

**Language Laboratory Film Collection  
Wagner College: Campus Hall 202**

**Italian Films (updated April 2011):**

**Agata and the Storm/ Agata e la tempesta (2004) Silvio Soldini. Italy**

The pleasant life of middle-aged Agata (Licia Maglietta) -- owner of the most popular bookstore in town -- is turned topsy-turvy when she begins an uncertain affair with a man 13 years her junior (Claudio Santamaria). Meanwhile, life is equally turbulent for her brother, Gustavo (Emilio Solfrizzi), who discovers he was adopted and sets off to find his biological brother (Giuseppe Battiston) -- a married traveling salesman with a roving eye.

**Bicycle Thieves/ Ladri di biciclette (1948) Vittorio De Sica. Italy**

Widely considered a landmark Italian film, Vittorio De Sica's tale of a man who relies on his bicycle to do his job during Rome's post-World War II depression earned a special Oscar for its devastating power. The same day Antonio (Lamberto Maggiorani) gets his vehicle back from the pawnshop, someone steals it, prompting him to search the city in vain with his young son, Bruno (Enzo Staiola). Increasingly, he confronts a looming desperation.

**Big Deal on Madonna Street/ I soliti ignoti (1958) Mario Monicelli. Italy**

Director Mario Monicelli delivers this deft satire of the classic caper film *Rififi*, introducing a bungling group of amateurs -- including an ex-jockey (Carlo Pisacane), a former boxer (Vittorio Gassman) and an out-of-work photographer (Marcello Mastroianni). The crew plans a seemingly simple heist with a retired burglar (Totó), who serves as a consultant. But this Italian job is doomed from the start.

**Blow up (1966) Michelangelo Antonioni. USA**

Blow-Up is writer/director Michelangelo Antonioni's view of the world of mod fashion, and an engaging, provocative murder mystery that examines the existential nature of reality through photography. Antonioni's first film in English, it quickly became one of the most important films of its decade, and a milestone in liberalized attitudes toward film nudity and expressions of sexuality. A desensitized-to-life, nihilistic, high-fashion photographer becomes bored with his lucrative career of glamour photography. So he resorts to photographing, in documentary style, the seamy and sordid side of life in London, in flophouses and slums.

**Bread and Tulips/ Pane e tulipani (2000) Silvio Soldini. Italy**

A cosseted, unhappy housewife (Licia Maglietta) taken for granted by her philandering, self-centered husband (Antonio Catania) finds *bella fortuna* when she hitchhikes to Venice and starts to construct a new life for herself. Blossoming with her newfound independence, the woman begins a tentative relationship with a lonely, suicidal waiter that bodes well for both of them.

**A Brief Vacation/ Una breve vacanza (1973) Vittorio Di Sica. Italy**

A woman lives a miserable life in the basement of her Milan apartment, with her boring in-laws and three children (boys). Her husband has been injured. Her bleak life takes an unexpected turn when she is diagnosed with tuberculosis and has to go to a sanatorium in the Italian Alps. At the medical clinic in Milan she meets young mechanic with the similar health problems. At the sanatorium she meets again the same man and they start a passionate love affair.

**Caterina in the Big City/ Caterina va in città (2003) Paolo Virzì. Italy**

When her father, Giancarlo is transferred to Rome from the small country town of Montalto Di Castro, Caterina, a 12 years old girl, will discover her new classmates, a totally new world, an ambient extremely divided politically. She starts developing her friendship with the "left side", represented by Margherita, and the right, Daniela, side of her class. She will lose herself, without knowing who she really is. However, maybe Edward, the young Australian boy, who lives in the apartment across hers, can help her more than she thinks.

**Christ Stopped at Eboli/ Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (1979) Francesco Rosi. Italy**

In the fascist Italy of 1935, a painter trained as a doctor is exiled to a remote region near Eboli. Over time, he learns to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of the peasants, and to overcome his isolation.

**Ciao Professore! (1993) Lina Wertmüller. Italy**

In this winsome Lina Wertmüller-directed comedy, Marco Sperelli (Paolo Villaggio), a priggish upper-class teacher from northern Italy, is assigned to teach a group of street-smart southern Italian village kids. But there's a problem: First, he'll have to find them and bring them to school. Before long, the tables are turned and the teacher becomes the pupil as he learns about the children's hard-knocks lives.

**Cinema Paradiso/ Nuovo cinema Paradiso (1988) Giuseppe Tornatore. Italy**

A Sicilian boy named Salvatore (played by Salvatore Cascio and Marco Leonardi) is mesmerized by the American movies shown at the local theater and befriends Alfredo (Philippe Noiret), the gruff but warmhearted projectionist. Mentored by Alfredo, the boy grows up to become a famous movie producer -- but never forgets his roots. Tremendously affecting on nearly every level, Cinema Paradiso won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.

**The Conformist/ Il conformista (1970) Bernardo Bertolucci. Italy**

A weak-willed Italian man becomes a fascist flunky who goes abroad to arrange the assassination of his old teacher, now a political dissident. The screenplay was written by Bertolucci based on the 1951 novel *The Conformist* by Alberto Moravia.

**The Conviction/ La condanna (1991) Marco Bellocchio. Italy**

A girl and her art professor get trapped inside a castle-museum after it closes at night. After a little resistance she agrees to have sex with him, but then sues the professor for rape. The professor will have to prove his innocence.

**Dangerous Beauty (1998) Marshall Herskovitz. USA**

A Venetian courtesan becomes a hero to her city, but later becomes the target of an inquisition by the Church for witchcraft.

**Days and Clouds/ Giorni e nuvole (2008) Silvio Soldini. Italy**

After years of putting it off, Elsa (Margherita Buy) finally returns to school to pursue her art history degree. But her newfound academic bliss crumbles when her husband, Michele (Antonio Albanese), loses his job and the duo is forced to sell their gorgeous flat. The ensuing financial strain soon takes a surprising toll on their marriage in director Silvio Soldini's intimate domestic drama, shot in beautiful Genoa.

**Dear Diary/ Caro Diario (1993) Nanni Moretti. Italy**

Three charming, semiautobiographical vignettes from director Nanni Moretti offer a humorous and sardonic look at life in Italy. Playing himself, Moretti takes Rome by scooter, motoring from one end to the next, suffers a hilarious medical "crisis" and finally, leaves for a remote island to finish his film in peace. Critically acclaimed, this wistful comedy also stars Jennifer Beals, Alexandre Rockwell and Renato Carpentieri.

**La Dolce Vita (1960) Federico Fellini. Italy**

Marcello is a young playboy journalist who spends his days between celebrities and rich people, seeking for ephemeral joy in parties and sex. When a famous film star comes to Rome, he does everything he can to meet her, and when he does, he is totally charmed by her.

**Don't Tell/ La bestia nel cuore (2005) Cristina Comencini. Italy**

Sabina has a regular life. She is satisfied with her job and her love for Franco. Lately nightmares start disturbing her, and almost in the same time she discovers to be pregnant. Step by step she remembers her childhood spent within a severe middle-class family. But a big secret is hidden within her heart. Sabina wants to contact again her brother, a University teacher in the US, to try to understand what is happened in their past. What is the secret? She is determined to bring clarity and serenity in her life. She finally manages to free herself from her "beast inside the heart".

**Elective Affinities/ Le Affinita elettive (1996) Taviani brothers. Italy**

Separated for 20 years, lovers Edward (Jean-Hughes Anglade) and Carlotta (Isabelle Huppert) reunite and marry. But their late-found bliss is short-lived when they invite Edward's friend Otto and Carlotta's teenage godchild, Ottilia, to visit. Husband and wife find

themselves attracted to their guests, resulting in passionate acts with lasting repercussions. Paolo and Vittorio Taviani direct this lavish adaptation of the Goethe novel.

**Facing Windows/ La finestra di fronte (2003) Ferzan Ozpetek. Italy**

Overburdened and stuck in a greying marriage, Giovanna takes to caring for the Jewish Holocaust survivor her husband brings home. As she begins to reflect on her life, she turns to the man who lives across from her

**Father and Master/ Padre Padrone (1977) Taviani brothers . Italy**

Acclaimed auteurs Paolo and Vittorio Taviani direct this award-winning film, based on the extraordinary autobiography of writer Gavino Ledda. At the tender age of 6, Gavino (Saverio Marconi) is taken out of school by his abusive father (Omero Antonutti) and forced into the life of a Sardinian shepherd. But his illiteracy, his solitude and his father's cruel oppression only spur him to strive for success as a writer and linguist.

**The Girl by the Lake/ La ragazza del lago (2007) Andrea Molaioli. Italy**

It swept Italy's Academy Awards, won the Venice Film Festival's top acting prize for star Toni Servillo, and remains one of the most acclaimed Italian mystery thrillers in years: When a beautiful young girl is found murdered in an idyllic Northern Italy village, Inspector Giovanni Sanzio is called in from the capital to investigate. But in a small town where nobody is what they seem, anyone could be capable of homicide and everyone may be hiding a dark secret . . . including Inspector Sanzio.

**The Gold of Naples/ L'oro di Napoli (1954) Vittorio De Sica . Italy**

A tribute to Naples, where director De Sica spent his first years, this is a collection of 6 Neapolitan episodes : a clown exploited by a gangster ; an inconstant pizza seller (Sofia) losing her husband's ring ; the funeral of a dead child ; the gambler Count Prospero B. defeated by a kid ; the unexpected and unusual wedding of Teresa, a prostitute ; the "professor" Ersilio Micci, a "wisdom seller".

**Golden Door/ Nuovomondo (2007) Emanuele Crialese. Italy**

In this elegiac immigrant's tale from director Emanuele Crialese, Sicilian widower Salvatore Mancuso (Vincenzo Amato) leaves behind everything he knows to pursue a better life in America at the dawn of the 20th century. With his sons in tow, Salvatore survives the harrowing Atlantic crossing only to suffer more hardship and humiliation on Ellis Island. But along the way, he finds romance with a mysterious Englishwoman (Charlotte Gainsbourg).

**Good Morning, Night/ Buongiorno, Notte (2005) Marco Bellocchio. Italy**

In this tragic historical drama, Italian director Marco Bellocchio reenvisions the notorious 1978 kidnapping and eventual murder of Aldo Moro (played by stage actor Roberto Herlitzka), president of the Democrazia Cristiana -- the most important political party in Italy at the time. But the real twist in the story is in the way Bellocchio tells it: through the conflicted eyes of one of Moro's female killers.

**I Am Love/ Io sono l'amore (2009) Luca Guadagnino. Italy**

*I Am Love* tells the story of the wealthy Recchi family, whose lives are undergoing sweeping changes. At the head of the family is Emma (Tilda Swinton), a Russian immigrant who has adopted the culture of Milan. An adoring and attentive mother, Emma's existence is shocked to the core when she falls deeply in love with her son's friend. A tragic love story set at the turn of the millennium in Milan, the film follows the fall of the haute bourgeoisie due to the forces of passion and unconditional love.

**I'm Not Scared/ Io non ho paura (2003) Gabriele Salvatores. Italy**

Michele (Giuseppe Cristiano), a 10-year-old boy growing up in a southern Italian village, discovers another youngster, Filippo (Mattia Di Pierro), chained up inside a small hole dug in the yard of an abandoned house. Michele soon learns from watching the news that the boy has been kidnapped ... and things take an even darker turn when he realizes his own parents may be involved. Aitana Sanchez-Gijon co-stars.

**I Remember/ Amarcord (1974) Federico Fellini. USA**

Federico Fellini's warmly nostalgic memory piece examines daily life in the Italian village of Rimini during the reign of Mussolini, and won the 1974 Academy Award as Best Foreign Film. The film's greatest asset is its ability to be sweet without being cloying, due in great part to Danilo Donati's surrealistic art direction and to the frequently bawdy injections of sex and politics by screenwriters Fellini and Tonino Guerra. Fellini clearly has deep affection for the people of this seaside village, warts and all, and communicates it through episodic visual anecdotes which are seen as if through the mists of a favorite dream, playfully scored by Nino Rota and lovingly photographed by Giuseppe Rotunno.

**Incantato/ Il cuore altrove (2003) Pupi Avati. Italy**

Helmed by Italian filmmaker Pupi Avati, this engaging tale follows Nello Balocchi (Neri Marcorè), a 35-year-old college professor dispatched to Bologna by his affluent parents to find a spouse. While attending a tea dance, he meets high-spirited blind beauty Angela Gardini (Vanessa Incontrada) -- who captures Nello's heart and promptly turns his world topsy-turvy. Giancarlo Gianinni plays Nello's skirt-chasing father to perfection.

**Johnny Stecchino (1991) Roberto Benigni . Italy**

Good hearted but not very world-wise, Dante is happy driving the school bus for a group of mentally handicapped children, while feeling he is somehow missing out on life and love. So he is very excited when after nearly being knocked down by her car he meets Maria, who seems immediately enamoured of him. He is soon invited to her sumptuous Palermo villa, little suspecting that this is part of a plot. He bears an amazing likeness to Maria's stool-pigeon gangster husband and it would be convenient for them if the mobster, in the shape of Dante, was seen to be dead and buried.

### **Lamerica (1994) Gianni Amelio. Italy -USA**

A couple of Italian con men travel to economically ravaged Albania after the collapse of Communism there, hoping to cash in by setting up a bogus corporation with a senile old man as its CEO. But the plot fails when the elderly chairman wanders away from the orphanage where he'd been stashed, leading one of the cons on an eye-opening quest through the slums of Albania.

### **The Last Kiss / L'Ultimo bacio (2001) Gabriele Muccino. Italy**

Giulia and Carlo have been happy together for three years, but Giulia's announcement that she is pregnant sends him into a secret panic. Terrified at his imminent entry into the adult world of irreversible responsibilities, Carlo finds himself tempted by a bewitching 18 year old girl, Francesca, whom he meets by chance at a wedding. The possibility of one last youthful crazy fling before the impending prison of parenthood proves to be too attractive to resist. But a short-term fling with Francesca comes with serious consequences that threaten to damage his three-year relationship with Giulia, who is expecting a baby girl. At the same time, it also dashes the idealistic hopes of Francesca, who dreams of a beautiful future with him.

### **The Leopard/ Il gattopardo (1963) Luchino Visconti. Italy**

In this war drama set in 1860s Sicily, Prince Don Fabrizio Salina (Burt Lancaster) attempts to hold onto the glory he once knew, while his nephew, Tancredi Falconeri (Alain Delon), has joined opposition forces and is being heralded as a war hero. As Falconeri begins to fall for Angelica, the daughter of the town's new mayor, Don Calogero Sedara, Salina must learn to accept his changing political status.

### **Life is Beautiful/ La vita è bella (1997) Roberto Benigni. Italy**

A Jewish man has a wonderful romance with the help of his humor, but must use that same quality to protect his son in a Nazi death camp. *Life is Beautiful* caused more than a little controversy when it was released: any attempt to make comedy out of the Holocaust is going to inspire strong reactions from critics and audience members. The movie inarguably made an international star out of Italian comedian Roberto Benigni, who wrote, directed, and starred in it. One of his country's most celebrated comedians, Benigni was previously known for his work in numerous Italian comedies, as well as Johnny Stecchino and Jim Jarmusch's *Down By Law* and *Night on Earth*.

### **Love and Anarchy/ Film d'amore e d'anarchia, ovvero 'stamattina alle 10 in via dei Fiori nella nota casa di tolleranza...' (1973) Lina Wertmüller. Italy**

When a friend is murdered by the Facists, a melancholy farmer takes up residence in a Roman brothel as he and an anarchist prostitute plot to assassinate Mussolini.

### **Malena (2000) Giuseppe Tornatore. Italy**

*Malena* is set in Sicily in 1940 during World War II just as Italy enters the war. Malena's husband, Nino Scordia, leaves to serve in the military. When she learns that her husband has been killed, Malena tries to cope with her loss, as the town she has moved to tries to deal with this beautiful woman who gets the attention of all the local men, including 12-year-old Renato. Starring Monica Bellucci and Giuseppe Sulfaro, based on a story by Luciano Vincenzoni.

### **Mambo Italiano (2003) Emile Gaudréault. Canada**

Angelo Barberini is the oddball son of Italian immigrants Gino and Maria, who inadvertently ended up in Canada rather than the States. Angelo shocks his parents by moving out on his own without getting married, and shocks them further still when he reveals that he's gay. But his boyfriend, policeman Nino Paventi isn't as ready to come out of the closet -- especially not to his busybody mother, Lina. In English and Italian.

### **Marriage Italian Style/ Matrimonio all'italiana (1964) Vittorio De Sica. Italy**

Domenico, a successful businessman, with an eye for the girls, begins an affair with Filumena when she is 17 years old. She becomes a prostitute, but also becomes the mistress of Domenico. He eventually sets her up in an apartment, and she works for him in his various businesses. She secretly bears three children, who are raised by nannies. Domenico starts planning to marry a young employee. Filumena tricks him into marriage by pretending to be dying. Domenico annuls the marriage. Filumena then tells him of the three children. She says that one of the children belongs to Domenico, but will not say which one is his. You start to believe that all of the children could be his, and Domenico then marries Filumena again, this time willingly.

### **Mediterraneo (1991) Gabriele Salvatores. Italy**

With a sun-burnished Aegean isle as a backdrop, this breezy, escapist comedy (which won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film) follows eight misfit Italian soldiers dispatched to defend the remote island during World War II. Next thing you know, the garrison ends up stranded on the seemingly deserted paradise. When the men discover the island's many charms -- including its preponderantly female population -- their fighting spirit melts away.

### **Mid August Lunch/ Pranzo di ferragosto (2008) Gianni di Gregeorio. Italy**

Gianni is a middle-aged man living in Rome with his imposing and demanding elderly mother. His only outlet from her and the increasing debt into which they are sinking, are the increasingly frequent quiet sessions at the local tavern. As an Oriental saying goes, 'Moments of crisis are moments of opportunities'. These appear during the celebration of the holiday of Ferragosto on 15 August. That's when everybody leaves town to have fun. Opportunity knocks on Gianni's door in the most unexpected way.

**The Millionairess (1960) Anthony Asquith. United Kingdom (in English)**

In Anthony Asquith's adaptation of the George Bernard Shaw play, Sophia Loren is the beautiful, spoiled heiress Epifania Parerga. Despite being the world's wealthiest woman, Parerga is far from happy. She believes she's found a husband when she meets Indian doctor Ahmed el Kabir (Peter Sellers), but he isn't interested. They agree to a three-month challenge: She'll attempt to live on only 500 rupees, while he must turn 500 pounds into 15,000.

**My Brother is an Only Child/ Mio fratello è figlio unico (2007) Daniele Luchetti. Italy**

Two brothers come of age in a small Italian town in the '60s and '70s. Manrico (Riccardo Scamarcio), the older son, follows his father into factory work and becomes a Communist almost as an afterthought. Militancy is a good way to attract girls, including Francesca (Diane Fleri), a particularly fetching daughter of the bourgeoisie, and the romance of left-wing radicalism fits in with Manrico's Byronic charm and self-confidence. His younger brother, Accio (Elio Germano), is more of an intellectual. Accio is a better student than Manrico and also a natural skeptic. After he is expelled from a seminary, he heads, by instinct and by accident, toward fascism. The film, which argues that blood brotherhood is stronger than political brotherhoods, vibrates with their youthful energy and ardor.

**Night of the Shooting Stars/ La notte di San Lorenzo (1982) Taviani brothers. Italy**

Concetta (Maria Lozano) narrates a heartfelt story that begins during the closing days of World War II, as retreating Nazi troops take revenge on the old men, women, and children who remain in the towns and villages of Italy. The people of Concetta's town, San Minato, must decide whether to stay and possibly be butchered by the Nazis, or leave the area to seek the safety Allied troops can provide. A wonderfully resonant film.

**Nostalgia/ Nostalghia (1983) Andrey Tarkovskiy. Italy**

The Russian poet Gortchakov, accompanied by guide and translator Eugenia, is traveling through Italy researching the life of an 18th century Russian composer. In an ancient spa town, he meets the lunatic Domenico, who years earlier had imprisoned his own family in a barn to save them from the evils of the world. As Eugenia seeks to tempt Gortchakov into infidelity, he, seeing some deep truth in Domenico's act, becomes drawn to the lunatic. In a series of dreams, the poet's nostalgia for his homeland and his longing for his wife, his ambivalent feelings for Eugenia and her Italy, and his sense of kinship with Domenico become intertwined.

**Open City/ Roma, città aperta (1945) Roberto Rossellini. Italy**

During the Nazi occupation of Rome, the resistance leader Giorgio Manfredi aka Luigi Ferraris is chased by the Gestapo. His friend Francesco, who is going to marry the widow Pina, together with the priest Don Pietro Pellegrini help him to get a new identity and leave Rome. However, Manfredi is betrayed by his lover Marina Mari and arrested by the Germans.

### **The Postman/ Il Postino (1995) Michael Radford. Italy**

Mario Ruoppolo (Massimo Troisi), the mailman on an Italian island, pines from afar for a beautiful waitress. When exiled Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (Philippe Noiret) comes to live on the island, Ruoppolo delivers Neruda's mail and picks up lessons on love, life and poetry. With director Michael Radford's commentary, a featurette about the real-life Neruda and more, *Il Postino* is a sun-splashed romantic comedy.

### **Puccini's Tosca (2005) Gianfranco de Bosio**

Puccini's well-known opera features Raina Kabaivanska as Tosca, who offers herself to the police chief in exchange for her lover's immunity after he's caught harboring a prisoner. American baritone Sherrill Milnes and the incomparable Plácido Domingo also star, as does Domingo's young son, Plácido Domingo Jr., as the shepherd boy Pastore. Bruno Bartoletti conducts the New Philharmonic Orchestra and the Ambrosian Singers.

### **Quiet Chaos/ Caos calmo (2008) Antonello Grimaldi. Italy**

With *Quiet Chaos* (*Caos Calmo*), acclaimed Italian helmer Nanni Moretti steps away from his standard directorial role to essay the lead and co-author the script in a gentle psychological drama directed by Antonello Grimaldi. Moretti stars as Pietro, a film executive whose life takes an irreversible and devastating turn one fateful morning. As a reaction to his wife Lara's tragic death, Pietro opts to sit and wait for his daughter to finish school each day (in a park across from the school), in lieu of abandoning her to his own priorities and commitments. This means that the fellow's colleagues in the film industry must, by necessity, come to do business with him in the park. Through it all, Pietro remains silently dumbfounded that the tragedy itself hasn't shaken him more, that the grief (the "quiet chaos" of the title) is subtly agonizing instead of grossly traumatizing and debilitating. Nevertheless, he ultimately begins to approach a full realization and acceptance of his loss, and gains an enhanced awareness of himself and others from the potentially crippling events thrust into his path. Valeria Golino (*Rain Man*) co-stars; Roman Polanski appears in a cameo as one of Pietro's industry colleagues.

### **La Scorta (1993) Ricky Tognazzi. Italy**

After a famous judge is brutally murdered in the Sicilian town of Trapani, four reluctant cops are assigned as "La Scorta," a bodyguard team to shield the replacement magistrate from Mafia assassins. But soon, both the judge and his protectors find themselves dealing with daily threats of car bombs and ambushes. Meanwhile, personal conflicts and backroom betrayals jeopardize the team's solidarity in this Italian thriller based on a true story.

### **The Sicilian Girl/ La siciliana ribelle (2009) Marco Amenta. Italy.**

Inspired to a true story, on November 5th 1991, Rita Atria a young 17-year-old Sicilian girl, goes to see an anti-Mafia judge Paolo Borsellino to denounce the Mafia system that was responsible for the murder of her father and her brother. It is the first time that such a young woman from a Mafia family rebels and betrays the Mafia. From that moment on, Rita's days are numbered. She only has nine months to live.

**The Sky is Falling/ Il cielo cade (2000) Andrea Frazzi. Italy**

Two young girls are sent to live with an aunt (Isabella Rossellini) in Tuscany when their parents are killed in a car crash during World War II. Married to a German Jewish intellectual (Jereon Krabbe), the aunt teaches the girls about the beauty of art and music despite the cacophony and horrors of war.

**The Son's Room/ La stanza del figlio (2001) Nanni Moretti. Italy**

A successful psychoanalyst (Nanni Moretti, who also directed) enjoys a placid, loving family life with a beautiful wife (Laura Morante) and two intelligent, attractive teenagers. But when one son drowns in a diving accident, the family's tight emotional bond is put to the test -- especially for Moretti, who tortures himself with second-guesses regarding what he might have done to prevent his son's death.

**The Story of Boys and Girls/ Storia di ragazzi e ragazze (1989) Pupi Avati . Italy**

At a farmhouse, a large family cooks mountains of food for the next day's engagement party for Silvia and her city fiancé, Angelo. Her parents feud about infidelity; an aging salesman who rents a cottage from them arrives with a young French woman; in Bologna, Angelo's mother frets that her son is marrying beneath him; his sisters are less critical. Early the next morning, the four of them go by train to the farmhouse, joined by Angelo's married, unpregnant sister. The day-long dinner is riotous, couples display affection and impatience, children chase angels. Angelo's family stays the night, and his sister Linda has a visitor. A silver elephant makes the perfect gift.

**The Trial Begins/ L'ora di punta (2007) Vincenzo Marra. Italy**

Director/screenwriter Vincenzo Marra crafts this tale of an unscrupulous civil servant who rises through the ranks to become a powerful businessman, only to see his empire buckle when the mistakes of the past catch up with him. Filippo Costa (Michele Lastella) began his career in the lower ranks of the Guardia di Finanza (an arm of the Italian military police which operates under the ministry of economy and finance), though it didn't take long for the ambitious worker to catch the attention of his superiors. A stiff and attentive worker who was following in the footsteps of his father, Filippo is sent on a high-profile audit when he unearths a collection of false invoices evidence of undocumented workers. Subsequently approached with a bribe by the owner of the business, Filippo makes a decision that will determine the trajectory of his entire career

**Truce/ La tregua (1997) Francesco Rosi. Italy**

Shockingly gaunt, his soulful brown eyes peering shyly out from behind round, nearly rimless eyeglasses, his sensitive lips quivering with nervous exhaustion, John Turturro gives what may be the screen performance of his career in Francesco Rosi's deeply morose film "The Truce." Portraying the Italian author and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi, the skinny, snaggletoothed actor taps powerfully into the streak of despairing paranoia. His portrayal of a depressed death camp survivor numbly sorting through the horrors he has experienced while feeling the first cautious tremors of hope is almost self-effacingly muted.

### **The Unknown Woman/ La sconosciuta (2008) Giuseppe Tornatore. Italy**

Cinema Paradiso director Giuseppe Tornatore returns to the helm for this suspenseful thriller concerning a young Ukrainian prostitute-turned-cleaning woman named Irina (Kseniya Rappoport). Years ago, Irina was drawn into an international prostitution ring before being brutalized by a man named Mold (Michele Placido) who also killed her boyfriend. Flash-forward to the present, and Irina is a humble cleaning woman in a building owned by jewelers. Though her appearance would suggest poverty, Irina always has a sizable wad of cash in her pocket and lives in a large apartment across the street from the loudly dysfunctional Adacher family. Gradually, the mousy cleaning woman works her way into the family home, befriending the parents (Claudia Gerini and Pierfrancesco Favino) and becoming a trusted confidante to their daughter Thea (Clara Dossena). As her relationship with the family deepens, her motivations for getting so close become frighteningly clear.

### **Victory/ Vincere (2009) Marco Bellocchio. Italy**

This unusual and offbeat historical drama rests on a little-known conceit. Though seldom discussed in history books (and reportedly undisclosed for half a century), fascist dictator Benito Mussolini conceived an illegitimate son by a woman named Ida Dalser -- a son Mussolini allowed to be born, acknowledged, and then promptly denied for the duration of his life. The tale begins in early 20th century Milan, with Benito (Fabrizio Costella) working as the socialist editor of a controversial newspaper called *Avanti*. His dream in life involves triumphantly leading the Italian masses away from monarchy and toward a "socially emancipated future." He met the young and wealthy Ida (Giovanna Mezzogiorno) once before, in Trento -- where they enjoyed a brief exchange; they re-encounter one another during Mussolini's period at *Avanti* and it becomes clear that Ida has fallen deeply in love with Benito. She believes wholeheartedly in his ideals and his future as the leader of Italy -- to such an extent that she sells everything she has (her apartment, furniture, jewelry, and the beauty salon she owns) to fuel the development of his newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*. On a stylistic level, director Marco Bellocchio films this historical material with the passion, theatricality, lyricism, and tragedy of a classical Italian opera.

### **I Vitelloni (1953) Federico Fellini. Italy**

*I vitelloni* (1953) is an Italian comedy drama film directed by Federico Fellini. Recognized as a pivotal work in the director's artistic evolution, the film has distinct autobiographical elements that mirror important societal changes in 1950s Italy. Nominated for an Academy Award in 1958, it was Fellini's first successful motion picture after the commercial failure of his second film *The White Sheik* (1952), and launched the career of Alberto Sordi, one of post-war Italy's most significant and popular comedians.

**The Way We Laughed/ Così ridevano (2001) Gianni Amelio. Italy**

This luminous film from Italian director Gianni Amelio tells the compelling story of two Sicilian brothers displaced in 1950s Turin, Italy. Working-class Giovanni takes any odd job to support his younger, irresponsible brother Pietro and keep him in school. As the economy improves, Giovanni goes against his character and accepts some lucrative yet corrupt deals, while Pietro, now a respectable teacher, attempts to cover for Giovanni.

**The Wedding Director/ Il regista di matrimony (2006) Marco Bellocchio. Italy**

Franco Elica is a filmmaker worried about his daughter marriage with a catholic extremist. He is filming also another version of 'I Promessi Sposi'. But a scandal explodes within the production pushing Franco to escape in Sicilia. Here he meets Mr. Palagonia that proposes him to film his daughter marriage. But Franco, while is recycling himself as ceremony's filmmaker, falls in love for her.

**Wild Flower/ Fiorile (1993) Taviani brothers. Italy**

This acclaimed saga from the Taviani brothers chronicles the rags-to-riches tale of the Benedetti family over a 200-year time span, examining how an ancient familial transgression continues to haunt the family to this day. The film portrays a series of historical family events bookended by a present-day drama involving the current generations of the dynasty, who are forced to confront their morally challenged legacy.

**Without Conscience/ Verse Nord (2004) Stefano Reali. Italy-USA**

A middle-aged male nurse (Maurizio Mattioli) who prefers peace and quiet agrees to accompany an illegal immigrant boy to meet his new adoptive parents at the Swiss border, all in a ploy to impress his boss. When a good-looking young gangster (Valerio Foglia Manzillo) decides to come along for the ride, the two men eventually develop a friendship, but things get bumpy when they realize their charge may not live happily ever after.

**You Laugh/ Tu ridi (1998) Taviani brothers. Italy**

The Italian Taviani brothers bring to life two stories from Nobel Prize-winning writer Luigi Pirandello. In the first, an aging opera singer must give up his career because of heart trouble. When his wife notices him laughing uproariously in his sleep, the retiring singer tries to remember what made him laugh -- and realizes it's the key to what makes him live. The second story compares two kidnappings in Sicily that took place a century apart.

**Educational Italian videos on VHS:**

**Ginevra's Story: Solving the Mysteries of Leonardo Da Vinci's First Known Painting, narrated by Meryl Streep**

As described by Meryl Streep in the film's graceful narration, da Vinci's work is a "portrait as complex as life itself." Young Ginevra is a source of visual mystery – the pale, golden-haired beauty looks straight forward to meet the viewer's gaze, but her own concentration appears to be focused inward. Perhaps she was resigned to an unpleasant future – her father, a wealthy Florentine banker, already arranged her marriage to a much-older man

whom she did not love. Perhaps she was lost in her own artistic considerations – she was a poet in her own right (though her work, sadly, is now considered lost) and the inspiration of the poetic output of the Venetian diplomat Bernardo Bembo. Her mysterious beauty rivals the "Mona Lisa" that da Vinci would create three decades later.

**Venice Queen of the Adriatic, Museum City Video.**

Venice is a fairy tale city, rising from the sea on 119 small island, separated by the 160 canals that dominate Venetian life. Five hundred years ago it was the world center of trade and commerce. Its jeweled Basilica, a blend of Byzantine splendor and Western imagination, was built in 829 to honor St. Mark, the city's patron saint. Close by is the pink marble Palace of the Doges, the Sansovino Library, the towering Campanile, the landmark Clock, which all surround the famous square - the Piazza San Marco - that has been proclaimed "the most beautiful room in Europe".