

COURSE SYLLABUS



THE HISTORY OF THE MAFIA

IFSA Rome

US semester credit hours: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Course Code: HST386-04 / SO386-04

Course Length: Semester

Delivery Method: Face to face

Language of Instruction: English

Suggested Cross-listings: History, Sociology

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to explore the history of the Italian Mafia from its origins to today as an economic, political, sociological, cultural, and gendered phenomenon. By examining the Mafia as an integral part of modern Italian history, we will trace the evolution of organized crime in Italy and beyond across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Special attention will be paid to the Mafia's relationship to religion and the state. What role has the Mafia played in the history of Italian dictatorship and democracy? We will also focus on the Mafia's place in American history and media. What are the dominant popular images of the Mafia? In what ways are the history and popular representations of the Mafia gendered? Finally, we will explore how formal and informal, legal and illegal, forms of social control operate. To what degree do the patterns and dynamics of Italian history resonate with other societies, including our own? Each of these questions will be critically examined.

COURSE DELIVERY

Students are expected to read or view assigned resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will review the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic. In addition, students are responsible for two papers, two exams, and one in-class presentation on a current event.

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in the IFSA Rome Program whenever possible (based on the philosophy of integrative learning).

There are no prerequisites for this course beyond a commitment to completing all the assignments and engaging in class discussion.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Enhance reading, writing, discussion, debate, and critical thinking skills

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- Demonstrate mastery of the history of the Mafia
- Analyze current events and engage critically with the use of history by politicians and the media
- Evaluate historical representations of the Mafia
- Become aware of gender issues in historical representations of the Mafia
- Strengthen oral and written communication skills
- Become familiar with resources available for further research on course topics
- Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in IFSA Rome

COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Topics	Activities	Readings, viewings
1A	Syllabus Appreciation Day: Introduction to the Course and its Themes	Class Introduction: Review syllabus, expectations, projects	Introduction: Review relevant maps and organizational structures in John Dickie, <i>Blood Brotherhoods</i> , xvii-xxiv
1B	Meeting the Mafia: Business, Crime, Gender, Religion, and State Power	Class Discussion: What is Organized Crime? What is the Mafia?	Screen: The Sicilian Mafia (43 min, 22 sec) Reading: John Dickie, <i>Blood Brotherhoods</i> , xxv-34
2A	Birth of Modern Italy, Birth of the Mafia	Class Discussion: To what extent do the origins of the Mafia lie in the establishment of the Italian state?	Reading: John Dickie, <i>Blood Brotherhoods</i> , 35-62
2B	The Mafia, Ritual, and Religion	Class Discussion: How does Catholicism shape Mafia rituals past and present?	Reading: John Dickie, <i>Blood Brotherhoods</i> , 63-90
3A	The Mafia and Sex	Class Discussion: What explains the Sicilian Mafia's aversion to the sex trade? What role did Mafia women play?	Reading: John Dickie, "Mafia and Prostitution in Calabria, c. 1880- c.1940," <i>Past & Present</i> 232, 1 (2016): 203-36
3B	Writing on the Mafia	Paper Topic: Dickie Review	Due: First Paper
4A	The Mafia and Mussolini	Class Debate: What was Fascism's impact on the Mafia?	Reading: John Dickie, <i>Blood Brotherhoods</i> , 223-284

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4B	The Mafia in the New Republic	Class Discussion: Was Italian democracy corrupt from its origins?	Reading: Jack E. Reece, "Fascism, the Mafia, and the Emergence of Sicilian Separatism (1919-43)," <i>The Journal of Modern History</i> 45, 2 (1973): 261-27; Salvatore Lupo, "The Allies and the Mafia," <i>Journal of Modern Italian Studies</i> 2, 1 (1997): 21-33
5A	The Mafia and Christian and Social Democracy	Class Discussion: What was the Mafia's relationship to postwar Italy's dominant political parties?	Reading: Jane Schneider, "Fifty Years of Mafia Corruption and Anti-mafia Reform," <i>Current Anthropology</i> 59, S18 (April 2018): S16-S27; Denis Mack Smith, "Italy's Dirty Linen," <i>The New York Review of Books</i> (November 30, 1995)
5B	The Mafia, Religious Ritual, and the Continuities of Catholicism	Class Discussion: Do Mafia rituals reveal more continuity or change over time?	Reading: Rossella Merlino, "Sicilian mafia, patron saints, and religious processions: The consistent face of an ever-changing criminal organization," <i>California Italian Studies</i> 5, 1 (2014): 109-129
6A	The Mafia Gendered	Class Discussion: In what ways was Mafia life gendered?	Reading: Valeria Pizzini-Gambetta, "Gender norms in the Sicilian mafia, 1945-86." In <i>Gender and crime in modern Europe</i> (Routledge, 2002), pp. 273-292
6B	Course Review	Exam Preparation	Reading: Review readings and notes in preparation for class review session
7A	The Mafia at Mid-Term	In bocca al lupo!	Mid-Term
7B	The Mafia in America	Class Discussion: How did the Mafia take root in the U.S.?	Reading: David Critchley, <i>The Origin of Organized Crime in America: The New York City Mafia, 1891-1931</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1-2
8A	The Mafia in America	Class Discussion: What similarities and differences do we see between the American and Italian Mafias?	Reading: David Critchley, <i>The Origin of Organized Crime in America: The New York City Mafia, 1891-1931</i> , Chapters 3, 6
8B	The Mafia in America	Class Discussion: What does the FBI know about the Mafia and how?	Reading: The Mafia Monograph (FBI documents), Part 4, Section VI: Organization and Leadership of Mafia, 83-124

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9A	The Mafia in the American Media	Godfather Film Fest	Screen: <i>The Godfather I</i> (1972) (2 hr 58 min)
9B	The Mafia in the American Media	Class Discussion: How did <i>The Godfather</i> portray the American Mafia?	Reading: Norman Silverstein, "The Godfather – A Year Later: An Examination of The Movie's Internal Structure," <i>Italian Americana</i> 1, 1 (1974): 104-117.
10A	The Mafia in the American Media	Godfather Film Fest	Screen: <i>The Godfather: Part II</i> (1974) (3 hr 22 min)
10B	Images of Italian Americans	Debate: Were depictions of Italian Americans in <i>The Godfather</i> and <i>The Godfather: Part II</i> stereotypical?	Reading: Carlos E. Cortes, "Italian-Americans in film: From immigrants to icons," <i>Melus</i> 14, 3, 4 (1987): 107-126
11A	Writing on the Mafia	Paper Topic: Gender in the <i>Godfather</i> films	Due: Second Paper
11B	The Mafia in Europe	Class Discussion: What does the expansion of the Italian Mafia into other European countries tell us?	Reading: Rocco Sciarrone and Luca Storti, "The territorial expansion of mafia-type organized crime. The case of the Italian mafia in Germany," <i>Crime, Law and Social Change</i> 61, no. 1 (2014): 37-60
12A	The Mafia in Europe	Class Discussion: What does the expansion of the Italian Mafia into other European countries tell us?	Reading: Judith Chubb, "The Mafia, the market and the state in Italy and Russia." <i>Journal of Modern Italian Studies</i> 1, 2 (1996): 273-291
12B	The Mafia as Business Enterprise	Class Discussion: How does focusing on the Italian Mafia as a business shape our understanding of its role in history?	Reading: Diego Gambetta, <i>The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection</i> , Introduction, Conclusion, Postscript; Guglielmo Barone and Gaia Narciso, "Organized crime and business subsidies: Where does the money go?," <i>Journal of Urban Economics</i> 86 (2015): 98-110
13A	The Mafia and the Rise of the Antimafia	Class Discussion: What provoked the rise of the Antimafia? Why did it emerge when it did?	Screen: <i>Excellent Cadavers</i> (1 hr 15 min) Reading: A.O. Scott, "'Excellent Cadavers,' an Italian Documentary, Dissects the Mafia," <i>New York Times</i> (July 12, 2006) Due: Presentation Topic
13B	The Mafia and Antimafia Today	Class Discussion: What did the Antimafia movement achieve? What did it not?	Reading: Jane C. Schneider and Peter T. Schneider, <i>Reversible Destiny: Mafia Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo</i> , Chapter 7; "Why Italy's anti-

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			mafia movement is in trouble," <i>The Economist</i> (August 9, 2016)
14A	The Mafia Today	Class Presentations	Presentation: The Mafia in the News
14B	Field Trip	Memorial to Mafia Victims: Villa Osio	Reading: Mafia victims remembered
15A	Course Review	Exam Preparation	Reading: Review readings and notes in preparation for class review session
15B	Final Exam	In bocca al lupo!	Final Exam

EVALUATION METHODS

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements:

Paper One (15%): In your essay, assess the strengths and weakness of Dickie's histories of the Mafia. How persuasive do you find his accounts? Does his depiction suggest any biases? Does he provide sufficient evidence to support his interpretations?

Paper Two (20%): In your essay, address the question of gender in the *Godfather* films. What do the depictions of the roles of men and women in the Mafia and Mafia families tell us? How are masculinity and femininity portrayed in the films?

Mid-Term Examination (15%): The mid-term exam will consist of a series of essay questions drawing on the readings and discussion topics of the preceding classes.

Final Examination (20%): The final exam will consist of a series of essay questions drawing on the readings and discussion topics of the course, including cumulative questions on the course's major themes.

Class Presentation (10%): As early as possible, but by Class 13A, identify an article about the Mafia in the recent press. (Should more than one student select a topic, the instructor will assign that topic to the first student to submit it.) For the in-class presentation, summarize and analyze the article's content within the context of the history of the Mafia. How does this current event relate to what we know about the Mafia?

Participation (20%): Students will be evaluated for the intellectual quality and quantity of their contributions to class discussions and debates. The best interventions are informed by the course readings and materials.

Timely Submissions

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA resident director as well as your home institution.

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