

## DEPARTMENT OF ITALIAN STUDIES

### ITL/SOC 250 Sicily against the Mafia

#### Syllabus

##### Course description:

This weekend fieldtrip course presents students with a different view of Sicily and of the mafia in Sicily, providing them with an understanding of the emergence of a new Sicilian culture and society based on the fight against the mafia, on pacifistic expression and on the creation of a culture of legality. The course will allow students the opportunity to visit sites of historical, social and cultural interest that document resistance to the local Mafia and encounter local civic associations, community service and solidarity networks that are active in the Sicilian context. Students will meet and exchange ideas with young Sicilians and thereby learn from direct experience an example of social activism in the Italian context. An understanding of the mafia in Sicily will be supported by readings from Sicilian writers such as Luigi Pirandello, Leonardo Sciascia and Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa and through the viewing of Italian films such as *I cento passi*.

**Pre- &/or co-requisites:** none

**1 credit.**

##### Course Learning Objectives

Upon conclusion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the mafia in Sicily and the local resistance struggle.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of Italian literary and cinematic works which focus on the role of the mafia in the Sicilian context.
3. Critically analyze the social, historical and cultural dynamics of the history of the Sicilian mafia and the struggle against the mafia
4. Integrate scholarly research material with direct observations of a historical, cultural and social phenomenon.
5. Demonstrate oral presentation and information technology skills

##### Course Learning Activities

1. **Participation:** Attendance at the preparatory sessions before the trip, the conclusion session afterwards and at all the visits during the trip and participation in the discussion sessions. CLO 1-4
2. Complete introductory **reading assignments** before the trip. CLO 1&2
3. **Journal:** to start the week before the trip, describe expectations and objectives, the trip itself and conclude with a critical analysis comparing expectations gained from scholarly material studied before departure with the reality observed. CLO 1-4
4. Take part in **meetings** with representatives and surviving witnesses of the fight against the mafia in Sicily (CLO 1& 4)
5. **Oral Presentation** – Present research findings to class on a topic related to course and to be decided upon with professor (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

## Assessment tools

1. Students' participation in, constructive contribution to class discussions and knowledge of assigned readings will be assessed in all discussion sessions. (CLO 1-4)
2. Rubric-graded journal. Students record expectations, observations and analysis of reality observed in a journal to be turned in upon return to campus. Journals will be graded by a rubric which evaluates skills of description, observation and critical analysis. (CLO 1-4)
3. Oral Presentation- Students will be evaluated by a rubric which assesses their oral presentation and research skills (CLO 1-5)
4. Final Exam - Students will complete a 2-hour exam upon return to campus in which they demonstrate knowledge of the history of the mafia in Sicily and the local resistance struggle, knowledge of assigned readings, ability to critically analyze the social, historical and cultural dynamics of the history of the Sicilian mafia and the struggle against the mafia

Participation	10%
Journal	25%
Oral presentation	25%
Final Exam	40%

### AUR grade values

94 – 100 points	=	A	Excellent
90 – 93.99 pts	=	A-	
87 – 89.99	=	B+	
83 – 86.99	=	B	Good
80 – 82.99	=	B-	
77 – 79.99	=	C+	
70 – 76.99	=	C	Satisfactory
60 – 69.99	=	D	Poor
59.99 – 0	=	F	Failing

### Course textbook

A course reader with selections from the following works:

Pickering-lazzi, Robin. *Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature*. Toronto, Toronto UP, 2007.

Schneider, Peter T. and Jane C. Schneider. *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo*. U of California P, 2003.

Pirandello, Luigi. *L'Esclusa (1901), Il fu Mattia Pascal (1904), I vecchi e i giovani (1913)*.

Sciascia, Leonardo. *Todo modo*. (Torino: Einaudi, 1974) and *Il giorno della civetta* (Torino: Einaudi, 1988).

Tomasi di Lampedusa, Giuseppe. *Il gattopardo*. Feltrinelli, 2005.

Verga, Giovanni. *I Malavoglia*. Feltrinelli, 1987 and *Novelle*. Feltrinelli, 2002.

### **Further recommended readings:**

Angello Honrby, Simonetta. *La Mennulara*. Feltrinelli, 2003.

Attanasio, Maria. *Concetta e le sue donne*. Sellerio, 1999.

Brancati, Vitaliano. *Don Giovanni in Sicilia*. Bompiani, 1993.

Camilleri Andrea, *La strage dimenticata* (Sellerio 1989); *Il Birraio di Preston* (Sellerio, 1995) *La Concessione del telefono* (Sellerio, 1998).

Lucarelli Carlo, *Il bandito Giuliano in Nuovi misteri d'Italia. I casi di Blu notte*. Torino: Einaudi, 2004.

### **Recommended Films:**

*Il Gattopardo*, di Luchino Visconti (1963)  
*La terra trema*, Luchino Visconti  
*Cento giorni a Palermo*, Giuseppe Ferrara, 1984  
*Johnny Stecchino*, Roberto Benigni, 1991  
*Il giudice ragazzino*, Alessandro Di Robilant, 1994  
*Salvatore Giuliano*, Francesco Rosi, 1961  
*Il giorno della civetta*, Damiano Damiani, 1967  
*A ciascuno il suo*, Elio Petri, 1967  
*Tano da morire*, Roberta Torre, 1997  
*Teatro di guerra*, Mario Martone, 1998  
*Placido Rizzotto*, Pasquale Scimeca, 2000  
*Luna Rossa*, Antonio Capuano, 2001  
*Angela*, Roberta Torre, 2002

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **2 Meetings before departure (3.5 hours)**

- 1) Viewing of film *I cento passi* (2 hours). Assignment of readings from course reader.
- 2) Lecture on the history of mafia in Sicily and introduction to theme of resistance. Discussion of the film *I cento passi* and of assigned readings from course reader. (1.5 hours)

### **In Sicily**

#### **Day 1**

#### **Portella della Ginestra (PA) (3.5 hours)**

- Visit to Portella della Ginestra memorial: meeting with surviving witnesses of the massacre and members of the association *La Ginestra* and the *Camera del*

*Lavoro* that attends to maintaining historical memory of the events of May 1, 1947.

- Lunch at the agriturismo "Portella della Ginestra," a confiscated territory from the Brusca family and managed by the *Coop Sociale Placido Rizzotto*. The agriturismo produces pasta, wine and other commercial products sold under the label *Libera Terra*
- Discussion of day's meetings. Context and analysis.

## **DAY 2**

### **Castelvetrano (TP) – 1.5 hours**

- Meeting with the young people of *La Casa dei Giovani*, an association that attends to the recovery of ex drug addicts and manages properties that have been confiscated from the mafia. Visit to the association's oil mill, which is also a confiscated property.

### **Cinisi e Partinico (PA) (3.5 hours)**

- Visit to Telejato, local television station that continues Peppino Impastato's work of providing information on/against the mafia
- Visita to Cinisi and the *Casa della Memoria "Felicia e Peppino Impastato"*, activist in the antimafia fight who was killed in 1978.
- Discussion of day's meetings. Context and analysis.

### **2 Meetings after return to campus (3 hours)**

- 1) Wrap-up class meeting. Oral Presentations. Turn in journals. (1 hour)
- 2) Final Exam (2 hours)

## **Attendance policy**

"Attendance is required in all classes at The American University of Rome and attendance records are maintained. More than two unexcused absences from any class may have a negative effect on student grades. Absences documented by a medical certificate or an obvious case of emergency may be excused by the Office of the Provost. If the Registrar determines that the student's attendance record is unacceptable, the student will be required to withdraw from the class with a grade of WU. The criteria upon which grades are determined, including the attendance policy, are outlined in each course syllabus." -- AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 17.

For this field trip, this means attending all activities. Above one hour's absence, there will be a penalty of one letter grade per hour for unexcused absences (from classes on campus and on-site visits).

## **AUR Academic Integrity Code & Plagiarism**

"Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments, including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports; lending to or producing assignments for others (either for or without payment); using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own; and otherwise misappropriating the knowledge of others. Such acts are both dishonest and deceptive: the work submitted to instructors is not the work of

the person whose name it bears. In consequence, the courses from which one derives one's ideas, statements, terms, and facts, including internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form. Failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism." -- AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 15.

**Disclaimer**

Every effort will be made to maintain the schedule as issued, but unforeseen circumstances might bring about changes in visits.