



**Italian Literature I - Fall Semester 2020**

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

**When:**

Monday, 8:30-10 am

Wednesday, 8:30-10 am

**Where:**

On Microsoft Teams. Link to be provided.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed as a broad introduction to the Italian literature and culture from its origins through the early modern age. We will read texts by Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Tasso, and Machiavelli, to name only a few authors whose influence was crucial not only for the Italian letters, but for the definition of the Western culture overall. At the same time, this course will also trace the origins and development of Italian language, from its Latin roots throughout its social and literary evolution in poetry, novels, political and scientific essays. By combining close reading with a larger historical approach, we will explore the fascinating paradox of Italian literature: that is, an apparently national literature which developed in a fragmentary, regional, not-yet-national environment.

**Main Goals:**

By the end of this course students will be able to contextualize the main Italian authors within the European literary tradition, from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern centuries, and they will be able to use key concepts and terms to analyze literary texts.



### 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 professor 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 the oral discussion of 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.

Suggested: Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, English transl.

All other readings will be available in digital version and will be available on Google Classroom. I will provide you with an access code to this platform.

### Schedule

**NB.** other secondary readings will be provided by the begin of classes

Class 1: Introduction: From Latin to Italian

Class 2: The earliest evidence. Poetry

St. Francis, *Song of Creatures*; Brand-Pertile 5-18.



Class 3: The Sicilian School. Selected texts.

Akash Kumar, Introduction to Jacopo da Lentini

Class 4: Dolce Stil Novo

Brand-Pertile 19-27

Class 5: Cavalcanti, Selected poems

Class 6: Dante's Dreams: *Vita nuova*, excerpts

Class 7: Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Introduction. Dante's *Inferno*, cantos 1 & 3

Class 8: *Inferno*, Cantos 5 & 10

Brand-Pertile, "Dante", pp. 39-68

Class 9: *Inferno*, Cantos 26 & 33

Auerbach, excerpts from *Mimesis* (chap. 8, "Farinata")

Class 10: Petrarca, Introduction.

Brand-Pertile 89-103

Class 11: Petrarca's *Canzoniere*. Selected poems

Brand-Pertile 132-143

Class 12: Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Introduction: Florence 1348.

Brand-Pertile 70-88

Class 13: Boccaccio's *Decameron*, selected novellas

Class 14: The Ruler and the Courtier: Machiavelli and Castiglione. Excerpts.

Brand-Pertile 181-192; 203-207

Class 15: Ariosto, Selected cantos



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Brand-Pertile 233-239

Class 16: Ariosto and Tasso, Selected cantos.

Brand-Pertile 240-250

Class 17: Melodrama and Opera. From Metastasio to Lorenzo da Ponte.

Class 18: Final conclusions.

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