**Introduction to Italian American Culture**

**Italian 131.001**

**Spring 2022, Penn State University**

Dr. Maria Truglio Classes: TR 10:35am-11:50am **203 EEW**

Professor of Italian Office Hours: by appointment

152 Burrowes Building

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

**For Spring 2022:**

Masks are required in the classroom. Students who arrive without a mask will be asked to wear one before entering the classroom. Students who remove their mask during class time will be asked to put it back on or leave. Students who refuse to wear masks appropriately (covering mouth and nose) may face disciplinary action for Code of Conduct violations. If you feel you cannot wear a mask properly during class, please speak with your adviser immediately about your options for altering your schedule.

For Weeks One and Two, in light of the pandemic situation, our class will be held remotely on zoom. We will then convene in person starting January 25. Should we need to meet remotely later in the semester for any reason, we will us the same link unless I notify you otherwise:

https://psu.zoom.us/j/95362040601?pwd=OXA3RkpHNnFTd3MzaGVVaU5lK1pGdz09

Password: 515778

Goals of the Course:

Do programs such as *The Sopranos*, *Jersey Shore* and *Cake Boss* perpetuate negative stereotypes of Italian Americans simply provide entertainment? Are the recently renewed criticisms of Christopher Columbus’s exploits an overdue correction of dangerous myths or an assault on Italian American heritage? What accounts for the strong appeal of mafia movies among Americans? This course will offer students an informed framework within which to consider questions such as these. Between 1870 and 1920 over five million Italians immigrated to the United States. Many returned to Italy, but those who remained, later immigrants, and their descendants left an indelible mark on the American cultural, political, and artistic landscape. Through a study of historical, sociological, literary, and cinematic texts, we will examine together such topics as:

the conditions in Italy that generated this emigration, daily life in the ethnic neighborhoods, the roles of labor conditions, radical politics, and Catholicism in the lives of Italian Americans, forms and consequences of discrimination, from lynching to media stereotypes, the intersections of gender and ethnicity over time, and the ways in which Italian American identity has been represented in American culture, both as profoundly “other” and as emblematically “American.”

Course is conducted in English. No prerequisites

Required Texts:

1. Mangione, Jerre & Ben Morreale. *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian-American Experience*. <https://psu.bncollege.com/shop/psu/page/find-textbooks>

2. Di Donato, Pietro. *Christ in Concrete*.

<https://psu.bncollege.com/shop/psu/page/find-textbooks>

# 3*. Course Packet* available at the Student Book Store on College Ave. or from thestudentbookstore.com

# Course films (to be viewed outside of class time as homework)

# *The Godfather* 1972 (2 hours 57 minutes)

# *Big Night* 1996 (1 hour 49 minutes) Pattee Library PN1997.B52 2001 DVD

# *Sacco and Vanzetti* 2006 (1 hour 34 minutes)

# *The Godfather* and *Sacco and Vanzetti* can be streamed from the link on Canvas through PSU. *Big Night* can be accessed either by watching the DVD on reserve in Pattee Library or via your own streaming services.

Assignments:

1. **Quizzes.** Five quizzes will assess your understanding of the readings, lectures, and films. The lowest grade will be dropped. A missed quiz will be considered the lowest grade. Quizzes will be conducted in class with open book and notes. Sharing of answers or other forms of collaboration are a violation of academic integrity for which appropriate measures will be taken. 30%

2. **Class archive project**. Each student will contribute to the “class archive” of sources. Guidelines on Canvas. Due Feb. 25. 10%

3. **Writing project** on *Christ in Concrete*. Guidelines on Canvas. Due April 11. 10%

4. **Image analysis** Guidelines on Canvas. Due Feb. 11. 10%

5. **Kick-off questions.** Each student will be responsible once during the semester to elicit the day’s conversation by providing some initial reactions and observations of their own about the readings and then offering a question or prompt for the class. 10%

6. **Group Project**. In groups of three, you will choose an example of the representation of Italian Americans in contemporary American popular media (film, TV, video games) and prepare a twenty-minute class presentation that analyzes critically your chosen text. A written bibliography must be submitted. Guidelines on Canvas. 15%

7. **Final Paper.** Students will submit a two-page paper that develops the themes and questions of the course. Guidelines on Canvas. 15%

Grade Scale:

A = 100-95 B+ = 89.9-87 C+ = 79.9-75

A- = 94.9-90 B = 86.9-83 C = 74.9-70

B- = 82.9-80 D = 69.9-60

Class Attendance: Please consult Faculty Senate Policy 42-27- Class Attendance for the University policy.

Because this is a course in the Humanities that emphasizes critical engagement with the material and the exchange of ideas, you are urged to attend all class sessions.

If you are unable to attend a class due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g. religious observation, illness) you should take these steps as soon as you are able:

-review the syllabus and the canvas site to confirm what was covered

-read the assigned material and complete and submit any written work missed.

-view the recorded zoom session for the class you missed

-contact me if you have questions about the material

Academic integrity: Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. Italian 131 encourages discussion of course material both in and out of the classroom. However, work submitted for a grade must result from the student’s individual effort or, in the case of group projects, from the work of the group members.

-All sources consulted for papers and projects, whether in print or electronic, must be properly cited. Failure to cite sources is a violation

-Requests for missing class or an evaluative event due to reasons based on false claims is a violation.

**Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course.** Students responsible for academic misconduct often receive academic sanctions, which can be severe, and put themselves at jeopardy for disciplinary sanctions assigned by the University’s Office of Student Conduct (see Senate Policy G-9). Students with questions about academic integrity should visit http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students/education/academic-integrity

Provisional Calendar:

\*\*Students are required to check regularly the course website on Canvas for updates and announcements.\*\* CP= course packet- readings are listed by author’s last name.

Week One: Italy and America: First Encounters

T Jan 11: Introduction to the course

R Jan 13: Italian Explorers and other first encounters: *La Storia,* Ch. 1 & 2

Week Two: Italian Unification and its Effects in the South

T Jan 18: *La Storia* Ch. 3

F Jan 20: *La Storia* Ch. 5

Week Three: The “Golden Door”

T Jan 25: **Quiz 1.** *La Storia* Ch. 6

R Jan 27: *La Storia* Ch. 7

Week Four: Life in the Urban “Enclaves”

T Feb 1: *La Storia* Ch. 8

R Feb 3: *La Storia* Ch. 9; Jacob Riis’s photography (in class)

Week Five: Patron Saints: Spirituality and Religion

T Feb 8: *La Storia* Ch. 4 pp. 41-45; Ch. 11 pp. 169-174; Ch. 19 pp. 325-335

R Feb 10: Ferraiuolo CP

**F Feb 11: Image analysis due**

Week Six: Labor and the Left

T Feb 15: **Quiz 2**. *La Storia* Ch. 16

R Feb 17: Zappia CP

Week Seven: Sacco and Vanzetti: martyrs or murderers?

T Feb 22: *La Storia* Ch. 17; Miller documentary.

R Feb 24: *La Storia* Ch. 18 pp. 315-322; Ch. 19 pp. 340-342.

**F Feb 25: Archive project due**

Week Eight: Italians “becoming white” and the role of World War II

T Mar 1: Mormino CP

R Mar 3: **Quiz 3.** *Work on group presentations*

**March 6-12: Spring Break**

Week Nine:

T Mar 15: Presentations

R Mar 17: Presentations

Week Ten:

T Mar 22: Presentations

R Mar 24: Presentations

Week Eleven: Crises of faith: the testimony of Pietro di Donato

T Mar 29: *Christ in Concrete* to page 79

R Mar 31: *Christ in Concrete* to page 154

Week Twelve: The neighborhood

T Apr 5: *Christ in Concrete* to end

R Apr 7: **Quiz 4.** Marianna De Marco Torgovnick (Canvas)

Week Thirteen: Mothers, Daughters, and la Nonna

**M Apr. 11 *Christ in Concrete* project due**

T Apr 12: Diane di Prima (Canvas); Edvige Giunta (Canvas)

R Apr 14: Louise De Salvo CP; Kym Ragusa (Canvas)

Week Fourteen: “I believe in America”

T Apr 19: *The Godfather;* Tamburri CP*;*

R Apr 21: *The Godfather;* Russo CP

Week Fifteen: *Mangiamo*! Food and foodways

T Apr 26: *Big Night*; Magliocco CP

R Apr 28: **Quiz 5**

**Wednesday May 4 at noon on canvas: Final Papers due**

Student Disability Resources: Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator). For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources website http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines (http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. **Please share this letter with me and discuss the accommodations as early as possible**. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Educational Equity: Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the University’s Report Bias webpage: http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias

Counseling: 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. 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.

* Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park  (CAPS)  
  (http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/): 814-863-0395
* Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400  
  Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Zoom recordings: Video and audio recordings of class lectures will be part of the classroom activity.  The video and audio recording is used for educational use/purposes and may be made available to all students presently enrolled in the class. For purposes where the recordings will be used in future class session/lectures, any type of identifying information will be adequately removed.

--Because of this practice, please do not use the minutes before or after class to discuss private matters with me (disability accommodations, absences). Instead please request a private appointment to discuss these or any other issues.