

## Spring 2015 Cinema Studies Graduate Seminar

Professor Rhiannon Noel Welch

Italian 673: (Post)colonial Italian Cinema

WEDNESDAYS, 4:30-7:10 pm (Italian Department Seminar Room)

Belatedness is a recurring feature of Italian modernity: Italy, we often hear, was late to nationhood (it was unified only beginning in 1861); late to industrialization (the so-called economic boom of northern Italy occurred in the 1950s); late to the colonial contest (Eritrea, its first-born colony, was born in 1890). Likewise, postcolonial critique got a late start in Italy, coming to the fore only in the last decade or so. And yet, as scholars of the Italian postcolonial have argued, Italy's belated status, far from conferring a sense of derivativeness, presents an opportunity to check in on some of the paradigms of postcoloniality. This seminar introduces students to a selection of canonical Italian films through the lens of the (Italian) postcolonial. Films are drawn from three historical thresholds: 1) Fascist colonial conquest in Libya and East Africa; 2) decolonization in the post-WWII era and 3) contemporary responses to immigration from across the Mediterranean. 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? What are some of the collective fantasies engendered by Italian films about (post)colonialism and race?

Instruction and readings in English; films in Italian (some without English subtitles).

This course is open to all graduate students, regardless of their training in film, critical theory, and/or Italian studies.