

BOSTON UNIVERSITY STUDY ABROAD PADUA

Galleria S. Lucia 1 – 35100 Padova tel. 049. 653030

Course: COM FT 315 History of Italian Cinema

Instructor: Giulia Lavarone, Ph.D

Instructor e-mail: lavarone@bu.edu

Office hour: by appointment

Class schedule: 4 hours per week

Credit value: 4 credits

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course will focus on the history of Italian Cinema from 1943 to today, with particular attention to the function of cityscapes and landscapes as portrayed by major Italian film directors.

Starting from references to silent films and the Fascist cinema of the 1930s and 1940s, the course will move on to Neorealism which was able to capture the drama of Italian cities during the Second World War, as well as the poverty of the postwar period.

Students will then analyze Comedies Italian Style, as well as engaging film by Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni and Pier Paolo Pasolini. The period between the 1950s and the 1960s was characterized by the economic boom. Even though narrative and stylistic approach varies a lot, many film directors focus on the radical changes that affected the architecture and lifestyle of Italian cities.

The final part of the course will also address some modern and contemporary film directors such as Nanni Moretti and Silvio Soldini.

Students will be brought behind the scenes of a film which will vary from one semester to another.

- In the fall, students will analyze Davide Ferrario's *Dopo mezzanotte*, a love story set inside the National Museum of Cinema in Turin. A class field trip to Turin will be integral part of the course.
- In the spring, students will study Andrea Segre's *Io sono Li*, set in Chioggia, a small traditional city close to Venice, and will visit the places where the film was shot.

Students will be required to watch the films assigned before the class meets, according to a schedule prepared with the instructor. In class students will discuss and analyze some of the most important scenes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

FILM

Paisà (*Paisan*, Rossellini, 1946)

Ladri di biciclette (*Bicycle Thieves*, De Sica, 1948)

I soliti ignoti (*Big deal on Madonna Street*, Monicelli, 1958)

La dolce vita (Fellini, 1960)

Deserto rosso (*Red desert*, Antonioni, 1964)

Caro diario (*Dear diary*, Moretti, 1994)

L'aria serena dell'Ovest (*The peaceful air of the West*, Soldini, 1990)

Dopo mezzanotte (*After midnight*, Ferrario, 2003) (FALL) or ***Io sono Li*** (*Shun Li and the Poet*, Segre, 2011) (SPRING)

The films which students are required to watch in their entirety (outside of the scheduled lessons) will be available on DVD at the BUSA Center.

Other film scenes, available online (YouTube) or on DVD at the BUSA Center, will be watched during the lessons.

The course pack prepared by the instructor (available at copy shop) will include readings as specified in the detailed syllabus below.

Additional bibliography will be available on JSTOR.

The course pack texts will be excerpted from the following books:

Cinema and the City. Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context / Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice – Blackwell, 2001

Cities and Cinema / Barbara Mennel – Routledge, 2008

A History of Italian Cinema / Peter E. Bondanella – Bloomsbury Academic, 2009

Re-Viewing Fascism. Italian Cinema, 1922-1943 / edited by Jacqueline Reich and Piero Garofalo - Indiana University Press, 2002

Italian Neorealism: Rebuilding the Cinematic City / Mark Shiel – Wallflower Press, 2006

The History of Italian Cinema: A Guide to Italian Film from its Origins to the Twenty-First Century / Gian Piero Brunetta – Princeton University Press, 2011

Comedy Italian Style – The Golden Age of Italian Film Comedies / Rémi Fournier Lanzoni – Continuum, 2009

Pier Paolo Pasolini, Poet of Ashes / edited by Roberto Chiesi and Andrea Mancini - Titivillus, 2007

The cinema of Nanni Moretti: Dreams and Diaries / Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli - Wallflower Press, 2004

Italian National Cinema 1896-1996 / Pierre Sorlin – Routledge, 1996

New Landscapes in Contemporary Italian Cinema / edited by Gaetana Marrone - «Annali d'Italianistica», Vol.17 (1999)

Cinema Italiano Contemporaneo / edited by Antonio Vitti - «Annali d'Italianistica», Vol.30 (2012)

Additional texts for the class presentation:

The films of Michelangelo Antonioni / Peter Brunette – Cambridge University Press, 1998

The cinema of Nanni Moretti: Dreams and Diaries / Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli - Wallflower Press, 2004

The cinema of Silvio Soldini. Dream - Image - Voyage / Luciano Bernadette – Troubador Publishing, 2008

GRADING CRITERIA

Attendance and class participation: 15%
2 short essays (4 pages each): 20%
Written midterm: 20%
1 class presentation (group work): 10%
Final written exam: 15%
Final paper: 20%

Attendance and class participation: Students are expected to be punctual, ask questions, express curiosity and participate in discussions.

2 short essays: Each student will be required to submit two 4-page essays. The first essay will focus on an Italian film shot before 1960, the second essay will focus on an Italian film shot after this date. The films will be selected by the student with the instructor's approval. Students will adopt either a historical perspective or will conduct a more personal stylistic analysis. Coherence, consistency, and accuracy in the use of cinematographic terminology will be assessed. In addition to references to what has been discussed in class, students are required to have a bibliography of minimum two texts.

Written midterm exam: Multiple-choice questions plus some open questions referring to the period up to Neorealism.

1 class presentation (group work): Students will be divided into groups. Each group will analyze a film (*Deserto rosso*, *Caro diario*, or *L'aria serena dell'Ovest*) and study the material recommended by the instructor.

Written final exam: Multiple-choice questions plus some open questions referring to the period from post Neorealism to contemporary cinema.

Final paper: A final paper based on an Italian film selected by the student with the instructor's approval. The student will prepare a detailed outline which will include a bibliography of minimum 3 texts. A draft of the paper will be given to the professor for suggestions. The paper will be 6-8 pages long. Students will have to use the skills acquired during the course in order to do a narrative and stylistic analysis of the film.

POLICIES

Attendance

Boston University Padua students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip required for the class. Students should note that attendance will be taken into account by faculty when determining final grades. Students absent from class for medical reasons need to provide a local doctor's note.

Religious Holidays

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.' See Chapter 151C of the General Laws, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Academic Conduct Code

It is every student's responsibility to read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean." You can view the entire Academic Conduct Code here: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

SYLLABUS

1st lesson

Introduction to the course and to the cinema/city relationship.

Introduction to the course (teaching methods, grading criteria, etc.).

Introduction to the general theme of the relationship between cinema and the city, examined in a historical and theoretical perspective. Discussion with students about some possible approaches to this topic. Watching short films by the Lumière brothers.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice, *Cinema and the City*: chapters *Cinema and the City* by Mark Shiel (only pp.1-2) and *Cities: Real and Imagined* by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, pp.99-108.
- 2) Barbara Mennel, *Cities and Cinema*: chapter *Introduction: The founding myth of cinema, or the "train effect"*, pp.1-16.

2nd lesson

Italian Cinema before Neorealism.

Italian cinema from the origins to the 1930s: the *Kolossal* film and the influence on American cinema (Griffith); the creative and production crisis during the 1920s; the birth of Cinecittà; the *telefoni bianchi* comedies; Fascism and the censorship of films, reality and language.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *The Silent Era*, pp.1-19.
- 2) Jacqueline Reich, *Mussolini at the Movies. Fascism, Film, and Culture*, in *Re-Viewing Fascism. Italian Cinema, 1922-1943*, pp. 3-18.

3rd lesson

Introduction to Neorealism.

The magazine *Cinema* and its influence: a “return to reality”, from Verga to Visconti. *Ossessione* (1943) and the birth of Neorealism.

The historical context of the Second World War.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Ennio Di Nolfo, *Intimations of Neorealism in the Fascist Ventennio*, in *Re-Viewing Fascism. Italian Cinema, 1922-1943*, pp.83-104.
- 2) Mark Shiel, *Italian Neorealism: Rebuilding the Cinematic City* : chapter *Ossessione*, pp.37-45.

Students will be required to watch the film: *Paisà (Paisan, Rossellini, 1946)*

4th lesson

Rossellini.

Rossellini. Watching and analysis of film scenes.

Analysis of *Paisà* and discussion with the students.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *Paisan*, pp.71-79.
- 2) Deborah Amberson, *Battling History: Narrative Wars in Roberto Rossellini’s Paisà*, «Italice», Vol.86, No.3 (Autumn, 2009), pp.392-407 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40505896>).

5th lesson

Rossellini and De Sica.

Conclusion of the discussion about Rossellini and beginning of the study of De Sica. Watching and analysis of film scenes.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Mark Shiel, *Italian Neorealism*: chapter *Introduction: Describing Neorealism*, pp.1-16.
- 2) Gian Piero Brunetta, *The History of Italian Cinema*: chapters *Rossellini’s Journey: Nobility, Faith, and Modernity*, pp. 131-134, and *The Fables of De Sica and Zavattini*, pp.134-137.

Students will be required to watch the film: *Ladri di biciclette (Bicycle Thieves, De Sica, 1948)*

6th lesson

De Sica.

Analysis of *Ladri di biciclette* and discussion with the students.

Conclusion of the De Sica topic. Watching and analysis of film scenes.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *The Bicycle Thief*, pp. 85-89.
- 2) John C. Stubbs, *Bicycle Thieves*, «Journal of Aesthetic Education», Vol.9, No.2, Special Issue: Film IV: Eight Study Guides (April, 1975), pp.50-61 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3331734>).
- 3) Frank P. Tomasulo, “*Bicycle Thieves*”: A Re-Reading, «Cinema Journal», Vol.21, No.2 (Spring, 1982), pp.2-13 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225033>).

7th lesson

Conclusions on Neorealism.

Watching and analysis of scenes from films by Visconti and by De Santis. Conclusions on Neorealism.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapters *Luchino Visconti and Verga: The Earth Trembles*, pp.93-97, and *Neorealist Cheesecake in De Santis's Bitter Rice*, pp.107-110.
- 2) Gianfranco Poggi, *Luchino Visconti and the Italian Cinema*, «Film Quarterly», Vol.13, No.3 (Spring, 1960), pp.11 -22 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1210429>).
- 3) Gian Piero Brunetta, *The History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *The Choral Voice of Giuseppe De Santis*, pp.139-140.

Students will be required to watch the film: *I soliti ignoti* (Big deal on Madonna Street, Monicelli, 1958)

8th lesson

From Neorealism to Comedy Italian Style.

The film genres of the 1950s. The so-called Pink (or Rosy) Neorealism. Introduction to the Comedy Italian Style and to the social context of the economic boom (1960s). Introduction to the cinema of Mario Monicelli. Analysis of *I soliti ignoti* and discussion with the students.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapters *A Change in the Political Climate in Italy and the Response of the Italian Cinema*, pp.112-113, *Melodrama, Popular Comedy, and "Rosy" Neorealism*, pp.113-116, *The Comic Genius of Monicelli and Comencini* (only pp.181-186: part about Monicelli).
- 2) Rémi Fournier Lanzoni, *Comedy Italian Style*: chapters *Differences between Commedia Italiana and Commedia all'Italiana*, pp.28-34, and *The Forerunners of the Comedy Italian Style*, pp.34-43.

By the 9th lesson, students will be required to submit the first short essay.

9th lesson

The Comedy Italian Style.

Other Comedies Italian Style (by Dino Risi and other directors). Watching and analysis of film scenes.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Rémi Fournier Lanzoni, *Comedy Italian Style*: chapters *Italian Comedy in the 1960s*, pp.49-78, and *Dino Risi and the Art of Caustic Satire* (only pp.89-93: part about *The Easy Life*)

10th lesson

Visit to the Museum of Pre-cinema in Padova.

Back to the “archeology” of cinema ... with the visit to the famous MUSEO DEL PRE-CINEMA MINICI ZOTTI in Padova.

11th lesson

Midterm exam.

Written exam on Neorealism

12th lesson

Introduction to the Art Film of the 1960s. Fellini.

Introduction to the Art Film of the 1950s and 1960s. Beginning of the study of Fellini. Watching and analysis of film scenes.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Gian Piero Brunetta, *The History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *The 1960s: Memorable Vintages and Bumper Crops*, pp.170-173.
- 2) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *Federico Fellini and the “Crisis of Neorealism”*: *The “Trilogy of Grace and Salvation”*, pp.146-154.
- 3) John C. Stubbs, *The Fellini Manner: Open Form and Visual Excess*, «Cinema Journal», Vol.32, No.4 (Summer, 1993), pp.49-64 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225710>).

Students will be required to watch the film: *La dolce vita* (Fellini, 1960)

13th lesson

Fellini.

Analysis of *La dolce vita* and discussion with the students.
Conclusion of the Fellini topic.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapters *Fellini, the Director as Superstar: La Dolce Vita*, pp.285-292, *Fellini and Dreams: 8 ½ and Juliet of the Spirits* (only pp. 292-295: part about 8 ½).
- 2) Tullio Kezich, *Federico Fellini and the Making of “La Dolce vita”*, «Cinéaste», Vol.31, No.1 (Winter, 2005), pp.8-14 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41689931>).
- 3) John C. Stubbs, 8 ½, «Journal of Aesthetic Education», Vol.9, No.2, Special Issue: Film IV: Eight Study Guides (April, 1975), pp.96-108 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3331737>).

14th lesson

Antonioni.

Antonioni. Watching and analysis of film scenes.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema: chapters Michelangelo Antonioni and New Ways of Seeing in the "Trilogy of Alienation"*, pp.268-275, and *Antonioni's English-language Films: Blow-Up, Zabriskie Point, and The Passenger*, pp.277-282.
- 2) James S. Williams, *The Rhythms of Life: An Appreciation of Michelangelo Antonioni, Extreme Aesthete of the Real*, «Film Quarterly», Vol.62, No.1 (Fall, 2008), pp.46-57 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/fq.2008.62.1.46>).

Students will be required to watch the film: *Deserto rosso (Red desert, Antonioni, 1964)*

15th lesson

Antonioni and Pasolini.

Analysis of *Deserto rosso*, led by a group of students, and discussion – **class presentation (1st group)**.

Introduction to Pasolini.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema: chapters Antonioni's Experiment in Color: Red Desert*, pp.275-277, and *The Early Postneorealist Work of Pier Paolo Pasolini*, pp.231-237.
- 2) *Pier Paolo Pasolini: An Epical-Religious View of the World*, interview with Piero Paolo Pasolini, «Film Quarterly», Vol.18, No.4 (Summer, 1965), pp.31-45 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1210254>).

To read for the class presentation (only students of the 1st group):

- 1) Peter Brunette, *The films of Michelangelo Antonioni: chapter Red Desert (1964)*, pp.90-108.
- 2) Seymour Chatman, *What is Description in the Cinema?*, «Cinema Journal», Vol.23, No.4 (Summer 1984), pp. 4-11 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225260>).
- 3) Matthew Gandy, *Landscapes of Delinquency in Michelangelo Antonioni's "Red Desert"*, «Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers», New Series, Vol.28, No.2 (June, 2003), pp. 218-237 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3804446>).

Program field trip to TURIN (fall) or CHIOGGIA (spring)

FALL: a 2-day trip to Turin, in order to visit the National Cinema Museum and to participate in the activities of the Turin Film Festival.

SPRING: a 1-day trip to the city of Chioggia and to the Laguna di Venezia, in order to visit – by feet and by boat - the sets of the film *Io sono Li* (with one of the film's photographers as a guide).

16th lesson

Pasolini.

Watching and analysis of scenes from films by Pasolini.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) *Pier Paolo Pasolini, Poet of Ashes*, edited by Roberto Chiesi and Andrea Mancini: chapter *La ricotta*, pp.163-165.
- 2) Silvia Arlorosi, *Pier Paolo Pasolini's La Ricotta: The Power of Cinepoiesis*, «Italica» Vol.86, No.2 (Summer, 2009), pp.254-271 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40505882>).

Students will be required to watch the film: *Caro diario* (*Dear diary*, Moretti, 1993)

By the 17th lesson, students will be required to submit the second short essay and to select the subject of the final paper (to be discussed with the instructor).

17th lesson

Film genres in the 1960s and 1970s. The crisis of Italian Cinema in the 1980s. Moretti.

Brief references to the film genres in the 1960s and the 1970s: *spaghetti western*, erotic comedies, horror, etc.

The creative and production crisis of Italian Cinema in the 1980s.

Moretti (the 1970s and 1980s). Watching and analysis of film scenes.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapter Nanni Moretti, pp.520-526.
- 2) Ewa Mazierska e Laura Rascaroli, *The cinema of Nanni Moretti*: chapter *Laughing Through the Tears: Tragicomedy and Existential Irony*, pp.85-113.

18th lesson

Moretti.

Analysis of *Caro diario*, led by a group of students, and discussion – class presentation (2nd group). Conclusion of the Moretti topic (the 1990s and 2000s).

To read before the lesson:

- 1) David Scott Diffrient, *Autobiography, corporeality, seriality: Nanni Moretti's Dear Diary as a Narrative Archipelago*, «Journal of Film and Video», Vol.61, No.4 (Winter, 2009), pp. 17-30 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20688645>).
- 2) Millicent Marcus, *Caro Diario and the Cinematic Body of Nanni Moretti*, «Italica», Vol.73, No.2 (Summer, 1996), pp.233-247 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/479365>).

To read for the class presentation (only students of the 2nd group):

- 1) Ewa Mazierska e Laura Rascaroli, *The cinema of Nanni Moretti: Dreams and Diaries*: chapter *Nanni Moretti's Self Portrait as a Humble Artist*, pp.14-45.
- 2) Richard Porton, Lee Ellickson and Nanni Moretti, *Comedy, Communism, and Pastry: An Interview with Nanni Moretti*, «Cinéaste», Vol.21, No.1/2 (1995), pp.11-15 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41688097>).
- 3) Dana Renga, *Pier Paolo Pasolini and the Memory of Martyrdom in New Italian Cinema*, «Italica», Vol.85, No.2/3 (Summer/Autumn, 2008), pp.197-209 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40505802>).

Students will be required to watch the film: *L'aria serena dell'Ovest* (*The peaceful air of the West*, Soldini, 1990)

19th lesson

Soldini.

Analysis of *L'aria serena dell'Ovest*, led by a group of students, and discussion – **class presentation (3rd group)**.

The theme of *displacement* in Italian Cinema of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

Watching and analysis of some scenes from Soldini's films.

To read before the lesson:

- 1) Peter E. Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*: chapter *Other Names to Remember from the Third Wave Generation of the 1950s*, pp.552-556.
- 2) Pierre Sorlin, *Italian National Cinema 1896-1996*: chapter *Fifth generation. The world in the box*, pp.144-164.

To read for the class presentation (only students of the 3rd group):

- 1) Luciano Bernadette, *The cinema of Silvio Soldini*: chapters *Introduction: Silvio Soldini. A Filmmaker's Voyage*, pp.1-26, *The Trilogy of the Three A's: Soldini's Women-Centered Cinema* (only pp.75-89), and *Conclusion: Reconfiguring Home*, pp.162-168.

Students will be required to watch the film: *Dopo mezzanotte* (After midnight, Ferrario, 2003) (FALL) or *Io sono Li* (Shun Li and The Poet, Segre, 2011) (SPRING)

20th lesson

Italian cinema of the 1990s and 2000s.

A film set in the National Cinema Museum in Turin: *Dopo mezzanotte* (FALL). Or: A film set in the Veneto region: *Io sono Li* (SPRING).

A brief overview of the renaissance of Italian cinema over the last two decades.

Analysis of *Dopo mezzanotte* (FALL) / *Io sono Li* (SPRING) and discussion with the students.

To read before the lesson (FALL):

- 1) L. Scott Lerner, *Why Angel's Fallen: The Narrating Architecture of "Dopo mezzanotte"*, «Italice», Vol.87, No.4 (Winter, 2010), pp. 646-671 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23070818>).

To read before the lesson (SPRING):

- 1) Manuela Gieri, *Landscapes of Oblivion and Historical Memory in the New Italian Cinema*, «Annali d'Italianistica», Vol.17 (1999), pp.38-54.
- 2) Pierre Sorlin, *Italian Cinema at the Outset of the 21st Century: Business, Spectacle, Innovation*, «Annali d'Italianistica», Vol.30 (2012), pp.51-60.

By the day of the final exam, students will be required to submit the final paper.

Final exam