



## **COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER: FVA 376/POL 375 - Politics through cinema**

**45 contact hours, 3 credits**

This syllabus is informational in nature and is not an express or implied contract. It is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, because of any circumstance outside the University's control, or as other needs arise. If, in the University's sole discretion, public health conditions or any other matter affecting the health, safety, upkeep, or well-being of our campus community or operations requires the University to move to remote teaching, alternative assignments may be provided so that the learning objectives for the course, as determined by the faculty and the University, can still be met. The University does not guarantee specific in-person, on-campus classes, activities, opportunities, services or any other format, timing, or location of education, classes, activities, or services.

### **Mask Policy**

Please be advised that the mask policy in this class will follow Sant'Anna Institute requirements. When/if the University enacts a mask policy, all students are expected to adhere to the policy.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*The Cold War cinema: the US, the Soviet Union, and the shaping of the global world.*

The course focuses on the Cold War era (1945-90), using cinema as a privileged perspective through which to understand political, historical, and social issues of a crucial period of the 20th century, when the United States and the Soviet Union were the main actors of a strategy that, by involving the international arena, was the first step to the shaping of globalization. Due to the action of the USA and the USSR, the world was divided into spheres of influence between democracy and communism. The process regarded Europe, split in two between the democratic countries, members of NATO (such as Italy, France, United Kingdom, West Germany) and the communist ones under the influence of the Warsaw Pact (such as Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia), but also Latin America (Cuba, Chile, Argentina), Far East (Korea and Vietnam wars), and Africa for its decolonization process.

Through films ranging from the late 40s to the 80s (mostly American movies, but also from the USSR, Italy, Germany, Poland, Chile, Argentina, Senegal), some political issues will be addressed (ideology, propaganda, totalitarianism, nuclear strategy, institutional crisis) reinterpreted in the light of the main events of the Cold War era.

Cinema will be the privileged tool for interpreting and understanding the themes, due to its ability to reflect events: sometimes directly, for example with films of explicit political propaganda; more often indirectly, since the cinematographic image conveys the unconscious fears, aspirations, anxieties of a whole society.

Students are invited to express their opinions and make their own criticisms and written assignments.

**Prerequisite:** A course in Contemporary History or Political Sciences or International Relations.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

- Describe the history of the Cold War era.
- Understand several issues in political theory.
- Analyze movies from the perspective of the political messages conveyed by visual storytelling.
- Appreciate how movies reflect politics and its impact on society.
- Appreciate several masterpieces of global cinema.
- Write and present a critique of a film.

## FORMAT

Students will engage in small group work and discussions.

## REFERENCE TEXTS

Chapters from the following textbooks will be provided:

- Tony Shaw, Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War. The American and Soviet Struggle for hearts and minds*, University Press of Kansas, 2010
- John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War. A New history*, Penguin, 2005
- Elizabeth Haas, Terry Christensen, Terry J. Haas, *Projecting Politics. Political messages in American film*, Routledge, 2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: first section, "Studying Political Films", 3-91
- James Combs (ed), *Movies and politics: the dynamic relationship*, Garland Publishing, 1993: 3-25; 55-86

## EXAMS and ASSIGNMENTS

25% Midterm exam

25%: Written Assignments

30%: Final Paper

20%: Participation

The mid-term exam will include: 10 open-ended questions, 5 multiple-choice, 500 words short essay. More detailed information will be made available at the start of the program.

Assignments to be submitted by email: one paper every two weeks of 4 pages each in length (Times New Roman 12, double space) for one of the two movies watched in the two weeks, including:

- A film critique.
- Summary of the historical background of the movie
- Analysis of the political issues conveyed by the movie.
- At least two references to US or Italian professional critics

Final paper to be submitted by email: long essay (10 pages, Times New Roman 12, double space) concerning one of the movies chosen by students and approved by the Faculty.

## Grading Scale

A 95%-100

A- 90%-94%

B+ 87%-89%

B 83%-86%

B- 80%-82%

C+ 77%-79%

C 73%-76%

C- 70%-72%

D+ 67%-69%

D 63%-66%

D- 60%-62%

F under 60

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Course outline and introduction: analyzing political messages in film

### **The birth of the Cold War and propaganda films in the USA and the USSR**

*Man on a Tightrope* (1953) by Elia Kazan, USA

Additional Movies: *Meeting on the Elbe* (1949) by Grigorij Alexandrov, USSR; *The Red Menace* (1949) by R.G. Springsteen, USA;

*Invasion USA* (1952) by Alfred E. Green, USA; *My Son John* (1952) by Leo McCarey, USA

### **The Red menace and McCarthyism**

*Guilty by Suspicion* (1991) by Irwin Winkler, USA

Additional Movies: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) by Don Siegel, USA; *The Front* (1976) by Martin Ritt, USA

### **The Years of the Thaw**

*Spring on Zarechnaya Street* (1956) by Marlen Khutsiev and Feliks Mironer, USSR

Additional Movies: *Storm Center* (1956) by Daniel Taradash, USA; *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) by David Lean, USA; *The Russians Are*

*Coming! The Russians Are Coming!* (1966) by Norman Jewison, USA

### **International Politics and the Atomic Fear**

*Fail Safe* (1964) by Sidney Lumet, USA

Additional Movies: *Nine Days in One year* (1962) by Mikhail Romm, URSS; *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955) by Robert Aldrich, USA; *On*

*the Beach* (1959) by Stanley Kramer, USA; *Doctor Strangelove* (1964) by Stanley Kubrick, USA

### **The Berlin Wall: a political symbol**

*One, Two, Three* (1961) by Billy Wilder, Usa

Additional Movies: *Escape from East Berlin* (1962) by Robert Siodmak, USA

### **The Cuban Regime: from Fidel Castro's revolution to the Missile Crisis**

*I am Cuba* (1964), by Mikhail Kalatozov, Cuba-USSR

Additional Movies: *Strawberry and Chocolate* (1993) by Tomàs Gutierrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío, Cuba-Mexico-Spain

### **Political Conspiracy**

*The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) by John Frankenheimer, USA

*The Mattei Affair* (1972) by Francesco Rosi, Italy

Additional Movies: *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (1965) by Martin Ritt, Great Britain

### **The Iron Curtain and Eastern Europe**

*Man of Marble* (1977) by Andrzej Wajda, Poland

Additional Movies: *The Lives of Others* (2006) by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, Germany

### **The Latin American Regimes**

*Missing* (1982) by Costa-Gavras, USA

Additional Movies: *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968) by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Argentina; *Bananas* (1971) by

Woody Allen, Usa; *Garage Olimpo* (1999) by Marco Bechis, Argentina; *Post Mortem* (2010), by Pablo Larraín, Chile; *No*

(2012) by Pablo Larraín, Chile

## **Africa and the End of Colonialism**

*The Battle of Algiers* (1966) by Gillo Pontecorvo, Italy-Algeria

Additional movies: *Black Girl* (1966) by Ousmane Sembéne, Senegal

## **The Crisis of Politics: Disillusionment and Paranoia**

*Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* (1970) by Elio Petri, Italy *All the President's Men* (1976) by Alan J. Pakula, USA

Additional Movies: *The Parallax View* (1974) by Alan J. Pakula, USA; *The Conversation* (1974) by Francis Ford Coppola, USA;

*Three Days of the Condor* (1975) by Sydney Pollack, USA; *Illustrious Corpses* (1976) by Francesco Rosi, Italy

## **The Vietnam War**

*Twilight's Last Gleaming* (1977) by Robert Aldrich, USA

Additional Movies: *The Deer Hunter* (1978) by Michael Cimino; *Coming Home* (1978) by Hal Ashby, USA; *Apocalypse Now*

(1979) by Francis Ford Coppola, USA

## **The Second Cold War: the return of propaganda in the '80s**

*Rambo: First Blood Part Two* (1985) by George Pan Cosmatos, 1985

Additional movies: *Incident at Map Grid 36-80* (1985), Mikhail Tumanishvili, USSR; *Solo Voyage* (1985), by Mikhail Tumanishvili, USSR; *Missing in Action 2 – The Beginning* (1985), by Lance Hool, USA; *Rocky 4* (1985), by Sylvester Stallone, USA

## **CLASS POLICY**

### **Attendance**

You are allowed ONE unexcused absence. Documentation for any other absence MUST be produced and APPROVED by your faculty. For absences due to illness, please provide the faculty with a doctor's note upon returning to class as well as inform them and/or the Office the first day of illness.

Participation grants the student one point for each lesson they attend. Unjustified absences result in 0 points. Participation in field trips, if any, awards 2 points, while non-participation results in a loss of 2 points.

Both by school policy and Italian law attendance at all classes is required of all students. (Yes, your student visa is dependent on perfect attendance.) Even so, I will reward students (around a borderline grade up) for perfect or very good attendance, but I am also forced by school policy to penalize students who accrue more than two unexcused absences, so please do your very best to be here and engaged when you are here. Students are expected to arrive at class on time, having completed the readings and written assignments due that day (see schedule below), to receive a passing (C or better) grade.

Since our texts are provided in electronic form, you will have a laptop in front of you during our class sessions, both the literary discussions and the workshops. Having lived for some years in a world free of such devices, I can tell you from experience that your laptop is *not* your friend, that it has already damaged your ability to concentrate and made it far more difficult for you to stay focused and benefit from classroom education than those of us lucky enough to have studied before this very tempting distraction-machine was invented. Serious psychological studies have demonstrated again and again that the laptop (and the myth of "multitasking") is seriously detrimental to human information retention, that taking notes on a computer is a far less effective memory jog than notes written on paper, and that the distractions that computers offer (social media, online shopping, games, etc.) are the greatest impediments to your education at the present moment. Please do your best to defeat these temptations and use the laptop only to refer to the text under discussion and, if you must, to take notes and jot down thoughts, interpretations, and possible paper topics. For 1.5 hours twice a week, please try your best to leave the buzz of the cyber world behind, to stay with us and live "in the moment." This is your only hope.

### **Late submissions:**

Assignments not submitted by the due date will receive a penalty of 10% for the first 24 hours, 20% for a 48-hour delay. No submissions will be accepted more than 3 days after the deadline, unless arrangements have been made with the instructor (for extensions under exceptional circumstances, apply to the course instructor).

**Personal Technology:**

Please turn cell phones off during class. You can use laptops to take notes, however social networking, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, playing games, etc. are forbidden during class. Any student caught using their laptop/cell phones inappropriately during class will be asked to turn them off. Repeated violations of this rule after the first warning will result in the student being marked absent for the day and permanently losing their laptop privileges. Please be respectful and limit your use of personal electronic devices during class to academic purposes.

**Contesting a grade:**

If students wish to contest a grade, they must make an appointment to do so in person. The student should contact the instructor with any concerns within ONE week of receiving the grade. The students must also demonstrate that they have read the comments accompanying the grade by presenting a brief written statement specifying why the grade does not reflect the quality of the work. It is at the discretion of the instructor to decide whether the work and the student's request warrant any increase or decrease in the grade. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments and feedback (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked assignments.

**Recommended behavior:**

- Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period. It is advisable that you be in your seat and ready to start participating in class at that time.
- Always bring the required supplies and be ready to be actively engaged in the learning process. This communicates preparedness and interest.
- Turn your cell phone off or to vibrate mode before the start of class.
- It is fine to bring a drink or a snack to class, if it is not distracting. In conjunction with this, please pick up your trash when you leave the room.
- Your professor expects your full attention for the entire class period. If you know that you'll need to leave before the class is over, try to sit as close to the door as possible so as not to disrupt others. Similarly, if you arrive in class late, just slip in as quietly as possible and take the first available seat you come to.
- Do not sleep in class! Laying your head on the desk or sleeping in class is rude, and it is distracting to others. Turn in assignments on time.
- When you have a question or comment, please raise your hand first as a courtesy to your classmates and the professor. Remember, your questions are NOT an imposition – they are welcome. So, ask questions! You'll learn more, it makes the class more interesting, and you are helping others learn as well.
- If an emergency arises that requires an absence from a session, it is your responsibility to get the notes and all other information that was covered in class from a colleague you trust.

**Secular and religious holidays:**

Sant'Anna Institute recognizes that there are several secular and religious holidays - not included in the Italian calendar - that affect large numbers of its community members. In consideration of their significance for many students, no examinations may be given, and no assigned work may be required on these days. Students who observe these holidays will be given an opportunity to make up the missed work in both laboratories and lecture courses. If an examination is given on the first-class day after one of these holidays, it must not cover the material introduced in class on that holiday. Students who wish to observe such holidays must inform their instructors within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday even when the exact date of the holiday will not be known until later so that alternative arrangements convenient for both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. For this reason, it is desirable that faculty inform students of all examination dates at the start of each semester.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

"Members of the Jacksonville University community are expected to foster and uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity, which are foundations for the intellectual endeavors we engage in.

To underscore the importance of truth, honesty, and accountability, students and instructors should adhere to the following standards:

“On my honor as a student at Jacksonville University, I promise to uphold the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all my dealings with faculty, staff, and students.”

Academic misconduct occurs when a student engages in an action that is deceitful, fraudulent, or dishonest regarding any type of academic assignment that is intended to or results in an unfair academic advantage. In this context, the term “assignment” refers to any type of graded or ungraded work that is submitted for evaluation for any course. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, collusion, falsification, misrepresentation, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, copying another student’s work, using or providing unauthorized notes or materials, turning in work not produced by the individual, attempting to get credit for a single instance of work submitted for more than one course, and plagiarism. Furthermore, providing deceitful, fraudulent, or dishonest information during discussions of an academic matter with faculty are also examples of academic misconduct.” (Jacksonville University Academic Integrity Policy).

Throughout this course we will be reading and reporting about the work of others. All information that is not original to the student must be appropriately attributed to both presentations and written work. All students are expected to do their own work and give appropriate credit for all sources used in the process of preparing papers, presentations, and homework assignments. Group assignments will be graded based on the product of the work, although some adjustment may be made for participation. [If you have a question about whether collaboration is allowed, or how to cite a reference, please ask. It is always better to check than to be accused of an unintended violation of the academic honesty policy]. Violations of the academic honesty policy will be dealt with in accordance with university policies [Refer to current Academic Catalog “Academic Integrity and Misconduct”].

Course Level Penalties: A first offense may result in a failing grade for the assignment. Second offenses may result in failure in the course. Significantly egregious violations may result in expulsion from the university. When in doubt give credit for all information that did not come directly out of your head!

#### **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

Students with a documented disability requesting classroom accommodation or modifications, either permanent or temporary, resulting from the disability are encouraged to inform the faculty in the first week of the program.

