CALL FOR PAPERS

MAFIAs
Realities and Representations of Organized Crime

April 24–26, 2014
JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE
Queens College, City University of New York
25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor (between 5th and 6th Avenues), Manhattan

The conference theme of “MAFIAs”—the first on the subject by this academic research institute—intends to cover a broad variety of manifestations of organized crime throughout the world and over time. This scholarly event seeks a comparative approach to the subject, from historical perspectives to contemporary realities. Contrasts in historical genesis, organizational templates, cultural expressions, and sociological influences will be examined. The conference is attentive to the defining features, boundaries, and ways to conceptualize organized crime, looking at it epistemologically and ontologically.

The entanglements between organized crime and political and business elites, a defining feature of these illegal enterprises, form a particularly rich and complex field of inquiry. Mediated representations—from journalism to novels, from film to gaming—have contributed to the popular imaginative of organized criminal economies and cultural expressions. The manners in which organized crime have become integral to civil society, and even factors in national self-identification, bear continued and in-depth examination, as do their influences in national and international commerce.

We are looking for papers that are grounded in serious academic argument both disciplinary-based and interdisciplinary. We are particularly interested in new approaches to the analysis of organized crime that draw from the social sciences and the humanities, discovering hitherto unexplored perspectives and expressions.

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

• Organized crime among diasporic communities (e.g., Russians in New York City, Nigerians in London)
• Ways in which organized crime serves to reify emigrant notions of identity
• Comparative discussion of organized crime in the United States (e.g., Jewish American, Irish American, Mexican American) as well as globally (e.g., Columbian Cartel, the Yakuza in Japan)
• Anti-organized-crime initiatives and activists, e.g., Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino
• Relationship of organized crime to global terrorism and influences in the global economy
• The artistic expressions of organized crime, from “canzone di malavita” in Calabria to “narcocorridos” on the Mexico–U.S. border
• Organized crime in film, television, gaming, e.g., Boardwalk Empire, “Grand Theft Auto”
• Organized crime and the written word, from journalistic accounts (e.g., Roberto Saviano’s Gomorrah) to memoirs by criminals and their descendants (e.g., Shoko Tendo’s Yakuza Moon: Memoirs of a Gangster’s Daughter)
• Teaching about organized crime.
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The official language of the conference will be English. All presentations are to last no longer than twenty minutes, including audio and visual illustrations that accompany presentations. Thursday evening is dedicated to welcoming comments and reception; sessions and panels will take place all day Friday and Saturday.


Abstracts for scholarly papers (up to 500 words, plus a note on technical requirements) and a brief, narrative biography should be emailed as attached documents, by September 16, 2013, to calandra@qc.edu, where other inquiries may also be addressed. There are no available funds for travel, accommodations, or meals. We encourage the submission of organized panels (of no more than three presenters). Submission for a panel must be made by a single individual on behalf of the group, with all the paper titles, abstract narratives, and individual biographies.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE OUR WEB SITE WWW.QC.EDU/CALANDRA

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The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, is a university-wide research institute of the City University of New York, dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in the United States.