pm
Appointments available via Zoom or in person on request
Zoom Personal Meeting Room: https://nyu.zoom.us/j/8234201358

Units earned
4

Course Details
- Monday and Wednesday, 1:30pm - 4:30pm
  Mandatory Make Up Day Friday, May 27, 1:30pm - 4:30pm

- 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

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 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.

Course Objectives

On completion of this course, students should:
- Have mastered a basic understanding of organized crime, its origins, growth and persistence;
- Have improved their understanding of how to research questions on crime, and their ability to compare criminal organizations across countries;
- Have improved their ability to think critically about the impact of mafia groups to democracy, society and development;
- Have gained experience with policies and best practices designed to prevent and control organized crime.

Assessment Components

- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- Weekly Assignments and in-class presentations: 20%
- Midterm Exam: Take-home essay (1,000-words): 10%
- Final Exams: In-class Exam (20%); POC Final Project (VoiceThread presentation): 30%, including Topic Proposal (5%), Peer discussion (5%) and Final Project Presentation (20%)

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. This may include, but is not limited to, presence at synchronous class sessions, timely submission of predetermined course assignments to the instructor, collaboration with peers in group course work both during class time or independently outside of class time, individual oral or written contributions to synchronous course time through the chat function, in person discussion, or in individual office hours with the instructor. In an asynchronous format this academic engagement may take the form of written contributions to course forums, adding comments to posted work on VoiceThread or Google Drive shared docs. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Required Readings, participation, weekly assignments and presentations

A significant amount of reading is required for the course. Students who fall behind will have a difficult time catching up. Therefore, they are expected to do the assigned reading
in advance of the class. The class will presume knowledge of the readings assigned for that week.

All students should be able to answer the Review Questions found in each class outlines provided by the instructor as a way to ensure familiarity with the materials. In some cases, self-assessment tests might be administered after the lecture to measure and ensure comprehension of readings and lectures. These tests will not be graded.

Once in the semester, students are expected either to present briefly a case study related to the topic assigned for that week or to play the role of discussion leader during group exercises/simulation. Presenters will sign up online. In the weekly outlines you will find the assignment for each session.

**Mafia News Report & Blog Postings**

Every week students are expected to keep up with news on criminal organizations that are reported in newspapers and on-line sources. Students are required to enter onto class website (http://wp.nyu.edu/mafia today) at least 5 POSTS (one per week) describing and commenting real-word events related to organized crime that occurred in the week before the post is published. Students must use reliable sources, by following the instructions and tips available on the website (here the link).

**Site Visits (TBC)**

Depending on the COVIS-19 situation, a site visit will be organized during the usual class schedule at the bunker courthouse and other antimafia agencies in Downtown Florence (TBC).

**POC Final Project**

Each student is required to develop a project that explores her view of an issue affecting any given organized crime group or related to the governance of illegal transactions. The topic will be chosen by the students according to their interests and program of studies.

Part of the goal of this assignment is for you to actually conduct a real research/project on a topic related to organized crime. Second, this final project gives you the opportunity to make connections between the course contents and your personal interests and areas of studies. You need to define and choose a single and limited topic or puzzle, explaining why this is either relevant, innovative or challenging for the studies of organized crime. You are expected to gather and collect real data about one or more case studies. Data collection might also include interviews with privileged actors, survey, fieldwork observation. You are expected to also use outside sources of material for your project. A sample of topics and ideas will be discussed in class during the semester, and a list of the best projects of the past semesters is available on the class website. Students may utilize text books and reference material aside from the course text as well as electronic resources on BobCat. Again, all research data, either from electronic sources, books, journals or periodicals must be properly attributed and cited.

**Each student is expected to submit a presentation about the project on VoiceThread.** A preliminary presentation about the topic will be submitted online due June 20, and each student is also expected to discuss peers’ projects online on the same platform (see Brightspace for instructions).
The final project must be submitted online on VoiceThread, and a copy of it on Brightspace before June 29 2022 (11:59PM CET)

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.academicsupport@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.

Required Text(s)

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 – Wednesday, May 25, 2022
Introduction

Session 2 – Make Up Day: Friday, May 27, 2022

Organized and Disorganized Crime. What is and not a mafia group.

Objectives:
- Define and identify the attributes of organized crime
- Understand historical perspectives of organized crime
- Identify the various classifications of organized crime
- Distinguish organized crime from other forms of criminality
Readings:
- GAMBETTA, D. (1993), The Sicilian…, Chapter 1 (ONLY selected pages);
- Selected-Cases Box. See MafiaToday Website

Assignment S_2: See Outline S_2 for instructions (Brightspace)

Session 3 – Monday, May 30

The origins of organized crime.

Objectives:
- Identify the conditions leading to the emergence of organized crime
- Identity different historical paths to the consolidation of organized crime
- Understand the impact of organized crime to democratization
- Understand how economic and political changes can affect organized crime

Readings:

Case studies: Gangs in Prison

Assignment S_3: Is Sicily the future of #anywhere? See Outline S_3 for instructions (Brightspace)

Session 4 – Wednesday, June 1, 2022
Organizing Crime. Sources of Mafia Power

Objectives:
- Understand the role of rituals and symbolic rules in mafias
- Explore the varieties of organizational arrangements in mafias as internal sources of criminal power
- Understand the trade-off between hierarchical vs anarchic organizations of crime
- Explore the varieties of social ties that mafias develop with local community as external sources of criminal power
- Assess the relationship between internal and external sources of criminal power

Readings:

Assignment S_4: See Outline S_4 for instructions (Brightspace)

Session 5 – Monday, June 6, 2022
The Economy of Crime I. Illicit markets and organized crime

Objectives:
- Understand the systemic differences in the functioning of markets that operate illegally;
- Assess the regulative role of mafia-like organizations within illegal markets;

Readings:
- SBERNA, S. (2014), Notes on illegal markets, mimeo (attached to Outline);
- SAVIANO, R. (2005), *Gomorrah*, Pan Macmillan, pp. 60-95
- Digital Materials on the MafiaToday website and Brightspace

Assignment S_5: *CrimeObserver Assignment*, see instruction on Brightspace See Outline S_5 for instructions (Brightspace)

Session 6 – Wednesday, June 8, 2022
The Economy of Crime II. Legitimate markets and organized crime

Objectives:
- Understand how/why organized crime penetrates legitimate markets;
- Critically evaluate the impact of organized crime’s penetration into legitimate markets

Readings:
- Digital Materials on the MafiaToday website and Brightspace
Assignment S_6: See Outline S_6 for instructions (Brightspace)

POC Research Fieldwork Session in Florence Downtown (TBC)
Field Research Session on “Mafia and Antimafia in Florence”, including a visit to the local bunker-courthouse and Libera Antimafia shop in Florence (TBC)

Session 7 – Monday, June 13, 2022
Political Corruption and Organized Crime

Objectives:
- Understand the modalities of infiltration of organized crime into institutional arenas
- Understand reciprocity mechanisms of exchange between criminals and political authorities
- Evaluate the impact of mafia’s infiltration upon corrupt networks
- Evaluate the impact of mafia’s infiltration upon democracy and democratizations

Readings:

!!! TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM !!! The take-home essay questions will be available online on Brightspace. Essays, in. doc, .rtf or .pdf format, must be submitted through Brightspace by June 13, 2022 (1:30PM CET).

Session 8 – Wednesday, June 15, 2022
Globalization and Organized Crime

Objectives:
- Understand how organized crime globalizes;
- Understand the varieties of mafias’ migrations;
- Explaining the success in mafias’ transplantation;
- Evaluate the costs&benefits of mafias’ transplantation

Readings:
- Digital materials on Brightspace

Assignment S_8: Final Projects’ Topic. Please submit your topic proposal on Brightspace (see instructions on the platform)
Session 9 – Monday, June 20, 2022
Antimafia Policies and Actions (I) Top-down approach: the institutional response

Objectives:
- Understand the institutional response to organized crime
- Explaining the differences in antimafia legislation across countries
- Evaluate the obstacles in designing antimafia public policies
- Evaluate the impact of antimafia policies and practices

Readings:

Assignment S_9: Final Project Presentation on Voicethread. See instructions on Brightspace

Session 10 – Wednesday, June 22, 2022
Antimafia Policies and Actions (II). Civil Society and Media Against the Mafia

Objectives:
- Understand the concept of community resilience against organized crime
- Explaining the differences in antimafia grassroots mobilizations
- Evaluate the impact of traditional and new media upon organized crime
- Evaluate the impact of antimafia mobilizations

Readings:
- Other online materials available on Brightspace

Assignment S_10: Final Projects’ Peer Discussion on Voicethread. See instructions on Brightspace

Session 11 – Monday, June 27, 2022
Mafia Group Contest Session: see instructions on Brightspace

Session 12 – Wednesday, June 29, 2022
Final exams: In-class exams and submission on VoiceThread of the final project presentation
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 offenses 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 e-mail 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