

Department of Italian

A Cultural Tour of Italy

Italian 248

Spring 2015



Course designed by:
Andrea Baldi, Professor of Italian

Course Description

The course, taught in English, aims to offer students a cultural tour of Italy, focusing on some of its most fascinating cities (Naples, Rome, Urbino, Florence, and Venice), seen from a variety of perspectives and a wide spectrum of media (literary texts, photographs, visual artworks, documentaries, and films). We will address select texts spanning from the Middle Ages to today, identifying traces of Italian identity. We will touch upon crucial paradigm shifts and cultural phenomena, such as the Renaissance and modernity. In order to explore these complex dynamics we will discuss works by foreign visitors as well as Italian masterpieces (by Dante, Boccaccio, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Cellini, etc.). The creations of these authors and artists, striving toward aesthetic excellence, illustrate the development of a rich cultural heritage, imbued with a strong sense of historical continuity.

Learning Goal

Italian Department Goal II. Cultural Proficiency

The course aims to provide students with an overview of key historical and aesthetic issues related to Italian culture in the 18th-20th centuries. Through readings, screenings, class discussions, and written assignments, the course is designed to foster the development of analytical and critical skills that students can apply to diverse cultural traditions. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively the

results of their analysis, both in oral and in written form, and to use those results to construct new arguments and formulate new questions on topics concerning Italian culture.

Required Readings:

A Reader will be made available by the instructor and posted on SAKAI.

Course Requirements:

The abilities defined in the learning goals will be assessed through oral and written activities.

Active class participation (20%); Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

One oral presentation (30%); Students are required to give a 10-minute presentation on a topic discussed with the instructor. Their performance will be evaluated according to their effectiveness in communicating as well as the thoroughness of their critical analysis of the subject.

Two 3-page papers (50%); Students are required to analyze a literary or visual text, discussing at least two sources linked to their topic. They are expected to demonstrate the ability to address and communicate complex ideas in standard written English.

Attendance, Participation, and Disabilities Policies.

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. No more than three absences are allowed; use them wisely, for health and other serious issues. Having more than three absences, arriving to class late, and engaging in behavior that is distracting to the rest of the class are grounds for a significantly lower mark in class participation.

Please note: no late assignments and make-up exams.

In case students with disabilities should require any special type of assistance and would like to request accommodations, they must follow the procedures outlined at: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

In order to avoid plagiarism (the representation of the words or ideas of others as one's own), every quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely when you paraphrase or summarize material from another source (in print, electronic, or other medium) on whole or in part. If you are in doubt, please consult the policy on plagiarism and academic integrity at Rutgers and do not hesitate to ask for clarifications, if needed. Please check: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Schedule of meetings

Week 1

1. Introduction to the course: syllabus, work required, purpose of the course.
Italy as a mosaic of regions; Italy's geography, dialects, and regional traditions.
2. *The Southern Question*
Discussion of Judith Chubb, *Patronage, Power and Poverty in Southern Italy: A Tale of Two Cities*, pp. 15-27; Sharon Ouditt, *Impressions of Southern Italy. British Travel Writing* (selections)

Week 2

1. *The Birth of an Image: Naples, the City of Love, Scoundrels, and Marvels*
Boccaccio, *Decameron*, II, 5; Petrarch, "The Woman Warrior from Pozzuoli," *Rerum familiarum libri*, V, 4
Screening and discussion of clips from Pasolini, *Decameron*
2. *Spanish Naples. Dialect as Popular Resistance*
Discussion of Basile, "Introduction;" "The Cat Cinderella," "The Benefactor Cat," from *Il Pentamerone*
Screening and discussion of clips from Rosi, *Cinderella: Italian Style*

Week 3:

1. *A Neapolitan New Wave?*
Discussion of Saviano, *Gomorra* (selections)
Screening and discussion of clips from Garrone, *Gomorra*
2. *Rome from the Outside*
Discussion of Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy* (selections) and Henry James, *Italian Hours* (selections)
Screening and discussion of clips from W. Wyler, *Roman Holiday* (1953) and W. Allen, *To Rome with Love* (2012)

Week 4:

1. *Rome in the Eyes of Neorealism*
Discussion of Alberto Moravia, *Two Women* (excerpts)
Screening and discussion of clips from Roberto Rossellini, *Rome Open City* (1945) and Vittorio De Sica, *Shoeshine* (1946)
First three-page paper due
2. *Cinema City: Rome's "Cinecittà"*
Discussion of Noa Steimatsky, "Place as an Index of Cinema: The Cinecittà Refugee Camp 1944-50," *Taking Place. Location and the Moving Image*, John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkle, eds. pp. 101-131

Week 5:

1. *Florence in the Eyes of Dante and Boccaccio*
Discussion of passages from Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Introduction to Day I; VI, 4). Screening and discussion of clips from documentaries on Dante's Florence
2. *Florence, the Cradle of the Renaissance: the Arts*
Discussion of excerpts from Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* and Cellini's *Autobiography*.

Viewing and discussion of masterpieces by Botticelli, Brunelleschi, Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Cellini.

Week 6:

1. *Florence in the Eyes of Foreign Travelers: the Stendhal's Syndrome*
Stendhal, *Naples and Florence: A Journey from Milan to Reggio* (selections); E. M. Forster, *A Room with a View* (selections); Freud's visit to Florence
Critical reading: S. Ross, *Tuscan Spaces*, 90-110
Screening and discussion of clips from James Ivory, *A Room with a View* (1985)
2. *Venice and its Courtesans*: Brief overview of the origins of the city, its geographical configuration, and demographics.
Discussion of Veronica Franco, *Poems and Letters* (selections)
M. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan. Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer* (selections)
Screening and discussion of clips from *Dangerous Beauty* (1998)
Second three-page paper due

Week 7:

1. *Venice and the Arts*
Viewing and discussion of masterpieces by Bellini, Carpaccio, Giorgione, and Titian.
Discussion of excerpts from Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*
2. *Renaissance Urbino: The Cradle of the Courtier*
Discussion of Baldassar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (selections)
Screening and discussion of pictures of the Ducal Palace in Urbino and 15th- and 16th-century artworks

Selected Bibliography

Tommaso Astarita. *Between Salt Water and Holy Water: A History of Southern Italy*. New York, 2005

Jeremy Black. *Italy and the Grand Tour*. New Haven and London, 2003

Elizabeth A. Bohls and Ian Duncan (eds.). *Travel Writing 1700-1830: An Anthology*. Oxford and New York, 2005

Judith Chubb. *Patronage, Power and Poverty in Southern Italy: A Tale of Two Cities*, 15-27. Cambridge, 1982

Brian Dolan. *Ladies of the Grand Tour*. New York and London, 2001

Nelson Moe. *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question*. Los Angeles, 2002

Sharon Ouditt. *Impressions of Southern Italy. British Travel Writing from H. Swinburne to N. Douglas*. New York, 2014

Margaret Rosenthal. *The Honest Courtesan. Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice*. Chicago, 2012

Theodore Stebbins (ed.). *The Lure of Italy. American Artists and the Italian Experience*. Boston, 1992

Noa Steimatsky. "Place as an Index of Cinema: The Cinecittà Refugee Camp 1944-50," *Taking Place. Location and the Moving Image*, John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkle, eds. pp. 101-131

Rosemary Sweet. *Cities and the Grand Tour*. Cambridge and New York, 2012

Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini. *Grand Tour: the Lure of Italy in the 18th Century*. London and Rome, 1996