



HS 330 NEVER GIVE IN! FASCISM, ANTI-SEMITISM, AND RESISTANCE IN ITALY, 1922-1948

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

This class introduces students to two topics: 1) the general history of Italy in the first half of the Twentieth century and specifically the Fascist era, culminating in the disastrous participation to the Second world war, the political and military defeat and the German occupation of Italy; 2) the topic of the Righteous among the Nations, in which some Italian people played a significant role, while protecting Jews from deportations and genocide by the Nazis and contributing to the birth of a new national identity, based on moral commitment and praise for democratic institutions as the ones shaped by the Republican Constitution of 1948. The city of Milan played in this set of historical events a very significant role, hosting both the birth of Fascism (in part linked with Futurism as an intellectual movement) and, later, numerous acts of resistance during the Nazi military occupation of Italy and the Italian Social Republic (1943-45).

The first part of the course will be based on Martin Blinkhorn's guide to Mussolini and Fascist Italy and on a classical work by Federico Chabod (*A History of Italian Fascism*, 1950), whose liberal interpretation of modern Italian history was very influential after World War II and shaped conventional political narratives about Fascism in Italy and the rise of the Resistance. At the same time, Chabod's traditional view will be challenged by recent historical approaches that shed light on controversial topics excluded from his narrative (i.e., the Resistance as a 'civil war'). Key issues will be the line of events that enabled Mussolini to take power, the Fascist ideology (whose core was nationalism) as well as the roots of anti-Semitism in Europe and more specifically in the Italian context. Specific attention will be dedicated to Futurism, which played a non-secondary role in shaping Fascism.

In the second part of the course major emphasis will be placed on the persecution and rescue of the Jews. In this regard, Italy represents a unique case with respect to the rest of Europe: about 65% of Jews in Italy survived the war. To understand this fact, it is necessary to explore the category of 'moral resistance' and situate it in relation to the traditional categories of 'political' and 'military resistance.'

The course-related trips are fundamental to the course, which visits the Museo del Novecento (a worldwide recognized exhibit of Futurist's works) and the Shoah Memorial of Milan. Interested students will have, asking the instructor, the possibility to visit the CDEC (Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center – [link](#)) and its library to deepen topics related to the course. The course will be taught in a 'seminar' style.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: Basic information about modern European history

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

To actively engage students with the course material, instruction will employ a variety of teaching methodologies designed to address diverse learning styles and foster a broad range of skills. These methods will include lectures, guided and commented readings, class discussions, group work, student in-class presentations, course-related field trips, film screenings, and guest lectures. All assignments and PowerPoint presentations will be made available on the course Moodle page.



REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation – 20%
- Homework – 20%
- Midterm Exam – 20%
- In-class Oral Presentation of Research Project – 20%
- Final Paper – 20%

Course Participation

Class participation will be evaluated according to the interaction of each student with their classmates and with the instructor during the sessions of discussion.

Homework

The grade of the home assignments will be based on the accomplishments of the requirements (deadlines, readings, research).

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be based on: 1) a chronological table, where dates should be associated with their proper corresponding historical events; 2) multiple-choice questions; 3) essay questions. The exam aims to determine if students can use material causes and human motivations to explain historical events.

In-class Oral Presentation of Research Project

The grade for the in-class oral presentations of research works will be based on the clarity and force of the communication, the number and quality of the sources, the interaction with the instructor and the local environment (if involved) and the compliance with deadlines.

Final Paper

The grade for the final home papers will be based on the correctness and the clarity of the written work and on the completeness of information. The final paper will be focused on the course-related trip to the Shoah Memorial of Milan.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will gain a critical understanding of the historical issues of the period and develop their critical thinking and moral reasoning. We will focus on case studies to involve the students emotionally and encourage them to use their imagination to identify themselves not only with the victims but also with those who risked their lives to help them. During the class everybody will be required to ask herself or himself: “what would I do in those same circumstances?” As the knowledge about the Italian rescuers of the Jews is still largely incomplete, students will be encouraged to do research on it, in connection with the Garden of the Righteous in the World.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, the IES Abroad Milan attendance policy allows for the following number of absences, which are intended to be used for physical and mental health reasons:

- THREE (3) absences in each Italian language course,
- TWO (2) absences in each Area Studies course,
- ONE (1) absence in each seminar course or course meeting 1 day a week,
- ZERO (0) absences in each course of individual music instruction.

Every absence beyond this allowance will automatically result in a penalty of 2 percentage points off the final grade. SEVEN (7) absences will result in a failing grade in Italian language and Area Studies courses. FOUR (4) absences will result in a failing grade in seminars or 1-day-a-week courses. Failure to attend a scheduled exam, test, quiz, or presentation will automatically result in an F grade on that assessment.



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to abide by the **IES Abroad Code of Academic Integrity**. All work submitted by a student for academic credit should constitute the student's own original work. Any work submitted for academic credit may be subject to review by a textual similarity detection service for the detection of plagiarism and AI usage.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1 <i>Session 1</i> Monday, September 21 st	Premises: 1. Liberal Italy, 1861-1915 2. The Seedbed of Fascism	Blinkhorn (pp. 1-18)
<i>Session 2</i> Wednesday, September 23 rd	Futurism as an intellectual movement	- Oestreicher - Joll (pp. 133-143)
Week 2 <i>Session 1</i> Monday, September 28 th	Futurism as a cultural and artistic movement	Joll (pp. 144-184)
<i>Session 2</i> Wednesday, September 30 th	Economy, Society and Politics in Italy after the First World War	Chabod (pp. 15-43)
Week 3 <i>Session 1</i> Monday, October 5 th	Fascism: Rise and Seizure of Power (1919-25)	- Blinkhorn (pp. 19-25) - Chabod (pp. 47-69)
<i>Session 2</i> Wednesday, October 7 th	Fascist Italy: Dictatorship, Totalitarianism, and Imperialism (1925-36)	- Blinkhorn (pp. 26-44) - Chabod (pp. 69-84)
Week 4 <i>Session 1</i> Monday, October 12 th	Italy 1936-1943: 1. Anti-Fascism 2. The Decline and Fall of the Régime	- Blinkhorn (pp. 47-53) - Chabod (pp. 87-117) - Vivarelli

Session 2 Wednesday, October 14 th	Course related trip: Milan – Museo del Novecento	• Museo del Novecento • Futurism
Week 5 Session 1 Monday, October 19 th	Fascism as political religion The Italian Jews The Racial Laws in Italy	• E. Gentile, <i>Fascism as Political Religion</i> <i>Compelling:</i> • A. Stille, <i>The Double Bind of Italian Jews: Acceptance and Assimilation</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 19-34) <i>Suggested:</i> • M. Toscano, <i>Italian Jewish Identity from the Risorgimento to Fascism</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 35-54) • A. Canepa, <i>Christian-Jewish Relations in Italy from Unification to Fascism</i> (Herzer, pp. 13-33) • K. Voigt, <i>Jewish Refugees and Immigrants in Italy, 1933-1945</i> (Herzer, pp. 141-158) <i>Compelling:</i> • A. Cavaglion, <i>The Legacy of the Risorgimento: Jewish Participation in Anti-Fascism and the Resistance</i> (Herzer, pp. 73-94) <i>Suggested:</i> • Gillette (pp. 35-49) • M. Sarfatti, <i>Characteristics and Objectives of the Anti-Jewish Racial Laws in Fascist Italy</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 71-80) • I. Nidam-Orvieto, <i>The Impact of Anti-Jewish Legislation on Everyday Life and the Response of Italian Jews, 1938-1943</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 158-181)
Session 2 Wednesday, October 21 st	The Rise of Racial Persecution	<i>Suggested:</i> • A. Capristo, <i>The Exclusion of Jews from Italian Academics</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 81-95) • R. Finzi, <i>The Damage to Italian Culture: The Fate of Jewish University Professors in Fascist Italy and After, 1938-1946</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 96-113) • F. Levi, <i>Anti-Jewish Persecution and Italian Society</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 199-208)
Week 6 Session 1 Monday, October 26 th	Midterm Exam	• Study for the Midterm Exam

Session 2 Wednesday, October 28 th	Movie: <i>Schindler's List</i> , by S. Spielberg (1993) – First part	
Week 7 Session 1 Monday, November 2 nd	Movie: <i>Schindler's List</i> , by S. Spielberg (1993) – Second part	
Session 2 Wednesday, November 4 th	The Shoah in Europe & Italy I	• Marrus & Paxton • P. Bookbinder, <i>Italy in the Overall Context of the Holocaust</i> (Herzer, pp. 95-108) • F.J. Coppa, <i>The Papal Response to Nazi and Fascist Anti-Semitism: From Pius XI to Pius XII</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 265-286)
Week 8 Session 1 Monday, November 9 th	The Shoah in Europe & Italy II	• Stille (pp. 17-90) • L. Picciotto Fargion, <i>The Jews During the German Occupation and the Italian Social Republic</i> (Herzer, pp. 109-138)
Session 2 Wednesday, November 11 th	Guest Lecture: <i>The Righteous Among the Nations. An Introduction</i> (Prof. Maria Peri)	• Stille (pp. 279-314)
Week 9 Session 1 Monday, November 16 th	Guest Lecture: <i>Resisting Radical Evil: The Righteous Among the Nations</i> (Prof. Sante Maletta)	• Paldiel • Stille (pp. 91-166) • <u>Yad Vashem</u>
Session 2 Wednesday, November 18 th	Benevolence & Betrayal	• Stille (pp. 167-222)
Week 10 Session 1 Monday, November 23 rd	The Persecution and the rescue of the Jews in Europe and Italy	• L. Picciotto, <i>The Shoah in Italy: Its History and Characteristics</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 209-223) • S. Zuccotti, <i>Pius XII and the Rescue of Jews in Italy: Evidence of a Papal Directive</i> (Zimmerman, pp. 287-307)
Session 2 Wednesday, November 25 th 3:00-4:00 PM	Course related trip: Memoriale della Shoah di Milano (The Shoah Memorial of Milan)	• Stille (pp. 223-278)
Week 11 Session 1 Monday, November 30 th	Student Presentations	

Session 2 Wednesday, December 2 nd	Student Presentations	
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COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Museo del Novecento, Milan ([link](#))
- The Shoah Memorial of Milan ([link](#))

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Blinkhorn, Martin. *Mussolini and Fascist Italy*, London: Routledge, 2006.
- Chabod, Federico. *A History of Italian Fascism*, Bath: Chivers, 1974.
- J. Joll, F. T. Marinetti. *Futurism and Fascism*, in *Three Intellectuals in Politics (Rathenau, Blum, Marinetti)*, New York, 1960, pp. 133-184; 193-197
- Oestreicher, Emil. *Fascism and the Intellectuals: The Case of Italian Futurism*, Social Research, 1974, 41, 3, pp. 515-533
- Gentile, Emilio. "Fascism as a Political Religion", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, No. 2/3 (May-Jun., 1990), pp. 229-251.
- Vivarelli, Roberto. "Winners and Losers in Italy at the End of the Second World War", *October*, 2009, Spring (n. 128), pp. 6-22
- Marrus, Michael R. & Paxton, Robert O. "The Nazis and the Jews in Occupied Western Europe, 1940-1944", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Dec., 1982), pp. 687-714.
- Paldiel, Mordechai. "To the Righteous among the Nations Who Risked Their Lives to Rescue Jews", *Yad Vashem Studies*, XIX, pp. 403-425.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, London: Faber & Faber, 1963.
- Gillette, Aaron. *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, London: Routledge, 2002.
- Herzer, Ivo (ed.). *The Italian Refuge. Rescue of Jews During the Holocaust*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989 (just the articles listed above in the assignments).
- Zimmerman, Joshua D. (ed.). *Jews in Italy Under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1922-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 (just the articles listed above in the assignments).
- Stille, Alexander. *Benevolence & Betrayal. Five Italian Jewish Families Under Fascism*, New York: Summit Books 1991 ([link](#)).
- Greenberg, Udi. "Intellectual History and the Fascism Debate: On Analogies and Polemic", *Modern Intellectual History*, 2023, 20, 2, pp. 571-581.
- Bowler, Anne. "Italian Futurism and Fascism", *Theory and Society*, 1991, 20, 6, pp. 763-794.