Cultures and Contexts: Italy

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Summer 2017 TuTh 9-12  Office Hours by appointment

Course Description & Objectives

Although the Italian peninsula has been the site of some of the oldest and most significant civilizations in Western history, the modern Italian state is relatively young, having been established only in 1861. Italy’s geographical and cultural complexities have ensured that regional identities throughout the country remain strong, to the extent that many Italians still identify closely with their more immediate social, cultural, and political traditions. Furthermore, Italy is positioned as a gateway of the Mediterranean world, making it both the center (if one views it from the shores of North Africa) and the periphery (if one views it from the countries bordering the North Sea) of Europe.

The influence of foreign visitors to a country that welcomes nearly as many tourists each year (over 46 million in 2014) as its entire population (roughly 60 million) and which regularly ranks as a top destination for immigrants coming to Europe also exerts a significant influence on Italian society. In the tradition of the Grand Tour, this course will reference the region’s rich Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance histories, using the rise of modern tourism to frame the shaping of the economics, politics, culture, and social mores of modern Italy. We will examine how Italians register their own similarities and differences within a national context, and how they regard the tourists, students, and immigrants who come to Italy. At the same time, we will also consider the accounts of foreign visitors to Italy, both from the perspective of western tourists seeking “culture” and through the eyes of immigrants arriving in the bel paese.

Throughout the semester, our primary objective will be to identify and evaluate the foreign and domestic influences that have shaped contemporary Italian culture and society.

Course Materials

Online Course Resources via NYU Classes/Google Drive. All readings are accessible via the course schedule below.

Please ensure that all assigned readings are available for consultation in class in either paper or electronic format—we will refer to them frequently. We will use laptops and mobile devices regularly in this class. These devices may be used in the classroom exclusively for academic purposes. Failure to respect this rule will adversely affect the Participation and Attendance grade.

Assessment Components

Attendance and participation are crucial to the successful completion of this course. Active engagement in class discussions is mandatory. Reading assignments should be completed for the day indicated for that particular class session (i.e. if a reading assignment is scheduled for 7/1, read it before 7/1). Assigned readings form the basis for class discussion, so it is essential that you have read each week’s assigned texts and come to class prepared to discuss them. Likewise, films listed in the course schedule should be viewed before class. Participation and Attendance are worth 15% of the final course grade.

Group Questions

These brief writing assignments will be done at the beginning class, and should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete. A small group of students (2-3) will be responsible for creating a question or short assignment for the rest of the class to complete on a topic connected to the theme currently being studied. This assignment/question will serve as the starting point for class discussion. Be creative! Use
images, music, intriguing questions or anything you think will be helpful in getting the class thinking and writing. Sign up here for group questions. Conducting the in-class assignment will be worth 5% of the final course grade.

Conclusions and Illuminations
For each class session, a group of students will be responsible for adding to the Conclusions and Illuminations document that will serve as an archive for the essential ideas from class discussions during the semester. For the assigned session, students should take notes during class, and conduct a final edit before the beginning of next week’s class. Successful completion of the assigned session will be worth 5% of the final course grade. Sign up here for this assignment.

Online Analyses
Questions related to the class readings will be posted during the semester. These will require an online response of roughly 1000 words. Students must complete four (out of five) of these. These responses must engage directly with course readings, bringing the texts we read in class into direct contact with the Italian context within which we are living and studying. Analyses should be as specific as possible, avoiding general statements and assertions, and instead focusing on particular details and examples. These analyses are due online in Google Drive no later than 10 PM on the assigned date. Students are encouraged to write creatively and to use other forms of media (images, video, music). These analyses are worth 50% of the final course grade.

Final Exam
There will be a final exam at the end of the semester worth 25% of the course grade.

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

Online Analyses 50%, Group Question 5% Conclusions and Illuminations 5%, Participation and Attendance 15%, Final Exam 25%

Assessment Expectations

Grading
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.

Grade Conversion
A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

**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 their [website](#) for further information.

**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.

**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.
Course Schedule

May 30: Constructing Italy: Ideas and Images
Dickie “The Notion of Italy” (19p)
Anderson “Imagined Communities” (3p)
Goethe “The Pilgrim Strides Out Busily” (1p)
Image: Panorama Italiana (1861)

June 1: Ancient Rome and the Concept of Citizenship
Edict of Caracalla (Costitutio Antoniana) (4p)
Dio Cassius “Roman History” (8p)
Beard “In the Beginning” (36p) “The First Roman Millenium” (10p)
Online Analysis 1 due June 4
Group Question 1

June 6: Medieval Florence & Siena
Site Visit to Historic Center of Florence
Meet in front of the carousel at Piazza della Repubblica
Bruni “Panegyric to the city of Florence” (29p)
Image: Rosselli “Map of Florence”
Machiavelli “Exhortation to Seize Italy to Free Her from the Barbarians” (5p)
Tylus “Siena City of Secrets” (16p)
Gilmour “Cities and Powers” (18p)
Images: Lorenzetti “Allegory of Good and Bad Governance” 1 2 3
Group Question 2

June 8: The Grand Tour
Site Visit to Villa La Pietra
Hom “Codes of Travel: Italy’s Guidebook Tradition” (20p)
Goethe “Rome” (12p) Letter (1p)
Starke “Excerpt from Travels in Europe” (15p)
Online Analysis 2 due June 8
Group Question 3

June 9-10: Field Trip to Rome

June 13: Italian Unification
Leopardi “To Italy” (2p)
Mazzini “General Instructions for the Members of Young Italy” (19p)
Riall “Risorgimento, Reform, and Revolution” (37p) “Travel, migration, exile: Garibaldi’s global frame” (12p)
Image: Hayez “La Meditazione” (1850)
Group Question 4

June 15: Italian Futurism
Marinetti “The Futurist Cinema” (5p) “Manifesto of Futurism” (7p)
Reich “Why Maciste?” (15p)
Video: Pastrone Cabiria
Image: Boccioni “Unique Forms of Continuity in Space” “Charge of the Lancers”
Optional: Rainey “F.T. Marinetti and the Development of Futurism” (39p)
Online Analysis 3 due June 18
Group Question 5

June 16: Field Trip to Val D’Orcia
June 20: The Spectacle of Italian Fascism
Mussolini "Past and Present" (1p)
Eco "Ur-Fascism" (6p)
Falasca-Zamponi "The Politics of Symbols" (31p)
Lasansky "Dictators as Tourists" (26p)
Bianchi Bandinelli "May 9, 1938" (4p)
Video: Hitler visits Florence

**Online Analysis 4** due June 25

June 23: Field Trip to Verona and Mantova

June 27: Emigrant Italy
Gardaphe "Leaving Little Italy" (25p)
Gabaccia "Italy's Many Diasporas" (13p)
Tintori & Colucci "From Manpower to Brain Drain" (12p)

**Group Question 6**

June 29: Italy and Modern Tourism
Urry "Why Tourism is Important" (15p)
Hom "Italian Montage" (32p)
Percy "Loss of the Creature" (12p)
Lippard "On Rubbernecking" (10p)

**Online Analysis 5** due July 2

**Group Question 7**

July 4: Tourism: The Case of Florence
Verdicchio "Renaissanceland" (8p)
Popp "Positive and Negative Urban Tourist Crowding: Florence Italy" (23p)
Orkin "Jinx Allen in Florence"

**Group Question 8**

July 6: Final Exam