

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

CSU Virtual International Program

Spring Semester VIP 2020

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: 4:45-5:45; through March 29

Wednesday: individual sessions by appointment.

Monday: 5:45 – 6:45 as of March 30

Office Hours: Thursday/Friday by appointment

Credit : 3 units

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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.

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*;

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

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. (MLA format) in **English**.
- **1 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. including 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.

Format: **MLA format; Length: (7-10 pages max. including 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. 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 English**).
- Analysis, comparison/contrast, quizzes and other writing assignments to train your literary critical approach (2 pages max, **In English/Italian**).

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 they 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: 40%

Midterm paper & final paper: 40%

Oral presentation (Mid-term and final): 20%

A = 100 - 94□, A- = 93 - 90□, B+ = 89 - 88□, B = 87 - 83□, B- = 82 - 80□,
C+ = 79 - 77□, C = 76 - 73□, C- = 72 - 70□, D = 69 - 60□, F = 59 and below□

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.

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.

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 your instructor before an exams, if necessary.

Copyright and Privacy Laws

Texts, films, videos, and other material used in this course can be reproduced in any format including scanning, electronic downloading or sharing of files, only for class use.

In addition, class lectures, discussions, and activities can be reproduced and used in any format, including electronic, with the consent of the instructor and/or guest speakers.

Attendance

For on-line classes, the teacher will track attendance through the Canvas platform.

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: 02/24; 02/26

ITALO SVEVO - PSYCHOANALYSIS: FRAGMENTED SELF I:

Decadentism & Italo Svevo: La Coscienza di Zeno (Zeno's conscience).

Sibilla Aleramo, Una Donna (A woman):

Reading Assignments:

- Svevo, *La coscienza di Zeno* (Zeno's conscience), 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: 03/02; 03/04

ITALO SVEVO - PSYCHOANALYSIS: FRAGMENTED SELF II

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

Reading Assignments:

- Svevo, Zeno's conscience, 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/>

*Please note: The first two weeks of classes were at CSU IP in Florence - Italy.

Please note: from March 9 - 12 the classes were suspended.

Week 3: 03/16

HOLOCAUST & RESILIENCE: PRIMO LEVI

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

Reading Assignments:

- P.Levi, The Truce/La Tregua, selected readings.
- Nezri-Dufour, Primo Levi tra storia e letteratura: uno stile unico (essay): nemla.org/publications/nis/archives/2010/v32a7_nezri-dufour.pdf
- P.Levi, On obscure writing (from, P.Levi, Other's people trades)

Week 4: 3/23

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: 03/30

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

Week 6: 04/06

ITALIAN WOMEN CONTEMPORARY POETRY (Antonella Anedda, Cristina Campo, Patrizia Cavalli): challenging the tradition canon

Reading Assignments:

- Italian Women Poets handouts: Please note Material provided by the Instructor prior to class (via Dropbox, email).

Week 7:

04/13/2020: Easter Monday: National Holiday in Italy – make-up class on Friday, April 17.

Friday, April 17 (Make-up class for class cancelled on 04/13, National Holiday in Italy)

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

Reading Assignments:

- Natalia Ginzburg: *Little Virtues*; *He and I*, *Human relations*; *scarpe rotte* (broken shoes) *this reading is in Italian.
- Ebraismo e cristianesimo in Natalia Ginzburg (saggio):
www.italianisticaultraiectina.org/publish/articles/000166/article.pdf
- Other material (articles, interviews, essays) will be provided by the Instructor prior to class.

Week 8:

04/20: Mid-term paper due at this date

Week 9: 04/27

THE SHORT STORY IN THE Post WWII ITALIAN LITERATURE II: Italo Calvino: *Gli amori difficili* (Difficult loves);

Reading Assignments:

- Italo Calvino: *Difficult loves (Gli amori difficili)*: *avventura di un fotografo*; *avventura di un poeta*.
- R.Barthes, *A Lover's discourse Fragments*: selection. (material provided by the instructor via Dropbox or Google Drive)

Week 10: 05/04

THE SHORT STORY IN THE Post WWII ITALIAN LITERATURE II : Italo Calvino: *Le città invisibili* (Invisible Cities).

Reading Assignments:

- Italo Calvino: *Invisible cities (Le città invisibili)* : selected readings.
- Further material (articles, videos, interviews) provided by the instructor prior to class.

***** Please note: between week 10 and week 12: oral presentations schedule to be announced: individual sessions and discussion.**

Week 11: 05/11

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>
- My Brilliant Friend, HBO season 1: <https://www.hbo.com/my-brilliant-friend>

Week 12: 05/18

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)
- My Brilliant Friend HBO, season 2: <https://www.hbo.com/my-brilliant-friend>

Friday, May 22 – Make-up class for class cancelled on Monday, May 25 (details TBA)

NEAPOLITAN NOVELS by Elena Ferrante and the HBO series: from text to screen: the literary text and "re-writes" it in the form of a screenplay and “the Ferrante mania”.

Reading assignments:

- Ferrante Fever documentary: <https://www.raiplay.it/video/2018/12/Ferrante-Fever-5fa69288-9b3a-4788-90fd-4d3839412122.html>
- Material (interviews, articles, etc.) provided by the instructor prior to class.

Week 13: Monday, 05/25: Memorial Day. National Day in the U.S – NO CLASS TODAY
Make-up class was on Friday, May 22 (details to be announced)

Final exams: May 26 – 29

05/29 : Final paper due at this date