



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM - FIRENZE

ITL 350 Italian Literature, 1100-1600

Fall 2016-17

Monday & Wednesday: 11:30 a.m-12:50 p.m

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday: 1:00-2:00 p.m and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course offers a general survey of Italian literature in the Middle-Ages to the late Renaissance, beginning Baroque through the analysis of the works of some relevant personalities, poets, and essayists. We will be dealing with different sources, poems, letters, essays and other different literary genres. This course will include close reading of major works by Dante Alighieri, Guido Cavalcanti, Giovanni Boccaccio, Francesco Petrarca, Caterina da Siena, Niccolò Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, Ludovico Ariosto, Torquato Tasso, Veronica Franco, Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo Buonarroti. Through the analysis of texts in historical and political context, I would like to elucidate the role of the artist, and specifically, of the writer in Italian society. I will provide an introduction to the Italian Middle-Ages, giving particular emphasis to the relation between poets and town-life and also the birth of the *Dolce Stil Novo*. Besides, the course will offer an introduction to Italian Humanism and the Renaissance, the “rebirth” of learning and revival of classical culture that lasted roughly from the mid-fourteenth to the sixteenth century and had its roots in the city of Florence. Beyond its strictly intellectual aspects, however, the Italian Renaissance was a crucial moment in the history of Western Europe. Words such as “patrons,” “patronage,” and “courts” will constitute as well a part of the terminology we will be using often during class. The Late Renaissance (the second half of the sixteenth century) which is known as the age of *Mannerism* offers a variety of suggestions in literature and opens the door to the birth of new styles and artistic trends. Torquato Tasso’s works reveal very well the dark side of the Renaissance, the melancholy and turbulence, and a general feeling of decadence present on the public stage. Mythology and chivalric values are felt as a refuge from the social violence and political disorder that affected Italy at the turning of the sixteenth century.

Just a few words about the women writers I include in this course. I will deal with three extraordinary personalities, Caterina da Siena, Veronica Franco, and Vittoria Colonna, all of whom contribute with their writings to animate the literary debate. Their passionate and moving work, even if rare on the literary scene, brings to birth a gendered view in Italian literature that from the Middle Ages to the late Renaissance/Baroque gave us still unknown masterpieces.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the course, which comes within a general reflection on the relationships between Italian literature and European context, is to give the students the historical, cultural and critical tools that are necessary to analyze the literary styles that have typified Italian literature from the Middle Ages to Late Renaissance/Baroque and to understand its characteristics.

PREREQUISITES

Beginners will find this class appropriate as an initial approach to the History of Italian literature. The class is in English, but the terminology used is also in Italian when a translation is not possible or not appropriate enough.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Two research or critical papers, 7-10 pages max. (Mid-term & Final paper):** they will be based either on texts, authors, genres, forms, themes or the period of the texts we read and discuss in class. In this sense, it is important to attend classes regularly and participate actively in class discussion. Nevertheless, if some of you wish to undertake research outside the topics discussed in class but regarding texts, authors, genres, themes of the course content that stimulated you in some way, I will be willing to offer you suggestions. The due dates of these papers are marked on the calendar syllabus with a →. Grades will be based on the written work, with positive or negative considerations for attendance and participation in the class discussion. In the correction of papers, I will give also particular emphasis to underline whether you reveal your personal involvement and contribution to analysis and critics of the texts.
- **Two Oral Presentation:** lasts approx. 20 minutes and deals with the historical context of the works read in class. It should be educational and interesting for the other students. You are asked to use photos, postcards, music, and films in your presentation. Simple reading from notes will not be accepted. Students shall bring to class short summaries of their oral presentations and the other students are responsible for keeping and studying them because they will be part of the exams. **(oral presentation schedule will be given at the beginning**
- **Home assignments:** See section below.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

During the semester students will be evaluated also through **weekly home assignments** such as: commentaries upon texts, parallel/comparison, reviews, etc.

NOTE: I will be not able to give a passing grade to any student who does not complete ALL THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND HOME ASSIGNMENTS regardless of the percentage value of that assignment or to any student with 5 or more unexcused absences. Grades will be given in ten percentage increments, with students in the top 10% of the course receiving an A, the next 10% receiving a B, and so on.

EVALUATION-GRADING SYSTEM

20% Attendance and class contribution

30% Mid-term test

30% Final test

15% Home assignments & oral presentation

5% additional activities (site visits, movie nights, events arranged by the CSUIP Italian Studies dept.)

A = 100 - 93%, A- = 92 - 90%, B+ = 89 - 87%, B = 86 - 83%, B- = 82 - 80%,
C+ = 79 - 77%, C = 76 - 73%, C- = 72 - 70%, D = 69 - 60%, F = 59 - 0%

NOTES ON METHOD

Some lines to explain how I intend to develop this course. The course will be structured in lectures, in-class discussion, some visits to key historical buildings and sites in Florence. I will encourage students to participate actively in the class and I would like to underline that I will be totally dependent upon your contributions and courtesy. I, personally, believe that sharing ideas and interpretations is fundamental to increase knowledge. My perspective will be either historical or literary. The historical perspective will help us to understand the contributions of literature to the social and cultural context. While the literary one will focus either on the illustration of the language style or the content of various works. Besides, I will take into consideration how these texts enact a **literary canon** or not for the evolution of Italian literature in the European framework through the ages. It will also be offered some highlights for other forms of art such as music, painting, architecture or sculpture which constitute relevant examples of how literature was able to inspire. In this direction, the critical approach will be interdisciplinary in order to offer a wider comprehension of the Italian literary panorama from the Middle-Ages to Late Renaissance, Early Baroque's eras.

REQUIRED TEXTS (mandatory)

- Brand, Peter, Pertile, Lino, *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, London-Cambridge, 1999.

You can purchase by download as ebook at:

<http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9781139056175>

- Handout and material given by the instructor.

PRIMARY SOURCES (TEXTS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Dante Alighieri: Vita Nova, De vulgari eloquentia, Divina Commedia:

http://www.danteonline.it/english/opere_indice.htm

Guido Cavalcanti, Rime: www.almaclassics.com/excerpts/Cavalcanti_poems.pdf

Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*:

<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/Petrarchhome.htm>

Giovanni Boccaccio, The Decameron: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23700/23700-h/23700-h.htm>

Saint Catherine of Sienne, *Letters* (Caterina Benincasa)

<http://www.drawnbylove.com/Scudder%20letters.htm>

Francesco Guicciardini: *Ricordi*

<https://ia802702.us.archive.org/6/items/counselsandrefl00thomgoog/counselsandrefl00thomgoog.pdf>

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*: <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm>

Gaspara Stampa, *Rime* : <http://elfinspell.com/LucchiStampa.html>

Vittoria Colonna, *Rime*: <http://elfinspell.com/ColonnaPoem.html>

Veronica Franco, *Poems*: <http://thepoetsgarret.com/franco/franco.html>

Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Rime*: <http://elfinspell.com/MichelangeloPoem.html>

Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* : <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/615/pg615-images.html>

Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*: <http://omacl.org/Tasso/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following works represent a valid bibliography for all class sessions and interesting optional sources for your study:

- M. De Luca and W. Giuliano, *Selections from Italian poetry*, Irvington On Hudson, 1966.
L. De' Lucchi, *An Anthology of Italian Poems*, 13th- 19th Centuries, London, 1922.
F. De Sanctis, *History of Italian literature*, 2 Vol., New York, 1931.
A.G. Debus, *Man and nature in the Renaissance*, CUP, Cambridge, 1978
W. Everett, *The Italian poets since Dante*, New York 1904.
R. Fubini, *Humanism and secularisation: from Petrarch to Valla*, Duke Univ. Press, 2002
P. Godman, *From Poliziano to Machiavelli: Florentine Humanism in the High Renaissance*, PUP, Princeton, 1998
M. Greenblatt, *Lorenzo de' Medici and Renaissance Italy*, Bench mark, 2002.
R. Kirkpatrick, *English and Italian literature from Dante to Shakespeare*, Longman Publishing Group, 1995.
J.Kisacky, *Magic in Boiardo and Ariosto*, Lang Peter Publishing, 2000
C.S. Lewis, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance literature*, CUP, Cambridge, 1966.
V. Luciani, *A brief history of Italian literature*, New York, 1967.
M.O. Marotti (ed.), *Italian women writers from the Renaissance to the present*, PSUP, Pennsylvania, 1996
C. Raffini, *M. Ficino, P. Bembo, B. Castiglione: philosophical, aesthetic and political approaches in Renaissance Platonism*, Lang Peter Publishing, 1998.
L. Rebay, *Invitation to Italian poetry*, New York, 1969
M.Rosenthal, *The Honest courtesan. Veronica Franco citizen and writer in the sixteenth century Venice*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1997.
M.G. Shapiro, *The poetics of Ariosto*, Wayne State Univ. Press, 1998
J.M. Soslow (ed.), *The poetry of Michelangelo*, YUP, Yale, 1991
J.H. Whitfield, *Petrarch and the Renaissance*, Haskell House Publishing Ltd., 1969
E. H. Wilkins, *The invention of the sonnet and other studies in Italian literature*, Rome, 1959.

For access to a larger research on Italian literature in original and in translation please refer to the **Harold Acton Library of the British Institute of Florence, in the Palazzo Lanfredini, Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 10am – 6.30 pm.

FEES: around 60-65 € (printed edition of the textbook: 56,67€ on Amazon.it, the ebook version is cheaper, entrance fee Casa di Dante 4€)

Your oral presentation might require some individual visit to a library, or the purchase of a book or a record the cost of which depends on the student's necessities and cannot be calculated in advance.

EXAMS

- Both mid-term and final tests are questionnaires (short essays questions) based on the notes taken during the sessions and on the readings in the text books.
- **Exam dates cannot be changed.**

Exam dates: Mid-term exam: 12/21/2016 Final exam: exact date and time to be announced.

Mid-paper due: 12/21/2016 Dec.; Final paper due: 02/06/2017

ATTENDANCE POLICY

For a better performance, a good attendance and participation at assignments is recommended. In particular, reading one's textbooks as a regular home assignment is mandatory to develop one's knowledge appropriately.

Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed during the semester but more than one unexcused absence will lower your grade as follows (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies): **TWO** unexcused absences, lowers by 1.5 letter grades (i.e., B to C-); **THREE** unexcused absences, lowers by 3 letter grades (i.e., A to D). More than **THREE unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.**

In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding ten minutes will be considered an absence.

Dates of mid-term and final exams **can not** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about these exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates. Missing the midterm or the final exam will mean failure of the course.

During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

Participation: Continuous lateness as well as leaving the class for long breaks without your instructor's permission definitely influences the evaluation of your participation. **It is important that students come to class on time. Three delays/early departures will be considered one absence.** A correct, active and responsible participation is strictly recommended. You are strongly urged to ask questions and express opinions in this course, approaching readings and ideas actively and critically. As you do so, however, please strive to be courteous to your fellow students. During lectures, students are not allowed to use any electronic devices (cell-phones, Ipad, Blackberry etc.). Use of the computer in class is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by the professor. **Note-taking is mandatory.** Eating is NOT allowed in class. Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on **silent mode** during class.

Course Readings: You are expected to have completed the day's readings prior to coming to class and to be prepared to participate in discussions.

CALENDAR

Class Calendar:

Week 1: 11/02/2016

Introduction to the course. Highlights on Italian vernacular. Sicilian school, Tuscan school and the Dolce Stil Novo (Sweet New Style) Dante Alighieri e Guido Cavalcanti.

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.I-II, pp. 3-27, chapt.4: pp.39-46.

Guido Cavalcanti: Rime: Chi è questa che ven; donna me prega

Rime: www.almaclassics.com/excerpts/Cavalcanti_poems.pdf

Dante Alighieri: Vita Nova see in: http://www.danteonline.it/english/opere_indice.htm

Week 2: 11/07/2016; 11/09/2016

Dante philosopher and theologian: from the Convivio to the Divina Commedia;

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.4, pp.46-69

Dante Alighieri: Convivio and Divina Commedia (Inferno, cantos I, II, III, V; Purgatory, XXXI; Paradiso, XXXIII)

Monday, NOV. 7, 12:00 p.m-1:30 p.m: site visit Dante's House. Bring 4 euro for entrance ticket.

Thursday, NOV.10, 2016: MOVIE NIGHT: 7:00 p.m – 9:00 p.m: Details to be announced.

Week 3: 11/14/2016; 11/16/2016

Giovanni Boccaccio: the invention of the story-story in Italian Literature (la novella. Plot, characters and narrative strategies. Parallel/comparisons with G.Chaucer

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt. 5, pp.70-88.

**Boccaccio: The Decameron: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23700/23700-h/23700-h.htm>
(Prologue; introduction; I,1; II,5; IV, 5; V,9)**

Week 4: 11/21/2016; 11/23/2016

Petrarch and the Canzoniere: Poetry in the XIVth century Italy.

St Catherine of Sienne: mysticism and sensuality: highlights on her epistolary.

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.6, pp.89-107; Petrarch:

Canzoniere: <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/Petrarchhome.htm>

(sonnets: n.1, 3, 15, 16, 128, 189, 267, 351,366)

St.Catherine of Sienne: Letters <http://www.drawnbylove.com/Scudder%20letters.htm> (Focus on TO RAIMONDO OF CAPUA OF THE ORDER OF THE PREACHERS; LETTERS DESCRIBING THE EXPERIENCE PRECEDING DEATH)

Week 5: 11/28/2016; 11/30/2016

Humanism and Renaissance: N.Machiavelli vs F.Guicciardini: Politics & Historiography.

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature: chapt.8: pp.131-143; chapt.9, pp.144-151; chapt.11,pp. 181-196.

Machiavelli: The Prince: <http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm> (chapt.XV; XVI; XVII; XXV); Guicciardini, excerpts from Counsels :

<https://ia802702.us.archive.org/6/items/counselsandrefl00thomgoog/counselsandrefl00thomgoog.pdf>

Week 6: 12/05/2016; 12/07/2016

“Gendering Petrarchism”: imitation of style and women poets and writers: Veronica Franco, Gaspara Stampa, Vittoria Colonna

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.13 pp.264-268; handouts given by the instructor;

Gaspara Stampa, *Rime* : <http://elfinspell.com/LucchiStampa.html>

Vittoria Colonna, *Rime*: <http://elfinspell.com/ColonnaPoem.html>

Veronica Franco, *Poems*: <http://thepoetsgarret.com/franco/franco.html>

Week 7: 12/12/2016; 12/14/2016

Michelangelo: Lyric poetry in the second-half of Renaissance.

Readings: P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.13, pp. 260-62; handouts given by the instructor;

Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Rime*: <http://elfinspell.com/MichelangeloPoem.html>

Week 8: 12/19/2016:

Michelangelo: Lyric poetry in the second-half of Renaissance II

12/21/2016: MID-TERM EXAM →Mid-Paper due at this date

Winter break: Dec.23, 2016 – Jan.8, 2017: CSU CLOSED.

Week 9: 01/09/2017; 01/11/2017

Ludovico Ariosto & Renaissance: narrative poetry in the XVIth century. Plotline, characters, classical myths revitalized.

Readings: P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.12, pp.233-240

Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* : <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/615/pg615-images.html> (canto: I, VII, XXXIII)

Week 10: 01/16/2017; 01/18/2017

Ludovico Ariosto: Ludovico Ariosto & Renaissance: narrative poetry in the XVIth century. Plotline, characters, ancient myths. Influences in Spanish Literature (Don Quixote) and contemporary literature (Calvino & Borges)

Torquato Tasso: Jerusalem Delivered: plot, characters main features.

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt.12, pp.243-250

Ludovico Ariosto: *Orlando Furioso* : <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/615/pg615-images.html>

Torquato Tasso: Jerusalem Delivered: <http://omacl.org/Tasso/> (canto, I)

Week 11: 01/23/2017; 01/25/2017

Torquato Tasso: Jerusalem Delivered and English Literature (Edmund Spenser –Fairy Queen

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, chapt. 12, pp.243-250

Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*: <http://omacl.org/Tasso/> (canti, V; XX)
Highlights on Edmund Spenser: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/edmund-spenser>

01/27/2017: SITE VISIT: Biblioteca Riccardiana 9:30 a.m-12:00 p.m Meet in P.zza San Lorenzo at 9:15 a.m

Week 12: 01/30/2017; 02/01/2017

Commedia dell'Arte: features and plots formats. Isabella Andreini: a woman playwright and performer in the Late Renaissance and Baroque.

Readings:

P.Brand (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, chapt.14, pp.277-298.

Handouts given by the instructor.

Thursday, Feb.2: MOVIE NIGHT: 7:00 p.m – 9:00 p.m: Details to be announced.

Week 13:

Feb. 6 – Feb 11: FINAL EXAMS. →. Final Paper due at this time (Exact day and time to be announced)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (mandatory):

Additional activities are offered to increase the interdisciplinary framework and approach offered by this class.

Site visits are designed to explore the city from a literary perspective and retrieve evidences downtown of writers daily life and/or about their cultural networks.

Movie nights are designed to increase the understanding of the Italian Literature and history & society at large.

- **Site visits: .11/07/2016: Dante's house, 12:00 p.m-1:30 p.m ; 01/27/2017: Biblioteca Laurenziana, 9:30 a.m-12:00 p.m**
- **Movie Nights: Thursday, 11/10/2016: 7 – 9 pm; Thursday, 02/02/2017: 7- 9 p.m**