

Department: Modern and Classical Languages

Course No: ILCS 149

Credits: 3

Title: Cinema and Society in Contemporary Italy

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Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Diversity: CA4 International

Catalog Copy: ILCS 149 Cinema & Society in Contemp Italy 3 units A critical analysis of contemporary Italian society seen through the media of film and literature. Since this course is mainly a film course (i.e., the literature that is included consists mainly of critical readings), I would like to omit the wording "and literature" from the description

Course Information: The goals of this course are to develop an understanding of the complex issues that have shaped contemporary Italian society from WW II and Fascism to the present. Since these issues will be explored by way of film, this course also provides the critical vocabulary for the process of film analysis. b. Mid term and final exams. The exams are in the form of short essay questions, definitions and identifications. Exams also include background, factual information, and interpretative material presented during the lectures and class-discussions. Students are also asked to write 4 short essays on the main topics around which this course is structured. c. The topics and issues covered are:

1. WW II, Fascism, the Resistance
2. The memory of the Holocaust
3. The subaltern at the margins of the economic boom of the 50's and 60's
4. Sexual politics: women and gay stories
5. Migration from and to Italy

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: hrough the medium of film, this course examines the most significant events in contemporary Italian society, including WW II and Fascism, the Holocaust, the modernization of society with the advent of American-inspired models of consumption, the cultural revolution of the 1960s and the phenomenon of migration from North Africa and the Balkans. Since these are events whose ramifications extend far beyond the Italian peninsula to encompass many Western societies from the post war to the present time of globalization, students will acquire not only a deeper "awareness of their era and society" (Gen Ed # 5) but by examining cultural and social developments from a broader, international perspective, will develop "intellectual breadth and versatility" (Gen Ed # 2). Since the films that have been selected provide specific responses to social development from the perspective of different groups (i.e., subaltern, women, gay, immigrants, center-right and left directors), students will become more conscious of the diversity of culture and experience (Gen Ed # 6).

CA1 Criteria: his course fulfills the Arts and Humanities Req. because the film selected belong to different styles (i.e., propaganda film, neo-realism, expressionism, avant-garde,) and genres (i.e., auteur-films, war-films, comedy, satire, drama, documentary, etc.). In addition, this course also promotes a sensitivity to the way film form (i.e., lighting, camera-work, editing, composition, depth-of-field, etc) and film narrative (plot structure and characterization) participate in the director's overall vision of experience.

CA4 Criteria: 1. "Emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity": This course examines major issues in contemporary Italian society from the perspective of groups separated by ideological and religious beliefs, gender, class, and race. Hence, the perceptions, thoughts, values, and modes of creativity of this group vary greatly depending on the "speaking" subjects. Thus, for example, the experience of Fascism and WW II will vary greatly when refracted from the work of a center-right director as opposed to that of a Holocaust survivor. Likewise, the topic of modernization or the more recent phenomenon of migration will generate different responses when represented from the perspectives of urban poor, women, gays, or the young generation of African/Balkans born filmmakers who are now working in Italy.

2. "Emphasize that interpretive systems and/or social structures are cultural creations": The many voices on Italian society from WW II to the present relativize perspectives and point of views on issues such as the state and the nation, family and community life, modernization, gender roles and sexuality, race relations, etc. Collectively considered, these voices reveal how interpretative systems are always provisional, cultural constructs subject to further modifications.

5. "Develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power in the context of any of the above four items". The issues that have shaped and continue to shape contemporary Italian society are carefully situated within international socio-political and economic contexts. Hence a great deal of attention is given to the impact of Americanization and American-inspired models of consumption and behavior in the transformation of Italian society in the aftermath of World War II, the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War in the phenomenon of migration, and so on.

Role of Grad Students: This course is taught by faculty and Teaching Assistants who use the teachers' syllabus and class note. As it is customary in our department, Teaching Assistants are trained by way of a yearly Orientation, a Teaching Methods course and remain under the supervision of a coordinator. In my section, I serve as the coordinator.

Supplemental Information: I look forward to hearing from you concerning the inclusion of this course in groups I, IV, and international.