

**ROME IN FILM MMXXIV**  
**Tuesdays 10-12**  
**October 29, November 5, 12, 19, December 3, 10**



**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week I:**  
**October 29**

**Introduction to the Course & Rome in Hollywood**

**Films:**

*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (R. Lester, 1966)  
*Spartacus* (Stanley Kubrick 1960)

**Week II:**  
**November 5**

**Ancient Rome**

**Films:**

*Caesar Must Die* (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 2012)  
*Cleopatra* (Joseph Mankiewicz, 1963)  
*Julius Caesar* (Joseph Mankiewicz, 1953)

**Week III:**  
**November 12**

**Christian Rome**

**Films:**

*Quo Vadis, Domine?* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1951)  
*Ben-Hur* (William Wyler, 1959)

**Week IV:**  
**November 19**

**WWII & Neorealist Films**

**Films:**

*Rome Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945)  
*Umberto D.* (Vittorio De Sica (1952)  
*Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)

**Week V:**  
**December 3**

**Hollywood on the Tiber**

**Films:**

*Roman Holiday* (William Wyler, 1953)  
*Mid-August Lunch* (Gianni Di Gregorio, 2010)

**Week VI:**  
**December 10**

**Films about Rome**

**Film:**

*Fellini's Roma* (Federico Fellini, 1972)  
*The Great Beauty* (Paolo Sorrentino, 2013)

## SYLLABUS



Each week will include a brief introductory lecture with film clips, discussions, questions, and (optional) related readings. Class discussions will focus upon cinematic interpretations of Rome's history and topography through considerations that guide us to:

- gain an overview of Roman civilization and society through film, from antiquity to modernity, including concepts of power, freedom, spirituality and religion, and relationships
- investigate how Hollywood movies about ancient Rome reinterpret the past and shed light on contemporary issues, e.g., national, political, and cultural identities of the places and times in which they were produced
- consider how modern films about Rome use the ancient city and its topography as part of their discourse
- recognize prominent Roman landmarks and streetscapes
- relate arguments and ideas from films, literature, and related documents to the circumstances under which they were written; place films in their historical context; identify disparate ideas from the evidence of documents
- identify and analyze basic compositional structures in the films
- evaluate the significance of films both metaphorically and in larger cultural contexts

- identify and analyze similarities, differences, and interrelationships among films
- explore primary sources such as novels and historical documents related to the films
- discuss the nature and scope of scholarly controversies concerning the films
- explore general observations about the film industry in Italy and the unique role of Cinecittà

Please note that the films are widely available from many streaming sources.

We will discuss the films listed for each week, but you do not have to watch all films to participate in and enjoy our class meetings!

## **Optional Readings:**

Ferdinand Addis, *The Eternal City* (2018): An outstanding (and very readable!) source for the overall history of the time periods that our films represent with an excellent concluding chapter about cinematic Rome, called "The Parade: Federico Fellini and *La Dolce Vita*."

Articles and chapters will be posted the week before each meeting. The two articles for our first meeting are already posted. Please note, you do not have to complete the optional readings to participate in and enjoy our discussions!

### **Week I:**

Addis, chapters 1-6.

Carl J. Mora, "The Image of Ancient Rome in the Cinema," *RCUB 7.3* (1997).

Michael Parenti, "Roman Slavery and the Class Divide: Why Spartacus Lost," ch. 8 in *Spartacus: Film and History*, ed. M. Winkler (2007).

### **Week II:**

Addis, chapters 7-10.

### **Week III:**

Addis, chapters 20-21

### **Week IV:**

Addis, chapters 14-19

### **Week V:**

Addis, chapter 22.