



ITALST 265 – Winter 2019
Mafia Culture and the Power of Symbols, Rituals, and Myth
Monday 6:30 -9:20 (SJ2-1002)

Instructor: Antonio Nicaso

T.A.: Oliver Marshall Goodison-Powell (omgoodisonpowell@uwaterloo.ca)

Office: 2212 (Sweeney Hall)

Telephone: TBA

Email: anicaso@sju.ca

Office hours: Mondays 3-5 pm

Course description:

The course will analyze the cinematic representation of organized crime in North America. It will focus on the manner in which North American cinema productions often glorify the 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 course will also analyze the depiction of other criminal organizations in popular culture, such as Outlaw motorcycle gangs, Street gangs, the Triads, the Yakuza and the Vory v Zakone.

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 of a problem it is in Canada and other contemporary societies
2. Understand and analyze the cinematic representation of the Mafia and other Mafia-type criminal organizations in North America.
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.

In order to do well in the course, regular attendance and completion of assignments are necessary. In particular, students should read the specified chapters from the textbooks and handouts given by the teacher as regular home assignments. Note-taking is mandatory.

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 Szigeti in *The AnaChronisT* 14 (2009): 24-46 ISSN 1219-2589 (article available online).
- You may also expect some additional readings, such as newspaper and magazine articles.

Required Watching:

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

An Important Note on Film Viewing

You must treat each film viewing as you would a reading. You are expected to be an active viewer, looking for historical, political, economic, social, cultural, narrative, and aesthetic meaning. You must take notes on every film you see. For each film, you are expected to be able to analyze the characters, themes, film techniques, narrative organization, historical significance, relation to history/film history, etc.

Evaluation :	Date	Value
Test no 1	Jan. 28, 2019	35%
Test no 2	April, 1, 2019	25%
Essay	Due March 9, 2019	35%
Attendance		5%
TOTAL :		100%

Attendance/participation: The course will be taught in a lecture and conversational 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%

Essay (1):

The essay must address how one of the following criminal organizations has been depicted in American popular culture. Some examples include the American or Canadian Cosa Nostra, the Sicilian Mafia, the 'Ndrangheta, Drug Cartels, the Triads, the Yakuza, the Yory v Zakone, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (Hells Angels, Bandidos) and Street Gangs (Crips, Bloods, 18th Street). Based on an analysis of various television shows, films, video games and music, students should demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis statement and effectively communicate complex ideas in written English. (Three to Five pages - 900 to 1200 words - double spaced, with notes and bibliography, Chicago Citation Style).

RUBRIC:

Clarity		15%
Use of three (3) academic sources (Journals and books). Wikipedia or other Internet sources are not accepted.		10+10+10=30%
Use of at least two (2) examples of media representation (tv show, movies or books)		10+10=20%

1) Allegoric and symbolic perspective; 2) Glamorization and negative stereotyping. 3) Organized Crime mythologies. 4) Celebratory and apologetic approach.		15+15=30%
Proper Citations and bibliography	No class notes in the bibliography. ALWAYS clearly indicate where your info (general info or quotes) is from.	5%

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.

P.S. No makeup tests or essay are offered.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Notes on readings.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due
1	Jan. 7, 2019	Origin and organization of the Mafia. The Black Hand in Canada and in the U.S. The Display of Power. The Mafia becomes a brand.	Chapter 1 of <i>Made Men</i> . Watch <i>The Little Caesar (1932)</i> Screening in class of <i>The Black Hand (1906)</i>
2	Jan. 14, 2019	Honor, Omertà, The power of Code. The role of women and their representation. Analysis of <i>The Little Caesar</i> .	Chapter 2 of <i>Made Men</i>
3	Jan. 21, 2019	The fascination for the Mafia and Italophobia. Rituals and Symbols, Religious Symbolism, Initiation and Passage Rites.	Chapter 3 of <i>Made Men</i>
4	Jan. 28, 2019	First Test	N/A
5	Feb. 4, 2019	Appearance. The Made Man. Tattoos, Gangster Chic, Enter the Movies. Names, The Gang, The Wise Guy, The Talk, Term of Distinction,	Chapters 4, and 5 of <i>Made Men</i>
6	Feb. 11, 2019	Analysis of <i>The Godfather</i>	Watch: <i>The Godfather</i> . Read: "The Dialects of Sin in Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i> and Francis Ford Coppola's <i>The Godfather Trilogy</i> " by Balázs Szigeti in <i>The AnaChronisT</i> 14 (2009): 24-46 ISSN 1219-2589 (article available on line).
7	Feb. 25, 2019	Analysis of <i>The Godfather - Part II</i>	Watch: <i>The Godfather Part II</i> .
8	March 4, 2019	Analysis of <i>The Godfather – Part III</i>	Watch: <i>The Godfather Part III</i> .
9	March 11, 2019	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.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due
10	March 18, 2019	Mith, Foundation Myths, An American Myth: Cosa Nostra, Street Myths, Technology. Analysis of <i>Goodfellas</i>	Chapter 6 of <i>Made men</i> . Watch: <i>Goodfellas</i>
11	March 25, 2019	Other criminal organizations: Yakuza, Triads, Vory v Zakone.	Conclusion chapter of <i>Made Men</i> .
12	April 1, 2019	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.

Class contacts

Students should have full contact information for a least two students in the class. In the case of absence, tardiness or similar, students are responsible for contacting a peer and catching up on information and work or notes that may have been missed during an absence. Instructors should not be contacted for catching up on missed work.

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.

Note for Students with Disabilities

The AccessAbility Service 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.

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](#).

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