



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM - FIRENZE

ITL 352 20th and 21st CENTURY ITALIAN AUTHORS AUTORI ITALIANI del 20 e 21 esimo secolo

“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

Location: California State University, Florence, via G.Leopardi, 12 50121 Florence Italy

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CSU GE Category: C1, C4 or C Elective

This class is conducted 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 20th century to the beginning of 21st 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 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.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

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

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

Please note: available copies for reference at CSU library during library opening hours.

Readings from the following novels/short stories:

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, *Città Invisibili /Invisible cities*

E.Ferrante, *L'Amica geniale/My Brilliant Friend; La storia del nuovo cognome/the story of new name; Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta/Those who leave and those who stay*.

Please Note: English & Italian version of the novels are also available at CSU library for reference.

Additional readings, bibliographies and web sources may be given during the semester.

CLASS COSTS:

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

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

You are responsible for the weekly readings, the information given to you in class, on handouts **and via email**. Part of your grade will be determined by regular attendance, participation in class discussion and active engagement in all activity of this course. ***Make sure to check your email on a regular basis for updates and additional information***

- **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.**
- **1 Written exam (final) based on multiple choice and essay questions upon writers and works. In English.**
- **2 Oral presentation based on one novel or collection of short stories. In Italian. (see section 7 for details)**
- **Periodical home assignments submitted on a weekly basis (see below section 7 for details). In English & Italian**

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).**

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).

CLASS SITE VISITS/RELATED CREATIVE ACTIVITIES :

- **Visits to museums/exhibits:**
Museo del Novecento 27/03/2020; Palazzo Strozzi: mostra Tomas Saraceno 15/05/2020
- **Women's Month Reading Performance at CSU Florence: 19/03/2020**

Focus on Italian women authors (**in Italian/English**): time and date to be announced. Please note: Instructor will meet students for rehearsals during office hours.

You are required to attend all of them.

****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)**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES :

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

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.

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 oral skills. **Oral Presentations will be in Italian** However, in order to help students to understand and better appreciate the authors, **Papers/Exams are in English. Italian Studies students are strongly encourage to submit their papers in Italian.**

GRADES & EXAMS

Your grade will be determined by the following assignments:

Weekly assignments: 15%

Midterm paper & final paper: 25%

Oral presentations (Mid-term and final): 25%

Final Exam: 25%

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

A = 100 - 94², A- = 93 - 90², B+ = 89 - 88², B = 87 - 83², B- = 82 - 80²,
C+ = 79 - 77², C = 76 - 73², C- = 72 - 70², D = 69 - 60², F = 59 and below²

The + and - symbols will be used for grading (except for A+). Specific information about the paper, exams and other projects will be given to you during the semester.

Turning Papers late will decrease your final grade 1 point for each day of lateness.

You must complete all work assigned in the course to pass the class .

A Student performance has been outstanding and indicates an exceptional degree of academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

B Student performance has been at a high level and indicates solid academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

C Student performance has been adequate and indicates satisfactory academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

D Student performance has been less than adequate and indicates deficiencies in meeting the learning outcomes and/or course requirements

F Student performance has been unacceptable and indicates a failure to meet the learning outcomes and/or course requirements

VERY IMPORTANT: Failure to complete all work and exams assigned in the course could result in failure of the class.

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.

Safety

All students are expected to respect the safety and security policies in place at CSU Firenze. Students will be expected to follow the procedures outlined by CSU Firenze for the safe use of all spaces, including the upstairs. Refusal to respect these policies and procedures could lead to access restrictions or disciplinary actions.

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.

Students with Disabilities

Upon identifying yourself to the instructor and the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluations. For more information, contact the Resident Director.

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.

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.

CLASS CALENDAR :

Week 1: 24/02; 26/02

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/MEDRZAK-CONWAY.pdf>
- Sibilla Aleramo, Una donna (A woman): selected readings.

Week 2: 02/03; 04/03

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/>

Week 3: 09/03; 11/03

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
- On obscure writing (from Other's people trades)

*****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)**

12/03-15/03: FIELDTRIP SOUTHERN ITALY

Week 4: 16/03; 18/03

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: 23/03/2017; 25/03/2017

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

Week 6: 30/03; 01/04

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) : selected readings .

Week 7: 06/04; 08/04

ITALIAN WOMEN CONTEMPORARY 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+).

08/04: ORAL PRESENTATION I →MID-PAPER DUE (in English)

From 10/04 to 19/04: SPRING BREAK – CSU CLOSED.

Week 8: 20/04; 22/04

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

25/04: NATIONAL HOLIDAY: LIBERATION DAY

Week 9: 27/04; 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: Difficult loves (Gli amori difficili): avventura di un fotografo; avventura di un poeta.
- Italo Calvino: Invisible cities (Le città invisibili) : selected readings.
- R.Barthes, A Lover's discourse Fragments: selection. (material provided by the instructor via Dropbox or Googledrive

Week 10: 04/05; 06/05

NEAPOLITAN NOVELS I by Elena Ferrante: L'AMICA GENIALE (THE BRILLIANT FRIEND): MELODRAMA OR METAFICTION? 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: 11/05; 13/05

NEAPOLITAN NOVELS II by Elena Ferrante: LA STORIA DEL NUOVO COGNOME (The story of a new name) : WOMEN'S RITES OF PASSAGE: from adolescence to adulthood; the power of getting an education: focus on Elena .

Reading assignments:

- Elena Ferrante, La storia del nuovo cognome (The story of new name) (selected readings)

- References to other Italian Women coming-of-age novels: Elsa Morante, Dacia Maraini e Goliarda Sapienza (Material provided by the Instructor).

Week 12: 18/05; 20/05

NEAPOLITAN NOVELS III: STORIA DI CHI FUGGE E DI CHI RESTA (Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay): Political commitment: gli Anni di Piombo (the Years of Lead) in contemporary narrative

Reading assignments:

- Elena Ferrante, Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta (Those who leave and Those who stay) (selected readings)
- Secondary sources material provided by the Instructor via googleedrive/dropbox

20/05 ORAL PRESENTATION II

→ FINAL PAPER DUE

Week 13: 25- 28 May

FINAL EXAM DATE AND TIME - TO BE ANNOUNCED