



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

**“Italian Identities in context: Culture, Gender, Society between Fiction and
Metafiction”**

Instructor: Prof. Beatrice Fabbri

Monday/Wednesday : 11:10 a.m-12:30 p.m

Office Hours: Monday: 10:00-11:00 a.m; Wednesday: 12:40-13:40 p.m.

Credit : 3 units

e.mail: beafab@tiscali.it ; cell : 366- 40 93 793

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION : This course explores the main contemporary Italian authors whose works have defined and/or challenged the Italian cultural and literary identity from the beginning of the 20th century to the beginning of 21st century. Italo Svevo, Luigi Pirandello, Sibilla Aleramo, Primo Levi, Cesare Pavese, Natalia Ginzburg, Anna Banti, Italo Calvino some prominent women poets such as Cristina Campo, Antonella Anedda, Patrizia Cavalli and last but not least, the worldwide acclaimed woman author, Elena Ferrante . Also, specific emphasis will be given to the most important cultural and literary movements in European literature such as Decadentism, Neorealism, Magic Realism, Post-modernism so to highlight the debate between Italian literary canon and avant-garde trends. The course also introduces students to the use of gender in contemporary Italian literature. The interdisciplinary approach to literary issues and analysis of various language styles and writing techniques of the works are designed to enhance students’ critical competence as well as their Italian language proficiency.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES :

- Learn about main contemporary Italian writers/poets and literary movements with an interdisciplinary approach (through close-reading of novels, short-stories and poems).
- Become confident with Italian literary language & textual analysis (syntax, writing techniques, etc.)

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

To enhance students' active participation and learning 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 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.

4. PREREQUISITES

Students from all field majors will find appropriate this class if they wish to have an initial approach to Italian Contemporary Authors.

Students majoring in **Literature and Italian studies** will have the opportunity to deepen into Contemporary Italian Literature.

The course will be conducted in Italian. Thus, students are encouraged to use Italian in class as much as possible in order to enhance their language proficiency and skills. However, in order to help students to understand and better appreciate the authors. **Papers/Exams are in English.**

5. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular attendance and active participation is mandatory. Particularly, completing the readings and home assignments on a regular basis is paramount for the successful accomplishment of this course.

Attendance to all CSU courses is **mandatory**. Only two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade as follows (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies): **THREE** unexcused absences lower by 1.5 point your letter grades (i.e., B becomes C-); **FOUR** unexcused absences lower by 3 points your letter grade (i.e., A becomes D). **More than FOUR unexcused absences could result in a 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 session hour; any delay exceeding ten minutes will be considered as absence. Dates of mid-term and final exams cannot 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 accordingly or after the final 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 could result in a failure of the course.

During the academic year, further material may be distributed in class by the instructor. Students who are not in class, or are absent during a session, are responsible for getting the materials from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

Note on Participation: Continuous lateness as well as leaving the class for long breaks without the 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 as one absence.** A correct, active and responsible participation is strictly recommended. During lectures, students are not allowed to use any electronic devices (cell-phones, Ipad, Blackberry etc.). Unless previously approved by the instructor, the use of the computer in class is restricted to oral presentations. **Note-taking is highly recommended.** Eating in class is NOT allowed. Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on *silent mode* during class.

6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **2 written papers (mid-term and final)** 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. (MLA format) in English.
- **2 Written exams (mid-term; final)** based on multiple choice and essay questions upon writers and works. In English.
- **1 Oral presentation based on one novel or collection of short stories. In Italian.** (see section 7 for details)
- **Home assignments submitted on a weekly basis** (see below section 7 for details). In English & Italian

7. ORAL PRESENTATION & PAPERS

Oral Presentation (In Italian): it lasts approx. 20 minutes max. and deals with the integral reading of one novel from those listed on syllabus. The focus should be on a specific issue (motifs, characters, narrative strategies, writing techniques, social and cultural aspects, etc.) If students are interested in investigating other works from contemporary Italian authors of your interest, the instructor will be willing to help in the process.

Oral presentation should be instructive and interesting for the other students. You may want to use photos, Power Point presentation tools and/or films in your presentation. Simple reading from notes will not be accepted during the presentation. 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.

Papers (in English): students will be expected to complete two (7-10 pages max. plus bibliography) interpretive essays. These essays will deal with Contemporary Italian Authors (i.e, motifs, characters, narrative strategies, writing techniques, social and cultural aspects, etc.). The instructor will also submit a suggested topics list in large advance so to help students to focus and retrieve further material. Feel free to meet the instructor during office hours or by appointment if you need help in the process. The first essay will be due no later than the date of the Midterm exam, the second no later than the date of the Final exam.

Format: **MLA format; Length: (7-10 pages max. plus bibliography).**

8.HOME ASSIGNMENTS (Italian &English):

You are expected to have completed the session's readings prior to coming to class and to be prepared to participate in discussions. Always bring the texts we will be discussing to class. Reading assignments will be collected in class during each session. The preparation of the assigned readings is fundamental to active participation in class discussions and will be considered as part of the class participation grade. Also, regular home assignments will be returned once a week with teacher's commentaries. Home assignments are designed to practise either your written skills through basic creative writing exercises and/or to train students to textual/critical analysis.

These home assignments will be as following:

- Creative-writing exercises based and/or inspired by passages taken from authors works (2 pages max, In Italian).
- Analysis, comparison/contrast and other writing assignments to train your literary critical approach (2 pages max, In English/Italian).

****Specific assignments for CSU fieldtrips (Southern Italy March 15-March 18): will focus on Representations of Southern Italy in Italian Literature (details to be announced)**

9. EVALUATION-GRADING SYSTEM

Weekly assignments: 10%

Midterm exam: 25%

Midterm Essay and Final Essay: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

Extracurricular events activities(site visits, fieldtrips, events, exhibits): 10%

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%

10. REQUIRED TEXTS:

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

You can purchase it and download as ebook at:

<http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/histories/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9781139056175>; or check the available copies for reference at CSU library during library opening hours.

Gordon, Robert S.C, *An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Italian Literature: a difficult modernity*, London, Duckworth, 2006.

Novels/short stories/ (mandatory):

Best Italian Paperback editions by Einaudi/Feltrinelli/Bompiani/Mondadori/E/O:

I.Svevo, *La Coscienza di Zeno/The confessions of Zeno*.

L.Pirandello

Sibilla Aleramo, *Una donna/A woman*

P.Levi, *La tregua/the truce*.

C.Pavese, *La casa in collina/the house on the hills; Dialoghi con Leucò/Dialogues with Leucò*.

A.Banti, *Artemisia*

N.Ginzburg, *Piccole virtù/Little virtues*

I.Calvino, *Gli amori difficili/Difficult loves;*

I.Calvino, *Le città invisibili/invisible cities*.

I.Calvino, *Lezioni americane/Six memos for a new millenium*.

E.Ferrante, *L'Amica geniale/My Brilliant Friend*.

Please Note: English version of the novels mentioned above are available at CSU library for reference.

** A complete bibliography of secondary sources will be given at the beginning of the course.

11. CLASS COSTS:

50 EURO approx. (books) + 16 euro for museums entrance fee (Palazzo Strozzi's exhibit: 6 euro; Museo del Novecento 8,50 euro)

These class costs could be cut down by purchasing e-texts (kindle version) of works (either in Italian and/or in English translation).

Also, you can subscribe for free at the Oblate library, via dell'Oriuolo and borrow Italian novels and short stories listed on syllabus. For details, check the website : http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_delle_oblate/

Extra fees: the preparing of 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.

12: CLASS CALENDAR :

Week 1: 26/02; 28/02

PSYCHOANALYSIS: FRAGMENTED SELF I:

Decadentismo & Italo Svevo: *La Coscienza di Zeno* (The confessions of Zeno).
Sibilla Aleramo, *Una Donna* (A woman):

Reading Assignments:

- Svevo, *La coscienza di Zeno* (The Confessions of Zeno), from chapt. 1 to chapt.3, pp. 3-28;
- Marta Medrzak-Conway *Triestine Follies: Italo Svevo and Jewish-American culture*: <https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/user/5076/ATTI/MEDRZAK-CONWAY.pdf>
- Sibilla Aleramo, *Una donna* (A woman): selected readings.

Week 2: 05/03; 07/03

PSYCHOANALYSIS: FRAGMENTED SELF II

Italo Svevo: *La Coscienza di Zeno*; Luigi Pirandello: *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (Six characters in search of an author – focus on act 1)

Reading Assignments:

- Svevo, *La coscienza di Zeno*, chapt.5 ; chapt.8
- Brian Moloney, psychoanalysis and irony:
http://people.ds.cam.ac.uk/paa25/papers/it3_files/moloney.pdf

L. Pirandello: *Six characters in search of an author* (Play):

<https://www.pirandelloweb.com/pirandello-in-english/1921-six-characters-in-search-of-an-author/act-1/>

08/03/2017: WOMEN'S MONTH -LITERARY EVENT: READING POETRY PERFORMANCE (Details to be announced).

Week 3: 12/03; 14/03

HOLOCAUST & RESILIENCE: PRIMO LEVI

Neorealism & Primo Levi, *La Tregua* (The Truce).

Reading Assignments:

- P.Levi, *La Tregua*, chaptt.: il disgelo; I sognatori; Il bosco e la via; Il risveglio.
- Primo Levi tra storia e letteratura: uno stile unico (essay):
nemla.org/publications/nis/archives/2010/v32a7_nezri-dufour.pdf

*****Specific assignments related to Southern -Italy field trip: Material will be sent by email or google drive by Monday 12/03. graded as from grading system (SEE ABOVE)**

15/03-18/03: FIELD TRIP SOUTHERN ITALY

Week 4: 19/03; 21/03

TRADITIONS: CLASSICAL MYTHS & TRANSCENDENCE

: Cesare Pavese, *I Dialoghi di Leuco* (Dialogues with Leuco).

Reading Assignments:

- C.Pavese, *Dialoghi con Leucò* (Dialogues with Leucò): L'inconsolabile; I ciechi; L'isola, la Belva

- Mito e modernità in Cesare Pavese (essay):
www.italianisti.it/fileservices/D'Arrigo%20Patrizia.pdf

Week 5: 26/03/2017; 28/03/2017

ITALIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT DURING WWII AND ITALIAN LITERATURE I: Political engagement and writing against the propaganda. The Anglo-American influence. Neorealism & Cesare Pavese: La Casa in collina (The House on the hills). Anglo-american writers' influence on Pavese's narrative and style (Hemingway, Steinbeck)

Reading assignments:

- 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..
- Notes on Pavese's critical view of American literature (essay):
<http://foi.sagepub.com/content/8/3/381.extract>

30/03-08/04: SPRING BREAK - CSU CLOSED.

Week 6: 09/04; 11/04

ITALIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT DURING WWII AND ITALIAN LITERATURE II:

C.Pavese: la Casa in collina (the House on the Hills): Characters in context: Corrado and Cate. Gender roles in Contemporary Italian Fiction.

Reading Assignments:

- La Casa in Collina (The House on the Hills) : from chapt.11 to chapt.23.

11/04 □MID-PAPER DUE (in English)

° Friday, April 13, 9:30 - 11:30 - CLASS SITE VISIT: MUSEO DEL NOVECENTO

Week 7: 16/04; 18/04

ITALIAN WOMEN POETRY (Antonella Anedda, Cristina Campo, Patrizia Cavalli)

Reading Assignments:

- Brand P. et Al., The Cambridge History of Italian Literature, pp.583-586
- Italian Women Poets: Material provided by the Instructor prior to class (via Dropbox, Google+).

18/04: MID-TERM EXAMS.

Week 8: 23/04; 25/04

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL REVISITED: THE GENDER CHALLENGE.

Anna Banti: Artemisia. Writing and Visual Arts.

Reading Assignments:

- Banti: Artemisia (novel: selection).
- Susan Sontag, A Double Destiny: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n18/susan-sontag/a-double-destiny>.
- Uno sguardo al di là di Artemisia: www.italianisti.it/fileservices/Torrecchia%20Davide.pdf

25/04: NATIONAL HOLIDAY: LIBERATION DAY - CSU CLOSED.

Week 9: 30/04; 02/05.

JOURNALING & FICTION I:

Natalia Ginzburg: Le Piccole Virtù (Little virtues). Genderizing the world: between fiction and journaling.

Reading Assignments:

- Natalia Ginzburg: Le Piccole Virtù: Io e Lui, Il figlio dell'uomo, le piccole virtù, scarpe rotte.
- Ebraismo e cristianesimo in Natalia Ginzburg (saggio): www.italianisticaultraiectina.org/publish/articles/000166/article.pdf
- Ginzburg e il femminismo (essay): [www.gentesdeyilania.org/.](http://www.gentesdeyilania.org/)

° Friday, May 4, 9:30 - 11:30, CLASS SITE VISIT- PALAZZO STROZZI'S EXHIBIT: "NASCITA DI UNA NAZIONE: TRA GUTTUSO E SCHIFANO"

Week 10: 07/05; 09/05

THE SHORT STORY IN THE Post WWII ITALIAN LITERATURE : Sociology of emotions from "Italian Economic Boom" to Generational protests: 1968
Italo Calvino: Gli amori difficili (Difficult loves).

Reading Assignments::

- Italo Calvino: Gli amori difficili: avventura di un fotografo; avventura di un poeta; avventura di due sposi; avventura di un automobilista.
- R.Barthes, A Lover's discourse Fragments: selection. (material provided by the instructor via Dropbox or GoogleDrive)
- Special Topic: 1968 in Italian Literature and Culture: material will be provided by the instructor by Monday, May 7 and discussed in class.

Week 11: 14/05/2017; 16/05/2017

THE SHORT STORY IN THE Post WWII ITALIAN LITERATURE II: "OTHER WORLDS": postmodern and science-fiction in Italian contemporary Literature
Italo Calvino: architecture and emotions: Le Città Invisibili (Invisible cities)

Reading Assignments:

- I. Calvino, *From Le città invisibili (Invisible cities)*: Bauci; Despina; Sofronia; Zirna.
- *Viaggio nelle città immaginarie di Italo Calvino (essay)* :
paolocristiani.it/upload/files/articoli/31/martignoni.pdf

16/05/2017 ORAL PRESENTATION

Week 12: 21/05/2017; 23/05/2017

NEW TRENDS: META-FICTION BY ELENA FERRANTE: "MASTER OF THE EPIC ANTI-EPIC": NAPLES IN CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN FICTION; GENDER & AUTHORSHIP

- Elena Ferrante, *L'Amica Geniale (My Brilliant Friend)* (selected readings)
- James Wood, *Women on the verge: the fiction of Elena Ferrante*
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/21/women-on-the-verge>
- Elena Ferrante interviewed by Sandro and Sandra Ferri:
<https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6370/elena-ferrante-art-of-fiction-no-228-elena-ferrante>

□ FINAL PAPER DUE

Week 13: 28/05; 31/05 :

FINAL EXAM DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED

13.EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (SITE VISITS/EVENTS) Strongly recommended!

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's daily life and/or about their cultural networks (Libraries, Museums, Exhibits, etc.).

All extracurricular activities require student commitment and punctuality. Also, some specific homework will be assigned to make the most of this experience.

Friday, April 13, 9:30 - 11:30 - CLASS SITE VISIT: MUSEO DEL NOVECENTO

Friday, May 4, 9:30 - 11:30, CLASS SITE VISIT- PALAZZO STROZZI'S EXHIBIT: "NASCITA DI UNA NAZIONE: TRA GUTTUSO E SCHIFANO"