



**Italian Literature II - Spring Semester 2020**

Monday, 4:00-5:30 pm

5:45-7:15 pm, Room G2

Prof. Fiammetta Di Lorenzo ([fiammettadil@gmail.com](mailto:fiammettadil@gmail.com))

**Syllabus**

**Main Goals:**

This course is designed as a broad introduction to the Italian literature and culture from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the first part, we will explore the crucial role exerted by literature, and in particular by the novel, in the creation of a collective pact around the idea that not only did a nation called Italy already exist, but that it should also be politically unified. Indeed, it is only in conjunction with the emergence of a national problem that the novel, a genre formerly “prohibited” in the Italian literary tradition, could be rehabilitated and play a fundamental role in the building of a shared understanding of the nation. The analysis of different texts will allow us to recognize conflicting ideas of national communities and thus to retrace the complexity of the Italian Risorgimento. After the unification, we will look at the new nation state through the lens provided by authors such as Verga, Serao, and De Roberto. The unity and the reliability of the self will be put in question, in the aftermath of WWI, by Pirandello and Svevo. The last classes will be devoted to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Through the analysis of texts by Fenoglio, Ortese, Pasolini, Morante, Calvino, and Saviano, we will explore some of the key-moments of the Italian recent history.

**Requirements:**

- Class participation: You are expected to *actively* read all assigned readings before each lesson, and to contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions. While attendance is necessary in order to obtain a good class grade, your presence alone does not constitute participation.
- Each class, a student will be in charge of a secondary reading (TBD with the instructor in the first week of classes): he or she will prepare an introduction highlighting the main points of the text and will be responsible for leading the in-class discussion.



**Final exam:**

The final exam will consist in a written quiz based on the assigned readings and the topics addressed during the classes.

**Texts:**

Peter Brand, Lino Pertile, *The Cambridge History of the Italian Literature*, Cambridge, CUP, 1999.

Alessandro Manzoni, *The Betrothed*, Transl. by B. Pelmann, London: Penguin. 2006

All other readings will be available in digital version.

Schedule

**A New Sensibility: Enlightenment and Romanticism**

Lesson 1. Introduction

Kant, pp. 58-64; Habermas, pp. 43-51; Watt, pp. 134-44;

Lesson 2. The Educated Spectator: Goldoni's Reform

Goldoni, *Pamela*

**The Rise of the Italian Novel**

Lesson 3. Italy as an Imagined Community

Benedict Anderson; Alberto Mario Banti; Manzoni; Cuoco, Excerpts from *The Historical Essay*

Lesson 4. Manzoni's *The Betrothed*

Manzoni, Selected Chapters

Lesson 5. Manzoni's *The Betrothed*

Manzoni Selected Chapters; Calvino, *The Betrothed: The Novel of Ratios and Power*

Lesson 6. Manzoni's *The Betrothed*

Manzoni Selected Chapters; Gramsci on Risorgimento

Lesson 7. An Alternative Model: Ippolito Nievo's *Confessions of an Italian*

Nievo, Excerpts



### The Age of Disillusionment

Lesson 8. Verga, *Libertà*; Gramsci, Selected readings

Lesson 9. De Roberto; Pirandello, *The Old and the Young* (excerpts)

Lesson 10. The Collapse of the Self

Pirandello, *On Humour*; Svevo, excerpts from *Zeno's Conscience*

Lesson 11. Svevo, *Zeno's Conscience*.

### From WWII to the Economic Boom

Lesson 12. Partisan Fenoglio; Primo Levi

Lesson 13. Still the Southern Question

Anna Maria Ortese, Readings from *Neapolitan Chronicles*

Lesson 14. Where Have All the Fireflies Gone?

Readings from Pasolini and Calvino

### 1968 and its Aftermath

Lesson 15. Youth and Women

Selected readings from Elsa Morante, Goliarda Sapienza, and Carla Lonzi

Lesson 16. Sciascia

Selected readings

Lesson 17. After Postmodernism

Saviano's *Gomorra*, selected chapters

Lesson 18. Saviano

Saviano's *Gomorra*, selected chapters