In a nation-state like Italy which, unlike Britain and France, did not experience the immigration of significant numbers of racially marked people until the 1980s, the racialized body has been relatively under-represented on the Italian screen. And yet, despite its rarity (particularly when compared to other national filmic traditions), racial representation in Italian cinema is as old as Italy’s cinematic tradition itself. This course will examine the representation of racialized bodies in a selection of narrative films produced in Italy over the course of the past century. Films are drawn from three historical thresholds that are critical to constructing the Italian racial imagination: 1) Fascist colonial conquest in Libya and East Africa; 2) “decolonization” in the post-WWII era and 3) contemporary responses to immigration. Our readings will be guided by critical works of early film theory on physiognomy and the face, feminist film theoretical works on the body and desire, as well as postcolonial film criticism on race. Some questions that will shape our inquiry are: what are the contours of Italy’s tradition of cinematic representations of race? What is unique about Italy’s brand of racial representation? How do racialized bodies relate to, complicate, or overlap with the sexualized or classed bodies? What are some of the collective fantasies engendered by Italian films about race? Instruction and readings in English; films in Italian (several without English subtitles).

Films on Reserve at the Media Center (Douglass Campus).

Readings available on Sakai.

Course requirements and grade distribution:

**Participation: 25%**
Regular attendance and active participation are required. Students who make the most of the seminar time by posing thoughtful questions, engaging directly with the texts assigned, and listening attentively to their classmates will receive excellent participation grades.

**Two in-class presentations: 25%**
Each student will choose two topics and/or texts from the syllabus to present to the class during the weekly seminar. The presentations are meant to be thought provoking and to generate a group discussion on the week’s film and/or readings. Students may choose to do independent research in line with their own research interests, but they must be sure to present any new material to clearly to the group, and they must draw explicit connections to the assigned viewings/readings. During the time allotted to each student for his/her presentation (roughly 30 minutes each), the student is responsible for presenting an interpretation, a reading, and/or additional relevant information, followed by a group discussion (to be led by the presenting student).

**Final paper: 50%**
Students will write a 15-page final research paper consisting of a close reading of a film or a film-theoretical essay, drawing from at least one text (film or essay) on the syllabus and relating to at least one of the major
topics covered in the course. Students should consult between 3 and 4 secondary sources, and should include a bibliography in MLA format.

Week 1. Thursday, January 24

**Introductions**

Week 2. Thursday, January 31

**Race in (Italian) Colonial Visual Culture**

1. Alan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive”
3. Silvana Palma, “The Seen, the Unseen, the Invented: Misrepresentations of African ‘Otherness’ in the Making of a Colony”
5. Rhiannon Noel Welch, “The Missing Limbs of the *Patria*”
6. Miguel Mellino, “Italy and Postcolonial Studies: A Difficult Encounter”

(Optional reading):


Week 3. Thursday, February 7

**Film: Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, *Dal polo all’equatore* (1986)**

1. Robert Lumley, “Amnesia and Remembering: *Dal polo all’equatore*”
2. Béla Balázs, “*Visible Man*; Type and Physiognomy; The Play of Facial Expressions; The Close-Up; The Face of Things.”
3. Tobias Nagl, “The Aesthetics of Race in European Film Theory”

Week 4. Thursday, February 14

**Film: Giovanni Pastrone, *Cabiria* (1914)**

2. Gabriele D’Annunzio, “On the Cinematograph As an Instrument of Liberation and an Art of Transfiguration”

(Optional reading):

Rhiannon Noel Welch, “Biopolitical Loss and Gain in Giovanni Pastrone’s *Cabiria*”
(In Italian) Antonia Lant, “Spazio per la razza in Cabiria”

Richard Dyer, “The White Man’s Muscles”

Tom Gunning, “A Little Light on a Dark Subject”

Week 5. Thursday, February 21

**Film: Augusto Genina, Lo squadrone bianco (1936)**

1. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

2. Jane Gaines, “White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory”


**Optional reading/viewing:**


(In Italian) Archivio Luce: Giornale LUCE B0907 Lavorazioni del film Lo squadrone Bianco (1936)

Week 6. Thursday, February 28

**Film: Augusto Genina, Bengasi 41 (1942)**


**Optional reading/viewing:**

Slavoj Zizek, “The Spectre of Ideology”

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”

(In Italian) Archivio Luce: Documentario LUCE: Conoscere le colonie: Ghat (1933); Giornale LUCE B1061, Tobruk. Il Duce in Libia (1937); and LUCE, Cronache dell’Impero CI005 “Addis Abeba.”

Week 7. Thursday, March 7

**Film: Carmine Gallone, Scipione l'Africano (1937)**

1. Jacqueline Reich, “Mussolini at the Movies”
2 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction [of Its Technological Reproducibility]”

(Optional reading):

Michel Foucault, “Panopticism”

Michel Foucault, “Governmentality”

Week 8. Thursday, March 14

Film: Roberto Rossellini, *Paisà* (1946)

1 Richard Dyer, “The Light of the World”

2 Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness”

3 Manthia Diawara, “Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance”

Week 9. Thursday, March 21

Spring Recess

Week 10. Thursday, March 28

Book Presentation: Caterina Romeo and Cristina Lombardi-Diop, eds. *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*

Required reading:

1 Romeo and Lombardi-Diop, “Introduction. Paradigms of Postcoloniality in Contemporary Italy”

2 Robert J.C. Young, “The Italian Postcolonial”

3 Cristina Lombardi-Diop, “Postracial/Postcolonial Italy”

4 Caterina Romeo, “Racial Evaporations: Representing Blackness in African Italian Postcolonial Literature”

5 Áine O’Healy, “Screening Intimacy and Racial Difference in Postcolonial Italy”

Week 11. Thursday, April 4

Film: Michelangelo Antonioni, *L’Eclisse* (1962)

1 Karen Pinkus, “Empty Spaces: Decolonization in Italy”

2 Robert Stam, “Fanon, Algeria, and the Cinema”

3 Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism”
Week 12. Thursday, April 11

**Film: Pier Paolo Pasolini, Appunti per un'Orestiade Africana (1972)**

2. E. Ann Kaplan, “Preface”; “Travel, Travelling Identities, and the Look”

*(Optional reading):*

Pier Paolo Pasolini, “The Screenplay as a Structure that Wants to Be Another Structure”; “The Cinema of Poetry”

Giovanna Trento, “From Marinetti to Pasolini: Massawa, the Red Sea, and the Construction of ‘Mediterranean Africa’ in Italian Literature and Cinema”

Rhiannon Noel Welch, “Here and Then, There and Now: Nation-Time and Colonial-Space in Pasolini, Oriani, and Marinetti”

Week 13. Thursday, April 18

**Film: Gianni Amelio, Lamerica (1994)**

1. Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man”
2. Derek Duncan, “Kledi Kadiu: Managing Postcolonial Celebrity”
3. Derek Duncan, “Italy’s Postcolonial Cinema and its Histories of Representation”

*(Optional reading):*

Cristiana Furlan, “Italy and Lamerica: The Road of Remembrance”

Week 14. Thursday, April 25

**Film: Marco Tullio Giordana, Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti (2005)**

1. Elena Benelli, “The Other from Another Shore: Identity at Sea in Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti”

Week 15. Thursday, May 2

**Film: Moshen Melliti, Io, l’altro (2006)**

1. Gloria Pastorino, “Death by Water? Constructing the ‘Other’ in Melliti’s Io, l’altro”
2. Áine O’Healy, “[Non] è una somala: Deconstructing African Femininity in Italian Film”
3. Giovanna Lerner, “From the Other Side of the Mediterranean: Hospitality in Italian Migration Cinema”

*(Optional reading):*
Jacques Derrida, *On Hospitality*

Rhiannon Noel Welch, “Intimate Truth and (Post)colonial Knowledge in Shirin Ramzanali Fazel’s *Lontano da Mogadiscio*.”


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**Works Cited in Syllabus**


Silvana Palma, “The Seen, the Unseen, the Invented: Misrepresentations of African ‘Otherness’ in the


--- Vital Subjects: Race, (Re)productivity, and Italian Modernity (Manuscript under review by University of Toronto Press).

An important figure of post-colonial African cinema, the Bissau-Guinean filmmaker Flora Gomes is one of relatively few directors working in this small West African country, but he is developing a reputation in art house circles across the globe.

Gomes' films often deal with symbolic themes of history, memory and modern cultural identity in post-independence Guinea-Bissau. Born to illiterate parents in Cadique, Guinea-Bissau in 1949, Gomes left his home country in 1972 to study at the Cuban Institute of Art and Cinematography in Havana, where he became influenced by the films of Ousmane Sembène, one of the most celebrated and influential directors of new African cinema.

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