

Format revised 2025  
Syllabus revised 2025

Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

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**SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS****DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY / CRIMINOLOGY****COURSE TITLE: HISTORY OF THE MAFIA****COURSE CODE: LAHSHM380 / LACCMHM380****3 semester credits****1. DESCRIPTION**

This course discusses the origins and development of the Mafia in the context of Italian politics, economics, and society from the nineteenth century to the present day. It analyzes the nature of Mafia activities and their international relevance. Special focus will be given to judicial procedures against the Mafia and the experiences of key individuals and groups contrasting their illegal activities.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

The course aims at providing students with instruments of knowledge, comprehension, application, evaluation and synthesis on the topic. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define specific elements characterizing mafia as compared to other criminal organizations.
- Describe the internal structures and the characteristics of the four types of Italian mafias.
- Understand the historical roots and evolution of mafia from its origins to contemporary times
- Identify key illegal markets and their global impact.
- Explain the relationship of mafia organizations with politics in time and their social impact.
- Evaluate the relationship with religion and gender.
- Indicate, analyze and compare the range of instruments and strategies to counter the mafia.
- Organize and present a research paper on a topic by choice.
- Enhance participation and constructive critical sense through class discussions.

**3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**4. METHOD**

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and interaction with the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, integrate relevant academic sources, may include multimedia references, propose creative problem-solving, and other appropriate forms of delivery as deemed appropriate to the course's purpose.

**5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES**

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

Dickie J., *Cosa Nostra*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2004

The textbook is mandatory for course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may be provided by the instructor.

**FURTHER READINGS**

Arlacchi, P., *Men of Dishonour: Inside the Sicilian Mafia*, Morrow and Co., 1993.

Arlacchi, P., *Mafia Business: The Mafia Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Verso, 1987.

Behan T., *Defiance, The story of the man who stood up to the Sicilian mafia*, Tauris & Co., 2008  
 Bolzoni A., *White shotgun: the Sicilian mafia in their own words*, Macmillan, 2013  
 Davis, J., *Mafia Dynasty*, Harper Collins, 1993.  
 Dickie J., *Cosa Nostra*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2004  
 Dickie J., *Mafia Republic: Italy's Criminal Curse. Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta and Camorra from 1946 to the Present*, Sceptre, 2014  
 Dickie J., *Mafia Brotherhoods: I Camorra, mafia, 'ndrangheta: the rise of the Honoured Societies*, Sceptre, 2013  
 Duggan C., *Fascism and Mafia*, Yale University Press, 1989  
 Fentress J., *Rebels and mafiosi. Death in a Sicilian landscape*, Cornell University Press, 2000  
 Finckehauer J.O., *Mafia and Organized Crime*, One World Book, 2007  
 Follain J., *The last Godfathers*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2008  
 Gambetta, D., *The Sicilian Mafia*, Harvard University Press, 1993.  
 Glenny M., *McMafia*, Bodley Head, 2008  
 Stille A., *Excellent Cadavers*, Jonathan Cope Ed., 1995.  
 Seindal, R. *Mafia, Money and Politics in Sicily 1950-1997*, Museum Tusculanum Press, 1998.  
 Siebert. R., *Secrets of Life and Death: Women and the Mafia*, Verso Ed., 1996  
 Varese F., *Mafias on the move: how organized crime conquers new territories*, Princeton Univ. Press, 2011.

## **LIBRARY**

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. Texts may be consulted on-site, and scanning/internet services available.

## **6. COURSE MATERIALS**

No additional course materials are necessary.

## **7. COURSE FEES**

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. If this course requires a fee, the exact amount is communicated prior to enrollment.

## **8. GRADING AND EVALUATION & ATTENDANCE**

10% Attendance  
 10% Class Participation  
 20% Assignments  
 20% Midterm Exam  
 20% Final Exam  
 20% Research Paper

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C-=70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

The above grade breakdown percentages reflect the grading scale standards in the "Grading and Evaluation System" section of the catalog.

### **Attendance**

Class participation is mandatory. Based on the hours defined in the Academic Catalog's attendance policy, students may miss up to 2 class encounters delivered as lecture hours. A third absence constitutes a course failure.

Please note that absence hours may vary according to the learning methodology, as per the academic catalog policy on credit hours:

[https://catalog.fua.it/standard\\_regulation](https://catalog.fua.it/standard_regulation)

## 9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

**Assignments** aim at documenting your knowledge and understanding on specific aspects relating to the course topic and count for a 20% of the final grade. This course requires at least 3 assignments as per the course outline in the syllabus. Further details are provided on the course site. They will be checked and discussed in class. Please be aware that late assignments will not be accepted in any form and the related grade for that assignment will be F corresponding to 0 points.

The **Midterm Assessment** accounts for 20% of the final course grade. Details will be provided on the course site. **The time and date of the submission cannot be changed for any reason.**

The **Research Paper** accounts for 20% of the course grade.

- Format: topic, length, guidelines, and due date will be provided on course website.
- The Paper is a group research project, and topics are to be communicated to the instructor by Lesson 4.
- Research is meant to discover information and explore ideas. The group work aims at stimulating creativity, the capacity to work well in teams and employing critical thinking skills. Furthermore, it aims at assessing multiple viewpoints on potentially challenging juridical, historical or ethical issues. Working with teammates gives you the opportunity to consider and weigh alternative perspectives and opinions that you might not have considered working on your own.
- Research papers will be discussed in class.

The **Final** exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course website. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Format:

- Part I: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 25 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 50 points.

## 10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Introduction to the Mafia: from its origins to the present day. Characteristics and specificities, deconstructing stereotypes.
Objectives	Define specific elements characterizing mafia as compared to other criminal organizations.
Readings/ Assignments	Umberto Santino, "Mafia and Mafia-type organisations in Italy" Renè Seindal, "Background and Terminology" in <i>Mafia: Money and politics</i> , Univ. of Copenhagen Press John Dickie, "Introduction", "Men of honour," "The so-called Mafia: how the mafia got his name," in <i>Cosa Nostra</i> Assignment #1 assigned, due by next class meet.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	The main types of Mafia in Italy: Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, Sacra Corona Unita: internal structures and illegal trafficking, old and new forms of trafficking. Focus: Social and cultural roots of the 'Ndrangheta and Camorra.
Objectives	Illustrate internal structures and identify specific forms of criminal trafficking.

	Analyze the social and cultural environment of mafia organizations and their role in these global criminal markets.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Renè Seindal, "The Mafia's business dealings," in <i>Mafia (...)</i> , cit. Libera ed., "The Criminal Markets," in <i>Europe exists but also the mafias</i> Umberto Santino, "From the mafia to transnational crime" Roberto Saviano, "Cocaine" in <i>Zero Zero Zero, 2013</i> , "Land of fires," "Hollywood," in <i>Gomorrah, 2002</i>

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Evolution of gender roles inside the mafia.</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Evaluate the relationships with the social and cultural environment of 'Ndrangheta. Understand the relevance of gender inside the different types of Mafia.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Giovanni Falcone, "Power" in <i>Men of Honour, selected pages</i> Pino Arlacchi, "The behaviour of the mafioso" in <i>Mafia business</i> Claire Longrigg, "Introduction," "The sins of the Mother," "Vendetta by law," in <i>Mafia Women</i> , London, Vintage, 1998 Assignment #2 assigned, due by next class meet.

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Mafia and Religion: the God of mafiosi and the position of the Church. Final Project Overview.</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Analyze the role of religion and of the Church in the mafia culture
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Archibishop Pappalardo, "The need for antimafia pastoral", in <i>Culture of Lawfulness - The role of religious experiences</i> , The Sicilian Renaissance Institute, 2002 C. Scordato, "What model of Church to face the Mafia", in <i>ib.</i> Mons. Di Cristina, "The Church moral condemnation of the Mafia and the Clergy's role in the Parish" Roberto Saviano, "Don Peppe Diana", in <i>Gomorrah, cit.</i>

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>The roots of the Mafia: from its origins to WWII, the connections with the Allied forces. The aftermath of war and the creation of a mafioso political class.</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Explain the historical and political roots of mafia organizations; clarify doubts on the content of the exam
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Christopher Duggan, selected pages from <i>Mafia and Fascism</i> Alexander Stille, selected pages from <i>Excellent cadavers</i> Renè Seindal, "The political mafia", in <i>Mafia: Money and politics</i> , cit. John Dickie, "Socialism, Fascism, Mafia", "War and rebirth", "God, concrete, heroin and Cosa Nostra", in <i>Cosa Nostra</i> MIDTERM ASSESSMENT assigned, due prior to next class meet.

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Law enforcement against the mafia, Maxi-Trial and Anti-Mafia Pool in Palermo Narrating the Mafia: Literature and media on mafia</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Indicate and analyze the legal and judicial instruments to fight against the mafia.

	Analyze the role of journalism and mass media in portraying and denouncing the mafia.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Law Enforcement in Italy and Europe against mafia and organized crime John Dickie, "The first mafia war and its consequences," "Terra infidelium," "The origins of the second mafia war" in <i>Cosa Nostra</i> Umberto Santino, "Giuseppe Impastato: his actions, his murder, the investigation and the cover up"

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Ethics in business: from silence to denounce</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Organize and present a research paper on a topic by choice, demonstrate effective communication and presentation skills. Analyze the relevance of extortion and the newest strategies against it
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	John Dickie, From "Bombs and submersion," in <i>Cosa Nostra</i> Alison Jamieson, "The grass-root Antimafia," in <i>The Antimafia cit.</i> Assignment #3 assigned, due by next lesson.

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>The Antimafia of Culture: voices breaking the silence</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Organize and present a research paper on a topic by choice, demonstrate effective communication and presentation skills. Analyze the role of education to citizenship against the mafia
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Maurizio De Luca, "A way of taking side," in <i>Culture of Lawfulness, The role of Mass Media</i> , The Sicilian Renaissance Institute, 2002 John Dickie, From "Ricotta cheese and ghosts" in <i>Cosa Nostra</i>

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>The role of civil society: The antimafia after the massacres in 1992-1993 Women against the Mafia, LIBERA</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Organize and present a research paper on a topic by choice, demonstrate effective communication and presentation skills. Analyze the role of civil society against the mafia
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	R.Siebert, "Mothers, sisters and widows in mourning. Women alone," "Women of Men against the Mafia," in <i>Secrets of Life and Death – Women and the Mafia</i> , Verso, London, NY, 1996 Alison Jamieson, "Introduction," "The significance of 1992," "The political response" in <i>The Antimafia: Italy's Fight against Organized Crime</i> , New York, St. Martin Press, 2000 FINAL PROJECT due prior to next class meet.

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Mafia &amp; Antimafia in contemporary culture and society. A culture of legality.</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Compare antimafia strategies analyzed. Reflect on the evolving issues and themes of legality in the context of organized crime.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Leoluca Orlando, "From a culture of lawfulness to an economy of legality" Rita Borsellino, "In spite of everything. The popular Antimafia commitment in Sicily"

<b>Lesson 11 Final Exam</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	
<b>Lecture</b>	FINAL EXAM