



UNIVERSITÀ
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 Studies and Culture
Area Code:	LT/AR320
Method of Instruction:	in-person and live-streaming
Participation:	synchronous/live only

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. Students 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.

Course Contents

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. The students will work in pairs on the final short story and short film screenplay.

Prerequisites

None

Method Of Teaching

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. Writing exercises.

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

Class participation and attendance	20% of final grade
Midterm written exam	40% of final grade
Creative work for final exam: Short story	20% of final grade
Creative work for final exam: Short film script	20% 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, *Le avventure di Pinocchio (The Adventures of Pinocchio)*

Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili (Invisible Cities)*

Luigi Pirandello, *La Carriola (The wheelbarrow)*

Yoshimoto Banana, *Kitchen*

James Joyce, *The Dead*

Required films:

Pinocchio (2002) by Roberto Benigni.

Pinocchio (2019) by Matteo Garrone.

Il Divo by Paolo Sorrentino.

Instructor bio

Prof. Mara Perbellini is a dramatist, headwriter and scriptwriter for major film and TV production companies. After her B.A. in Italian Humanities and her master's degree in Screenwriting at UCSC of Milan, she studied filmmaking at the New York Film Academy (NYC and L.A.-Universal Studios) and at 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. In 2012 she joined the Faculty of Università Cattolica where she teaches creative storytelling with Prof. Provenzi and Fellini and contemporary Italian Cinema. She teaches at MISP (Master in international screenwriting and production) at UCSC. She's also tutoring Italian film for the film-making summer course at the School of Visual Arts in NYC.

She worked 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.

Her first commissioned work was the TV animation series *Uffa che Pazienza!* (Rai) which earned the Pulcinella Award at Cartoons on the Bay 2008. Since then, she wrote many prime-time mini-series and series, such as *Distretto di polizia 8* (Canale 5), *Ci vediamo a Portofino* (DAP), *La vita che corre* (Rai 1), *Eleonora Duse* (Publispei) and *Ombre sulla neve* (Casanova Multimedia). In 2009 she got an Award for best screenplay at the Fiuggi International Family Film Festival with the film "Il sirenetto".



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Recent filmography

- 2022: Writer of 2 episodes of the prime-time mini-series *Che Dio ci aiuti 7* (LuxVide / Rai 1)
- 2022: Co-producer in the writers' room of the HBO Max tv series *Home sweet Rome!* (Red Monk Studios)
- 2021: Writer of 1 episode of the prime-time mini-series *Viola come il mare* (LuxVide / Canale 5)
- 2021-2: Story-editor of the 6 episode-series *Dakota* (Swiss e-Motion / RSI)
- 2021: Head-writer of the tv series *Marta & Eva – season 2* (20 episodes; 3zero2 / Rai)
- 2020: Head-writer of the tv series *Marta & Eva* (20 episodes; 3zero2 / Rai)
- 2020: Writer of 7 episodes of the animated tv series *Nina & Olga* (enanimation / Rai)
- 2019: Screenwriter of *The last days of the Republic*, an epic historical film that won the StoryLab competition 2019.
- 2016-19: Writer of 2 episodes of the TV series *Made in Italy* (Taodue – The family for Mediaset / Amazon Prime, 2016-19).
- 2018-19: Head-writer of the TV series *Penny on M.A.R.S.*, seasons 2 (10 eps) and 3 (13 eps; 3zero2-The Walt Disney Company Italia).

Prof. Ilenia Provenzi graduated in Modern Literature and attended a Master's Degree in Screenwriting. She began working for production companies in Rome (Lux Vide) and New York (Rai International), and while there, she started to develop her own projects.

After that she attended several courses and seminars held by Bobette Buster and Laurie Hutzler, worked as a scriptwriter for RAI Educational and wrote several episodes of animated series for children (*Julio Bunny*, *YoYo*, *Topo Gigio*) and screenplays for the TV series *Penny on M.A.R.S* and *Marta & Eva*. She's also been working as a script translator on an international TV series produced by Lux Vide and Big Light Productions (*Medici – Masters of Florence*), Lux Vide and Sky (*Devils*) and as a book translator.

Her novel for young readers, *La discesa dei Luminosi*, was published by Giunti Editore in January 2012. In the same year she joined the Faculty of Università Cattolica, where she teaches Creative Storytelling with Prof. Mara Perbellini.

She co-wrote a book with Eleonora Fornasari, *Le amiche formidabili* (DeAgostini 2021), dedicated to female characters in children's books. She has also been writing fantasy novels under the pseudonym of Viola Marchesi: *Il segreto di Artica* (Einaudi Ragazzi 2021) and *I Kirai e le cinque energie* (Edizioni EL 2022), illustrated by Alessandro Barbucci (W.I.T.C.H., Monster Allergy).

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