

IT 475: MODERN ITALIAN LITERATURE AND CINEMA

Spring 2021, Pennsylvania State University, TR 10:35-11:50 am via Zoom

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Course Description and Learning Objectives:

In IT475, Modern Italian Literature and Film, students will engage with seminal works of Italian film and literature to consider pivotal transformations in Italian culture from post-World War II to contemporary times, to include: the difficult passage from fascism to Republic; the evolution from an agricultural to an industrial society with the "economic miracle" of the Fifties and Sixties and resultant massive internal migration; legislation and societal attitudes regarding divorce, abortion and women's roles; cultural representations of/for the LGBTQT community; politics and human rights issues related to immigration to Italy in the last three decades. Beginning with Neorealist cinema that depicts the economic, political, and societal devastation in post-World War II Italy, students will examine artistic manifestations of the leading cultural revolutions in the Bel Paese up to the current day. Students will address the following questions via an engagement and analysis of representative literary and cinematic works and selected critical texts related to them:

- **What are the consequential political, cultural, and societal revolutions in Italy after the conclusion of World War II to the present day?**
- **How has art (cinema and literature) represented these monumental transformations in Italy and even contributed to them?**
- **What are the key artistic movements in Italy in the last half century. what are their principal characteristics, and who are the prominent voices?**

Through film viewings, readings, and class discussions, students will develop critical analysis skills and advance their ability to discuss and write about cultural, theoretical, and historical aspects of literary and cinematic texts. Students will strengthen their linguistic skills in Italian (reading, writing, speaking, listening, cultural knowledge and competency).

Language: The course will be conducted in Italian.

Prerequisite: Any 300-level IT course

Course text:

L'Amica geniale, Elena Ferrante (2011), Edizioni e/o: available at Penn State bookstore or from www.ibs.it

Course films:

Roma città aperta, Roberto Rossellini (1945) Kanopy: <https://pennstate.kanopy.com/video/rome-open-city>

Sciuscià (1946, Vittorio De Sica): Swank: <https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/psu279437/play/4dbbabcd05e74850?referrer=details>

Mamma Roma, Pier Paolo Pasolini (1962) Kanopy: <https://pennstate.kanopy.com/video/mamma-roma-0>

Divorzio all'italiana, Pietro Germi (1962) Kanopy: <https://pennstate.kanopy.com/video/divorce-italian-style>

Rocco e i suoi fratelli, Luchino Visconti (1960) Alexander Street: <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/watch/rocco-and-his-brothers>

My Brilliant Friend (2018), Prima stagione, Episodio 1: Netflix

Fuocoammare, Gianfranco Rosi (2016): DVD in library or available for rent on Amazon, Google Play, Vudu, Youtube and iTunes.

Io sono Li, Andrea Segre (2011): free on <https://tubitv.com/movies/460217/shun-li-and-the-poet>

Zen sul ghiaccio sottile, Margherita Ferri (2018): watch in class

Chiamami col tuo nome, Luca Guadagnino (2017): available for rent on Vudu, Hulu, Amazon, You Tube for personal use or DVD available by Interlibrary Loan request

Critical Reference Texts: for consultation for course projects and papers

Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present (1983, Peter Bondanella): text available online through library website, HathiTrust

Storia del cinema italiano, vol. 4 *Dal miracolo economico agli anni novanta* (1993, Gian Piero Brunetta): text available online through library website, HathiTrust

Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism (1986, Millicent Marcus): copy placed on course reserve in library

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation and Preparation for Class (20%): Your dedicated, active, and consistent participation is fundamental in this course. You are expected to have all materials thoroughly read/viewed prior to class. You are expected to take notes and come to class with questions, comments, points of interest, and general thoughts about the material every class period. Fruitful discussion during class time is essential to the success of this class, therefore, you should be prepared to comment each period with thoughtful input and dialogue with your classmates. **Excessive absences or tardiness (three or more during the semester), minimal class input**, disruption of class with English, cellphones, etc. will negatively impact your weekly participation grade. Students will be assigned to a “**discussion**

group” which will be assigned a question based on the day’s readings or film at every class meeting; members will have time to collaborate to formulate a response during class and then will take turns in the role of spokesperson to present the group’s analysis to the class. Grade will be based on quality of response (evidence of reading/viewing class materials, evidence of thoughtful engagement with discussion question, quality of presentation to class). **A weekly grade** will be assigned based on quality and quantity of participation in class discussions, including responses provided by discussion groups. Discussion groups will be shuffled at mid-term.

Daily homework (15%): A brief homework assignment related to the day’s reading or film will be posted on Canvas. The deadline is **before the class meeting**. Late responses will be graded at minus 10% for up to each 24 hours late. The lowest homework grade of the semester will be dropped. Responses must be student’s own work. Please see Penn State’s Academic Integrity Policy below.

One in-class presentation of daily film/reading (10%): One student will start the class discussion for the day with a brief (~7-minute) presentation. **Essential elements** of the presentation include: brief biography of author/director/scholar; a summary of the day’s film/text; a 60-second maximum pertinent videoclip(s)/quotation(s) from the day’s work and the student’s explanation and interpretation of its relevance; and three discussion questions for the class which require analysis and reflection, not factual, yes-no responses. A visual presentation (Power Point/Google slides) must accompany the oral one and must be emailed to the professor no later than an hour before class.

“Faccio critico cinematografico” project, Neorealism and beyond (10%): Each student will prepare an 8-10 minute presentation that demonstrates independent investigation of one of the principal artistic (literary, cinematic) movements in post-War Italy. Students will select an additional work not studied in class from the genres of neorealism, *la commedia all’italiana*, *lo spaghetti western*, the cinema of Federico Fellini or Michelangelo Antonioni, or another work to be approved in advance by the professor. Students will provide background information on the director/writer and their opus; a synopsis of the plot of the film or text; a representative film clip or two (up to 90 seconds total) with the student’s analysis/interpretation; and an explanation of how the work represents and/or diverges from its genre. The project may take the form of: a Power Point/Google Slides presentation, a podcast, creation of a website, or journalistic article. The project must include an oral discourse and an accompanying multi-medial presentation with images, film clips, and important quotes from the work. The project will be graded on evidence of additional research beyond the scope of what was discussed in class, demonstrated effort, depth of critical analysis, and the quality of presentation to class.

Quizzes (20%): There will be three quizzes during the semester which will consist of short answer responses to questions on the previous weeks’ readings, film, and class discussions. No quiz grades will be dropped. **Quizzes will be posted on Canvas at 12 noon on Thursday and are due no later than Friday at 5:00 pm**. Each day late (up to 24 hours) will result in a 10% grade reduction. **MISSED QUIZZES WILL BE COUNTED AS A ZERO**. Quizzes are open-book and open-note but **must be your original work, unaided by other students or contacts, websites, or outside sources other than class materials**. Please see the Penn State Faculty Senate Policy 49-20 regarding cheating and plagiarism: <https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/47-00-48-00-and-49-00-grades/#49-20>.

Final course project, “Uno sguardo critico ad un’opera letteraria/cinematografica” (15%):

Each student will prepare a final project on a literary or cinematic work related to a significant cultural movement in Italy from Neorealism to the current day. The selected film or text must be discussed with and approved in advance by the professor and may not include works previously discussed in class. The project may take the form of: an informational website, a podcast, a final critical paper (four-pages minimum, six pages maximum, Times New Roman 12 font, double spaced typed with bibliography), an original documentary, a multi-media presentation, among others. The final project will be graded on evidence of: additional research beyond the scope of what was discussed in class; creativity and demonstrated effort; the student’s analysis of how the work represents transformations in the Italian literary and/or cinematic landscape as well as broader evolutions in Italian culture; engagement with at least one critical essay on the work; and the quality of the presentation (~10 minutes in length) to the class. There will be prior deadlines that will be posted in advance on Canvas to include a meeting with the professor to discuss and approve topic, an annotated bibliography of sources used to complete the project, and a detailed outline of the project (see below for details). The projects will be presented to the class during the last two weeks of the semester.

Conference with professor (5%): Students will schedule a five to ten-minute conference with the professor during the eleventh week of the semester during office hours to discuss and agree on the topic for their final course project. Students will be graded on the amount of time and effort they have put into exploring, thinking about, and solidifying their topic before meeting with professor.

Annotated bibliography and outline (5%): During the thirteenth week of the semester, students will turn in an **annotated bibliography** and a **detailed outline** of their final project. The bibliography must consist of at least three sources beyond those studied in class on the approved final topic and include a brief commentary (a typed 150-word minimum paragraph) on each source, summarizing its content and describing how it will be used in the final project. The **detailed outline** must consist of at least one typed page and include the organization of their final project. Both the outline and annotated bibliography will be graded on completeness, organization, evidence of research and inquiry beyond the class materials, and correct use of Italian language.

GRADING SCALE

A 95-100 A- 90-94.9 B+ 87.7-89.9 B 83.3-87.6 B- 80-83.2 C+ 75-79.9
C 70-74.5 D 60-69.9 F below 60

Per departmental policy, there is no curving or rounding of grades. No extra credit will be awarded.

COVID-19 Statement

We know from existing data that wearing a mask in public can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community (Lyu & Wehby, 2020; CDC, 2020; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020). In accordance with PA Department of Health regulations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Pennsylvania State University has determined that everyone will be required to wear a face mask in university buildings, including classrooms. While ***this course will meet synchronously via Zoom***, if you are in a campus building for any reason, you **MUST** wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose). Masks are provided for students, instructors, and staff, and everyone is expected to wear one.

Students experiencing any illness and especially COVID-19 related symptoms should not attend class in person. Those students are strongly encouraged to contact a health care provider and their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Failure to comply with university policies related to COVID-19 may result in a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Students who believe they should be granted a health or safety exception to this policy should consult with Student Disability Resources about reasonable accommodations and present their accommodation letter to me if an exception is granted.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity - We support active collaboration with classmates, more proficient speakers, and tutors in discussing course materials. You may share notes and ideas with other students and watch films, read texts together; however, **you may not ask tutors, more proficient speakers or classmates to complete your own work (homework, quizzes, course projects and presentations), and you may not use electronic translation programs.** In accordance with *PSU Senate Policy 49-20*, plagiarism, cheating, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor may lead to lowered course grades, a failing in the course, or more severe measures, depending on the gravity of the individual case according to the judgment of the Academic Integrity Committee. Visit <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html> for further information. For other general university policies regarding Academic Code of Conduct, please read <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/student-conduct/code-conduct>.

Technological distractions in class: Cell phones are to be **turned off and stored** before class begins. Use of laptops during class is limited to participation in the course activities. The professor reserves the right to penalize a student's participation grade as well as final grade for continued technological interruptions (texting, surfing the web, browsing social media, etc.). The course is discussion based; therefore, students must be fully engaged, contributing members to the class discussions.

University Policy on Disabilities – Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for modifications or reasonable accommodations in this course, you **must** contact the Office for Disability Services, ODS, located at 116 Boucke Building at 1-814-863-1807 (V/TTY) and provide documentation. **In order to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact ODS and provide documentation.** If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, ODS will

provide a letter identifying appropriate academic adjustments. **Please share this letter and discuss the adjustments with your instructor during the first two weeks of the course.** Please note you must contact ODS and request academic adjustment letters at the beginning of *each* semester. For further information regarding ODS please visit their web site at www.equity.psu.edu/ods.

Counseling and Psychological services - Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. For further information regarding CAPS please visit their web site at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>

Educational Equity/Report Bias - Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. **Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated** and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](#)

PROGRAMMA DEL CORSO: subject to modification

SETTIMANA 1 (dal 19 gennaio): INTRODUZIONE AL CORSO, L'ITALIA DEL DOPOGUERRA

Martedì: Introduzione al corso, presentazioni degli studenti e della prof, spiegazione del programma

Giovedì: *Roma città aperta* (1945, Roberto Rossellini)

SETTIMANA 2 (dal 25 gennaio): IL NEOREALISMO

Martedì: *Sciuscià* (1946, Vittorio De Sica). IN CLASSE: Conversazione su Neorealismo con professori Charles Leavitt (Notre Dame) e Luca Cottini (Villanova): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4N-P84aKV4>

Giovedì: *Mamma Roma* (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini)

Altri capolavori del neorealismo: *L'Osessione* (1943, Luchino Visconti), *Ladri di biciclette* (1948, Vittorio De Sica, Kanopy: <https://pennstate.kanopy.com/video/bicycle-thieves>), *La terra trema* (1948, Luchino Visconti, DVD biblioteca), *Germania Anno Zero* (1948, Roberto Rossellini), *Riso amaro* (1949, Giuseppe De Santis), *Paisà'* (1946, Roberto Rossellini), *Bellissima* (1951, Luchino Visconti), *Miracolo a Milano* (1951, Vittorio De Sica), *Umberto D* (1952, Vittorio De Sica), *Accattone* (1961, Pier Paolo Pasolini), *Gli indifferenti* (1929 romanzo, Alberto Moravia), *Tre operai* (1934, Carlo Benari), *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli* (romanzo 1945, Carlo Levi), *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (1947 romanzo, Italo Calvino), *Se questo è un uomo* (1947 memoir, Primo Levi), *Ragazzi di vita* (1955 romanzo, Pier Paolo Pasolini), *Una vita violenta* (1959 romanzo, Pier Paolo Pasolini).

SETTIMANA 3 (dal 1 febbraio):

Martedì: *PRESENTAZIONI: IL NEOREALISMO*

Giovedì: *Divorzio all'italiana* (1962, Pietro Germi)

QUIZ #1 NEOREALISMO: Scadenza: venerdì alle 05:00 del pomeriggio

SETTIMANA 4 (dall'8 febbraio): *DOPO IL NEOREALISMO: LA COMMEDIA ALL'ITALIANA, LO SPAGHETTI WESTERN, FEDERICO FELLINI E MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI*

Martedì: *NESSUNA LEZIONE "WELLNESS DAY"*

Giovedì: *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, Luchino Visconti (1960) Alexander Street: <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/watch/rocco-and-his-brothers>

Altri film/testi della svolta dopo il neorealismo: *I soliti ignoti* (1958, Mario Monicelli: RAI Play <https://www.raiplay.it/programmi/isolitiignoti>), *I Vitelloni* (1953, Federico Fellini: <https://pennstate.kanopy.com/node/154456>), *La dolce vita* (1960, Federico Fellini, Swank: <https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/psu279437/play/F627D820D766D7E1>), *Il buono, il brutto e il cattivo* (1966, Sergio Leone: Swank: <https://pennstate.kanopy.com/video/bicycle-thieves>), *Un pugno di dollari* (1964, Sergio Leone, ILL), *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (1964, Pier Paolo Pasolini, DVD biblioteca), *L'avventura* (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni, DVD biblioteca), *Il deserto rosso* (1964, Michelangelo Antonioni, DVD biblioteca), *Blow-up* (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni, ILL request), *Il mafioso* (1962, Alberto Lattuada, DVD biblioteca), *Sedotta e abbandonata* (1964, Pietro Germi), *La grande guerra* (1959, Mario Monicelli, DVD biblioteca), *Il gattopardo* (1963, Luchino Visconti, DVD biblioteca), *Tutti a casa* (1960, Luigi Comencini), *La ragazza Carla* (1962, di Elio Pagliarani, (<https://maurimarzano.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/la-ragazza-carla.pdf>))

SETTIMANA 5 (dal 15 febbraio):

Martedì: *PRESENTAZIONI: LA COMMEDIA ITALIANA, LO SPAGHETTI WESTERN, FELLINI, ANTONIONI E COMPAGNIA*

Giovedì: *PRESENTAZIONI: LA COMMEDIA ITALIANA, LO SPAGHETTI WESTERN, FELLINI, ANTONIONI E COMPAGNIA*

QUIZ #2 IL DOPONEOREALISMO: Scadenza: venerdì alle 05:00 del pomeriggio

SETTIMANA 6 (dal 22 febbraio): *UN ROMANZO CONTEMPORANEO AMBIENTATO NEL DOPOGUERRA, "L'AMICA GENIALE" DI ELENA FERRANTE*

Martedì: Introduzione a Elena Ferrante e *L'amica geniale*: Prologo e Infanzia (Capitoli 1-9)

Giovedì: *L'amica geniale*: Infanzia (Capitoli 10-18)

SETTIMANA 7 (dal 1 marzo):

Martedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 1-8)

Giovedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 9-16)

SETTIMANA 8 (dall'8 marzo):

Martedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 18-24)

Giovedì: ***NESSUNA LEZIONE "WELLNESS DAY"***

SETTIMANA 9 (dal 15 marzo):

Martedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 17-24)

Giovedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 25-32)

SETTIMANA 10 (dal 22 marzo):

Martedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 33-40)

Giovedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 41-49)

SETTIMANA 11 (dal 29 marzo): ***CONFERENZA CON LA PROFESSORESSA DURANTE L'ORARIO D'UFFICIO PER DISCUTERE L'ARGOMENTO DEL PROGETTO FINALE***

Martedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 50-56)

Giovedì: *L'amica geniale*: Adolescenza (Capitoli 57-fine), *My Brilliant Friend*, Prima stagione, Episodio 1: Netflix

QUIZ #3 L'AMICA GENIALE: Scadenza: venerdì alle 05:00 del pomeriggio

Altri testi della Ferrante: *L'amore molesto* (1992, anche il film di Mario Martone), *I giorni dell'abbandono* (2002, e il film di Roberto Faenza), *La figlia oscura* (2006), *Storia del nuovo cognome* (2012-, il seguito a *L'amica geniale*), *Storia di chi fugge e chi resta* (2013), *Storia della bambina perduta* (2014), *La vita bugiarda degli adulti* (2019), la serie Netflix su *L'amica geniale*

SETTIMANA 12 (dal 5 aprile): ***L'IMMIGRAZIONE IN ITALIA***

Martedì: *Fuocoammare*, Gianfranco Rosi (2016)

Giovedì: *Io sono Li*, Andrea Segre (2011)

Altri film/testi sull'immigrazione: *Soltanto il mare* (2011, Dagmawi Yimer: ILL), *Terraferma* (2011, Emanuele Crialesi: Kanopy PSU), *Per un figlio* (2017, Suranga Deshapriya Katugampala), *Io sto con la sposa* (2014, Antonio Augugliaro), *Alba gli occhi azzurri* (2012, Claudio Giovannesi), *My name is Adil* (2016, Adil Azzab), *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio* (2006, Amara Lakhous), *Divorzio all'islamica a Viale Marconi* (2010, Amara Lakhous), gli scritti di Igiaba Scego, Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Pap Khouma

SETTIMANA 13 (dal 12 aprile): ***LA COMUNITÀ LGBTQ IN ITALIA***

Martedì: *Zen sul ghiaccio sottile*, Margherita Ferri (2018): VISIONE DEL FILM IN CLASSE

Giovedì: *Chiamami col tuo nome*, Luca Guadagnino (2017)

CONSEGNA DELLA BIBLIOGRAFIA RAGIONATA E LO SCHEMA DEL PROGETTO FINALE, venerdì entro le 05:00 del pomeriggio

Altri film sulla comunità LGBTQT in Italia: *Mine vaganti* (2010, Ferzan Özpetek: <https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/psu279437/play/4dbbabcd05e74850?referrer=details>), *Le fate ignoranti* (2001, Ferzan Özpetek: DVD biblioteca), *Saturno contro* (2007, Ferzan Özpetek), *Fratellanza* (2010, Nicolò Donato), *Io e lei* (2015, Maria Sole Tognazzi: streaming gratis su Tubi https://tubitv.com/movies/549723/me-myself-and-her?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed)

SETTIMANA 14 (dal 19 aprile):

Martedì: Giorno di lavoro/ricerca/consulenza con la professoressa

Giovedì: **PRESENTAZIONI DEI PROGETTI FINALI**

SETTIMANA 15 (dal 26 aprile):

Martedì: **PRESENTAZIONI DEI PROGETTI FINALI**

Giovedì: **PRESENTAZIONI DEI PROGETTI FINALI**