Framing Rome: Exploration Seminar

Cinema Studies Italy: Framing Rome

This seminar reinvents the logic of the Grand Tour by exploring Rome and its historical significance as the western world's "Eternal City" through the aspect of film and space. Given the cinema's capacity to utilize the constant change and movement of images as a formal principle, it bears a unique relationship to the complexity of perception and affectivity inherent to the flow of urban space. "The great promise of the cinema," writes Abbas Ackbar, "is that it does not have to give us 'pictures' of the city, although this promise is not always kept. Admittedly, there will always be films that use the city as mere setting and that close down the movement of cities and images by drawing on recognizable urban landmarks as stable points of reference." The relationship between the many "stable" representations of Rome produced by an American film industry, and a tradition of Italian filmmaking that alternately maps what we call "uncertain" space—a volatile, culturally conflicted, and highly contingent urban landscape—provide the basis of this course. Ultimately, we will use our study of cinema to explore the city, and our explorations of the city to heighten our study of cinema. Both aspects of our learning enterprise will be enhanced by a series of creative exercises, including the seminar's production of a short city-film.

Complete Program Information:
UW Study Abroad Program Details, Application, and Deadlines

Program Status: Active

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