FROM THE SILENTS TO THE SOPRANOS:
Organized Crime in American Culture

American Studies
Spring, 2010

Instructor: Bruce Chadwick
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Class meets from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. each Monday.

Goals of the Course: 1) to understand why movies and television shows about organized crime have been successful, 2) how these medium have changed as the American viewing audience has changed, 3) the effect of real crime and media coverage of it on film and television depiction of crime 3) the prominent role these movies, and organized crime figures, have come to play in American culture, 4) the rise of street gangs.


Week One: Introduction
Screening of The Godfathers documentary
Assignment: begin The Great Gatsby, Inventing The Public Enemy, Pump ‘Em, Chapters 1-2.

Week Two: Organized Crime: the early years
Screening of Public Enemy
Assignment: finish The Great Gatsby, Inventing the Public Enemy, magazine accounts of crime

Week Three: Organized Crime: the early years
Screening of Little Caesar
Discussion of The Great Gatsby, the rise of the gangster in the Real world and in film and literature
Assignment: Pump ‘em, Ch. 3-4
Week Four: Discussions of mobsters as pop icons, discussion of student papers  
   First paper due (glamorization of gangsters)  
   Assignment: *Pump 'Em*, chapters 5, 6, 7.

Week Five: Screening of *On the Waterfront*  
   Assignment: *Pump 'Em*, chapters 8, 9, 10

Week Six: Discussion of the Pump ‘Em chapters  
   Assignment: *Pump 'Em* (rest of book)

Week Seven: *The Godfather* Marathon (class begins at 8:45 a.m.)  
   Screening of *Godfather I*  
   Assignment: articles on street gangs

Week Eight: Comparative papers discussion / Street Gangs  
   Comparative papers due

Week Nine: Guest Speaker. Lee Seglem, Assoc. Director of the State Commission of Investigation / Class discussion of the street gangs

Week Ten: Screening of *Bugsy*

Week Eleven: Screening of *Scarface (1982)*  
   Discussions of contemporary street gangs; gangsta rap

Week Twelve: Screening of *Donnie Brasco*  
   Assignment: Articles about *The Sopranos*, Street Gangs

Week Thirteen: Screening of episodes of *The Sopranos*  
   Assignment: *Sopranos* Discussion

Week Fourteen: Screening of episodes of *The Sopranos*  
   Term papers due  
   Discussion of term papers

Week Fifteen: Wrap-up  
   Return of term projects
**Papers:** 1) the glamorization of the gangster, 1880-1935 (4 pages), 2) comparisons between any two literary or film works (4-5 pgs), 3) term project: any theme involving organized crime and its role in American culture or any aspect of our studies (7-8 pgs). The term project should reflect what you learned in the course in addition to what you learned in research for the term project. The term project should be footnoted and have at least three sources. *Important: discuss your term project topic with the professor.*

**Attendance:** Mandatory

**Guest Speakers:** Lee Seglem, Associate Director of the New Jersey Commission of Investigation