

**ITL 352 TWENTIETH CENTURY ITALIAN AUTHORS -  
AUTORI ITALIANI CONTEMPORANEI**

*“The Birth of the Italian Identity (1900-1985)”*

**Tuesday/Thursday : 16- 17:20 p.m**

**Instructor: Prof. Beatrice Fabbri**

**Office Hours: before and after class by appointment.**

**Credit : 3 units**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION :** This course explores the main contemporary Italian novelists such as Italo Svevo, Primo Levi, Sibilla Aleramo, Natalia Ginzburg, Cesare Pavese and Italo Calvino whose works have defined Italian cultural and literary identity from the beginning of the 20th century to the late eighties. Specific emphasis is given to the most important cultural debates in European literature of the time and references to literary movements (such as Decadentism, Neorealism, Magic Realism, Post-modernism) are included to highlight the dialogue between Italian traditions and avant-garde perspectives. The course also introduces students to several women writers and poets (including Patrizia Cavalli and Cristina Campo) and investigates the issue of gender in contemporary Italian literature. The course uses an interdisciplinary approach to literary issues and analyses various language styles and writing techniques of the works discussed to enhance students' critical competence as well as their language comprehension and fluency. The main critical approaches to texts will be introduced by the instructor (formalistic, socio-historical, etc.) to better focus on specific aspects developed by writers.

**METHOD:** The teacher will introduce the topic of the session, as well as the topics' related readings. Then a debate on the readings and on the subjects analysed will follow. Audiovisual aids will be used regularly when possible.

To enhance students' active participation and learning, and to increase the instructor will submit students a series of in-class exercises such as:

1. Reading comprehension of literary texts in class (specific emphasis will be given to vocabulary and writing techniques).
2. Role-plays based on specific issues dealt by Italian writers taken from their works.

These practises are set to develop in-class discussion as well as personal elaboration of reflections upon works read individually.

## **OBJECTIVES :**

- Learn about main contemporary Italian Literature and their specificity into the European Literature framework.
- Become confident with Italian literary language & analysis of literary texts (syntax, writing techniques, oral communication)

## **PRE REQUISITES**

ITL 101-102 Students will find this class appropriate as an initial approach to Literary contemporary Italian and will be able to increase their vocabulary competence and develop practise in literary syntax and writing techniques.

Also, students majoring in Italian studies and/or Literature will have the opportunity to deepen into a variety of narrative and stylistic paths and to enhance their critical and interdisciplinary perspective on literary issues. Other students will find appropriate this class if they wish to enlarge their framework about Italian language through a close study with

**The course will be conducted in Italian.**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- **6 written papers (due periodically and marked on calendar with→). 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. 4 written papers in Italian 2 in English. (Italian papers: 2-3 pages max; English papers: 5-7 pages max)**
- **2 Written exams (mid-term; final) based on multiple choice and essay questions upon writers and works. Half in Italian half in English**
- **1 Oral presentation based on one novel (focus on characters, specific aspects of the plot, parallel/comparison with anglo-saxon contemporary authors) In Italian.**

## **HOME ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Regular home assignments will be given in order to practise Italian as a language and to check level of reading and comprehension of passages read in class or individually. These home assignments will be:**

- **Brief research on characters, writers, literary movements (1-2 pages max);**
- **Creative-writing exercises based and/or inspired by passages taken from authors'works.**

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 criticism of the texts. NOTE: I will be not able to give a passing grade to any student who does not complete both of the writing assignments regardless of the percentage value of that assignment or to any student with 3 or more unexcused absences.

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies) as follows: 3 unexcused absences, lowers one letter grade; 4 unexcused absences, lowers two letter grades; 5 unexcused absences, lowers 3 letter grades. More than five 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.

**Other class policies:**

- ° Use of computer in class is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by professor.
- ° Eating is NOT allowed in class.
- ° Cellular phones must be turned off or placed on *silent mode* during class.

**Grade distribution:**

Periodical quizzes: 20%  
Midterm exam: 25%  
Midterm Essay- Final Essay: 25%  
Final Exam: 30%

800-899: B

Scale:

900- 1000:A

700-799: C

600-699:D

599 and below: F

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

### Novels/short stories/essays (mandatory):

I.Svevo, *La Coscienza di Zeno*.

I.Calvino, *Lezioni americane; Gli amori difficili; Le città invisibili*

C.Pavese, *La casa in collina; Dialoghi con Leucò*.

P.Levi, *La Tregua*.

A.Banti, *Artemisia*

N.Ginzburg, *Piccole virtù*

S.Aleramo, *una donna (highly recommended)*

*A contemporary Italian women poets-Bilingual anthology, ed.Sartini-Blum, 2001 (on reserve CSU library)*

\*All novels and other works quoted are published in paperback edition either by Einaudi, Garzanti or Mondadori.

\*\* A complete bibliography of secondary sources will be given at the beginning of the course. Critical perspective (formalistic, socio-historical, see marxist, psychoanalytical) will include mostly works of: R.Barthes, W.Propp, E.Auerbach and others.

\*\*\*Portable editions can be purchased at :

Feltrinelli bookstore, via Cerretani; Melbookstore, via Cerretani.

## CALENDAR:

Week 1:

02/25/2014; 02/27/2014

: Decadentismo: Italo Svevo: *La Coscienza di Zeno*. Psychoanalysis and addiction in the contemporary Italian novel.

: Decadentismo: Italo Svevo. *La Coscienza di Zeno*. Wife and Lovers: female characters. Writing techniques: Interior monologue.

Readings:

I. Svevo, *La coscienza di Zeno*, from chapt. 1 to chapt.3, pp. 3-28; *La coscienza di Zeno*, chapt. 5 and 6 pp.57-263.

About Decadentismo as literary movement:

[it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decadentismo](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decadentismo)

Brief overview on his life and works:

[it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo\\_Svevo](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo_Svevo)

Week 2:

03/04/2014; 03/06/2014

: Holocaust and writing: Primo Levi. *La Tregua* : between history and fiction.

□ PAPER DUE

: *La Tregua* : a contemporary Odysseus' journey. Writing as a resilience.

Readings:

P.Levi, *La Tregua*, chaptt.: il disgelo; Il Campo Grande; I sognatori; Il bosco e la via; Teatro; Il risveglio.

Primo Levi' biography and works:

[it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primo\\_Levi](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primo_Levi)

*Primo Levi tra storia e letteratura: uno stile unico* (essay):

[nemla.org/publications/nis/archives/2010/v32a7\\_nezri-dufour.pdf](http://nemla.org/publications/nis/archives/2010/v32a7_nezri-dufour.pdf)

Week 3:

03/11/2014; 03/13/2014

Myth and writing : Cesare Pavese and *Dialoghi di Leuco*. Writing technique: the Dialogue.

Readings:

Cesare Pavese's biography and works:

[it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cesare\\_Pavese](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cesare_Pavese)

C.Pavese, *Dialoghi con Leuco*: *L'inconsolabile*; *I ciechi*; *L'isola*.

Mito e modernità in Cesare Pavese (essay):

[www.italianisti.it/fileservices/D'Arrigo%20Patrizia.pdf](http://www.italianisti.it/fileservices/D'Arrigo%20Patrizia.pdf)

Week 4:

03/18/2014; 03/20/2014

Cesare Pavese: *La Casa in collina*. Being an intellectual during the II WWWar.

Cesare Pavese: *La Casa in collina*. Writing style: dialogue and description.

Influences of Anglo-american writers on Pavese's narrative and style (Hemingway, Steinbeck)

Readings: C.Pavese: *La Casa in collina*: from chapt 1 to chapt.10.

Cesare Pavese and Film Noir (essay):

[nemla.org/publications/nis/archives/.../v31a2.p..](http://nemla.org/publications/nis/archives/.../v31a2.p..)

Week 5:

03/25/2014; 03/27/2014

C.Pavese: *la Casa in collina*: Characters in context: □ PAPER DUE

Readings:

C.Pavese, *La casa in collina* : the Intellectuals and the birth of Italian Democracy

Readings: *La Casa in Collina* : from chapt.11 to chapt.23.

Week 6:

04/01/2014; 04/03/2014

: Anna Banti: Artemisia. Writing an historical biography: The Life of a woman artist.  
Anna Banti: Artemisia. The gender in Contemporary Italian literature.

Readings:

A. Banti; Artemisia. From the beginning to p. 150

Anna Banti's biography and works: [it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna\\_Banti](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Banti)

Uno sguardo al di là di Artemisia:

[www.italianisti.it/fileservices/Torrecchia%20Davide.pdf](http://www.italianisti.it/fileservices/Torrecchia%20Davide.pdf)

Week 7:

04/08/2014;

Anna Banti: Artemisia: the interior monologue in the novel.

Readings:

Banti; Artemisia.

Readings: Artemisia: from 150 to the end.

04/10/2014: Natalia Ginzburg: Le Piccole Virtù. Genderizing the world: between fiction, autobiography and journalism

Readings: Natalia Ginzburg's biography: [it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalia\\_Ginzburg](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalia_Ginzburg)

Week 8:

04/15/2014;

Natalia Ginzburg: Le Piccole Virtù: Rites of passages in the life of a woman: □  
PAPER DUE

Readings:

Natalia Ginzburg: Le Piccole Virtù, Parte I: from: *Inverno in Abruzzo to Lui e Lo* (included)

Natalia Ginzburg e il femminismo (essay): [www.gentesdeyilania.org/..](http://www.gentesdeyilania.org/)

04/17/2014 : MID-TERM EXAM

04/18- 04/27: SPRING BREAK – CSU CLOSED

Week 9:

04/29/2014

: N.Ginzburg: Le piccole Virtù. La logica e la poesia dello sguardo sul □ PAPER DUE

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Readings:

Natalia Ginzburg: Le Piccole Virtù, Part II: *from Il figlio dell'uomo to le piccole virtù.*

Ebraismo e cristianesimo in Natalia Ginzburg (saggio):

[www.italianisticaultraiectina.org/publish/articles/000166/article.pdf](http://www.italianisticaultraiectina.org/publish/articles/000166/article.pdf)

05/01/14; national holiday – no class, CSU closed

Week 10:

05/06/2014; 05/08/2014

: Italo Calvino: the art of the short-story : Gli amori difficili.

Italian men and women in post-war Italian society.

: Italo Calvino: the art of the short-story : Gli amori difficili.

Readings:

Italo Calvino: Gli amori difficili: avventura di un fotografo; avventura di un poeta; avventura di due sposi; avventura di un lettore; avventura di un automobilista.

Italo Calvino's biography and works:

[it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo\\_Calvino](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italo_Calvino)

Week 11:

05/13/2014; 05/15/2014

: Italo Calvino: architecture and geography: Le Città Invisibili.

: Italo Calvino: architecture and emotions: Le Città Invisibili

□ PAPER DUE

Readings:

I. Calvino, Le città invisibili: Bauci; Despina; Sofronia; Zirna.

Viaggio nelle città immaginarie di Italo Calvino (essay) :

[paolocristiani.it/upload/files/articoli/31/martignoni.pdf](http://paolocristiani.it/upload/files/articoli/31/martignoni.pdf)

Week 12:

05/20/2014; 05/22/2014

Italo Calvino narration beyond literary genres: the challenge of *Lezioni americane* : fantasy, erudition or philosophy?

: Italo Calvino, *Lezioni americane*: language and vocabulary.

Readings: Italo Calvino, *Lezioni americane*: Sulla leggerezza; Sull'esattezza.

Italo Calvino and the art of essay (article):

[www.daimi.au.dk/.../Italo%20Calvino/Italo%20Calvino%20-..](http://www.daimi.au.dk/.../Italo%20Calvino/Italo%20Calvino%20-..)

Week 13 :

05/27/2014; 05/29/2014

final exams to be announced - FINAL PAPER TO BE DUE

**EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (mandatory for the students taking this class):**

The purpose of this section is to enlarge the framework of the learning of Contemporary Italian literature but also to enhance an interdisciplinary perspective in the field of the Italian Studies. Particular emphasis in this section is given to aspects closely intertwined with Italian Literature: Cinema, History of Art, history of the city.

- **PERIODICAL COLLABORATION WITH CINEMA CLASS (Prof. Benedettini will lecture in class about cinema and literature and I will lecture in his class about Literature's influence in Italian Cinema, dates to be announced)**
- **MOVIE NIGHTS (CALENDAR WILL BE GIVEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER)- movies are taken from contemporary Italian novels. Shows will be held on tuesday or Thursday. Calendar to be announced.**
- **LITERARY WALK TO BE ARRANGED DURING THE CULTURAL WEEK INCLUDING BRIEF (DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED (Palazzo Pitti and Boboli Garden; San Frediano & Santo Spirito areas are the chosen areas to investigate a vivid trace of Italian and European writers during the beginning of the XX century.**