# Course: Art and Culture in Fascist Italy

**Semester: Winter 2016**

Instructor: Dr Alessandro Celani

Class Location: St.Agostino

Class Meeting Time: Mon/Wed (10.45 am – 12.15 am)

Office Hours: After/before class or by appointment

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**Course Syllabus**

**Course Description**

This course aims to provide students with a critical knowledge of the main themes regarding Fascist Art and Culture. In an age which precedes the diffusion of mass media, art, architecture, literature, and music played a major role in the growth and the success of “Fascist ideals”. This course gives students a chance to study an important topic, which is usually relegated to minor chapters of monographs and publications regarding Fascism as a whole.

The focus of the course will be on the following main topics:

* The search for a pure Italian style (Art, Architecture, Literature)
  + Simplicity
  + Tradition
  + Rejection of the ornate and the elaborate
* The revival of the Antiquity (Archaeology, Architecture, Sculpture)
  + Monumentality
  + Symmetry
  + Durability
* The growth of the National Ideal (Art and Architecture, Literature, Music, Cinema)
  + Idealism
  + Heroism
  + Duty
* Tradition and Innovation
  + Technology (Photography and Cinema, Communications)
  + Fashion and design (Visual arts, music, dance)
  + Music and dance

The first part of the course will focus on an historical introduction to early 20th century Italy and the growth of the Fascist Ideals. It will present the major expressions of the Fascist propaganda: National Identity, the creation of a tradition, the use of Archaeology, the city of Rome as a “prototype of perfection”, the rejection of foreign styles and cultures, and the birth of a monu-mental architecture.

The second part of the course will study in detail single places, topics, and individuals related to the success of Fascism or examples of (sometimes hidden) anti-Fascim: the controversial figure of the architect Giuseppe Terragni, the charming and mysterious villa of Curzio Malaparte in Capri, as well as documentaries about modernity and progress in the Fascist Italy.

The major purpose of the course is to provide students with the ability to unveil the hidden layers of ideology, present in any expression of a mass communication, be it totalitarian or democratic.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

* acquire a sophisticated and in-depth understanding of Fascist history, society, and culture
* gain knowledge of the main visual, cultural, and artistic expressions of Fascist propaganda
* be able to analyze different types of documents: paintings, sculptures, architectures, movies.

**Teaching Method**

The course will be structured in:

* Classroom lectures, focused on:
  + - historical overview about early 20th century Italy and Europe.
    - history of the Fascist Italy in all its social implications
    - study of peculiar social aspects: sense of belonging, national identity
    - during classroom lectures students will be invited to participate exercising some of the methods proposed by the lecturer: reading texts, learning to identify places and buildings, etc.
* Field visits, focused on:
  + - understanding sites and specific buildings as results of social changes
    - interpreting the images on the basis of ideology, politics, and sociology

Any lecture or field visit will always be structured as an interdisciplinary analysis. The major disciplines involved will be: history, art, archaeology, architecture, music, cinema, photography.

**Nature of Assignments**

**Mid-term Test**: The Mid-term test will consist of short questions about the arguments treated during the first part of the course, identification of pictures representing images shown during class lectures or seen during field visits.

**Final Test**: The Final test will propose to the students, as the Mid-term, short questions and identification of pictures from arguments and sites approached during the entire course. Students will also be asked to write a short, analytical essay on some arguments suggested by the lecturer.

**Research Papers**

The purpose of writing a research paper is to clearly communicate what you have learned through your research. Your research must have a clearly defined question which you set out to answer in your paper, providing the necessary arguments and evidence for your conclusions

### The length of the paper should be at least seven pages. Papers must be typed, written in a clear and cogent style and include documentation of sources of information in proper footnotes.

* Handwritten papers are not accepted
* Late papers may not be accepted.
* If a late final paper is accepted, then one letter grade will be deducted for the first week (or partial week) of delay in handing in the final paper.
* Plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” for the course. Please consult the student handbook for the definition of plagiarism and the policies followed by the Institute in the case of plagiarism.
* All papers should have a pertinent bibliography. Websites must be cited as references. More weight and positive evaluation will be given to book references than to internet/website references.

**Assessment Policy**

The final grade for the course will be compounded from the following:

Mid-Term exam: 20%

Research paper and oral presentation 30%

Final exam: 30%

Assignments 15%

Class participation: 5%

Attendance Policy

Attendance is obligatory and the final grade will reflect absences. Missing three (3) classes will lower the course grade. If a student misses a class, he/she is responsible for obtaining the assignment and any class notes. If there is any problem about any aspect of the course, please contact the instructor to discuss and resolve it. Active participation will be widely appreciated and will be reflected in the student’s final grade. Absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up.

The field trips are considered part of the course, and attendance policy is the same as class lectures.

Students are expected to be in class on time. Lateness of more than fifteen minutes will be counted as half an absence.

**Required Readings**

Reader provided by the lecturer

**Short selected bibliographies on Fascist Politcs and History, Culture and Life, Art and Architecture**

**History of Fascism: Political Science and Modern History**

Nicholas Farrell, *Mussolini. A new life*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2003.

Richard Collier, *Duce! A biography of Benito Mussolini*, The Viking Press, 1971.

Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, Harvard University Press 1996.

Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 1981.

Alexander de Grand, *Italian Fascism. Its origins & Development*, Lincoln & London, 1982.

Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self. The Political Culture of Interwar Italy*, Cornell University Press 1997.

William Sheridan Allen. *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922–1945*. Quadrangle Press, 1965.

R. J. B. Bosworth. *Mussolini’s Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915–1945*. Penguin Press, 2005.

Christopher R. Browning. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. Harper Perennial, 1992.

Richard J. Evans. *The Coming of the Third Reich*. Penguin Press, 2004.

Jeffrey Herf. *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys*. Harvard University Press, 1997.

Adrian Lyttelton. *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919–1929*. Routledge, 2009.

Michael Mann. *Fascists.* Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Cas Mudde. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.  
Stanley G. Payne. *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Robert O. Paxton. *The Anatomy of Fascism*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.  
Henry Rousso. *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944*. Harvard University Press, 1991.

Henry Ashby Turner, Jr. *Hitler’s Thirty Days to Power: January 1933.* Addison-Wellesley, 1996.

**Fascist Culture and Life**

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’*. New York: Routledge, 1993.  
Cannistraro, Philip. Ed. *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982.   
de Grazia, Victoria. *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1943*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.  
de Grazia, Victoria. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.  
Forgacs, David. Ed. *Rethinking Fascism: Capitalism, Populism, and Culture*. London: Lawrence and Wishart. 1986.  
Gori, Gigliola. *Italian Fascism and the Female Body: Sport, Submissive Women, and Strong Mothers*. New York: Routledge, 2004.  
Horn, David. *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.  
Payne, Stanley. *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.  
Pickering-Iazzi, Robin. Ed. *Mothers of Invention: Women, Italian Fascism, and Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.  
Pickering-Iazzi, Robin. *Politics of the Visible: Writing Women, Culture, and Fascism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.   
Pinkus, Karen. *Bodily Regimes: Italian Advertising Under Fascism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.  
Schanpp, Jeffrey. *Staging Fascism: 18BL and the Theater of Masses for Masses*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.  
Spackman, Barbara. *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology and Social Fantasy in Italy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.  
Stone, Marla. *The Patron State: Culture and Politics in Fascist Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Ben-Ghiat, Ruth, *Fascist Modernities : Italy, 1922-1945*, University of California Press, 2004.

Sakchs, Harvey, *Music in Fascist Italy*, Weindenfeld & Nicholson, 2000.

**Art and Architecture**

Affron Mathew, *Fascist Vision: Art and ideology in France and Italy*, Princeton University Press 1997.

Blum, Cinzia. The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.  
Brown Emily, *Chaos and Classicism: Art in France, Italy and Germany, 1918-1936*, Guggenheim Museum, 2011.

Falasca-Zamponi, Nicoletta, *The Aestetics of Power in Mussolini’s Italy*, University of California Press 1997.

Golomostok, Igor, *Totalitarian Art*, Icon (Harpe), 1990.

Lasansky, D.Medina, *Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourismin Fascist Italy (Buildings, Landscapes and Societies)*, Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2005.

Lazzaro, Claudia and Roger J. Crum eds. *Donatello Among the Blackshirts: History and Modernity in the Visual Culture of Fascist Italy*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005.  
Luzzatto, Sergio. *The Body of Il Duce: Mussolini's Corpse and the Fortunes of Italy*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005.  
Mangan, J.A., *Shaping the Superman. Fascist Body as a Political Icon*, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999.

Brown, Emily, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism*: *Art and Politics under Fascism*, Cambridge University Press 2000.

Painter, Borden W. Junior, *Mussolini’s Rome. Rebuilding the Eternal City*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.

Talamona, Marida, *Casa Malaparte*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1992.

Eisenmann, Peter, *Giuseppe Terragni: Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques*, The Monacelli Press, 2003.

Sabatino, Michelangelo, *Pride in Modesty: Modernist Architecture and the Vernacular Tradition in Italy*,

Toronto University Press 2010.

S**yllabus**

**Class 0 – Jan 13th**

Intro to the course and conversation about Italy and Fascism

**No reading assignment**

**Class 1 – Jan 18th**

Introduction to the course: methods, materials, chronological overview

**Read pp. 13-31 from Lazzaro**

L.Visconti and Tomasi di Lampedusa – *The Leopard*.

The Italian Unification and Art

**Read pp. 25-56 from Sabatino**

**Class 2 – Jan 20th**

The historical background of Fascism: the economical crisis and the loss of a sense of belongness

Conversation about the Italian novel *Terra Matta*, by Vincenzo Rabito.

**Read:** **Introduction: The Genesis of Fascism,** byGeorge L. Mosse, in*Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, No. 1. (1966), pp. 14-26.

**Class 3 – Jan 25th**

The creation of a primordial purity. The myth of the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance and the demolition of the Baroque ideals

**Read pp. 113-144 from Lazzaro**

A study case – The Duomo in Orvieto

**Class notes and discussion**

**Class 4 – Jan 27th**

The Historical fundaments of a modern city: Rome (1)

Analysis of a monument: the Vittoriano (monumentality)

**Read: Urban Rhetoric and Embodied Identities: City, Nation, and Empire at the Vittorio Emanuele II Monument in Rome, 1879-1945,** in Annals of the American Geographers, vol. 88, No. 1 (Mar. 1998), pp. 28-49.

**Michelangelo and the Black skirts**

**Discussion**

**Friday Jan 29**

**Field trip to Spoleto**

**Class 5 – Feb 1st**

The Historical fundaments of a modern city: Augustus, Mussolini and the Empire

**Read pp. 53-65 from Lazzaro**

Midterm Test

**Class 6 – Feb 3rd**

“Il foro Mussolini”: sport, art and the myth of Rome

Analysis of a monument: the statues of the Foro Italico (ideal beuty?)

**Assignment**: Relationships between sport, marketing and business: a new form of totalitarism? Find some examples.

**Read: Mussolini’s Forum and the myth of Augustan Rome,** in Classical Bulletin, 2000, 76, 2, 117-139

**Class 7 – Feb 10th**

The architectural body: a short reflection on the EUR in Rome

Analysis of a monument: the Colosseo Quadrato (volume)

**Assignment**: find any element of tradition in a modern building that you know.

**Read: The Classicism of the E42: Between Modernity and Tradition,** in Assemblage, No. 8 (Feb. 1989), 78-87

The Image of Sport: Riefenstahl’s Olympia

Documentaries in Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany

**Assignment**: write a short essay comparing color to black and white cinema.

**Read pp. 86-106 from Mangan**

**Friday Feb 12**

**Field trip to Orvieto**

**Class 8 – Feb 15th**

**Midterm test**

**Class 9 – Feb 17th**

Giuseppe Terragni and the S.Elia kindergarten: education (still towards a better future)

**Read pp. 93-122 from Ben-Ghiat**

Adalberto Libera and the Villa Malaparte in Capri: leisure time

Primary sources: Readings of short excerpts from C.Malaparte, *Cantata dell’ArciMussolini*.

**Read pp. 92-127 from Sabatino**

**Class 10 – Feb 22nd**

Palazzo delle Esposizioni and the Mostra Universale della Romanità: public memory

Primary sources: Readings from the Catalogue of the Exhibit “Mostra Universale della Romanità” (Universal Exhibit of Romanity)

**Read: Staging Fascism: The Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution**, by Marla Stone, in Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 28, no. 2 (Apr. 1998), 215-243

**Class 11 – Feb 24th**

The Istituto Luce: Propaganda and Technology

Primary sources: watch short excerpts from some of the Istituto Luce documentaries and short written analysis in classroom.

**Assignment**: find any aspect of a political ideology or propaganda in the news or news papers you know better.

**Class 12 – Feb 29th**

Fascism and the Church: St.Peter’s Basilica and City Planning in Fascist Rome

**Read: Framing St.Peter’s: Urban Planning in Fascist Rome, by Terry Kirk,** in The Art Bulletin, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Dec. 2006), 756-776.

Italian Lybia: the restoration of the Roman antiquities and the colonies

**Read: Building Power: Italy’s Colonial Architecture and Urbanism, 1923-1940, by Mia Fuller,** in Cultural Anthropology, VOl. 3, No. 4 (Nov. 1988), 455-487.

**Class 13 – Mar 2nd**

Hitler’s Grand Tour to Italy

**Read: Capturing the Fascist Moment: Hitler’s Visit to Italy in 1938 and Radicalization of Fascist Italy, by Paul Baxa,** in Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Apr. 2007), 227-242.

**Class 14 – Mar 7th**

Continuity

Postwar Architecture and Urbanism

**Read pp. 165-195 from Sabatino**

**Class 15 – Mar 9th**

The Ara Pacis Museum and its changes over the 20th century

Class notes

Oral Presentation and review

Pre-final test

**Class 16 – Mar 14th**

**Final paper due**