



LT 311B LITERATURE AND THE CITY

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

This course will expose students to a selection of Italian literary classics of the late-19th and 20th centuries, with specific focus on the relationships they have with Milan and urban space in general. We begin with Alessandro Manzoni's masterpiece, *I promessi sposi*, which is partially set in Milan; we will trace the protagonist's wanderings through the city, and visit the places where Manzoni lived and worked. We then watch the transformation of Milan into a modern European city through a reading of Luigi Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, and experimental poems. Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* next leads us to explore the city during World War II, including Milanese sites that played dramatic roles in this historical moment, such as the railway track from which Jews were sent to German concentration camps. The course concludes with Italo Calvino's *Le città invisibili* and his visionary postmodern images of cities.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: Italian. This course is conducted in Italian. The required readings are in Italian. Critical works are both in Italian and English.

PREREQUISITES: The course is conducted in Italian, so a good knowledge of the Italian language is necessary. No previous Italian literature background is necessary.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The course will alternate class discussions, field studies, students' presentations. Great emphasis will be given to the active participation of the student.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation – 25%
- Midterm Exam – 25%
- Final Exam – 25%
- Assignments – 25%

Course Participation

Each student will be asked to write two assignments based on their response to the readings and the course-related trips, which will be discussed in class. Students will have to deliver regular presentations on the readings to the class. Attendance is mandatory.

Assignments

Punctual reading of assigned material is mandatory

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The course is based on the awareness that literature is not an abstract pursuit, but something, which happens in the real world. It also emphasizes making literature as well as studying it: the students will have the opportunity to extend their awareness of literature through their own writing. By reading and walking through Milan, students will gain insights into methods of narration, and will learn to integrate various techniques into their own analyses of the texts. They will also develop an understanding of the major issues of modern Italian literature, such as the development of the language, Modernism, Neorealism, and Postmodernism. They will learn to master a scholarly Italian.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend classes each day, including course-related excursions. IES Abroad Milan allows a maximum of two excused absences per semester. Each further absence will automatically result in a penalty of two points off (2/100) on the final grade. Seven absences per course (including the two excused absences) will result in a failing

grade for that course. Furthermore, absence on the date of scheduled tests, presentations or quizzes does not entitle you to recover/reschedule such tests. Failure to attend your midterm and/or final exam will result in an F grade on that paper/exam.

It is your responsibility to manage your absences during the term. If you are sick, you will need to apply your absence to the two excused absences allowed for the term. If you use up your two excused absences for personal travel and then are sick at the end of the semester, those sick days will not be excused. Please plan wisely!

CONTENT: The course will develop as a series of lessons on an author, complemented by one, or more, course-related trips in Milan.

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1 <i>Session 1</i>	Introduzione al corso. 1. Introduzione ai Promessi sposi (PS) di Manzoni	
<i>Session 2</i>	Manzoni e la lingua italiana 1. (PS) Introduzione dell'autore	
Week 2 <i>Session 1</i>	(PS) I personaggi, cap. 1 e 2	
<i>Session 2</i>	Renzo arriva a Milano 1. (PS) cap. 11 e 12	
Week 3 <i>Session 1</i>	Course-Related Trip 1. Il lazaretto, sulle orme di Renzo 2. La pese, (PS) cap. 34	
<i>Session 2</i>	Course-Related Trip 1. La Milano di Renzo e di Manzoni al Museo di Milano 2. La monaca di Monza, (PS) cap. 9-10	
Week 4 <i>Session 1</i>	Il lieto fine, (PS) ultimi capitoli	
<i>Session 2</i>	Chi era Manzoni? 1. Course-Related Trip: Alla casa di Manzoni	
Week 5 <i>Session 1</i>	Revisione Generale	

Session 2	Midterm Exam	
Week 6 Session 1	Il modernismo e Pirandello	
Session 2	Pirandello 1. Atto 1 and a selection of poems by various poets	
Week 7 Session 1	Pirandello 1. Atto 2	
Session 2	Course-Related Trip 1. Al Cimitero monumentale, “Da Pirandello alla Seconda Guerra mondiale”	
Week 8 Session 1	Se questo è un uomo 1. Cap. 1-6	
Session 2	Se questo è un uomo 1. Cap. 6-12	
Week 9 Session 1	Se questo è un uomo 1. Cap. 13-fine	
Session 2	Course-Related Trip 1. “Ascesa e caduta di un impero,” visita alla Stazione centrale e al Memoriale della Shoah	
Week 10 Session 1	Conclusioni su Primo Levi	
Session 2	Calvino e Milano 1. “Troppo ricca,” an episode of De Sica’s film <i>Ieri, oggi e domani</i>	

Week 11 Session 1	Conclusioni	
Session 2	Final Exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Il lazaretto, sulle orme di Renzo
- La Milano di Renzo e di Manzoni al Museo di Milano
- Al Cimitero monumentale, “Da Pirandello alla Seconda Guerra mondiale
- “Ascesa e caduta di un impero,” visita alla Stazione centrale e al Memoriale della Shoah

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Alessandro Manzoni. *I promessi sposi* (1840). Milano, BUR
- Luigi Pirandello. *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (1921). Milano, Mondadori
- Primo Levi. *Se questo è un uomo* (1947). Torino, Einaudi
- Italo Calvino. *Le città invisibili* (1972). Torino, Einaudi
- Herman W. Haller. “Lombardy”, in *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1999, pp. 114-180
- Richard Lehan. “The City and the Text”, in *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 3-12
- A course-pack with a selection of poems.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

ENGLISH:

- E.H. Wilkins. *A History of Italian Literature*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1974
- Gregory Lucente. *Beautiful Fables. Self Consciousness in Italian Literature from Manzoni to Calvino*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986
- Herman W. Haller. *The Hidden Italy: Bilingual Edition of Italian Dialect Poetry*. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1986
- Lucia Re. *Calvino and the Age of Neorealism: Fables of Estrangement*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1990
- Herman W. Haller. *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1999
- Richard Lehan. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998
- Ruth Ben-Ghiat. *Italian Fascism: History, Memory, and Representation*. New York, St.Martin’s Press, 1999
- Edward J. Ahearn. *Urban Confrontations in Literature and Social Science, 1848-2001*. Burlington, VT, Ashgate Publishing, 2010.

ITALIANO:

- Alberto Asor Rosa. *Storia europea della letteratura italiana. Vol. 3: La letteratura della Nazione*. Torino, Einaudi, 2009
- Alberto Asor Rosa, ed. *Dizionario delle opere della letteratura italiana. A-L*. Torino, Einaudi, 2006
- Alberto Asor Rosa, ed. *Dizionario delle opere della letteratura italiana. M-Z*. Torino, Einaudi, 2006
- Franco Moretti, ed. *Il romanzo III. Storia e geografia*. Torino, Einaudi, 2002
- Carlo Dionisotti. *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana*. Torino, Einaudi, 1999

On Alessandro Manzoni:

- Natalia Ginzburg. *La famiglia Manzoni*. Torino, Einaudi, 205



On Italo Calvino:

- Italo Calvino. "Presentazione", in *Le città invisibili*. Torino, Einaudi, 2002, pp. V-XI.
- Carolyn Springer. "Textual Geography", in *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 15, No.4 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 289-290
- Alessia Ricciardi. "Lightness and Gravity: Calvino, Pynchon and Postmodernity", in *MLN*, Vol. 114, No. 5 (December 1999), pp. 1062-1077
- Barbara Spackman. "Calvino's Non-Knowledge", in *Romance Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (January 2008), pp. 7-19

On Primo Levi:

- Valerio Ferme. "Translating the Babel of Horror: Primo Levi's Catharsis through Language in the Holocaust Memoir *Se questo è un uomo*", in *Italica*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Spring, 2001), pp. 53-73.
- Ernesto Ferrero, ed. *Primo Levi: un'antologia della critica*. Torino, Einaudi, 1997

On Elio Vittorini:

Ruth Ben-Ghiat. "Fascism, Writing, and Memory: The Realist Aesthetic in Italy, 1930-1950", in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Sept., 1995), pp. 627-665.

FILMOGRAPHY:

- *Leri, oggi e domani*, by De Sica's