

# Films and Society 4

Francis Ford Coppola's Godfather  
II (1974)

# The Movie

- Mario Puzo (1920-1999)
  - Born in NYC, his parents immigrated from Sicily
  - 1969 best-seller Godfather written based on material gathered as a journalist
- Francis Ford Coppola (1939-)
  - Born in Detroit of Italian descent,
  - His father Carmine Coppola flutist and composer
  - UCLA film school
  - From early 1960s various undistinguished movies, Academy Award for screenplay of Patton 1971
  - Paramount gives him the contract for Godfather 1972
  - Followed by Godfather II in 1974
  - Godfather III in 1990 all co-written with Puzo

# Mafia

- Originally: Sicilian criminal secret society (Cosa Nostra)
  - created after the 1860 unification of Italy – resistance to centralization encouraged by the Papal State (Vatican)
  - Confederation of groups or (cosche = family)
  - Exercise sovereignty over a certain territory
  - Usurp functions normally performed by the state (policing, criminal justice, protecting the weak)
  - Induction ritual -- omertà (wow of silence)
- Repatriated to the U.S. and Australia with immigration
  - Prohibition in the U.S. 1920-1933 (18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution)
  - Gambling legalized in Nevada in 1931 (air conditioning)
  - During WWII the mafia cooperated with the Allied forces against Mussolini providing intelligence (Vito Genovese)

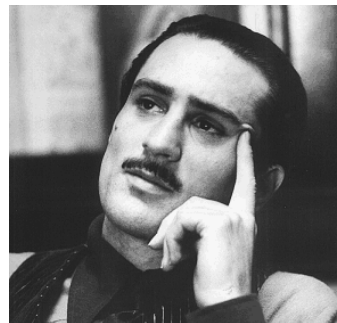
# Notable figures

- Some real Italian mafiosi
  - Giuseppe Masseria
  - Lucky Luciano
  - Francesco Costello
  - Joe Adonis
  - Vito Genovese
  - Carlo Gambino
- Some real Jewish Mafiosi
  - Meyer Lansky
  - Bugsy Siegal



# American Dream

- What do we learn about the immigrant experience from this movie?
- To what extent does the mafia embody basic American values and the American Dream?
- What do Vito and Michael Corleone stand for?



# Immigration

- How does the story of Chinese immigration compare to the Italian one?
- How did the composition of Chinese immigrants change over time? And what were the consequences of these changes?
- Why are Chinese (Asian) immigrants considered a “model minority”?