



Italy & Italians in English Literature  
from the Romantics to Modernism  
COLIT-UA 9180-SASEM-UG 9201 -- Spring 2019  
Thursdays 10.30 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.  
TBA

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**Course Description:**

Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist writers in both Britain and the United States were fascinated by Italy. Shelly and Byron were inspired by the hope of a new political dawn in the Italian Risorgimento. Robert Browning, George Eliot, and E. M. Forster saw the transition from Medieval to Renaissance culture in Florence as mirroring and offering an example for their own struggles to free themselves from the repression and religious orthodoxy of Victorian England. Henry James and Edith Wharton saw Italy as beautiful and dangerous in equal measure and used it as the setting of stories about the clash of old-world and new-world cultures. T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound were both profoundly influenced by Dante. As you can see, the "Italy and Italians" of the title refers not only to images and characters in the works of the British and American authors we will be reading but also to the influences of Italian literature on literature in English. Recurring themes in the course will be history and its uses in literature, gender and sexuality, democracy and aristocracy, language and power, and religion as an instrument of sexual repression. There will also be theoretical components, introducing you to various critical approaches to literature, such as psychoanalytic criticism, gender studies, post-colonial studies, and Harold Bloom's theory of the anxiety of influence.

**Instructor Details:**

Name: Dorothea Barrett

NYUGlobal Home Email Address: dorothea.barrett@nyu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Villa Ulivi Office Location: at the end of the corridor on the top floor.

**Desired Outcomes:**

On completion of this course, you should

- Have improved your ability to think critically, engage in complex reasoning, and express your thoughts clearly through your written work.
- Have improved your understanding of the methodologies of literary criticism.
- Be able to recognize works by eminent writers of the Romantic, Victorian, and modern periods and understand their uses of Italian settings, characters, and literary influences.
- Have a deeper understanding of your host country and the reactions of generations of other English speakers who came here.

**Assessment Components**

- Participation: 10%
- Student focus 10%
- Timeline 10% (1-3 pages)
- Four tests 10% each
- Author letter 10% (1-2 pages)
- Term project 20% (2500 words max for a written project; 20 minutes max for a presentation)

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

### Assessment Expectations:

**Grade A:** I reserve A-range grades for essays that are original, complex, accurate, convincing, well organized, and written in good English. By "original" I don't mean that no one has ever come up with the idea before but simply that you thought of it yourself; it did not come from supplementary reading, the class discussion, or the internet. By "convincing" I don't mean that I agree with it but rather that the idea is supported by textual evidence that is difficult to refute. In the tests, I reserve A for students who identified all the passages correctly and whose comments on their chosen passages are accurate, complex, detailed, and analytical.

**Grade B:** B-range grades are for essays that have most of the attributes of A-range work but lack some important element, such as complexity or originality. In tests, I deduct one grade increment for each misidentified passage and one for poor writing or inaccuracy (e.g. you know which text this is, but you get the title wrong), so a test with good comments but two misidentified passages and some mistakes in the identifications or the comments will receive a B.

**Grade C:** If you receive a C-range grade for an essay, it is probably the result of haste and carelessness: there are mistakes in the prose and/or the facts, the argument is facile or unconvincing, and overall the essay lacks complexity and analytical insight. In tests, you will receive a C-range grade if, for example, your comments are superficial and descriptive (as opposed to analytic) or if you misidentify several of the passages (say four out of twelve).

**Grade D:** You will receive this grade for essays that are inaccurate, sloppily written, brief, descriptive (as opposed to analytical), and/or give me the impression that I spent more time correcting it than you did writing it. In tests, the comments are weak, inaccurate, purely descriptive, and/or poorly written or there are five or more misidentifications.

**Grade F:** I reserve this grade for plagiarism, submitting work you have submitted for another course, and non-existence (i.e. you didn't do it).

### Grading Guidelines

Below is NYU's standard grade conversion for numerical grades. Please note, however, that **I never use numerical grades**: I use the four-point GPA system. The GPA system does not correspond to the numerical values below. D.B.

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

### **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 [insert new hyperlink]
- 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 [insert new hyperlink]
- 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 [insert new hyperlink]
- 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.academicssupport@nyu.edu](mailto:florence.academicssupport@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. Please consult the "Academic Guidelines for Success" distributed on your USB key at Check-in and on the NYU Florence Global Wiki. For a detailed description of some possible forms of plagiarism and cheating please consult the Community Compact that you signed at Orientation, a copy of which is on the above mentioned Wiki and USB key.

### **Writing Center:**

The Writing Center, located in Aula Belvedere in Villa Ulivi, offers you feedback on any type of writing, at any stage in planning or drafting. Sign up for a consultation at the [Writing Center's website](#) and submit your working draft or ideas a day in advance to [NYU Florence Writing Center](#). Drop in for a consultation M-Th, but remember that appointments are given priority. Be assured that very rough drafts are welcome. Please note that

we do not correct or “fix” your writing; instead we prompt you to think and work. Our aim is to create stronger writers in the long term, not necessarily perfect papers in the short term

**Required Text(s):**

**The required books (below) are available at** International bookshop - La Feltrinelli, Via de' Cerretani 30/32r - 50123 Florence. Tel: 055 2382652 Fax: 055 288482 [firenze.international@lafeltrinelli.it](mailto:firenze.international@lafeltrinelli.it)

Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*

Henry James, *Daisy Miller*

E. M. Forster, *A Room with a View*

Robert Pinsky (trans.) *The Inferno of Dante: A New Verse Translation*

**All the shorter readings are in the electronic course pack in the "Resources" area of our NYU Classes website. You may want to take the file to a copy shop and have it printed and bound (*stampato fronte/retro e legato*). Copies of each book are available for consultation and short term loans in the [Villa Ulivi Library](#). Extra copies of some books are also available for semester long loans. For more information on Books and Course Materials go [here](#).**

**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 – Thursday 7 Feb. Introduction. Romantic Revolutionaries: Byron, Shelley, Leopardi. **Writing in class: timeline.** Introduction to Dante Power Point. **Your timeline is due Sat 9 Feb by noon.** All readings for today's session will be done in class.

**Session 2 – Friday 8 Feb (make-up day, Thursday schedule) Visit Villa La Pietra. Today we meet outside Villa La Pietra for a tour.** Back in the classroom, we will read and discuss extracts from Harold Acton's memoirs.

Session 3 -- Thursday 14 Feb. International Influence: Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch. **Student focus,** seminar discussion, and Power Point (hereafter PP). Reading for class: Dante's *Inferno*, Cantos 1, 5, and 13. Boccaccio's *Decameron*: Prologue; Intro Day 1; Day 1 stories 1-4; Day 2 stories 2, 7, and 9; Day 3 stories 1 and 10. All the Petrarch sonnets in the course pack.

Session 4 -- Thursday 21 Feb. The Anti-Romanticism of Mary Shelley. **Student focus,** seminar discussion, and PP. **Test 1 on Byron, P. B. Shelley, Leopardi, Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch.**

**Reading for class:** Extracts from *Frankenstein* and Mary Shelley's Introduction to the 1831 edition.

Session 5 -- Thursday 28 Feb. Love and Death 1: Boccaccio and Keats. **Student focus,** seminar discussion, group work, PP. Reading for class: Boccaccio's *Decameron*: Day 4 stories 1 and 5; Day 5 story 8; Day 6 story 7; and Keats, "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil."

Session 6 -- Thursday 7 March. Love and Death 2: Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Emily Dickinson. PP, **student focus**, group work, and seminar discussion. Reading for class: All the Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Emily Dickinson poems in the course pack.

Session 7 -- Thursday 14 March. George Eliot and *Romola* at La Pietra. **Student focus** and seminar discussion. Reading for class: The extracts from George Eliot's *Felix Holt* and *Romola* in the course pack. **Test 2 on Mary Shelley, Keats, R. Browning, E. B. Browning, Dickinson, and G. Eliot.**

Session 8 -- Thursday 21 March. Lions, Christians, and Gladiators: Henry James and Edith Wharton. **Student focus**, seminar discussion, and PP. Reading for class: *Daisy Miller* by Henry James and "Roman Fever" by Edith Wharton.

**Monday 25 March to Sunday 31 March midterm break.**

Session 9 - Thursday 4 April. Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Shakespeare's sonnets. seminar discussion, PP, and interactive game. There's no reading for class or student focus today; all the sonnets will be read aloud in class time. **Writing in class: author letter (send it to me as a Word document attached to an e-mail by noon on Saturday).**

Session 10 - Thursday 11 April. Dante's dark influence: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. **Student focus**, seminar discussion, group work, and PP. Reading for class: Dante *Inferno* Cantos 26, 27, and 32-34 inclusive. "The Waste Land" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot and Canto 45 by Ezra Pound. **TEST 3 on James, Wharton, Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, and Pound.**

Session 11 - Thursday 18 April. Escapes from sexual repression 1: E. M. Forster. **Student focus**, seminar discussion of the novel and Boccaccio's influence on Forster, group work, and PP. Reading for class: *Decameron*, Intro Day 6; Concl. Day 6; Intro Day 7; E. M. Forster, *A Room with a View*.

**Session 12 – Friday 19 April. Fifteenth session. Viewing of *A Room with a View*.**

**Thursday 25 April is a national holiday – no classes.**

Session 13 -- Thursday 2 May. Escapes from sexual repression 2: D. H. Lawrence. **Student focus**, seminar discussion, group work, and PP. Reading for class: extracts from *Etruscan Places* and *Aaron's Rod* by D. H. Lawrence. (We will read Lawrence's poem "Snake" in class time.)

Session 14 - Thursday 9 May. **COURSE EVALUATIONS.** Joyce, Woolf, and Dante. Reading for class: "The Dead" by James Joyce. Excerpts from *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf (in the course pack). **Student focus**, seminar discussion, and PP. **TEST 4 on Forster, Lawrence, Joyce, and Woolf. TERM PROJECTS ARE DUE ON MONDAY 13 MAY.**

Session 15 - Thursday 16 May. **SHOWING OF TERM PROJECTS.**

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**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

### **Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

Suggested optional co-curricular activities may be announced in class and/or via email during the semester.

### **Your Instructor**

Dorothea Barrett (Ph.D. Cambridge University 1987) has taught at Beijing Normal University (China), Glasgow University (Scotland), and the University of Florence. She is the author of *Vocation and Desire: George Eliot's Heroines* (a feminist analysis of the works of the great nineteenth-century British woman writer). She has edited works by Eliot, Wilde, Forster, Joyce, and others. *Vocation and Desire* was reissued in 2016 as part of Routledge Historical Sources: History of Feminism.\*

\*(<https://www.routledgehistoricalresources.com/feminism/search?action=toggleFacet-NotableFigures-Person/person-notablefigure-601&newSearch>).