This course utilizes the close analysis of violence against women and femicide in a variety of Italian films—including examples of melodrama, neorealism, commedia all’italiana, giallo, and horror—as a way of gaining insight into the collective attitudes and anxieties about women circulating in post-war Italian culture and being expressed in cinema. This investigation will address a wide range of significant moments in Italian history, including Fascism and WWII, the years of the economic boom, the rise of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, the TV-dominated Berlusconi era, and today’s still-unfolding #MeToo movement.

Key points of discussion will include questions of how victimhood and violence are understood within a culture, how this understanding changes over time, and how these ideas are communicated through cinema. Additional materials and readings may include texts, articles, and criticisms; examples from literature, music, comics, and other popular mass media; and excerpts of non-Italian film and media, for comparison.

All films are in Italian with English subtitles.