

LT 353
COMIC ITALIAN THEATER
Fondazione IES Abroad Italy: Rome

DESCRIPTION: The course offers a survey of the Italian theatre tradition, alternating between the long-established and traditionally 'popular' forms (*commedia dell'arte*, the Sicilian puppet theatre or *opera dei pupi*, political satire, narrative theatre and so on) and an analysis of contemporary comic language. The survey will be conducted also on the basis of performances being given in the most important theatres of Rome. At the end of the course, the student will be able to 'read the theatre': that is, to look at, analyse and criticise a theatrical performance within its historical-cultural context and its staging.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 36 (60 minutes each)

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: Italian

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: Lectures, movies, projection of iconography and sound/visual material, field study.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT: Attendance and participation (20%), term paper (30%), midterm exam (20%), final oral exam (30%).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By the end of the course, students are able to:

- Identify themes and protagonist of Italian theatre
- Analyse a theatrical play and performance
- Understand the strategies of Italian Comic theatre

CONTENT:

WEEK 1: The "Teatro all'italiana" and its instruments

- ♦ Introduction to the study and analysis of theatre and performance
 - ♦ The signs of the theatre: space, light, actor, word, scenography, costumes...
- (Various materials from videos – Camilleri, extracts; Alberioni e Pagliericci, extracts; Schino, extracts)

WEEK 2: The Rome theatres

- ♦ Rome and its theatres: the question of space
- (Camilleri, extracts; Alberioni e Pagliericci, extracts; Field Study Teatro Valle Occupato)

WEEK 3: Why do we laugh? What do we laugh at? The aesthetics of laugh in Italian culture

- ♦ History of the comic in Italian culture
 - ♦ The language of the comedian: plots, masks, characters, objects, music, dialects, *grammelot*, etc.
- (Camilleri, extracts; Pirandello, extracts)

WEEK 4: Understanding theatre

- ♦ Written text analysis (genre, rhetoric and vocabulary, social and psychological context, historical context, etc.)
- ♦ Performance analysis (direction, actors, lights, proxemics, etc.)

WEEK 5 The tradition of *Commedia dell'Arte*

- ♦ stock characters, scenarios, improvisation, *lazzi*, *grammelots*
 - ♦ actress, troupes
- (E. Scola – Il viaggio del Capitan Fracassa, movie; Schino, extracts)

WEEK 6 MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 7: The art of body's motion

- ♦ actors, puppets, marionettes and the Sicilian *pupi*
- ♦ Maria Signorelli's puppets

(Camilleri extracts; Scaparro -video-, Pasolini -movie-; Field study: Coll. Signorelli)

WEEK 8: Theatre and Literature: boundaries and contaminations

- ♦ Dario Fo and the Nobel Prize
 - ♦ *Coppia aperta quasi spaventata*: play's analysis
- (Fo - Nobel Lecture extracts; Mistero Buffo, Fo, video)

WEEK 9: Actor's dramaturgy

- ♦ Totò: the face and the mask
- ♦ Roberto Benigni: body language and *grammelot*

(Totò, L'Imperatore di Capri, movie; extracts from Jim Jarmusch, Down by law, movie)

WEEK 10: The European success of *Commedia dell'Arte*

- ♦ Carlo Goldoni and the reform of comic theatre
- ♦ Harlequin in contemporary literature, drama and film

(Camilleri, extracts; G. Strelher/Goldoni -Il servitore di due padroni, video)

WEEK 11: Writing for the theatre

- The creation of an Italian Style Mask
- (field study: Teatro Argentina)

WEEK 12: FINAL ORAL EXAM

The course includes 4 visits to the theatre. Attendance at performances is mandatory and is considered an integral part of the course.
The schedule of the performances will be given at the beginning of the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is mandatory for all IES classes, including field studies. If a student misses more than two classes, 2 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical emergencies or family emergencies.

REQUIRED READING:

Reader Contents:

1. "Le Parole Raccontate (Excerpt)." In *Le Parole Raccontate*, 1ed, by Camilleri, Andrea. pp. 9-153. Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, RCS Media Group, 2001. (145 pages);
2. "Lo Spettacolo Pietrificato." In *Profilo del Teatro Italiano*, by Schino, Mirella. pp. 43-50. Carocci Editore S.p.A. 2006. (8 pages);
3. "La Commedia dell'Arte." In *Storia del Teatro*, by Molinari, Cesare. pp. 103-112. Gius. Laterza & Figli SpA, 2009. (10 pages);

4. "Le Resurrezione di Lazzaro." In *Mistero Buffo*, by Fo, Dario. pp. 96-105. Giulio Einaudi, 1998. (10 pages);
5. "Contra Jogulatores Obloquentes". Nobel Lecture, 1997 (6 pages www.nobelprize.org);
6. "Lo Spettacolo" in *Teatro da riscoprire. Uno spazio per la creatività e la relazione*, by Alberioni e Pagliericci, Milano, Edizioni Paoline, 1998.

A further reading list (plays, a selection of reviews of performances, articles etc.) will be given at the beginning of the course.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Fano, Nicola. Le maschere italiane. Milano: Il Mulino, 2001.
- Buscarino, Maurizio. Dei pupi. Milano: Electa, 2003.
- Bachtin, Michail. Introduzione a L'opera di Rabelais e la cultura popolare. Torino: Einaudi, 2001. pp. 3-68.
- Fo, Dario. Contra Jogulatores Obloquentes (Nobel Lecture 1997) (published in www.nobelprize.org)
- Fo, Dario. Manuale Minimo dell'attore. Torino: Einaudi, 1996.
- Matarazzo, Silvana. Teatri a Roma tra storia e contemporaneità. Roma: Intra Moena, 2004.
- Molinari, Cesare. L'attore e la recitazione. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993.
- Schino, Mirella. Profilo del teatro italiano dal XV al XX secolo. Roma: Carocci, 2002.
- Lecoq, Jacques. Il corpo poetico. Milano: Ubulibri, 2000.
- Pirandello, Luigi. L'umorismo. Milano: Mondadori, 2000.
- Mango, Lorenzo. La scrittura scenica. Roma: Bulzoni, 2003.

Movies and Videos used during the course:

- Bene, Carmelo. Pinocchio, Sassella editore (Audio).
- Comencini, Luigi. L'imperatore di Capri, (with Totò) Cristaldi Film.
- Fo, Dario. Mistero Buffo, Einaudi stile libero/Video.
- Pasolini Pier Paolo. Che cosa sono le nuvole, (with Totò) Filmauro Video.
- Poli, Giovanni. Aspects of the Commedia dell'Arte (documentary).
- Scola, Ettore. Il viaggio di Capitan Fracassa, Cecchi Gori Home Video.
- Strehler, Giorgio. Arlecchino servitore di due padroni, Einaudi Stile libero/Video.
- Scaparro, Maurizio. Don Chisciotte, Istituto Luce/Video.