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CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Creative Italian Storytelling: from Literature to Cinema to other Forms of Fiction

PROF. PERBELLINI MARA/ PROVENZI ILENIA

Area of study:	Italian Culture: Literature, Theatre, Cinema, Music, Philosophy and History
Area Code:	LT/AR320
Method of Instruction:	In-person (except ~15 hours that will run online)

Description

Adaptations have long been a mainstay of Hollywood, Cinecittà and the television networks. Many of the most successful international films are indeed adaptations of novels, plays or true-life stories. We will analyze some of the most important adaptations of Italian Literature and biopics for the seventh art. We will discover masterpieces of Italian Cinema, understanding the changes from the source material to the new text and identifying the resistance of literature. This course is very hands-on because it includes a creative experience through literature and cinema: the writer's lab. Each student will be given tools to write a short story and develop it into a short film screenplay, learning the craft of storytelling, creating compelling characters, shading style, mastering structure, writing dialogue. This course provides the student with a new knowledge of humanities (particularly, but not exclusively Italian), from literature to cinema to biography. It is a great opportunity to discover the Italian culture through the arts of time: poetry, literature, and screenwriting. And also a great opportunity to learn creative techniques in writing.

Students will learn narrative techniques and how Literature and Biography can be manipulated to create an original piece of art: the screenplay. Students will discover great examples of Italian novels, shorts stories and films and, through them, they'll acquire a deeper knowledge of the Italian Culture.

Course contents

Prerequisites

None

Method of instruction

Lecture and Lab. Readings of stories and excerpts of novels and short stories. Screening and analysis of clips of important films adapted from literature, theatre and true-life stories. The source material will be compared to the adaptation, revealing the essence of each medium.

Course requirements

The reading of the book Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi is recommended prior to the beginning of the course (it can be found in the course-pack). Ideally students should read it from beginning to end, before it is analyzed in class.



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Credits

6 ECTS

Grading

Attendance and class participation	20% of final grade
Midterm written exam	40% of final grade
Creative work for final exam; Short story	25% of final grade
Short film script	30% of final grade

Course readings and materials

All the required readings will be available in a course pack and the lecturers' slides will be available on Blackboard.

Required readings (excerpts):

Linda Seger, *The art of adaptation: turning fact and fiction into film*, Owl Book, NYC 1992 (introduction, chapters 1, 3, 8).

Robert Mc Kee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting*, Harper Collins Publishers, NYC (chapters 1, 2, 5, 11, 17, 18)

Some excerpts from the following Italian novels and short stories (in English):

Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

Italo Calvino, *The Distance of the Moon*

Luigi Pirandello, *La Carriola* (The wheelbarrow)

James Joyce, *The Dead*

George Bowering, *A Short Story*

Required film:

Pinocchio(2002) by Roberto Benigni.

Instructor bio

Prof. Mara Perbellini is a scriptwriter and story analyst for major film and TV production Companies. After her B.A. in Italian Literature and her Master's Degree in Screenwriting at the Università Cattolica of Milan, she began to write screenplays and work as a story analyst for Rai Fiction and Eagle Pictures. She also worked as assistant director on the TV-movie "Una famiglia per caso" for RAI 1. She has had over twelve feature film stories and screenplays purchased or optioned, including the treatment of "Bugie e miracoli" for Academy Award Winner Producer Marina Cicogna. In addition to her screenplays, Mara has had a number of scripts produced for animated series, such as "The Lord of Shadows" and "Uffa che Pazienza!" (Rai 2, season 1 and 2, which earned the Pulcinella Award at Cartoons on the Bay 2008 as best TV series for children). She also attended the Film School at the New York Film Academy, both in NYC and in L.A. (at Universal Studios) and the London Academy of Radio, Film & TV: while there, she directed, wrote and edited 4 short films. In 2006 Mara joined the Faculty of IES Abroad Milan, where she teaches History of Italian Cinema and filmmaking. In 2012 she joined the Faculty of Università Cattolica where she teaches Creative Storytelling with Prof. Provenzi and Fellini and contemporary Italian Cinema. She's also tutoring Italian film students at Università Cattolica, both for the Screenwriting Master Program and the film-making summer course at the School of Visual Arts in NYC. In 2009 she got an Award for best screenplay at the Fiuggi International Family Film Festival with the film "Il sirenetto". After that she wrote several prime-time mini-series and series, such as "Distretto di polizia 8" (Canale 5), "Ci vediamo a Portofino" (Rai 1), "La vita che corre" (Rai 1), "Eleonora Duse" (Publispei) and "Ombre sulla neve" (Casanova Multimedia). In 2013 she



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wrote 5 plays for “Decalogo parte prima” that premiered at the Spoleto “Festival dei due mondi”. She’s currently writing some cinematic projects and prime-time TV series.

Prof. Ilenia Provenzi graduated in Modern Literature and attended a Master’s Degree in Screenwriting. She began working for production companies in Rome and New York, and while there, she started working on scripts and editorial projects. Her first novel for young readers –La discesa dei Luminosi –has been published by Giunti Editore in January 2012. She has worked as a script translator and as a scriptwriter on animation series for children; she currently works as a writer and consulting editor for publishing companies.

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