

Italian Cinema
WL 3390/CTV 3390

No prerequisites. In English.

SYLLABUS

Brandy Alvarez
balvarez@smu.edu
416 Clements Hall
Tel. 214 768 1892

Required texts: Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema from Neorealism to the Present*; Continuum, New York, 1997 (Third Edition 2001) and course packet

Grading: 25 % class discussion
25 % daily response papers
25 % oral presentation
25 % final paper

Methods of evaluation: Students will write short responses to each film (generally one page to a page and a half) and answer analytical questions that are distributed with each film, present to the class a summary of a critical film essay, and write a five-page final paper on one of the film's we viewed in class.

Absences: Given the nature of the J-term course, any absence will affect the final grade (one grade for each absence).

Student Learning Outcomes: *(from Creativity and Aesthetics: Level One: 1). Students will be able to identify methods, techniques, or languages of a particular art form and explain how those inform its creation, performance, or analysis, and 2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of concepts fundamental to the creative impulse through analysis.*

Overview and additional learning expectations: This course offers a brief chronological survey of renowned Italian films and directors as well as exemplars of popular cinema that enjoyed box office success abroad. We will explore the themes and cinematic style of Neorealism and the 'generational' waves of those directors who followed in its wake, including Fellini. Students will watch the films in original language with English subtitles.

- Students learn the fundamentals of film analysis, including the basic structural and narrative components of a film, and the terminology necessary to describe both.
- Students are introduced to Italy's political, economic, social, and cultural history and gain an understanding of reactions to World War II and Fascism as they were articulated in film

- Students view films from different genres, but the emphasis will be on Neorealism, the shifting attitudes towards it, and its legacy.
- Students examine multiple interpretive possibilities of single films
- Students consider the course content in relation to their own intellectual and cultural interests as well as work done in other subject courses.

Class procedure: Films are viewed in Italian with English subtitles with short lectures before or after; in-class group discussions; student-generated interpretive questions on the films (students address questions to each other in class and evaluate the other students' responses)

Mon., Jan. 7:

The Beginnings of Neo-realism. Luchino Visconti, *Obsession* (1942)
Bondanella Ch 1

Tues., Jan. 8:

Fascism, World War II and the Liberation. Roberto Rossellini, *Roma Citta` Aperta/Open City* (1946)
Bondanella Ch 2, pp. 31-42

Wed., Jan. 9:

Post war realities. Vittorio DeSica, *Ladre di biciclette/Bicycle Thieves* (1948); Vittorio DeSica, *Umberto D* (1952)
Bondanella Ch 2

Thur., Jan. 10:

The Break with Neo-realism. Federico Fellini, *La Strada* (1954) *I Vitelloni* (1953)
Bondanella Ch 4

Fri., Jan.11:

The Economic Boom: The North-South Divide. Luchino Visconti, *Rocco e I suoi fratelli/Rocco and his brothers* (1960)
Bondanella Ch 6

Mon., Jan. 14:

New Sensibilities: the Auteur. Federico Fellini, *La Dolce Vita* (1960)
Bondanella Ch 6

Tues., Jan. 15:

Neo-realism Revisited. Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, *Notte di San Lorenzo/Night of the Shooting Stars* (1982)

Ch 12

Wed., Jan. 16:

Fascism Revisited. Gabriele Salvatores, *Mediterraneo* (1991)

Gianni Amelio, *Ladri di bambini* (1992).

Bondanella Ch 9 & 12

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.