

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
University Honors Program
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866

Tales of a Creative Mind: Fellini, the Dream-Director

HON 371 — Fall 2025



Professor Federico Pacchioni
Office Hours Appointments: <https://pacchioni.youcanbook.me/>
E-mail: pacchion@chapman.edu

Course Description

Prerequisite, acceptance to the University Honors Program. The course will explore how a creative's personal vision may be developed within an industrial medium such as cinema. The course follows the case of Federico Fellini, Italy's greatest film director, considered as one of the most influential filmmakers worldwide, who came to embody the idea of cinema auteur with unforgettable films such as *La strada* and *8 1/2*, which draw from intimate dream experiences, esotericism, and multimedia. This course investigates the nature, genesis, and impact of Fellini's poetic vision, taken within its cultural and intellectual contexts. Students will engage with a variety of texts and produce projects that are both critical and creative in response. Letter grade. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits

Required Texts and Tools

- Kezich, Tullio. *Federico Fellini: His Life and Work*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2006.
- Fellini, Federico, et. al *The Journey of G. Mastorna: The Film Fellini Didn't Make*. Translated by Marcus Perryman. 2013. ISBN: 978-1782382300
- The instructor will provide essays exemplifying various perspectives, stories, poems, correspondence, and testimonies by Fellini and his collaborators.
- A device, as well as a paper notebook, a pencil, and a pen.

Where to Screen Films

During some weeks, students are responsible for screening a film in preparation for class. While some films might be available through the university streaming service [Kanopy](#), [Swank](#), or Canvas, all assigned films are held on reserve in the Leathery Libraries and can be screened there. It is highly recommended that students create a room booking account and reserve a room in advance, as they can fill up quite quickly. ****A Note about Copyright:** Please understand that any film and/or media material made available to screen for our class is under copyright and should not be shared, downloaded, or disseminated in any other way. Students should not engage in conduct violating copyright protection or unauthorized further dissemination.

CONTENT, LEARNING AND TECH

Troubling Content?

During the semester, you will read, watch, and listen to a variety of expressions that may be uncomfortable or troubling: this includes modes of speech, rough and/or racialized language, depiction of sex, and other scenarios. Keep in mind that every form of aesthetic or historical text is a time capsule of that socio-cultural moment and may be frowned upon by our contemporary attitudes. Despite any discomfort, you are encouraged to respectfully lean into the discussion (being uncomfortable can be a sign of growth) as all chosen texts are for learning. Trust in the process.

Let's Keep Portals of Distraction Closed

In today's world, it's easy to let laptops, tablets, and phones distract us from the people and environment around us. Research shows that when students use devices for unrelated tasks, it not only disrupts their own learning but also that of nearby peers. This course relies on your full attention and participation. Your ideas gain depth through dialogue with others. Since discussion is central to our work, listening with care and respect is essential. We've all felt the sting of being ignored by someone absorbed in their phone. Let's commit to being fully present and attentive to one another.

Preserving Learning (a.k.a. using tools effectively)

For me, college is a place where students choose to commit to a path they care about and share this commitment with professors who know them personally and meet them where they are. Together, we undergo an experiential and artisanal process of learning that improves skills, discipline, and self-direction. I'm committed to this process and expect the same of you. I expect, therefore, that you will not offload thinking exercises assigned to you to an AI tool. And when it comes to writing, at least in the courses I teach, writing is a means of thinking; therefore, offloading writing equates to offloading thinking and stepping on the path that leads to failing.

INSTRUCTIONAL OVERVIEW

Course Learning Outcomes

- Appreciate the nuances and complexities of a single master's entire artistic trajectory (relating to the evolution of an authorial voice, cultural and biographic intersections, and the development of a unique approach to creativity).
- Demonstrate an overarching understanding of Fellini's work through individual and collaborative projects.
- Understand and identify aesthetic innovations of Fellini's opus, and the spiritual, philosophic, cultural and societal value of major films as well as writings, drawing and other production.
- Discuss and research various influences and roots of Fellini's films and creativity (including, but not limited to, Italian folklore and popular culture, psychoanalysis, the occult, fascism, neorealism, existentialism, Catholicism, literary and visual sources).

Instructional Strategies

The lessons will build on the student's own understanding of assigned readings and screenings, and on their research of and creative engagement with the subject matter. Lessons will present contextual background and interpretative models through interactive and multi-media lectures. Students will engage in explorative and critical writing, as well as in creative/scholarly collaborative projects.

Method of Evaluation

Student evaluation in this course combines preparation, participation, and a range of individual and collaborative assignments. Lessons build on students' understanding of readings and screenings, while also providing context and interpretative models through interactive lectures. Assessment includes active participation, screening notes, a student-led class discussion, and an exploratory essay. A unique component is the Mastorna Project, which involves teamwork, the creation of a storyboard or video, and an individual reflection. The course concludes with a final portfolio that brings together revised work and a reflective letter. Together, these methods balance critical analysis, creative practice, and collaborative engagement.

ACTIVITIES

Participation

A student receives an outstanding participation grade (A) when he or she: is on time, brings readings and necessary materials to class, avoids distractive use of technology (including during class screenings), contributes regularly and in an informed manner to the class discussions, successfully

collaborates with others, participates in all class activities, manifests professional behavior (also in email exchanges), and helps others to do all of the above.

Screening Notes

This assignment is essential to your success in this course. The activity supports consistent engagement with the screenings, better prepares you for class discussion, and aids the production of detailed notes. These notes lead to and enrich your exploratory essays and your final research essay. You are asked to compile guided Screening Notes through Canvas for the major films screened and submit your notes before the start of the lesson.

Student-Led Class Discussion

This activity allows you to expand your (and the class's) understanding of the broader influence and cultural context around Fellini's cinema. It will also be a way for you to practice your presentation skills. During the semester, you will guide one class discussion (about 10 minutes). The presentations must focus on a secondary text related to the class (such as a film, novel, or other cultural artifact inspired by or related to Fellini, or comparing another artist or thinker to Fellini).

Exploratory Essay

Emerging from your regular screening notes, readings, and class discussion, your exploratory essay gives you the opportunity to tackle major questions or topics during the semester. Unlike argumentative essays, exploratory essays do not aim to support a thesis but rather to explore an idea's relevance and feasibility. This assignment, therefore, affords you the necessary freedom to explore an idea from multiple perspectives. Format: 750-1,000 words (include word count, please), your favorite font, double-spaced, please, MLA style.

The Mastorna Project

The last phase of the semester will be dedicated to the analysis of Fellini's unrealized and monumental film project, *The Voyage of G. Mastorna*, which has often been referred to as the most famous unrealized film in the history of cinema. Students will form groups and examine the screenplay, the director's notes, and ancillary materials, and collaborate in the creation of a storyboard or video containing a sequence of the film. The project shall reflect the group's understanding of the style and concerns of Fellini's cinema and will be discussed at the end of the semester. The project is organized in various phases, entailing the awarding of points both individually and collectively. *See handout for guidelines.*

Individual Conference

At the end of the semester, you will schedule an individual conference with me to discuss your overall progress and your plans for the final portfolio. You must schedule your meeting via the link provided in Canvas (Syllabus Tab) at least a week in advance. Failure to schedule or attend the meeting will result in zero points for this portion of the grade and can significantly impact your success in the course.

Final Portfolio and Reflective Letter

Your final portfolio is not seen as an ending or an inert body of writing but as a starting point, the coming into being of a unique form of thinking and writing about your individual relationship to the key themes and issues of this course (which include monumental topics such as creativity, truth, spirituality, society, love, sexuality, innovation, etc.). It will contain your screening notes, class presentation notes/materials, revised exploratory essay, and a reflective letter about your learning in the course. A handout with guidelines will be provided.

Language coursework for students of Italian

Students of Italian have several opportunities during the course to integrate practice with Italian. While any writing in Italian is only optional for students at the elementary and intermediate level, students who have completed 201, and who are taking the course for the Italian minor or major, are required to integrate at least one assignment in Italian.

Grade Breakdown¹

Preparation and Participation	15%
Screening Notes (p/np)	15%
Student-Led Class Discussion	15%
Exploratory Essay	20%
Mastorna Project	
— Teamwork scoring rubrics (individual)	3%
— Story board or video (collective)	12%
— Reflection (individual)	5%
Final Portfolio (revised work and reflective letter)	15%
Total:	100%

Absences and Punctuality. Each unexcused absence lowers your final grade by 2 percentage points. Two late arrivals (5 minutes or later) count as one absence. In order to be granted an excused absence, you will need to provide evidence that you could not attend for causes beyond your control (illness, accidents, death in the family, etc.). Permission to submit assignments late or make-up examinations can be granted in connection with excused absences. You can also request extensions in other situations, but only if you have contacted the professor one week in advance.

*** A Note on Toilet Use.** Professor Pacchioni plans his toilet usage around teaching. He respectfully asks that you plan your toilet usage around learning. All restroom-related emergencies will be overlooked, but coming and going from class without explanation is unacceptable.

OUR SCHEDULE

(Aspects of this calendar might change; always refer to the most recent online version)

AUGUST

WEEK I – THE FELLINIAN SPHERE

8/25

Preparation: read the syllabus; read Bondanella's *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (ch. 1, 3-29, PDF) and "What They Say About Fellini" (PDF).

8/27

Preparation: Today, we will undertake an in-class exploration of the Fellinian Sphere. To prepare, freely explore online filmmakers and artists influenced by Fellini, including areas of pop culture,

¹ A 100-94; A- 93-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-84; B- 83-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-74; C- 73-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-64; D- 63-60; F 59-0

fashion, and art; here are some keywords (“Fellini and Fashion”, Wes Anderson, Woody Allen, David Lynch, Martin Scorsese, Tim Burton, Terry Gilliam, Emir Kusturica, Donald Sutherland, Paolo Sorrentino, Nanni Moretti, Pedro Almodovar, REM, Qiu Jiongiong...).

SEPTEMBER

WEEK II – FELLINI’S CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC ROOTS

9/1

Preparation: read Bondanella’s *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (ch. 2, 30-67) and screen the short film *The Miracle* (written by Fellini and Pinelli for director Roberto Rossellini, 1948).

9/3

Preparation: read Kezich’s *Federico Fellini: His Life and Work* (ch. 15). Screen *The White Sheik* (dir. Fellini, 1952) and complete **Screening Notes #1 (always to be submitted via Canvas before class)**. Then examine one of these two articles: Risset, “*The White Sheik*: The Annunciation Made to Federico” OR Picchetti, “When in Rome Do As the Romans Do? Federico Fellini’s Problematization of Femininity” (both in PDF).

WEEK III – THE QUESTION OF FELLINI’S IDEOLOGY I

9/8

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 16) and screen *I Vitelloni* (Fellini, 1953, Kanopy).

9/10

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 18). Screen *La strada* (Fellini, 1954, Kanopy) and complete **Screening Notes #2**. Read “Letter to a Marxist Critic” (PDF), which Fellini wrote in response to the accusation of having betrayed neorealism and indulged in “fascist-like” melodramatic cinematography.

WEEK IV – THE QUESTION OF FELLINI’S IDEOLOGY II

9/15

Preparation: examine the early enthusiastic discussion by Cahiers du Cinéma’s critic André Bazin, “La strada a Phenomenology of the Soul” (PDF).

9/17

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 21). Screen *The Nights of Cabiria* (Fellini, 1957) and complete **Screening Notes #3**. Then read André Bazin’s “*Cabiria*: The Voyage to the End of Neorealism” (PDF). **Sign up for the discussion you will lead (see link in Canvas)**

WEEK V – GENESIS AND IMPACT OF LA DOLCE VITA

9/22

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 23). Screen *La dolce vita* (Fellini, 1960, Swank) and complete **Screening Notes #4**. Then examine passages from the diary of the film’s main screenwriter, Ennio Flaiano’s *The Via Veneto Papers* (PDF), written during the making of the film.

9/24

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 24) and Pier Paolo Pasolini, “The Catholic Irrationalism of Fellini” (PDF).

OCTOBER

WEEK VI – FELLINI’S ECLECTIC PSYCHOANALYSIS AND ONEIRIC PERSPECTIVE

9/29

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 26) and Bondanella’s *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (ch. 4, 150–163, PDF). Screen *The Temptation of Dottor Antonio* (contained in *Boccaccio 70*, 1962, Kanopy) and complete **Screening Notes #5**.

10/1. Dream Laboratory

Preparation: read Kezich, ch. 27 and Suderburg, “In Bed with Fellini: Jung, Ernst Bernhard, Nightwork and *Il libro dei sogni*” (PDF). Special dream book activity: a) explore Fellini’s *Book of Dreams* on reserve (*Il libro dei sogni*, PN1998.3.F45); b) choose two dreams and write informal notes on their relevance to Fellini’s films as well as his creative process; c) take a photo of the pages and upload them in canvas prior to class. In class, we will compare notes. *During the semester, you are

encouraged to practice recording your dreams.
Exploratory Essay Idea (send via before the beginning of class).

WEEK VII

10/6

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 28). Screen *8 1/2* (Fellini, 1963, Kanopy) and complete **Screening Notes #6**.

10/8

Preparation: read Meiri and Raz, “Fellini’s *8 1/2*: Dreams, Guilt, Casting and ‘the Code of Codes’ of the Cinematographic Image” (PDF).

WEEK VIII. FELLINI AND THE BEYOND

10/13. Introduction to *The Voyage of G. Mastorna* and Collaborative Project.

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 29-30-31) and begin reading *The Voyage of G. Mastorna* (main script only).

10/15

Preparation: screen *Juliet of the Spirits* (Fellini, 1965, Kanopy) and complete **Screening Notes #7**. Then examine Pacchioni’s “Fellini and Esotericism: An Ambiguous Adherence” (PDF).

WEEK IX – JOURNEY TO PLANET ROME

10/20

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 32). Screen *Fellini-Satyricon* (Fellini, 1969, Swank) and complete **Screening Notes #8**. Then read Dick, “Adaptation as Archeology...” (PDF). Continue reading *The Voyage of G. Mastorna*.

10/22

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 34). Screen *Fellini’s Roma* (Fellini, 1972, Swank).
Exploratory Essay (due Friday via Canvas)

WEEK X

10/27. – THE POLITICS OF POETRY

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 35). Screen *Amarcord* (Fellini, 1974, Kanopy), and complete **Screening Notes #9**.

NOVEMBER

10/29. Continue discussion of *Amarcord*.

Preparation: read Bondanella’s *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (ch 6, 262-284, PDF).

*Finish reading *The Voyage of G. Mastorna*.

WEEK XI

11/3– FELLINI CASANOVA

Preparation: Kezich (ch. 36). Examine Marcus, “Fellini’s *Casanova*. Adaptation by Self-Projection” (PDF). We will screen selections from *Fellini’s Casanova* (Fellini, 1976) in class.

11/5 – FELLINI AND FEMINISM

Preparation: Kezich, ch. 38. Examine Waller, “‘Il Maestro’ Dismantles the Master’s House: Fellini’s Undoing of Gender and Sexuality” (PDF). We will screen scenes from *The City of Women* (Fellini, 1980, Amazon Prime).

WEEK XII – INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES AND GROUP WORK

* **Make your appointment with me this week to discuss your plan for revising the exploratory essays** (pacchioni.youcanbook.me)

* **Meet your group and advance the Mastorna Project**

* **Mastorna Project Teamwork Scoring Rubric #1 (via Canvas).**

* **No regular class meetings this week.**

WEEK XIII – FELLINI AND NEW MEDIA

11/17

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 39) and Bachmann's interview with Fellini, "A Guest in My Own Dreams: An Interview with Federico Fellini" (PDF). We will screen scenes from *And The Ship Sails On* (Fellini, 1983).

11/19

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 41 and 44) and Ravetto-Biagioli, "Remote Control Politics: Federico Fellini and the Politics of Parody" (PDF). We will screen scenes from *Ginger and Fred* (Fellini, 1986).

*** THANKSGIVING BREAK ***

DECEMBER

WEEK XIV – FELLINI'S FINALE

12/1

Share and discuss Mastorna projects
Complete Mastorna Project
Submit Individual Reflection
Teamwork Scoring Rubric #2

12/3

Preparation: read Kezich (ch. 43) and Marcus, "Fellini's *La voce della luna*. Resisting Postmodernism" (PDF). We will screen scenes from *The Voice of the Moon* (Fellini, 1990).
Course evals

Submit your final portfolio via Canvas by December 10, 4 pm.

PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Honors Program Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:

- a. Obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- b. Sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
- c. Understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;
- d. Developed effective communication skills.

Artistic Inquiry Learning Outcome:

Composes critical or creative works that embody or analyze conceptually an artistic form at a baccalaureate / pre-professional level.

Social Inquiry Learning Outcome

Students identify, frame and analyze social and/or historical structures and institutions in the world today.

Instructional Strategies

The lessons will build on the student's own understanding of assigned readings and screenings, and on their research of and creative engagement with the subject matter. Lessons will present contextual background and interpretative models through interactive and multi-media lectures. Students will engage in explorative and critical writing, as well as in creative/scholarly collaborative projects.

UNIVERSITY POLICY and SUPPORT

Chapman University's Academic Integrity Policy: Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please review the full description of Chapman University's policy on [Academic Integrity](#).

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy: Students who seek an accommodation of a disability or medication condition to participate in the class must contact the Office of Disability Services and follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s) of any granted accommodations. This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact [Disability Services](#) at (714) 516-4520 or DS@chapman.edu if you have questions regarding this process, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive. <https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services/policy.aspx>

Chapman University's Anti-Discrimination Policy. Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity, including of backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please review the full description of the [Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#). Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

A Statement on Chapman University's Values

At Chapman University, we strive to make meaningful and lasting connections – with one another and with our broader community and world. We aim to cultivate a welcoming environment, helping every person feel valued and empowered to engage and contribute. Our community members are part of the Chapman Family, where relationships matter – and so do ideas. We strive for a vibrant intellectual community where different perspectives are sought and encouraged freely – to enable new thinking to emerge and interdisciplinary dots to be connected. Through these connections, we advance as individuals, as a campus, and as a society.

Student Support at Chapman University

Over the course of the semester, you may experience a range of challenges that interfere with your learning, such as problems with friend, family, and or significant other relationships; substance use; concerns about personal adequacy; feeling overwhelmed; or feeling sad or anxious without knowing why. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. You can learn more about the resources available through Chapman University's [Student Psychological Counseling Services](#).

Fostering a community of care that supports the success of students is essential to the values of Chapman University. Occasionally, you may come across a student whose personal behavior concerns or worries you, either for the student's well-being or yours. In these instances, you are encouraged to contact the Chapman University [Student Outreach and Support](#) team who can respond to these concerns and offer assistance. While it is preferred that you include your contact information so this team can follow up with you, you can submit a report anonymously. 24-hour emergency help is also available through Public Safety at 714-997-6763

Religious Accommodation at Chapman University

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of all backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to fulfill their obligations to the university without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their sincerely held religious obligations. Please review the syllabus early in the semester and consult with your faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with major religious holidays, being as specific as possible regarding when those holidays are scheduled in advance and where those holidays constitute the fulfillment of your sincerely held religious beliefs. For more information, please see the [Fish Interfaith Center website](#).

Writing Center Statement

Chapman's Writing Center serves both undergraduate and graduate students of all majors. Appointments are held online and can be either synchronous or asynchronous. We assist writers in the development of the skills and confidence needed to succeed in their chosen fields by identifying diverse writing needs, demystifying writing processes, and developing scholarship for presentation and publication.

The Writing Center fulfills the University's commitment to nurture intellectual curiosity and ensure holistic development and success for our community's writers. We promote a welcoming learning environment for all students, regardless of background, writing experience and comfort, and viewpoints. Please find more information or make an appointment at the [Writing Center's website](#).