

211.357 MAFIA WARS IN LITERATURE AND FILM: FROM LEONARDO SCIASCIA'S MAFIA NOVELS TO THE SOPRANOS

9 – 10:30 on TH (Hodson 313) and F (Sheridan Library's Audiovisual Center)

https://jshare.johnshopkins.edu/bwegens1/211357_mafia_wars/

Visiting Associate Professor Bernadette Wegenstein

berna@jhu.edu

office hours: Thursday, 11-1pm, Gilman 246

office phone: 410 516-7511

Course Description:

The course will examine the discourse of and about mafia wars in literature, film and television. We will read the mafia novels and tales of Sicilian authors (e.g., Leonardo Sciascia), analyze the legendary films made from their novels (e.g., *Cadaveri Eccellenti* by Francesco Rosi), as well as discuss possibilities of the translation of the classic mafia tale into comedy as in such films as *Mio cognato* (2003) by Alessandro Piva. The representation of the mafia in the U.S. will be a theme of the course as exemplified in Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy, or in the format of evening entertainment in the mafia soap TV series *The Sopranos*. Course taught in Italian and English.

Books:

Aldo Budriesi, *Pigliari di lingua: temi e forme della narrativa di Leonardo Sciascia*, 1986

Gesualdo Bufalino (ed.), *Cento Sicilie*, 1993

Francesco Casetti/Federico di Chio, *Analisi del Film*, 1990

Giancarlo de Cataldo: *Romanzo Criminale*, 2002

John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra. The History of the Sicilian Mafia*, 2004

Lee Grieveson, Esther Sonnet, Peter Stanfield (eds.): *Mob Culture: Hidden History of American Gangster Film*, 2005

John Katz, *Days of Wrath: The Ordeal of Aldo Moro, the Kidnapping, the Execution, the Aftermath*, 1980

Saverio Lodato, *Trent'anni di mafia*, 2006

Saverio Lodato (ed.), *La confessione di Giovanni Brusca: "Ho ucciso Giovanni Falcone,"* 1999

Salvatore Lupo, *Storia della mafia: dalle origini a nostri giorni*, 1993

Salvatore Lupo, Andreotti, la mafia, la storia d'Italia, 1996

John McCarty: *Bullets over Hollywood: the American gangster picture from the silents to The Sopranos*, 2004

Teresa Principato & Alessandra Dino, *Mafia donna: le vestali del sacro e dell'onore*, 1997

Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*, 1972

Leonardo Sciascia: *Il giorno della civetta* (1961), *A ciascuno il suo* (1964), *Il contestato* (1971)

Silvana la Spina, *La Mafia spiegata ai miei figli*, 2006

Alexander Stille: *Excellent Cadavers. The Mafia and the Death of the First Italian Republic*, 1995

Salvo Vitale: *Nel cuore dei coralli Peppino Impastato una vita contro la mafia*, 1986

FILMS:

A Ciascuno il Suo, Elio Petri (1967)

Alla Luce del Sole, Roberto Faenza (2005)

Cadaveri Eccellenti, Francesco Rosi (1976)

Goodfellas, Martin Scorsese (1990)

I Cento Passi, Marco Tullio Giordana (2000)

Il Gattopardo, Luchino Visconti (1963)

Il Giorno della Civetta, Damiano Damiani (1968)

In Un'Altro Paese, Marco Tulio (2005)

La Capa Gira, Alessandro Piva (2000)

Mio Cognato, Alessandro Piva (2003)

Ragazzi Fuori, Marco Risi (1990)

Raging Bull, Martin Scorsese (1980)

Romanzo Criminale, Michele Placido (2005)

Salvatore Giuliano, Francesco Rosi (1962)

The Godfather trilogy, Francis Ford Coppola (1972-1992)

The Sopranos, David Chase (1999-2006)

The Sicilian, Michael Cimino (1987)

Todo Modo, Elio Petri (1976)

SYLLABUS

Week 1: Sep 7 + 8: **Course Introduction: what is “the mafia,” historical background to the Risorgimento; why narration, why literature, why film?**

Screening: *Il Gattopardo*, Sicily in 1800s, by Luchino Visconti (1962) part I

Week 2: Sep 14 + 15: **Mafia History & Methodological Approach to Analysis of Mafia Wars in Literature and Film**

Reading: *The Genesis of the Mafia 1860-1876*; (Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia); Excerpts from Gesualdo Bufalino (ed.), *Cento Sicilie* (1993)

Screening: *Il Gattopardo*, Sicily in 1800s, by Luchino Visconti (1962) part II

Week 3: Sep 21 + 22: **Bandits and Mafiosi in Italy and America in the First Part of the 20th Century**

Reading: *The Mafia Enters the Sicilian System 1876-1890; The Mafia Establishes Itself in America 1900-1941*; optional: *War and Rebirth 1943-1950* (Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia); “Philology” by Leonardo Sciascia from *The Wine-dark Sea*;

Screening: *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962) by Francesco Rosi; *The Sicilian* (1987) by Michael Cimino (watch on your own)

Week 4: Sep 28 + 29: **The Classic Mafia Tales: Leonardo Sciascia and Francesco Rosi:**

John Dickie: *God, Concrete, Heroin, and Cosa Nostra 1950-1963; The First Mafia War and its Consequences* (Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia); Discussion of novel: *Il giorno della civetta* (1961) available as copies; Aldo Budriesi: *Pigliari di Lingua; temi e forme nella narrativa di Lenordo Sciascia*; Film *Il giorno della civetta* (1968) by Damiano Damiani

Week 5: Oct 5 + 6: **The Classic Mafia Tales: Leonardo Sciascia and Francesco Rosi:**

First paper due (10 pages): argumentative response to readings and screenings; short written proposal for end-term paper; Screening: *Cadaveri Eccellenti* (1976) by Francesco Rosi based on Sciascia’s *Il Contesto* (1971)

Week 6: Oct 12 + 13: **Mafia and Politics: the 1970s**

Readings: *The Origins of the Second Mafia War 1970-1982* (Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia); Excerpts from *Days of Wrath: The Ordeal of Aldo Moro, the Kidnapping, the Execution, the Aftermath* by John Katz; Giancarlo de Cataldo: *Romanzo Criminale* (book); Film: *Romanzo Criminale* (2005) by Michele Placido

Week 7: Oct 19 + 20: **Representations of the Mafia in the US: The Godfather Trilogy**

Reading: Mario Puzo’s *Godfather* (1972); Screening: part I of *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola); Chris Messenger: *The Godfather and American Culture; how the Corleones became our gang*; Nick Brown (ed.): *Francis Ford Coppola’s Godfather Trilogy*; Excerpts from Teresa Principato/Alessandra Dino, *Mafia Donna*

Week 8: Oct 26 + 27: **Americanized Mafia Comedy: The Sopranos**

Reading: Lee Grieveson, Esther Sonnet, Peter Stanfield (eds.): *Mob Culture: Esther Sonnet and Peter Stanfield, "Waddaya lookin' at? : rereading the gangster film through The Sopranos;"* Excerpts from Kevin L. Stoehr: *Nihilism in film and television : a critical overview, Citizen Kane to The Sopranos*

Screening: parts of *The Sopranos*' first season

Week 9: Nov 2 + 3: **Italianized American Mafia Comedy: "The Sopranos in Bari"**

Reading: John McCarty: *Bullets over Hollywood: the American gangster picture from the silents to The Sopranos*

Screening: *Mio Cognato* (2003) by Alessandro Piva

Week 10: Nov 9 + 10: **Course review**

Second paper due (10 pages): argumentative response to readings and screenings

Screening: *La Capa Gira* (2000) by Alessandro Piva

Week 11: Nov 16 +17: **A Neorealist Account of Palermo in the 1990s**

Reading: *Terra Infidelium 1983-1992; Bombs and Submersion 1992-2003* (Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia); Screening: *Ragazzi Fuori* by Marco Risi (1990)

Week 12: THANKSGIVING

Week 13: Nov 30 + Dec 1: **The excellent cadavers of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino:**

Reading: Saverio Lodato: *Ho Ucciso Giovanni Falcone*; Alexander Stille: *Excellent Cadavers, The Mafia and the Death of the First Republic*; Interview by Julia Kospach with Roberto Scarpinato (translation Bernadette Wegenstein), current anti-mafia judge/follower to Faclone in Palermo;

Screening: *In Un'Altro Paese*, documentary by Marco Turco with Alexander Stille (2005); compare Ricky Tognazzi's *Excellent Cadavers* (1999, docudrama also based on Alexander Stille); questions of history, violence, and the documentary medium will be focused upon.

Week 14: Dec 7 + 8: **Narrating a life against the mafia:**

Reading Salvo Vitale: *Nel cuore dei coralli Peppino. Impastato una vita contro la mafia*; Film *I cento passi* by Marco Tullio Giordana (2000) based on the story of Peppino Impastato

Week 15: Dec 14 + 15 **Final Exams:**

During this last week, students will hand in a written paper about one of the topics related to the course.