

Mafia Culture and the Power of Symbols, Rituals and Myth

LLCU 214: Fall 2020

OFFERED REMOTELY

Asynchronous course.

All classes, materials and information will be posted on OnQ)

Instructors: Antonio Nicaso & Donato Santeramo

Synchronous Office Hour: - Tuesdays 9:30-10:30 p.m. EST or by appointment.

Emails: antonio.nicaso@queensu.ca - ds19@queensu.ca

General information on course delivery and content

LLCU 214 will be entirely delivered remotely, which means you will have access to the course classes from wherever you are residing. The course will be completely offered as an asynchronous course which means that the course material (including classes) will be posted on OnQ, and you can access the posting to watch it when it is convenient for you. (Although we strongly recommend you systematically watch the classes posted and do the readings weekly to avoid being overwhelmed).

Required readings and PowerPoints will be posted on OnQ weekly. You are responsible for the contents of the classes, the readings from the book *Made Men*, the posted articles and the PowerPoints.

Films will be available on-line or ARES: Electronic course resources and in the PowerPoints.

OFFICE HOURS will be offered *synchronously (live)* on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 p.m. EST (Kingston time). Please contact us through TEAMS – Use button on OnQ: “Call or Chat with me on TEAMS”.

OFFICE HOURS will also be offered by appointment: please write to Antonio Nicaso: antonio.nicaso@queensu.ca or Donato Santeramo: ds19@queensu.ca to set up an appointment.

TESTS: There will be three tests -October 6, November 10, and December 3.

Each TEST will consist of 5 questions (50-75 words maximum, per question) concerning aspects of the materials studied for the course. (You may also be asked to comment on a “still” from one of the films watched).

The TESTS will take place on the date indicated in the schedule below. Students will have 2 1/2 hours to write the test from the moment they access it. The TESTS will be available for 24 hours - from 6:30 p.m. EST (Kingston time) to 6:30 p.m. EST (Kingston time) the following day.

FILM REVIEW: Due Date and Time: December 10 at 11:59 p.m. EST (Kingston time). The penalty for late submission is a reduction by 3% for each day or part day that the Assignment is late.

Watch one or two films, or documentaries studied and review it/them in 1,000-1200 words maximum by focusing on at least two concepts discussed in LLCU 214.

Grading and Feedback: We will provide feedback on the document, so make sure the file you upload on onQ is editable. Your grade will be determined by the quality and completeness of your review. Please define any concepts you are deploying and make necessary distinctions if you are referring to two or more. Make sure your analysis has a clear opening and ending.

Suggestions and further guidance will be posted on “Announcements” on OnQ under the title: What is a film analysis?

Marking Scheme:

Tests (3 x 20%)	60%
Film analysis (1,000 words) Due on December 10; every late day -5%.	40%
Total	100%

The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to [Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale](#)

Learning Outcomes:

The course promotes the investigation and the analyses of organized crime organizations throughout the world. Students will gain knowledge of how symbols, myths and rituals are at the core of justifying the organizations’ existence. Furthermore, students will also gain awareness of how cinematic representations of the Mafia and other criminal organizations, such as Yakuza, Triads, Vory V Zakone shape and often glorify organized crime groups while, at the same time, vilifying the ethnic groups of origin. The goal is for the students to deconstruct the romantic portrayal of the gangster life style created, to analyze the atrocities committed by organized crime groups, to understand the political and economic influence these groups have in the territories they rule and to understand how they reach and maintain their power.

Primary Text:

- A) **Textbook** - Nicaso & M. Danesi, *Made Men*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013. (Also available in electronic form).
- B) **Selected Articles** – as per schedule below and posted on OnQ.

*Films:

Little Caesar, 1931, Scarface 1932, The Godfather I, II & III, Eastern Promises, The Year of the Dragon, The Yakuza. Other films are part of the posted Power Points on OnQ.

*Films are available on-line or ARES: Electronic course resources and in PowerPoints posted on OnQ.

Schedule of Course Work

Week 1	Sept. 08	Intro and presentation of the course. Using semiotics as an investigative tool. The gangster genre of 1930s. Film analyses: <i>Little Caesar</i> (1931), and <i>Scarface</i> (1932). Discussion on the origins of the Mafia in Italy and North America: reality and myth. The importance of name recognition. The presence of Mafia groups in Popular Culture: Movies, Videogames and Advertising.	Read the article <i>Ethnicity and the Classical Gangster Film: Mervyn LeRoy's Little Caesar and Howard Hawks' Scarface</i> by Norma Bouchard. Read Chapter 1 and 5 of <i>Made Men</i> by Antonio Nicaso and Marcel Danesi
Week 2	Sept. 15	What is the Alien Conspiracy theory? The "invention of "The Black Hand". The murder of New Orleans Chief of Police. The fascination for the Mafia during Prohibition and Italophobia.	Read the article "Black Hand and White Hearts" by Giorgio Bertellini.
Week 3	Sept. 22	At the roots of the Mafia: <i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i> (Rustic Chivalry). The role of the "Honour" system in organized crime groups and their codes. The importance of Ritual and Myths.	Read the short novel <i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i> by Giovanni Verga Read Chapter 2, 3 and 6 of <i>Made Men</i> by Antonio Nicaso and Marcel Danesi
Week 4	Sept.29	I am who I seem to be: The importance of appearance. The role of symbols, tattoos, and nicknames as identifiers. The role of women in organized crime and their representation.	Read the article "Code of the Underworlds, How Criminals Communicate" by Diego Gambetta Read Chapter 4 of <i>Made Men</i> by Antonio Nicaso and Marcel Danesi.
Week 5	Oct. 6	TEST I (Open Book) *	
Week 6	Oct. 13	Analyses of <i>The Godfather I; II and III</i> . Myths and realities.	Read the "Conclusion" Chapter of <i>Made Men</i> by Antonio Nicaso and Marcel Danesi
Week 7	Oct. 20	Deconstructing drug trafficking. Narco-Culture & Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs: rules and beliefs.	Read "Narcoculture? Narco-trafficking as a semiosphere of anti culture" by Julieta Haidar and Chávez Herrera.
Week 8	Oct. 27	READING WEEK	

Week 9	Nov. 03	The Vory v Zakone: its origin and the transformation of organized crime in the former Soviet Union after the fall of the Berlin Wall.	Power point presentation on The Vory v Zakone. Read "Self-Image" by Federico Varese
Week 10	Nov. 10	TEST II (Open Book) *	
Week 11	Nov. 17	The Triads: rituals, myths, and reality. Politics and power.	Power Point presentation on Triads. Read Chapter 3 of <i>Warlords of Crime</i> by Gerald L. Posner
Week 12	Nov. 24	The Yakuza: myths, rituals and corruption.	Read Chapter 1 (The Honorable Outlaws) of <i>Yakuza</i> by David E. Kaplan and Alec Dubro
Week 13	Dec. 03	TEST III (Open book) *	

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Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We are aware that we are living in exceptional and challenging times and we are here to support you during the semester, but it is essential that you communicate with us. Take care and see you, kind of, in class. Antonio Nicaso and Donato Santeramo

Statement on Academic Integrity

The following statement on academic integrity builds on a definition approved by Senate and is designed to make students aware of the importance of the concept and the potential consequences of departing from the core values of academic integrity. It is highly recommended that this statement be included on all course syllabi. Instructors may also consider including this statement with each assignment.

Academic Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1>), on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity>), and from the instructor **of this**

course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Turnitin Statement

This course makes use of Turnitin, a third-party application that helps maintain standards of excellence in academic integrity. Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments to through onQ to Turnitin. In doing so, students' work will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

Turnitin is a suite of tools that provide instructors with information about the authenticity of submitted work and facilitates the process of grading. Turnitin compares submitted files against its extensive database of content, and produces a similarity report and a similarity score for each assignment. A similarity score is the percentage of a document that is similar to content held within the database. Turnitin does not determine if an instance of plagiarism has occurred. Instead, it gives instructors the information they need to determine the authenticity of work as a part of a larger process.

Please read Turnitin's Privacy Pledge, Privacy Policy, and Terms of Service, which governs users' relationship with Turnitin. Also, please note that Turnitin uses cookies and other tracking technologies; however, in its service contract with Queen's Turnitin has agreed that neither Turnitin nor its third-party partners will use data collected through cookies or other tracking technologies for marketing or advertising purposes. For further information about how you can exercise control over cookies, see Turnitin's Privacy Policy:

Turnitin may provide other services that are not connected to the purpose for which Queen's University has engaged Turnitin. Your independent use of Turnitin's other services is subject solely to Turnitin's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, and Queen's University has no liability for any independent interaction you choose to have with Turnitin.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2016 (see <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslclwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/ACADACCOMMPOLICY2016.pdf>). If you are a student with a disability and think you may need academic accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

Academic Consideration for Students with Extenuating Circumstances

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time, not to exceed three months. Students receiving academic consideration must meet all essential requirements of a course. The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances was approved at Senate in April, 2017 (see <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslclwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf>) Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where a request can be submitted at:

<http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations>. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

If you need to request academic consideration for this course, you will be required to provide the name and email address of the instructor/coordinator. Please use the following:

Instructor Name: Dr. Donato Santeramo

Instructor email address: ds19@queensu.ca