

**Department:** Modern and Classical Languages

**Course No:** ILCS 158

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Italian American Experience in Film and Literature

**Contact:** Roger Travis, Norma Bouchard

**Content Area:** CA1-Arts and Humanities

**Diversity:** CA4 Non-International

**Catalog Copy:** LCS 158 Ital Amer Exper in Lit & Film 3 units Lectures in English. Focuses on the Italian American experience as represented in a variety of fields, including literature and cinema.

**Course Information:** a. Through the mediums of film and literature, this course examines the Italian diaspora to North America and therefore fulfills 2 objectives. One the one hand, it introduces students to the many symbolic forms that represent the Italian American experience, such as narrative, short-story, poetry, and film. On the other hand, this course examines complex issues of community-life, gender roles, racial stereotyping, and inter-ethnic relations that have characterized the Italian American experience in the United States b. Mid term and final exams. The exams are in the form of short essay questions, definitions and identifications. Exams also include background, factual information, and interpretative material presented during the lectures and class-discussions. Students are also asked to write 4 short essays on the main topics around which this course is structured.

The course is organized around these topics and issues (all seen from a variety of literary and cinematic texts):

1. The Italian Diaspora: Patterns of Immigration to the United States
2. urban settlements and community-life
3. Anarchism and syndicalism
4. racial stereotyping
5. gender roles
5. inter-ethnic relations

**Meets Goals of Gen Ed:** This course addresses the experience of Italian Americans to the United States. Since this experience opens a window into the Old World of the immigrants as well as into their land of destination, it allows students to acquire a deeper awareness of the way migratory flows during the modern era have profoundly shaped contemporary society. The inclusion of a variety of texts fosters intellectual versatility while the perspectives from which these texts are written (i.e., oral narratives, first and second generation immigrant literature and film, women and gay stories, and so on), allows students to acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience.

**CA1 Criteria:** Specific criteria for Arts and Humanities The topics and issues addressed by this course follow a chronological development and therefore examine the Italian American experience in the United States according to specific social and historical developments spanning from the post-unification era to World War I, syndacalism, the interwar period and the Quota Acts, World War II, the post-war era, the ethnic revivalism of the 60ies, and so on. Students are also given the critical tools necessary to analyze and appreciate the modes of symbolic representation that record this experience in literary and cinematic texts.

**CA4 Criteria:** This course fulfills a number of categories listed under Group 4. 1. "Emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity" > This course addresses the diaspora to the United States by examining the immigrant experience of a group that was separated across gender (i.e., female vs. male immigrants) race (Southern vs. Northern Italians), and class lines (Southern illiterate peasants vs. educated Northerners). Hence, the perceptions, thoughts, values, and modes of creativity of this group vary greatly depending on the immigrant speaking subjects. Thus, for example, the experience of family life on the part of women writers not only expresses itself in specific genres but often reveals an account of familial relationships in Italian American communities that differs greatly from the one provided by male writers. 2. "Emphasize that interpretive systems and/or social structures are cultural creations" The many voices of Italian immigrants to the United States relativize perspectives and point of views on issues such as family and community life, gender roles and sexuality, race relations, etc. Collectively considered, these voices reveal how interpretative systems are always provisional, cultural constructs subject to further modifications. 4. "Develop an understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights and migration". This course includes various accounts of storage travels, medical examinations at Ellis Island, exploitative systems of "padrone/paesano relations" (whereby immigrants were given the money for the ticket but had to enter into exploitative labor contracts), the Palmer raids following the Red Scare, the Southern lynchings, the execution of so-called "Anarchists", such as Bartolomeo Sacco and Nicola Vanzetti, the Quota Acts, and so on. This tragic history, which is amply recorded in narrative, poetry, and cinema, develops students' awareness of the violation of human rights that has often been one of the corollaries of migration. 5. "Develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power in the context of any of the above four items". The Italian immigrant experience to the United States is carefully situated within the socio-political and economic contexts of the United States from the late 19th century to post 1968. Hence a great deal of attention is paid to the impact that developments such as industrialization and the rise of Labor movements, World War I, the Red Scare, the Depression, the rise of Fascism and World War II, etc. had on Italian immigrant groups in America.

**Role of Grad Students:** Role of Grad Students: -So far, this course has only been taught by faculty member. If Teaching Assistants were to teach it, they would be provided with syllabi and class lectures. As it is customary in our department, Teaching Assistants are trained by way of a yearly Orientation and a Teaching Methods course.

They also remain under the supervision of a coordinator. In my section, ILCS, I serve as the coordinator.

**Supplemental Information:** I am resubmitting this proposal after Roger Travis, our MCL representative, informed me that this course did not justify inclusion into Group IV-- Diversity and Multiculturalism. As I have argued above, this course fulfills several of the criteria required for inclusion.