

ENGL 2090: Italian Cinema as Literary Art
UNO Rome Summer Study Abroad 2019
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course surveys Italian cinema during the postwar period, charting the rise and fall of neorealism after the fall of Mussolini. Neorealism was a response to an existential crisis after World War II, and neorealist films featured stories of the lower classes, the poor, and the oppressed and their material and ethical struggles. After the fall of Mussolini's state sponsored film industry, filmmakers filled the cinematic void with depictions of real life and questions about Italian morality, both during and after the war. This class will chart the rise of neorealism and its later decline, to be replaced by films concerned with individual, as opposed to national or class-based, struggles. We will consider the films in their historical contexts as literary art forms.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Rome, Open City, director Roberto Rossellini (1945)

La Dolce Vita, director Federico Fellini (1960)

Cinema Paradiso, director Giuseppe Tornatore (1988)

Life is Beautiful, director Roberto Benigni (1997)

Various articles for which the instructor will supply either a link or a copy in an email attachment

LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the completion of this course, students will be able to

- 1-understand the relationship between Italian post-war cultural developments and the evolution of cinema during the latter part of the 20th century;
- 2-analyze film as a form of literary expression;
- 3-compose critical and analytical papers that explore film as a literary, artistic, social and historical construct.

GRADES: This course will require weekly short papers (3-4 pages, double spaced, 12-point font); each @ 20% of final grade) and a final exam (20% of final grade). Class participation is expected and productive and helpful participation will positively impact a student's grade. (Think of class participation as a form of "extra credit.")

ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA: Paper grades are final, but the instructor is happy to read and comment on any and all rough drafts leading up to the final version of the paper. When students use outside sources in their papers, all quotations, paraphrases, and summaries must be documented in MLA style, with in-text citations and a "Works Cited" page. Failure to document outside sources correctly in MLA style will result in an F on the paper; this includes internet sources, which must be approved by the instructor beforehand and are *strongly discouraged*. Please note that articles and book chapters from library databases like JSTOR and Project Muse are NOT internet sources, but rather scholarly sources that student access through online databases. As such, students do

NOT need permission to use sources accessed through university library databases. Guidelines for MLA citation may be found at Purdue University, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory and vitally important in a short, labor-intensive summer program. An absence will only be excused in the event of illness, and you must notify the academic director--me--if you are ill. (Hangovers are not illness.)

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism, the use of someone else's ideas or words without adequate acknowledgment, is grounds for failure or worse and should be avoided; see "Academic Dishonesty" at <http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs/documents/Student-Code-of-Conduct-rev-2018.pdf> Papers found to be plagiarized in whole or in part will receive a grade of zero and all evidence of plagiarism will be turned over to the dean of judicial and student assistance for prosecution upon our return to New Orleans.

DISABILITIES: University policy provides, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. If you have a disability, please contact the Program Coordinator, Robyn White (RLWhite3@uno.edu) as soon as possible so that we can best accommodate you.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: All electronic devices—cell phones, i-pods, handheld video games, et cetera—should be turned off and put away for the duration of the class; the sole exception to this rule is the use of laptop computers or tablets for the purpose of taking notes only. If I detect a student texting, playing video games, or otherwise using technology for any unauthorized purpose during class, I will deduct 2 points from the student's *final grade* for each infraction. I will not call you out on it publically, but I will make a note privately, and you may be surprised when you receive your course grade.

DAILY SCHEDULE—PLEASE NOTE: This schedule is tentative. As our field trips have not been finalized, some elements of the syllabus may change. The instructor reserves the right to adjust the schedule but will notify students in person and/or via email if and when such adjustments must be made.

Week One [July 1-4]

Readings: Marcia Landy, "Introduction" to *Italian Film* (Cambridge UP, 2000), pp. 1-20.

Esma Kartal, "Defining Italian Neorealism: A Compulsory Movement."

Cinema Journal vol. 2, no. 2 (2013): 141-48.

Summary of *Rome, Open City* (optional reading) at

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/italians/resources/Amiciprize/1996/roma.html>

Viewing: *Rome, Open City*, Rossellini (1945)

Response paper one due Friday, July 5, 2019, by 8 a.m. via email

Week Two [July 8-11]

Readings: Enzo Peri & Federico Fellini, "Federico Fellini: An Interview." *Film Quarterly* vol. 15, no. 1 (Autumn 1961): 30-33.

Peter Bondanella, "Fellini, the Director as Superstar: *La Dolce Vita*" in *A History of Italian Cinema* (New York: Continuum, 2009), pp.285-92.

Viewing: *La Dolce Vita*, Fellini (1960)

Response paper two due Thursday, July 11, 2019, by 8 p.m. via email

Week Three [July 15-18]

Reading: Millicent Marcus, "Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* and the Art of Nostalgia" in *After Fellini: National Cinema in the Postmodern Age* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2002), pp. 199-213.

Viewing: *Cinema Paradiso*, Tornatore (1988)

Response paper three due Thursday, July 18, 2019, by 8 p.m. via email

Week Four [July 22-26]

Readings: Gerald Peary, "Review: *Life Is Beautiful*) in the Boston Phoenix, 2 Nov. 1998.

<http://www.geraldpeary.com/reviews/jkl/life-is-beautiful.html>

Maurizio Viano, "'Life Is Beautiful': Reception, Allegory, and Holocaust Laughter." *Film Quarterly* vol. 53, no. 1 (Autumn 1991): 26-34.

Viewing: *Life Is Beautiful*, Benigni, 1997.

Response paper four due Thursday, July 25, 2019, by 8 p.m. via email