

Social History of the Italian Mafia

UNH Course Code: HIS341

Subject Areas: History, Cultural Studies

Level: 300

Prerequisites: None. A basic knowledge of general Italian history is desirable.

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Description:

“Mafia” is one of a long list of words that the Italian language has given to many other languages across the world. It is commonly applied to criminals far beyond Sicily and the United States, which are the places where the mafia is historically based. “Mafia” has become an umbrella label for whole world panoply of gangs – Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Chechen, Albanian, Turkish, and so on – that have little or nothing to do with the Sicilian original.’ (John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, p.1)

This course will examine the history of the Sicilian mafia from the Unification of Italy in 1861 to the present day, considering how different cultural, social, political and economic factors during this period have influenced its development.

The history of the mafia is not just the chronicle of the criminal deeds of a select list of mobsters. It is at the same time a chronicle of Italy’s uneasy institutional configuration, of the dangerous liaison between politics and crime in the stabilization of power, and of the hundreds of people who, since the late nineteenth century, have fought the mafia (and in many cases lost their lives), and of those numerous others who, for varying reasons - from rational fear to downright complicity - have favored the organization’s cause.

You will be encouraged and guided to critically analyze the material discussed in class and the assigned readings. Rather than remembering the names of bosses or dates of massacres, the emphasis is upon understanding the interrelated historical and cultural dynamics, such as changes in national politics and legislation or the transformation of illicit activities, so as to be able to fully make sense of the information provided in the lessons and to acquire a more incisive knowledge of the mafia.

Learning Objectives:

- understand the fundamental aspects of the Italian mafia
- recognize the relationship between mafia and Italian history
- critically consider the relationship between the mafia and Italian politics and society
- analyze the social relations within the organization and between the Mafiosi and the external world
- distinguish the similarities and differences between the Italian and the American mafia as well as other criminal organizations in Italy
- be in a position to chart the recent developments and shifting contexts of Italian organized crime as well as anti-mafia groups.

Instructional Format:

This class will meet once a week for 2 hours and 40 minutes. During each week, time will be devoted to an ongoing, chronological analysis of the mafia’s development, as well as to social, political and cultural analyses of the phenomenon that will be introduced by the instructor and discussed by the students. Photographic and cinematic material will also be

viewed and discussed. Meetings with members of an anti-mafia association and/or personalities involved in the fight against the mafia will be arranged according to their availability.

Form of Assessment:

Your instructor will use different forms of assessment to calculate the final grade you receive for this course (see the table below). The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. However, you must complete all grading assessment categories to receive a grade for this course. In addition, your work and behavior in this course must conform to the regulations of the [CEA Academic Integrity Policy](#) to which you are subject.

Class Participation at mid-term	5%
Class Participation at end of term	5%
Research project proposal & annotated bibliography	15%
Midterm exam	20%
Final paper with Portfolio	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Final exam	25%

Class Participation: The grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the texts, your ability to interpret different uses of literary language and to express your analysis in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grade, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are also evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect on your grade. The instructor will use the following specific criteria when calculating your class participation grade:

Criteria for Assessing Class Participation	Grade
You make major and original contributions that spark discussion, offering both critical and analytical comments clearly based on readings and research and displaying a working knowledge of theoretical issues.	A+ (9.70–10.00)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings and independent research.	A-/A (9.00–9.69)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B/B+ (8.40–89.90)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	C+/B- (7.70–8.39)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C (7.00–7.69)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject, attending class having manifestly done little if any preparation.	D (6.00–6.69)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion, a result of frequent absence and complete un-preparedness.	F (0–5.90)

Two in-class Exams: The midterm exam comprises two parts: the first part will test your factual knowledge relating to material from the first half of the course; the second part is an essay. The final exam consists of two essays (of equal value)

selected from five questions relating to material from across the whole course. The essay questions for the final exam will be distributed to students before the date of the exam in order to allow for preparation.

Research project proposal & annotated bibliography: To be handed in at the beginning of week 5. The first stage of this project is a working proposal that identifies your topic, scope, approach and objectives. You will design a particular research question or identify a “problem” and offer ways of approaching it and, where applicable, of answering/solving it. Your research proposal must be accompanied by an annotated bibliography (that is, accompanied by your written comments on the origins, value and limitations of your sources), identifying key sources and how you plan to use them. **Please note that the Grading Criteria below apply equally to the Proposal and Bibliography as they do to the Final Paper.**

Final Paper with Portfolio: The final paper (2,000-2,500 words) will be based on your research project proposal and its annotated bibliography. In order to produce your final paper you will keep a portfolio of research materials during the semester. The final paper and the portfolio will both be assessed at the end of the course.

Criteria for assigning main letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F) for students’ exams and all assessed work:

A: The student’s work directly and clearly addresses the questions raised in the exam/research project, and displays an extensive knowledge of relevant information. The work demonstrates an ability to critically evaluate historical issues regarding the mafia and possesses an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of a significant amount of reading besides the key texts required for the course and, in the case of the research project and proposal, an ability to critically select and discuss literature on a chosen topic.

B: This is a highly competent level of performance that directly addresses the questions raised in the exam or, in the case of research project and proposal, clearly identifies issues for discussion. The student’s work demonstrates some ability to critically evaluate historical issues and relate them to the development of the mafia. The student’s discussions reflect personal arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the key texts.

C: This is an acceptable level of performance, which provides clear but limited answers/analysis that draw uncritically from information in the class lectures and selected sources.

D: This level of performance demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

F: This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material discussed by the student is irrelevant. Note: evidence of extensive plagiarism in the research paper (i.e. cutting and pasting from the internet) will result in an F.

More detailed instructions, advice, handouts and suggested research topics will be provided during the course.

CEA Grading Scale				
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade Low Range	Numerical Grade High Range	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70	10.00	97.0 - 100%	4.00
A	9.40	9.69	94.0 - 96.9%	4.00
A-	9.00	9.39	90.0 – 93.9%	3.70
B+	8.70	8.99	87.0 – 89.9%	3.30
B	8.40	8.69	84.0 – 86.9%	3.00
B-	8.00	8.39	80.0 – 83.9%	2.70
C+	7.70	7.99	77.0 – 79.9%	2.30

C	7.00	7.69	70.0 – 76.9%	2.00
D	6.00	6.99	60.0 – 69.9%	1.00
F	0.00	5.99	0 - 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal			0.00
INC	Incomplete			0.00

Appealing a Grade:

Please be advised: any grade dispute you have during the course must immediately be addressed with the instructor and definitively resolved before the last week of class. Only end-of-term assignments graded after the end of your program are subject to CEA’s formal grade appeal procedure.

CEA Attendance Policy

Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day’s class activities. In compliance with NEASC and UNH accreditation requirements, CEA instructors compile regular attendance records for every course and take these records into account when evaluating student participation and performance.

- In this course, a maximum of **1** day of accumulated absences due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.
- Your final course grade will drop one full letter grade (e.g. A+ to B+) for missing 2 days of class, regardless of the reason for your absence.
- If your absences exceed three (3) days of class, you will automatically fail this course (e.g., C+ to F; miss three (3) or more days to receive an “F”).

Furthermore, to comply with immigration and financial regulations, you must maintain full-time student status and attend at least 12 hours of class every week. Consequently, the Dean and Program Director will dismiss from all CEA courses, programs, activities and housing any student who fails to maintain full-time status.

Sections

You must attend the class section they are registered in and may not switch sections for any reason. Those who turn up in a section of a class they are not registered in will not be able to stay for the lesson and will not be considered present unless they attend their assigned section that week.

Arriving Late for Class

Consistently arriving late for class displays an unacceptably deficient degree of participation and an unacceptable lack of respect for instructor and fellow students. Instructors will reflect students’ persistent lateness by deducting percentage points from the total 10% earmarked for Participation as indicated on the syllabus. Please note that missing a significant portion of one of your classes can be considered a full absence at the discretion of the professor. Always communicate to your teacher if you need to leave early due to illness, or if you are late due to serious, unforeseen circumstances.

Missing Examinations

Those who miss mid-term or final examination at the assigned hours will not be permitted to take a make-up examination without written permission from the Academic Dean. Permission is usually granted only for extreme cases such as serious, documented illness (see the attendance policy for more details), but never for travel.

Examinations will not be rescheduled under any circumstances, except in cases of genuine emergencies. Such cases should be taken to the Academic Dean in writing. Missing an examination for whatever reason is effectively an absence from class.

Cellphones:

During class time, all mobile phones must be switched off. In case of family emergency, students can keep their phones on (silent mode) after asking for permission before class starts.

Laptops:

Responsible use of laptop computers during class is encouraged, and so when required by your professor.

Email Communication

All information will be communicated in the class and or by email. You should check your email regularly for any changes.

Required Readings:

MAIN TEXT BOOK: **Dickie J., *Cosa Nostra. A History of the Sicilian Mafia.* Hodder, 2007.** (Please note that there are numerous copies of this book in the CEA Rome Center library)

- Further reading material will be assigned on a week-by-week basis (assigned supplementary reading).
- The class will be encouraged to monitor and research mafia-related events on English-language media websites such as *The Economist* or *New York Times* as well as specialist e-journals (see suggested list below).

Additional Readings:

The following books are currently available at the CEA Resource Center:

- Blok, A., *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960: a Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs.* Oxford, 1974
- Dash, M., *The First Family: Terror, Extortion, Revenge, Murder and the Birth of the American Mafia.* Ballantine Books, 2010
- Di Lampedusa G., *The Leopard.* Pantheon, 1991
- Foot, J., *Modern Italy.* Palgrave, 2003
- Gambetta, Diego. *Codes of the Underworld: How Criminals Communicate.* Princeton University Press, 2011
- Ginsborg P., *Society and Politics 1943-1988.* Penguin, 1990
- Ginsborg P., *Italy and Its Discontents 1980-2001.* Penguin, 2001
- Jamieson A., *The Antimafia. Italy's Fight Against Organized Crime.* St. Martin's Press, 2000
- Lane D., *Into the Heart of the Mafia: A Journey Through the Italian South.* Profile Books, 2009
- Lewis N., *The Honoured Society.* Eland, 1991
- Lupo, S., *History of the Mafia.* Columbia University Press, 2009
- Follain, J., *The Last Godfathers. The rise and fall of the mafia's most powerful family.* Hodder, 2009
- Reppetto, T. *American Mafia: A History of Its Rise to Power.* Holt, 2004
- Saviano R., *Gomorra. Italy's other Mafia.* McMillan, 2007
- Schneider, J., Schneider P., *Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily.* Academic Press, 1976
- Schneider P., Schneider J., *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo.* UCP, 2003
- Sciascia, L., *The Day of the Owl.* Nyrb Classics, 2003

Photocopied extracts from the following recommended readings are consultable at the CEA Resource Center:

- Behan T., *See Naples and Die. The Camorra and Organized Crime.* Tauris, 2002
- Duggan C., *Fascism and the Mafia.* New Haven Press, 1989
- Fiandaca G., *Women and the Mafia: Female Roles in Organized Crime Structures.* Springer, 2007
- Gambetta D., *The Sicilian Mafia. The Business of Private Protection.* Harvard University Press, 1996
- Paoli L., *Mafia Brotherhoods: Organized Crime, Italian Style.* Oxford, 2003
- Schneider J. (ed.), *Italy's Southern Question. Orientalism in one Country.* Berg, 1998

The following items can be purchased at the Anglo American Bookstore or online (cost between 10 and 20 euros):

- Glenny M., *McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld.* Knopf, 2008
- Maran A. G. D., *Mafia: Inside the Dark Heart.* Mainstream Publishing, 2008
- Finckenauer J., *Mafia and Organized Crime: A Beginner's Guide.* Oneworld Publications, 2007
- De Vico P. J., *The Mafia Made Easy: The Anatomy and Culture of La Cosa Nostra.* Tate, 2007
- Raab S., *Five Families. The Rise, Decline and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires.* Robson Books, 2006
- Reppetto T., *Bringing Down the Mob: The War against the American Mafia.* Henry Holt, 2004

Online Reference & Research Tools:

www.economist.com
www.nytimes.com
www.iht.com

www.mafiatoday.com

www.guardian.co.uk (The Guardian, British newspaper with extensive archive)

www.newcriminologist.com/home.asp (online journal of criminology)

www.corriere.it/english/ (major Italian daily newspaper based in Milan, English version)

www.ansa.it (major Italian press agency; click for English version)

www.centroimpastato.it (Sicilian Centre of Documentation on the Mafia; click for English version)

www.libera.it (click for English page of Libera antimafia organization)

www.istat.it (Italian statistics agency; click for English version)

Films:

At least one film will be viewed during the semester.

Field trips:

Two on-site classes will be scheduled during the semester that will visit locations with a particular organized crime interest in Rome. Details to be announced in advance.

Social History of the Italian Mafia
Course content:

Session	Session focus/activity	Student Assignments
WK1	Outline of course. Introduction to Italy/Sicily/South Introduction to the Italian mafias: differences, terminology and approaches	
WK2	Introduction to the history of the Italian South and the origins of the Sicilian Mafia	Textbook reading: - Dickie: pp. XI-XXII; 1-91. Assigned supplementary reading: - Lupo, S., 'Introduction' in <i>History of the Mafia</i> , Columbia University Press, 2009: 1-30.
WK3	The 19 th -century origins of the Sicilian mafia Cultural Norms and Symbolism	Assigned supplementary reading: - Blok, A. 'Genesis of Mafia' in <i>The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960: A Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs</i> , Oxford, 1974: 89-102. Assigned supplementary reading: - Schneider, J., Schneider P., <i>Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily</i> . Academic Press, 1976: 81-109.
WK4	The mafia in the early twentieth century: fascism and socialism Cesare Mori: Fascism's Iron Prefect	Assigned supplementary reading: - Dickie: pp. 172-191. Assigned supplementary reading: - Duggan C., 'Sicily, "The Siege of Gangi"', in <i>Fascism and the Mafia</i> . New Haven Press, 1989: 132-146.
WK5	The Second World War, Allied Occupation and the Rebirth of the Mafia in Sicily Guest speaker(s)	Assigned supplementary reading: - Paoli L., 'The Italian and American Mafia: a comparison' in <i>Mafia Brotherhoods</i> . Oxford, 2003: 3-23. - Lupo, S., 'The Allies and the mafia', <i>Journal of Modern Italian Studies</i> , 1997 2(1): 21-33. Speaker(s) T.B.A. (possibly FBI official(s) from US Embassy in Rome on fighting Organized Crime in global context, or Italy's Direzione Investigativa Antimafia) **Research project proposal & annotated bibliography to be handed in by today

WK6	Construction and heroin: Cosa Nostra in post-war Sicily Antimafia (1890 – 1970) Feedback on research project proposals and Exam Review	Textbook reading: - Dickie: 271-301. - Dickie: 305-328. Assigned supplementary reading: - Schneider J. & Schneider P., ‘The Mafia and the Cold War’ in <i>Reversible Destiny</i> , UCP, 2003: 49-80.
WK7		Midterm Exam Film: <i>I Cento passi</i> (2000), (with subtitles, 114mins)
WK8	Class discussion of <i>I Cento Passi</i> Women and the Mafia Class discussion of <i>The Day of the Owl</i>	Assigned supplementary reading: - Small, P., ‘Giordana’s <i>I Cento passi</i> : renegotiating the mafia codes’ in <i>New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film</i> , vol.3 no.1: 41-54 - Dino, A., ‘Symbolic Domination and Active Power: Female Roles in Criminal Organizations’ in G. Fiandaca (ed.) <i>Women and the Mafia</i> , 2007: 67-86. - Sciascia L., <i>The Day of the Owl</i> . Nyrb Classics, 2003 [1961]: 9-32.
WK9	1980-1993: War between Cosa Nostra and Italian State Documentary film and class discussion	Textbook reading: - Dickie: 356-425. Assigned supplementary reading: - Ginsborg, P., ‘Corruption and Mafia’ in <i>Italy and Its Discontents</i> . Penguin 2001: 179-212.
WK10	Other criminal organizations of Italy: Rome and <i>La Banda della Magliana</i>	Lecture Banda della Magliana site visit : Ministero della Sanità (EUR, Rome)
WK11		Banda della Magliana site visit : Basilica di Sant’Apollinare (Historic Center, Rome)
WK12	Other criminal organizations of Italy: The Camorra and the notion of “Ecomafia” Other criminal organizations of Italy: The Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta Guest speaker	Assigned supplementary reading: - Behan, T., ‘The origins of the Camorra and the Mafia’ in <i>The Camorra</i> . Routledge, 1996: 1-30. - Saviano R., ‘Land of Fires’ in <i>Gomorra. Italy’s other Mafia</i> . McMillan, 2007 Assigned supplementary reading: Lane, D., ‘Reggio Calabria – Violent Death’ in <i>Into the Heart of the Mafia</i> . Profile, 2010: 82-105. Specialist in RICO investigations
WK13	Oral Presentations	**Hand in final paper with Portfolio

	Final review and discussion	
WK14	Final Exam	