

**ITT 3541 GANGSTERS & GODFATHERS ITALIAN MAFIA MOVIES  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
FALL 2020**



|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Instructor</b>   | Deborah Amberson   |
| <b>Meetings</b>     | T 7 (1:55-2:45); R 7-8 (1:55-2:45; 3:00-3:50)                    |
| <b>Room</b>         | <b>Zoom: links available on Canvas</b>                           |
| <b>Office Hours</b> | T 3:00-4:00; R 11:25-12:35; <b>Zoom link available in Canvas</b> |
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| <b>Email</b>        | <a href="mailto:dambers@ufl.edu">dambers@ufl.edu</a>             |
| <b>Phone</b>        | (352) 273 3763 – <b>but please use email for contact</b>         |

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**

This course will explore Italian cinematic representations of organized crime. Starting with a brief consideration of the history and activities of the Sicilian Cosa Nostra and the Neapolitan Camorra, we will also address the conventions of gangster film and crime film more generally as developed, for the most part, in Hollywood. From here we will move to a sampling of Italian cinema's engagement with organized criminality. Our selected films vary significantly in terms of genre, tone, and directorial style and they span a period of time from the 1960s to the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Issues addressed over the course of the semester include but are not limited to: genre, *omertà*, social order, gender, representations of violence, state collusion, the relationship between fact and fiction, and environmentalism. By the end of the semester, students should expect to have a familiarity with Mafia history and practices, as well as a knowledge of cinematic crime genres, and of Italy's filmic engagement both with its own problem of organized criminality and with a cinematic tradition apparently fascinated with violence.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:**

- All reading materials are available through Canvas
- All films can be accessed in digital form via library west course reserves

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**FINAL GRADE AT A GLANCE:**

1. **PARTICIPATION, 10%**
2. **WORKSHEETS, 20%**
3. **EXAM, 15%**
4. **SCENE ANALYSIS PRESENTATION, 10%**
5. **DISCUSSION JOHNNY STECCHINO, 10%**
6. **FINAL PRESENTATION, 10%**
7. **FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL & OUTLINE, 5%**
8. **FINAL PAPER, 20%**

**Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):**

|        |        |        |       |        |        |       |        |        |       |        |     |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-----|
| A      | A-     | B+     | B     | B-     | C+     | C     | C-     | D+     | D     | D-     | E   |
| 100-93 | 92-90  | 89-87  | 86-83 | 82-80  | 79-77  | 76-73 | 72-70  | 69-67  | 66-63 | 62-60  | 59- |
| (4.0)  | (3.67) | (3.33) | (3.0) | (2.67) | (2.33) | (2.0) | (1.67) | (1.33) | (1.0) | (0.67) | (0) |

**Note:** A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>;

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

**ZOOM STATEMENT:**

I expect we all agree that Zoom is not the ideal place to hold our class meetings. I imagine we would all prefer to be meeting in person, even in the ugliest classroom on campus. However, we cannot always choose the challenges our reality throws in our direction and, so, for now, we must adapt as best we can. Synchronous Zoom classes are, to my mind, the best way available to us as we try to recreate the face-to-face in-class experience. I hope that, in our regularly scheduled online meetings, we will manage to maintain a high level of discussion and interaction. Discussing Italian films might feel a bit awkward under the best of circumstances. And I know that this strangeness might well be heightened by the fact that we must now do this in an online format. I welcome, at *any* point in the semester, suggestions regarding my teaching practices or our use of Zoom. If any ideas come to you regarding ways to facilitate participation and discussion, please share them. I think we might approach this semester as a group project of sorts in which we can work together to make the most of our course material, our shared experience, and Zoom itself. To recreate the classroom experience as fully as possible, I ask that you make sure your webcams work throughout the semester and that you keep them turned on during our Zoom classes. Although there will be **NO RECORDING** of our classes, I understand that you might still have some concerns regarding privacy. So, I would remind you that neither I nor your classmates need to see your background – we just need to see your face. You can use the “change virtual background” option on Zoom or you can set yourself up against a blank section of wall wherever you happen to find yourself.

**ASSIGNMENT NOTES**

- In the case of all **presentations**, you **must provide me with all notes and visual supports**. If I do not receive notes, you will not receive a grade for the assignment.
- All written assignments should be submitted in **Microsoft word format (NO ADOBE/PDF)**. They should be **double-spaced** and written in 12 pt. font (Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, or similarly conventional script) with 1-inch margins on all sides. These assignments should be uploaded as Microsoft word documents to Canvas.

**1. CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%):** When you come to class, you should be ready to speak, ask questions, and engage with the opinions of your classmates. Class participation is not about having all the right answers. Instead, it is a question of preparing the assigned readings/viewings

and being alert and active in class. It is about expressing your doubts or questions about our assignments as much as it is about sharing your opinion on this or that director. It is also a question of listening to your classmates' opinions and responding when and where you can. All of the above comments apply to discussion within our large zoom group as well as any smaller breakout room work. Your participation grade will therefore reflect your overall willingness to engage with the work. It will also reflect the degree to which you have prepared your reading homework and the quality of your interventions in class. **See last page of syllabus for detailed participation rubric.**

**2. WORKSHEETS (20%):** You will be expected to complete and submit a worksheet for each film, beginning with Damiani and ending with Tognazzi. The worksheets will cover issues such as plot, genre, scene preference, directorial agenda. In addition to answering the questions as completely and accurately as you can, you might also view this exercise as a means to formulate your ideas for the week's in-class discussion. You will lose over 2% every time you fail to submit your completed answer sheet. Unless otherwise indicated, you should upload your completed worksheet **by midnight each Monday.**

**3. EXAM (15%):** There will be 1 exam during the semester. The exam will consist of multiple-choice and/or essay questions and is scheduled for September 22. Detailed preparation tips will be provided closer to the scheduled date.

**4. SCENE ANALYSIS PRESENTATION (10%):** Working with another student, you will be expected to present a 10-minute analysis/close reading of a selected scene from one of the films studied. You will present your analysis to the class using some form of visual support (PPT or similar). Your analysis should explore a specific scene in light of the considerations raised in our reading and discussion. Scene choices will be discussed closer to the due date as will the format and content of the assignment. **Scene analysis presentations will take place on October 27 and 29.**

**5. DISCUSSION: JOHNNY STECCHINO (10%):** Our analysis of Benigni's *Johnny Stecchino* will revolve around an extended class discussion of the film, its ideas and strategies. Students will be responsible for the content of this discussion—in effect, you will structure and teach the class. The class will be divided into groups and each group will select a specific aspect of the film and present its findings to the class as a whole. Each group presentation should include visual aids such as power point or similar. It is expected that everyone will participate in this discussion and your grade for this assignment will be based on the level and quality of your participation. Further details will be provided. **Discussion is scheduled for November 12.**

**6. FINAL PRESENTATION (10%):** As part of a group of 3-4 students, you will be expected to deliver a presentation of about 15-20 minutes in length. Together with your group, you will explore the representation of organized criminality in a film not addressed over the course of the semester. This film does not need to be Italian though it must address organized criminality. Your presentation should introduce your classmates to the work, and it should also consider the work in light of the films and ideas studied over the course of the semester. **Final presentations are scheduled for December 1, 3, and 8.**

**7. FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL & OUTLINE (5%):** You will submit a brief paper proposal (working title; thesis; brief description) and outline of your final paper prior to Thanksgiving. Although the paper itself is not due until December 13, the proposal/outline will allow you to begin thinking and planning the final assignment. A prompt for all final assignments will be provided closer to the end of the semester. **Paper proposal & outline are due on November 24.**

**8. FINAL PAPER (20%):** You will be expected to write a final paper of approximately 5 pages in length (double-spaced; 1-inch margins; 12 pt font). This paper should reflect your thinking and research on ONE of the films studied during the semester as they relate to ONE of the questions raised in our class discussion. For example, you might choose to work on subversion of genre in Sorrentino or gender in Wertmüller. You will also be expected to include in your paper at least one critical source not included in our assigned readings. Guidelines will be provided closer to the end of the semester. Your paper should be uploaded to Canvas by 9pm on December 13.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Papers must be submitted by the due date unless you have asked for (via email) and received permission to extend the deadline or unless you have a valid excuse. **Papers submitted late with no excuse will be penalized.** *Papers will be graded with regard not only to content and organization, but also to presentation, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Your research should be **documented accurately.** Secondary sources, whether textual or internet based, must be acknowledged.* **UNATTRIBUTED USE OF SOURCES WILL EARN YOU AN E FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.**

### **CLASS POLICIES:**

**Attendance & makeup policy:** Attendance via Zoom is **MANDATORY** and will be assessed by roll call. **Students will lose 1% from their final grade for each unexcused absence.** Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable excuses include illness, religious holidays, & military obligation: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to the material covered. Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse, there will be no make-up option for missed exams/assignments. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on return to classes.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of assignment and/or course. For UF's honor code, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with Dean of Students Office. Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must provide this documentation to instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact Disability Resources Center for information about available resources: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

**Counseling & Mental Health Resources:** Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

**Online Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

**COURSE CALENDAR: ITT 3541 GANGSTERS & GODFATHERS**

*(schedule subject to change over the course of the semester)*

| READING & VIEWING   | Tuesday (7)                         | Thursday (7-8)                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>MODULE 1: MAFIA HISTORIES &amp; GENRE</b>  |                                     |                                 |
| <b>Reading:</b> (R) “Cosa Nostra: History, Codes, Activities”<br><b>Optional reading:</b> “Camorra: History and Activities”   | 9/1 course introduction             | 9/3 Cosa nostra                 |
| <b>Reading:</b> (T) Lam, “Gangsters and Genre”  | 9/8 GENRE                           | 9/10 GENRE                      |
| <b>MODULE 2: GENRE &amp; VIOLENCE</b>   |                                     |                                 |
| <b>Viewing:</b> (T) Damiani, <i>Day of the Owl</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (R) Garofalo, “Day of Owl: Western Flirtation,” 252-60<br>• <b>Worksheet 1 due Monday 9/14</b>   | 9/15                                | 9/17                            |
| <b>Viewing:</b> Leone, <i>C’era una volta in America</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (R) Martin, <i>Once Upon a Time in America</i> , 9-43<br>• <b>Worksheet 2 due Wednesday 9/23</b>   | 9/22 <b>EXAM 1</b>                  | 9/24                            |
| <b>Viewing:</b> (R) Garrone, <i>Gomorra</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (R) Antonello, “Dispatches from Hell,” 377-85; Renga, “Why Italian cinema is starting to glamorize the mafia”<br>• <b>Worksheet 3 due Monday 9/28</b> | 9/29                                | 10/1                            |
| <b>MODULE 3: STATE COLLUSION, FACT &amp; FICTION</b>  |                                     |                                 |
| <b>Viewing:</b> Rosi, <i>Salvatore Giuliano</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (T) Wittman, “The Visible, Unexposed,” 211-18<br>• <b>Worksheet 4 due Monday 10/5</b>   | 10/6                                | 10/8                            |
| <b>Viewing:</b> Placido, <i>Romanzo Criminale</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (T) O’Rawe, “More More Moro”<br>• <b>Worksheet 5 due Monday 10/12</b>   | 10/13                               | 10/15                           |
| <b>Viewing:</b> Sorrentino, <i>Il Divo</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (R) Marcus, Antonello, & Marlow-Mann, “ <i>Il Divo</i> : a Discussion”<br>• <b>Worksheet 6 due Monday 10/19</b>  | 10/20                               | 10/22                           |
| <b>SCENE ANALYSIS PRESENTATIONS</b>   | 10/27 <b>Presentations</b>          | 10/29 <b>Presentations</b>      |
| <b>MODULE 4: OMERTÀ, HONOR, &amp; GENDER</b>  |                                     |                                 |
| <b>Viewing:</b> Wertmuller, <i>Mimì metallurgico</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> (T) Harrison, “Smaller & Larger Families,” 261-269<br>• <b>Worksheet 7 due Monday 11/2</b>   | 11/3                                | 11/5                            |
| <b>Viewing:</b> (R) Benigni, <i>Johnny Stecchino</i> ;<br><b>Optional Reading:</b> (R) Interview w/ Benigni, 127-55<br>• <b>Worksheet 8 due Monday 11/9</b>   | 11/10                               | 11/12 <b>Benigni discussion</b> |
| <b>MODULE 5: ANTI-MAFIA MARTYRDOM</b>   |                                     |                                 |
| <b>Viewing:</b> (R) Tognazzi, <i>La scorta</i> ; <b>Reading:</b> Swennen Ruthenberg, “Sacrifice, Sacrament, & Body,” 304-11<br>• <b>Worksheet 9 due Monday 11/16</b>  | 11/17                               | 11/19                           |
| <b>HOUSEKEEPING: FINAL ASSIGNMENTS</b>  | 11/24 <b>Proposal &amp; outline</b> | 11/26 <b>Thanksgiving</b>       |
| <b>NO VIEWING; NO READING</b>   | 12/1 <b>Presentations</b>           | 12/3 <b>Presentations</b>       |
| <b>NO VIEWING; NO READING</b>   | 12/8 <b>Presentations</b>           |                                 |

**REMEMBER: Final paper to uploaded to Canvas by 9pm December 13**

## PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

|                          | <b>A: 90%- 100%</b>   | <b>B: 80%-89%</b>   | <b>C: 70%-79%</b>   | <b>D: 60%-69%</b>   | <b>E: 0-59%</b> |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Participation            | <p>Asks and answers questions in every class</p> <p>Participates enthusiastically in all class discussion</p> <p>Remains alert and focused on class discussion</p>                      | <p>Asks and answers questions in most class meetings.</p> <p>Participates enthusiastically in most class discussion</p> <p>Mostly alert and focused on class discussion</p>                   | <p>Ask and answers questions in at least half of the classes</p> <p>Occasionally participates in class discussion</p> <p>Frequently distracted, but alert more often than not</p> | <p>Speaks only when called upon by instructor</p> <p>Generally unenthusiastic about class</p> <p>Rarely focused on class activities; plays with phone; generally distracted</p> | Absent          |
| Preparation              | <p>Always comes to class having completed assigned readings or viewings</p>   | <p>Completes assigned readings and viewings most of the time</p>  | <p>Completes assigned readings and viewings at least half of the time</p>   | <p>Only occasionally completes assigned readings and viewings</p>   | Absent          |
| Quality of Comments      | <p>Comments always insightful &amp; constructive</p> <p>Comments reflect content of assigned homework and show personal consideration or reflection on questions raised by homework</p> | <p>Comments mostly insightful &amp; constructive</p> <p>Comments mostly reflect content of assigned homework but are occasionally too general or not entirely relevant to the discussion.</p> | <p>Comments sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight.</p> <p>Comments not always relevant to discussion and often show no evidence of homework preparation</p>    | <p>Comments superficial, and mostly off topic.</p> <p>No real evidence of having prepared readings. Comments grounded only in personal opinion or preference.</p>               | Absent          |
| Engagement in Group Work | <p>Actively participates in group work.</p> <p>Listens attentively while others speak or present, as indicated by comments that reflect &amp; build on remarks made</p>                 | <p>Mostly participates in group work</p> <p>Mostly attentive when others speak or present.</p>  | <p>Sometimes inattentive during group work; needs to be reminded to focus</p> <p>Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.</p>                            | <p>Only occasionally focused attention on topic of group work</p> <p>Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak; plays with computer; dozes off, etc.</p>    | Absent          |