



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM - FIRENZE

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**ITL 350 Italian Literature, 1100-1600**

**Fall 2017-18**

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

**Instructor: Prof. Beatrice Fabbri**

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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 some major works (poems, short stories, letters, essays) 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. 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 after winter break)**
- **Home assignments:** See section below.

**You must complete ALL requirements for this course.**

### **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, fieldtrips projects, cultural events arranged by the CSUIP Italy program)

**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%

### **REQUIRED TEXTS (mandatory)**

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

You can purchase the ebook version by download at:

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

- Handouts and material sent by the instructor via googledrive/dropbox.

\*a detailed bibliography will be 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](http://www.danteonline.it/english/opere_indice.htm)

Guido Cavalcanti, Rime: [www.almaclassics.com/excerpts/Cavalcanti\\_poems.pdf](http://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 Sienna, *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/>

\*\*For access to a larger research on Italian literature in original and in translation please refer also 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. (daily entrance fee: 5 euros)

**FEES: around 60-62 €** (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

- Format: both mid-term and final tests are questionnaires (multiple choice and short essays questions) based on the notes taken during the sessions and assigned readings as from class calendar.

**Exam dates cannot be changed.**

**Exam dates: Mid-term exam: Dec. 20; Final exam: exact date and time to be announced.**

**Mid-paper due: Dec. 20; Final paper due: exact date and time to be announced.**

## 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, Ipod, 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: 6/11; 8/11

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](http://www.almaclassics.com/excerpts/Cavalcanti_poems.pdf)

**Dante Alighieri: Vita Nova see in:** [http://www.danteonline.it/english/opere\\_indice.htm](http://www.danteonline.it/english/opere_indice.htm)

#### Week 2: 13/11; 15/11

**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)**

#### Week 3: 20/11; 22/11

**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)

**THANKSGIVING BREAK: 23/11 – 26/11. CSU CLOSED.**

**Week 4: 27/11; 29/11**

**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: 4/12; 6/12**

**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: 11/12; 13/12**

**“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: 18/12; 20/12**

**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>

**20/12/2017: MID-TERM EXAMS and → MID-TERM PAPER due at this date.**

**WINTER BREAK: Dec.22, 2017 – Jan.7, 2018: CSU CLOSED.**

**Week 8: 8/01/2018; 10/01/2018**

**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 9: 15/01; 17/01**

**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 10: 22/01; 24/01**

**Torquato Tasso: Jerusalem Delivered and English Literature (References to 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>**

**Week 11: 29/01; 31/01**

**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.**

**Week 12: 5/02; 7/02**

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

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS & Review: schedule will be announced after Winter Break.**

**Week 13: 12/02; 14/02: FINAL EXAMS. →. Final Paper due at this time (Exact day and time to be announced)**

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (hardly suggested participation):**

**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.**

**Site visits offered: Dante's house; Biblioteca Laurenziana. Schedule TBA**