Class Description:
The key events you read about in your morning twitter feed or on your favourite news sites are usually not unique in world affairs. They have a background, a context, that makes them more understandable and often more interesting. History is about everything that happened before you started reading this course description. To think historically means trying to make sense of the news in the context of what human beings have done before. In this bi-weekly, two-credit course, we will meet with some NYU Florence instructors who are the experts and can guide you to get behind the scenes of current events that you thought you knew, with the goal of making you a better observer and analyst of the world around you. The goal of this course is two-fold. First, it will provide students with a basic historical perspective, and secondly, students will learn about the society in which they are currently living. By doing so, the course will provide students with a better understanding of Italy today and of the ways in which the past informs and inflects contemporary Italian and European society, politics, and culture.

Instructor Details:
Name: Angelica Pesarini
NYU Global Home Email Address: angelica.pesarini@nyu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2pm-3pm
Villa Ulivi Office Location: n.7
Villa Ulivi Phone Number: +39 055 5007 300

Desired Outcomes:
On completion of this course students should:

- Be able to trace the historical development of specific current issues
- Evaluate critically different sources of knowledge
- Having mastered a basic understanding of key issues informing Italian society, politics and culture
- Having improved their ability to think critically, engage in complex reasoning and express their thoughts clearly through their written work.
Assessment Components

- Three 500 word blog entries: 40%
- One 3-4 page final paper based on one of the entries: 30%
- Group Presentation: 15%
- Class Participation: 15%

Blog entries guidelines

The students are required to write three 500 word response blog entries based on the topics tackled in class. The syllabus offers seven different prompts. The blog entry will be due after the lecture in which the research question is addressed.

Final Paper

At the end of the semester, students will be required to submit a three- four page, double-spaced paper analyzing the historical roots of the news item of their choice. The paper should be footnoted, with a short bibliography. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate how you might contextualize a major current issue in in a way that made it more understandable to a non-expert.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations:

- **Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays/exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.
- **Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy
- **Grade C:** The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement
- **Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research
- **Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible

Grading Guidelines

A = 94-100

A minus = 90-93
B plus = 87-89
B = 84-86
B minus = 80-83
C plus = 77-79
C = 74-76
C minus = 70-73
D plus = 67-69
D = 65-66
F = below 65

Grading Policy:
Please refer to Assessment Expectations and the policy on late submission of work.

Academic Accommodations:
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see the Moses Center for further information.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Attendance Policy:
Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalized by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to the number of class times over a single week.

Excused Absences:
In case of absence, regardless of the reason, the student is responsible for completing missed assignments, getting notes and making up missed work in a timely manner based upon a schedule.
that is mutually agreed upon between the faculty member and the student. The only excused absences are those approved by the Office of Academic Support; they are as follows:

**Absence Due to Illness**
- If you are sick, please see a doctor. Contact the Office of Student Life for assistance.
- For absences that last for two or more consecutive days, a doctor’s certificate, “certificato medico” is required. The doctor will indicate in writing the number of days of bed rest required. Please note these certificates can only be obtained on the day you see the doctor and cannot be written for you afterwards.
- Absences can ONLY be excused if they are reported WITHIN 48 HRS of your return to class via the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- OAS will not accept a student email or telephone call regarding an absence due to illness
- OAS will only notify faculty of absences REPORTED on the ABSENCE FORM
- The Office of Student Life, when assisting you in cases of severe or extended illness, will coordinate with the Office of Academic Support to properly record your absences

**Due to Religious Observance**
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday
- Information regarding absences due to religious observance must be provided at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question using the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- Please note that no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retroactively.

**Due to a class conflict with a program sponsored lecture, event, or activity**
- All students are entitled to miss one class period without any penalty to their grade in order to attend a lecture, event or activity that is sponsored by La Pietra Dialogues, Acton Miscellany or the Graduate Lecture series.
- Information regarding absences due to a class conflict must be provided at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question using the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- Please note that no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retroactively.

Students with questions or needing clarification about this policy are instructed to contact a member of the Office of Academic Support located in Villa Ulivi or to email florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu

**Late Submission of Work**
- All course work must be submitted on time, in class on the date specified on the syllabus.
To request an extension on a deadline for an assignment, students must speak to the professor one week prior to the due date.

To receive an incomplete for a course at the end of the semester, two weeks before final exams, both the student and the faculty member must meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs to review the request and if granted, they must both sign an Incomplete Contract detailing the terms for completing missing coursework.

**Plagiarism Policy**

**PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM:**
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

In the event of suspected or confirmed cases of plagiarism, the faculty member will consult first with the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs as definitions and procedures vary from school to school.
**Writing Center:**
The Writing Center, located in Villa Ulivi, offers you feedback on any type of writing, at any stage in planning or drafting; very rough drafts are welcome. Sign up for a consultation at the [Writing Center's website](#) and submit your working draft or ideas at least six hours in advance to NYU [Florence Writing Center](#). You can drop in for a consultation M-Th, but remember that appointments are given priority. Please also note that the Writing Center does not correct or “fix” your writing but prompts you to think and work. The aim is to create stronger writers in the long term, not necessarily perfect papers in the short term.

**Required Text(s)**

**All texts are uploaded on NYU Classes**


Von Henneberg “Memory, the Public Space and the Memory of Empire in Modern Italy,” *History& Memory* 16.1 (2004) 37-85


The Economist, *How has organised crime adapted to globalisation?*, Aug 16th 2013

**Media Reading:**

[Ben-Ghiat Fascist Monuments](#)

[The Guardian Britons on Second Referendum](#)

[The New York Times Brexit explained in 7 questions](#)

[The Guardian One I’ll have my country back](#)
Copies of each textbook are available for consultation and short term loans in the Villa Ulivi Library. Extra copies of some textbooks are also available for semester long loans. More information on Books and Course Materials.

**Supplemental Texts(s):**
Texts that students are not required to are in NYU-FL Library or available on line

**Internet Research Guidelines:**
The careful use of internet resources is encouraged and a list of recommended websites will be given. Failure to cite internet and other non-traditional media sources in your written work constitutes plagiarism.

**Additional Required Equipment:**
N/A

**Class Assignments and Topics:**

**Session 1 - September 4**
*Discussion of title, content, readings, assessments and other practical issues*

No readings assigned

**Session 2- September 18**
*Fake News Before Social Media: Lorenzo Valla debunks the Donation of Constantine (Matteo Duni)*

The so-called Donation of Constantine was the single most important document supporting medieval popes’ claims to universal political domination. In 1440, the Italian humanist scholar Lorenzo Valla proved that the document was a forgery through the use of sophisticated methods of linguistic and historical analysis.

**Blog entry research question:** Is Valla’s Renaissance lesson in debunking a forgery still applicable to the world of social media, and how?


**Session 3- October 3**

**Participation to the day workshop: “The Language of Race”**

The workshop will examine the ways, means and languages in which racism has found expression and agency in Italy in different geographical and historical contexts, including colonialism, the Italian diaspora abroad, internal migrations from Southern to Northern Italy, the treatment of Jews and other groups during World War II, recent extra European migration to Italy and questions of representation. These issues will be examined through an interdisciplinary framework, focusing on three aspects of the long history of discrimination and racism: how legislation and law have helped construct or deconstruct theories and practices of racism indifferent historical moments; the relationship between racism and diasporas, refugees, and migratory flows; and the representation of difference as racial in the media, postcolonial literature, photography, film, and advertising

**Blog entry research question:** Summarize the main points of one of the papers presented today.

**Session 4 – October 16**

**“Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?” (Angelica Pesarini)**

On October 5th 2017, NYU Historian Professor Ruth Ben-Ghiat published an article on *The New Yorker* asking Italians a question of particular importance: “Why is it that, as the United States has engaged in a contentious process of dismantling monuments to its Confederate past, and France has rid itself of all streets named after the Nazi collaborationist leader Marshall Pétain, Italy has allowed its Fascist monuments to survive unquestioned?” The reception of Ben-Ghiat’s article in Italy has been particularly negative and it has triggered a fiery debate. The extent of the criticism received by Ben-Ghiat clearly shows the presence of ambivalent and contrasting feelings in relation to the legacy of Fascism within Italian society and the difficult relationship Italy holds with a certain historical memory.

**Blog entry research question:** What are the consequences of allowing Fascist/colonial monuments which surround us in our every-day life to survive unquestioned and to be labelled as mere “objects of art”?


Von Henneberg “Memory, the Public Space and the Memory of Empire in Modern Italy,” *History & Memory* 16.1 (2004) 37-85
Session 5- November 7

**Attendance to the LPD talk “A People’s History of Beyoncé. Stardom and Standom in the 21st Century” (Jason King)**

**Blog entry research question:** summarize the main point of Jason King’s intervention.

Session 6- November 20

**The dark-side of globalization: crime without borders? (Salvatore Sberna)**

Twenty years ago, globalization was pitched as a strategic imperative for the world economy and diplomacy, but many authors argue that organized crime is now transnational and it has globalized its activities for the same reasons as legitimate multinational corporations. To what extent is this true? And how an understanding of the history of organized crime and of its geographic expansion in the past century can help us assessing its current transformations due to the spread of globalisation?

**Blog entry research question:** While globalization has supported international trade and population mobility in the past two decades, to what extent has it also increased the opportunities for organized crime and illegal markets?


The Economist, *How has organised crime adapted to globalisation?*, Aug 16th 2013


Session 7- December 4

**Brexit: Why? (Guy Ortolano Skype class from NY)**
This lecture locates Britain’s pending departure from the European Union in a longer historical context. It considers the roles played by decolonization, deindustrialization, immigration, and nationalism, but ultimately argues that Brexit emerged out of a contingent political circumstance. For this reason, Brexit should have been avoidable, and it still should be reversible - except that these political circumstances that produced it still remain in place.

**Blog entry research question:** Identify 3 distinct origins/causes of Brexit, and explain which one is the most important.

**Headline journalism reading:**

- [The Guardian Britons on Second Referendum](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/13/brexit-second-referendum-independence)

**Background reading:**

- [The Guardian One I’ll have my country back](https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2016/jun/27/brexit-result-special-brits-vox-populi)
- [BBC News Referendum Results](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk/2016/06/23/brexit-referendum-result)
- [NY Times Article 50](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/30/world/50-brexit-what-you-should-know.html)
- [The Spectator Brexit suggests we are on the right side](https://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/06/brexit-suggests-we-are-on-the-right-side/)
- [Foreign Affairs Brexit One Year Later](https://foreignaffairs.com/backchannels/2017/01/30/brexit-one-year-later/
- [The Guardian Where are we at with these Brexit talks](https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2016/jun/27/brexit-result-special-

**Session 8 – December 10**

**Presentations**

**Classroom Etiquette**

- Eating is not permitted in the classrooms. Bottled water is permitted.
- Cell phones should be turned off during class time.
- The use of personal laptops and other electronic handheld devices are prohibited in the classroom unless otherwise specified by the professor.
- We recycle! So keep it green! Please dispose of trash in the clearly marked recycle bins located throughout the on campus buildings.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

[Field trip and site visit dates may be consolidated here as well as listed under the appropriate class session above. These must be requested in advance via the Office of Academic Support and pre-approved before appearing on the syllabus]
Suggested Co-curricular Activities
Suggested optional co-curricular activities will be announced in class and/or via email by the professor throughout the semester.

Your Instructor
Dr Angelica Pesarini was awarded a PhD in Sociology and Gender Studies at the University of Leeds (UK) and she received a Master’s Degree in Gender, Development and Globalisation at the London School of Economics. She previously worked as a Lecturer in Race, Gender and Sexuality at Lancaster University, UK. Angelica conducted research on gender, identity and the development of economic activities within some Roma communities in Italy and she has analysed strategies of survival, risks and opportunities associated with male prostitution in Rome. Her current work investigates visual racializing practices located at the intersection of “race”, gender and identity in colonial and postcolonial times, with a specific focus on Italy.