

COURSE GUIDELINES

COURSE DESCRIPTION: What can explain the shocking popularity of *Jersey Shore*? Where did the controversial images of Italian Americans that the show displays originate? This course proposes an examination of Italian Americans as represented in mainstream and independent American cinema (and later television) from the silent era to the present. Particular attention will be paid to the traditional stereotypes associated with these representations (how they arose and why they continue to exist), two specific genres -- the gangster film and the boxing film -- and how Italian-American filmmakers respond to and re-vision them.

CLASS STRUCTURE: In general, the course organization is as follows: discussion of the previous day's film with readings, followed by a film screening for the next day's discussion. Winter session is intense: attendance is required at all class meetings. Missing one class is equivalent to missing one week of classes during a normal semester, and only extreme emergencies will be excused. **ALL CELLPHONES, IPADS, IPHONES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS TIME.** If you need to use a laptop or ipad during classtime, you must seek my permission first.

MATERIALS: All readings are available on-line on Blackboard: <http://www.nyu.edu/its/blackboard/>. If you wish to review a film, many are available at the Library, and most are available to rent through Netflix (www.netflix.com) and on-line through iTunes or amazon.com. **PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU ARE EXPECTED TO SEE THREE FILMS ON YOUR OWN:** *The Godfather Parts I and II*, and as well as the rest of *Italianamerican*. Please view these films as indicated on the syllabus, and let me know if you do not have access to them.

BLACKBOARD: Everything pertaining to the class – syllabus, links to films, external links, and all readings – will be available on **BLACKBOARD**. Please make sure that you check it EVERY DAY for course information.

CLASS WORK: Readings are to be done for the class period as listed. There will be a midterm and a final exam, as well as a final paper, due as indicated on the syllabus. Topics will be announced for the paper. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

GRADES: Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION	20%
MIDTERM EXAM	25%
PAPER	30%
FINAL EXAMINATION	25%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty will be reported to the University.

ASSISTANCE: In general, I will hold office hours after class every day except Tuesdays. If you need assistance outside of office hours, the best way to reach me is via e-mail at jr3322@nyu.edu. You will be expected to come and discuss your final paper with me at some point during the second week of classes.

SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION

- 1/7 General Introduction
READINGS: Greg M. Smith, "It's Just a Movie," Lester D. Friedman, "Celluloid Palimpsests: An Overview of Ethnicity and the American Film"
SCREENING: Scenes from *Italianamerican* (Martin Scorsese, 1974); *The Black Hand* (Biograph, 1906); *The Italian* (Barker, 1914)
ON YOUR OWN: The rest of *Italianamerican*:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tzKAILb4iM>
- 1/8 Race, Italians, and Early American Cinema
READINGS: Bertellini, "Black Hands & White Hearts," Thomas Guglielmo, "No Color Barrier"
SCREENING: *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (D. W. Griffith, 1912), *The Sheik* (George Melford, 1921)
- 1/9 Models of Masculinity: The Gangster and the Latin Lover
READINGS: Bertellini, "Divo/Duce," Gaylyn Studlar, "Discourses of Gender and Ethnicity: The Construction and De(con)struction of Rudolph Valentino as Other"
SCREENING: *Little Caesar* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1930)
- 1/10 The Gangster Film I
READINGS: Warshow, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero," Thomas Schatz, "The Gangster Film"
Scenes from: *Scarface*, *The Shame of a Nation* (Howard Hawks, 1932)
SCREENING: *Mean Streets* (Scorsese, 1973)

- 1/11 Martin Scorsese and the Gangster Film II
SCREENING: *Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990)
READINGS: David A. Cook, "Auteur Cinema and the 'Film Generation' in 1970s Hollywood," Richard A. Blake, "Redeemed in Blood: The Sacramental Universe of Martin Scorsese," Maurizio Viano, "Goodfellas"
- Weekend: On your own: *The Godfather, Parts I and II* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972 and 1974)**
- 1/14 The Gangster Film III: The Godfathers
READINGS: T. Ferraro, "Blood in the Marketplace: The Business of Family in the Godfather Narratives," M. Ryan/D. Kellner, "Francis Coppola and the Crisis of Patriarchy"
SCREENING: *Golden Boy* (Robert Mamoulian, 1939)
- 1/15 **Midterm Examination**
Introduction to the Boxing Film
SCREENING: *Rocky* (John Avildsen, 1976)
- 1/16 The Boxing Film I
READINGS: Reading: Daniel J. Leab, "The Blue Collar Ethnic in Bicentennial America: *Rocky*"; Leger Grindon, "Body and Soul: The Structure of Meaning in the Boxing Film Genre,"
SCREENING: *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980)
- 1/17 The Boxing Film II
READINGS: Robert Casillo, "Catholicism and Violence in the Films of Martin Scorsese," Robin Wood, "Two Films by Martin Scorsese"
SCREENING: *True Love* (Savoca, 1989)
PAPER ABSTRACTS DUE
- 1/18 Italian American Revisions I: Gender and Sexuality
READINGS: Daniel Golden, "Pasta or Paradigm: The Place of Italian-American Women in Popular Film," Edvige Giunta, "The Quest for Ethnicity"
SCREENING: *Kiss me, Guido* (Vitale, 1997)
- 1/21 NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
- 1/22 Italian American Revisions II: Gender and Sexuality
Baker and Vitullo, "Screening the Italian-American Male," Donald Tricarico, "Guido: Fashioning an Italian American Youth Style"
Scenes from *Romance and Cigarettes* (Turturro, 2005); Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

Italian Americans on Screen: From *The Black Hand* to *Jersey Shore*
Winter 2012
Prof. Jacqueline Reich, Jr3322@nyu.edu

SCREENING: *The Sopranos* (Various episodes)

1/23 Italian American Revisions III: *The Sopranos*
Readings: Lance Strate, "No(rth Jersey) Sense of Place: The Cultural Geography (and Media Ecology) of *The Sopranos*," David Pattie, "Mobbed Up: *The Sopranos* and the Modern Gangster Film"
SCREENING: *Jersey Shore* (various episodes)

1/24 Italian American Revisions IV: *Jersey Shore*: The Beginning or the End of an era?
Readings: TBD

1/25 **Final Examination**

Paper Due by Monday, January 28 via e-mail