



St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Italian & French Studies
ITALST 265 – Fall 2018
Mafia Culture and the Power of Symbols, Rituals, and Myth
M6:30 -9:20 (SJ2-2002)

Instructor: Antonio Nicaso

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Office hours: Mondays 3-5 pm

Course description:

The course will analyze the cinematic representation of the Mafia in North America. It will focus on the manner in which North American cinema productions often glorify the Italian Mafiosi's lifestyle. As this characterization of both the Mafia and the Mafiosi began with the archetypal figures of the bosses, special attention will be given to movies of the 1930s, as well as to Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy. The goal is to deconstruct the romanticized portrayal of the Italian and Italian-American gangster lifestyle created on the silver screen and on television by analyzing the atrocities committed by organized crime.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Understand and analyze scholarly debates about the nature of the Mafia in North America; gain an understanding of its mechanics, such as recruitment, organizational structure, and violence, that goes beyond what most people glean from its fictional representations; and understand what corruption means, what its varieties are, and how serious a problem it is in Canada and other contemporary societies
2. Understand and analyze the cinematic representation of the Mafia in North America. Special attention will be given to movies of the 1930s, as well as to Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy.
3. The goal is to deconstruct the romanticized portrayal of the Italian and Italian-American gangster lifestyle created on the silver screen and on television by analyzing the atrocities committed by organized crime.

Course materials:*Required Readings:*

- Made Men: Mafia Culture and the Power of Symbols, Rituals, and Myth* by Antonio Nicaso and Marcel Danesi (Roman and Littlefield).
- “The Dialects of Sin in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather* Trilogy” by Balázs Szigetzi in *The AnaChronisT* 14 (2009): 24-46 ISSN 1219-2589 (article available on line).
- You may also expect some additional readings, such as newspaper and magazine articles.

Required Watching:

- The Black Hand* (1906);
- Little Caesar* (1931);
- Scarface* (1932);
- Goodfellas* (1990);
- The Godfather, II, and III* (1972, 1974, and 1990).

Evaluation :	Date	Value
Test no 1	Oct. 1, 2018	35%
Test no 2	Dec. 3, 2018	25%
Comparative Essay	Nov. 10, 2018	35%
Attendance and Participation		5%
TOTAL :		100%

Attendance/participation: The course will be taught in discussion format. All students are required to attend class regularly, to complete all required readings, and to participate actively in class discussion. Class Participation/Attendance: 5% (-8 out of 100 per any unjustified absence).

Tests (2) with short answers, multiple choice and one or two longer answers: (The first is worth 35%, the second 25%): 60%

Comparative Essay on The Godfather Trilogy due on November 10, 2018: 35%

(Three to Five pages - 900 to 1200 words - double spaced, with notes and bibliography, Chicago Citation Style)

See <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/comparative-essays>.

Alternative option: An analysis essay of The Godfather Trilogy's scenes from an allegorical and/or a symbolic prospective.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen the essay in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Notes on readings.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Sept. 10, 2018	The origin of the Mafia in Italy and North America: Reality and Myth. Structure and Mechanisms	Chapter 1 of Made Men
2	Sept. 17, 2018	What is in a name? The Black Hand in Canada and the United States. Study case: the saloon keepers and the relation with politicians	Chapter 5 of Made Men Watch: The Black Hand (1906) available on line.
3	Sept. 24, 2018	The fascination for the Mafia and Italophobia. Honor. The other criminal organizations. The role of women and their representation.	Chapter 2 (from page 25 to page 45) of Made Men Watch The Little Caesar
4	Oct. 1, 2018	First Test	N/A
5	Oct. 15, 2018	Symbolism, Codes and Language. Initiation and Passage Rites. Appearance.	Chapters 3, 4, and 6 of Made Men

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
6	Oct. 22, 2018	Analysis of The Godfather	Watch: The Godfather. Read: "The Dialects of Sin in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather Trilogy" by Balázs Szigeti in The AnaChronisT 14 (2009): 24-46 ISSN 1219-2589 (article available on line).
7	Oct. 29, 2018	Analysis of The Godfather - Part II	Watch: The Godfather Part II.
8	Nov. 5, 2018	Analysis of The Godfather – Part III	Watch: The Godfather Part III.
9	Nov. 12, 2018	Drug trafficking and Narco-Culture - Mafia and Biker Gangs	Exploring the world of Narcos and Biker Gangs: Students are required to select an article on Internet for class discussion.
10	Nov. 19, 2018	Analysis of Goodfellas	Watch: Goodfellas
11	Nov. 26, 2018	Yakuza, Triads and Vory V Zakone	Read Chapter 2 (from page 45 to page 49) and Chapter 7 of Made Men.
12	Dec. 3, 2018	Test #2	N/A

COURSE POLICIES

Extension of deadlines

Students are entitled to a rescheduling of exams or an extension of deadlines for legitimate medical or compassionate reasons. Students are also entitled to rescheduling of exams based on religious grounds. However, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor *prior* to the due date, to arrange a timely makeup, and to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical, compassionate, or religious claim.

Late Work

The essay is expected to be submitted, in class, on the day they are due. Student will be penalized ten percent for every day a paper is late. Papers submitted over one week after the deadline won't be accepted. If a student becomes ill or the victim of an emergency, please let the instructor know within 48 hours.

Copyright in instructional settings

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an

instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. It is absolutely forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes to a website or sell them in any form without formal written permission.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offenses. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offenses in the Academic Calendars (Policy 71: page 14 of the St. Jerome's University Calendar and page 1:10 of the University of Waterloo Calendar). Note that such offenses include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Pertinent to this course, examples of cheating on an exam could include viewing another person's exam paper, allowing another person to look at your exam paper, or bringing a 'cheat' or 'crib' sheet with information written on it into the exam. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" will not be accepted as an excuse. If you need help in learning how to avoid academic offences such as cheating or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor, the appropriate St. Jerome's departmental chair and, ultimately, the Discipline Advisor for St. Jerome's University. The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offense include refusal of a passing grade on the exam, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Electronic Device Policy

Cell phones are not allowed during class.

Attendance Policy

The course will be taught in discussion format. All students are required to attend class regularly, to complete all required readings, and to participate actively in class discussion. Class Participation/Attendance (-8 out of 100 per any unjustified absence): 5%

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For

information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.