Course Description

This course explores urban experience in Italy from two distinct perspectives, the historical and the theoretical.

We will start with a historical overview of the evolution of the urban environment in Italy. This overview will extend from ancient and roman times to the (re-)birth of towns by the year 1000, when various towns identified themselves around their piazzas, churches, streets, and within their walls, to the evolution of Italian towns in modern times, the changes in size and organization, the emergence of new spaces and new functions, and the emergence of new institutions such as Cafes, Museums, Train Station. The focus of these first lectures will be on the city of Florence.

The second dimension of the course, which will be articulated at two levels, will reflect upon the way in which we conceptualise, represent and construct discourses about cities in modern times. Firstly, we will make an exploration of some texts, concepts that have contributed to shaping our way to understand modern cities. We will also explore the various possible positioning of the self towards the city, the “seerer”, the “Flaneur” the Stroller”, and we will investigate how the bodies of these subjects is then constituted. Secondly, we’ll go through some discourses and representations of the city: maps, views, panoramas points, travel literature, tourist guides and narrative literature (e.g. detective novel) will provide with quite different ways to tell of (and relate to) the experience of the Italian and specifically Florentine urban environment.

Goals

The course intends to provide a background of historical and geographical knowledge of the variety of urban Italian reality. It also aims to study and explore some categories through which urban life in Florence and in Italy could be understood and discussed. It aims to raise the awareness of the “otherness” as well as the similarities that urban Italian environment presents when compared to the students’ own background. Finally, the course will work as site where the students’ patrimony of insights and experiences can be shared and the various possible framings can be discussed and conceptualised.

The course pursues these goals through lectures, readings, site trips, films, discussions and meetings with specialists. Some general texts offers a background on the historical development of towns while other readings will offer a choice of interpretations of actual cities and of their representations. These will include critical literature from different perspectives: architectural, linguistic, historical, and sociological.

Requirements
Attendance, attention and active contribution are strongly requested and will count for a substantial part of the final grade. Students are required to read the literature indicated in the bibliography for each class and to give a class presentation during the course. Handouts and topics taught in class will be included in the tests. A midterm and a final exam will provide with about 60% of the final grade.

Prof. Lombardo will be available for individual meeting about presentations, papers or any other matter, at his office, n. 7 in villa Ulivi on Thursdays from 12 a.m. Other days and times are possible by previous arrangements.

Course schedule

1) Sep. 9th - Presentation of the course, Introducing Italian Cities, Roman Florence.

2) Sep. 16th - Introducing Italian cities: the communal towns in the Middle Age.

   Reading:

3) Sep. 23rd – Reading urban patterns, two approaches, Medieval Italian squares and modern cities.

   Readings:
   - Camillo Sitte: *The Art of Building Cities*, New York, 1945, Ch 1-6, pp1-39

4) Sep. 30th – Introducing Genova


5) October 2nd – Saturday, day trip to Genoa

6) Oct. 7th – City of the eye city of the feet, Review of the first half of the term

   Readings:

7) Oct. 14th - Midterm exam

8) Oct. 21th - Florence and the modern age. XIX and XX century Bridge and doors.

Readings:
- Fei, Gobbi Sica, *Sica, Florence: an outline of urban history*, pp. 127-152

**********Fall break**********

9) Nov. 4th - Site visit: Florence: City centre, Piazza della Repubblica and the Caffè Giubbe Rosse

Meeting point: In front of S. Lorenzo Church. At 9 a.m.

Readings:
Handout to be distributed.

10) Nov. 11th – 1)- Ideal Cities, the Quattrocento debate. Ferrara: an introduction.

Readings:

11) November 13th, Saturday, day trip to Ferrara

12) Nov. 18th Site visit Florence. Piazza ss. Annunziata and the Museo dell’Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

Meeting point: Piazza SS. Annunziata. At 9 a.m.
Reading:
Handout to be distributed.

Thursday, November 25th, NO CLASS
13) Dec. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Narratives of disasters, the 1966 flood in Florence.

Readings:

14) Dec. 9\textsuperscript{nd}. – Florence 2010 an assessment, towards a modern city.

Meeting point Piazza S. Marco, at 9 am.

Reading:

15) Dec. 16\textsuperscript{th} - \textbf{Final Exam.}

\section*{Bibliography}

To be bought by the students: available at the Paperback Exchange bookshop.


List of readings, students are responsible for getting hold of their own copy of individual readings.


Camillo Sitte, \textit{The Art of Building Cities}, New York, 1945, Ch 1-6, pp1-39


Fei, Gobbi Sica, Sica, *Florence: an outline of urban history*, pp. 127-152


**Extra readings that may be included in the course:**

