



**ITL 352 20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ITALIAN AUTHORS –  
AUTORI ITALIANI CONTEMPORANEI – Spring 2019**

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**“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](mailto:beafab@tiscali.it) ; cell : 366- 40 93 793**

**CSU GE Category: C1, C4 or C Elective**

**THE COURSE IS TAUGHT IN ITALIAN.**

**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 20<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Italo Svevo, Luigi Pirandello, Sibilla Aleramo, Primo Levi, Cesare Pavese, Natalia Ginzburg, 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 European and/or Angloamerican literary trends. A brief overview of methodologies will also be introduced, i.e structuralism, sociological, gender studies, etc. The interdisciplinary approach to literary issues and analysis of various language styles and writing techniques of the works are designed to enhance their oral and written Italian language proficiency as well as students' critical thinking competence skills.

**Italian Studies students are expected to read extensive sections of novels, short stories and poems in Italian (and help with English translations when needed) and discuss in class. All students enrolled in this course are expected to submit oral presentations in**

**Italian. Italian Studies students should submit their home assignments in Italian and are strongly encouraged to submit their mid-term and final papers in Italian.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Students will read, analyse and discuss works from early 20th century to the first decades of the 21st century about main contemporary Italian writers/poets and literary movements with an interdisciplinary approach (through close-reading of novels, short-stories and poems).
- Acquire competences in critical questioning and how to make connections among apparently disparate literary genres and the close relationship between literature and society in Italy.
- **Enhance Italian language proficiency skills and become confident with Italian literary language & textual analysis (syntax, creative-writing techniques as from authors included on syllabus)**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

At the end of the semester, Students will be able to:

- Grasp the significance and relevance of the Main Italian Authors and works from Early XXth century to the first decades of XXIth century included on syllabus.
- Fully appreciate the specificity of Contemporary Italian Literature (i.e, genres, motives, features, writing techniques) and how these affected the European literature and culture at large through XXth century and the first decades of the XXIth one.
- To really understand and appreciate Italian language for literature.

**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. Audio/visual 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.

**PREREQUISITES**

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

Students from Literature, English, Humanities and all other field majors will find appropriate this class if they wish to have an initial approach to Italian Contemporary Authors.

## ATTENDANCE, 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.

### **Class Code of Conduct**

Activities unrelated to the course (including private conversations, emailing, text messaging, reading, web surfing, etc.) are not permitted during class time. Please turn off or put all electronic devices on silent mode prior to the beginning of the class.

### **Academic Dishonesty Will Not Be Tolerated.**

Any form of plagiarism or cheating may result in a failing final grade in the course and might be reported to IP and your campus. You are better off spending your time studying for the class. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the student handbook and catalog of your campus and also ask me and/ or the Resident Director for more information.

### Important: Exams

You must attend all exams and quizzes as scheduled. Make-up exams are given only for valid reasons. Please check your academic calendar **BEFORE** you book trips, flights and hotels.

### Copyright and Privacy Laws

No portion of the texts, films, videos, and other material used in this course can be reproduced in any format including scanning, electronic downloading or sharing of files.

**In addition, no portion of class lectures, discussions, and activities can be reproduced and used in any format, including electronic, without the written consent of the instructor and/or guest speakers.**

### Changes- Important

Information contained in this syllabus, including the class calendar, other than that mandated by the University, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

As this course is taught in Italian, students are strongly encouraged to express in Italian in in-class discussions. Requirements as following:

- **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. Italian Studies students are strongly encouraged to submit their papers in Italian**
- **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. All students are required to submit their presentation In Italian. (See below for details)**
- **Home assignments submitted on a weekly basis (see below for details). In English & Italian. Italian Studies students should submit their home assignments in Italian.**

### ORAL PRESENTATION & PAPERS

**Oral Presentation (In Italian):** it lasts approx. 20 minutes max. 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.

**Mid-term & Final Paper (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.

**Students with Upper-intermediate/Pre-Advanced Italian Proficiency are strongly encouraged to submit their papers in Italian.**

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

### **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 either to enhance Italian written skills through basic creative writing exercises taking inspiration from authors' texts included on syllabus and/or to improve critical thinking skills.**

### **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).

### **EVALUATION-GRADING SYSTEM**

Midterm exam: 20%

Midterm Essay and Final Essay: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Weekly assignments and oral presentation : 15%

Class participation, other activities (site visits, fieldtrips, events, exhibits): 15%

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:

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.

### 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*.

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*.

N.Ginzburg, *Piccole virtù*/*Little virtues*

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

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

E.Ferrante, *L'Amica geniale*/*My Brilliant Friend*, *Story of a new name*; *Those who leave and those who stay*.

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.

### CLASS COSTS:

50 EURO approx. (books) + 8,50 euro for museums entrance fee (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\\_oblate/](http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_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.

## CLASS CALENDAR :

Week 1: 25/02; 27/02

**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 Mędrzak-Conway *Triestine Follies: Italo Svevo and Jewish-American culture*: <https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/user/5076/ATTI/MEDZRZAK-CONWAY.pdf>
- Sibilla Aleramo, *Una donna* (A woman): selected readings.

Week 2: 04/03; 06/03

**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](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/>

**THURSDAY - 07/03/2019: WOMEN'S DAY - LITERARY EVENT: READING POETRY PERFORMANCE (Details to be announced).**

Week 3: 11/03; 13/03

**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](http://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 googledrive by Monday 12/03. graded as from grading system (SEE ABOVE)**

**14/03-17/03: FIELD TRIP SOUTHERN ITALY**

Week 4: 18/03; 20/03

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

Week 5: 25/03/2017; 27/03/2017

**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..](http://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>

Week 6: 01/04; 03/04

**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.

03/04 □ **MID-TERM EXAM & MID-TERM PAPER DUE (in English)**

Week 7: 08/04; 10/04

**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+).*

**Friday, April 12: Museo del Novecento site visit 10-12. Details to be announced.**



Week 8: 15/04; 17/04

**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](http://www.italianisticaultraiectina.org/publish/articles/000166/article.pdf)
- Ginzburg e il femminismo (essay): [www.gentesdeyilania.org/..](http://www.gentesdeyilania.org/)

19/04-28/04: SPRING BREAK- CSU CLOSED.

Week 9: 29/04

THE SHORT STORY IN THE Post WWII ITALIAN LITERATURE: Italo Calvino  
*Gli amori difficili* (Difficult loves) & *Le Città Invisibili* (Invisible cities)

Reading Assignments:

- Italo Calvino: *Gli amori difficili* (Difficult Loves): avventura di un fotografo; avventura di un poeta.
- I. Calvino, *From Le città invisibili* (Invisible cities): Maurilia, Sofronia; Zirma.
- *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)
- R. Barthes, *A Lover's discourse* Fragments: selection. (material provided by the instructor via Dropbox or Google Drive)

WED., MAY 1: BANK HOLIDAY - CSU CLOSED. NO CLASS TODAY.

Week 10: 06/05; 08/05

NEW TRENDS: META-FICTION OR MELODRAM ? ELENA FERRANTE  
NAPLES IN CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN FICTION; GENDER & AUTHORSHIP I

Reading assignments:

- 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>

Week 11: 13/05; 15/05

**NEW TRENDS: META-FICTION OR MELODRAMA?: ELENA FERRANTE: THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION IN ITALIAN SOCIETY I.**

Reading assignments:

- Elena Ferrante, *Storia del nuovo cognome* (Story of a new name) (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>

Week 12: 20/05/2019; 22/05/2019

**NEW TRENDS: META-FICTION OR MELODRAM: ELENA FERRANTE. THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION IN ITALIAN SOCIETY II.**

Reading assignments:

- Elena Ferrante, *Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta* (Those of leave and those who stay) (selected readings)

**22/05 ORAL PRESENTATIONS.**

**Week 13: 27/05; 29/05 :**

**FINAL EXAM DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED □ FINAL PAPER DUE**

**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.