Course Description

This course aims to explore the idea of national identity and how literary works, as well as language, can contribute to the birth of this identity in various ways. Specifically, we will examine the long process which led to the formation of a united Italian nation, touching on the political and sociological unity and divide of a country that - after the fall of the Roman Empire - remained fragmented and subdued for centuries. Key authors of Italian literature will guide us through the complex process of nation configuration through different ages.

We will discuss how Medieval writers, such as Dante Alighieri, Petrarca, and Machiavelli, helped shaping the idea of a motherland. We will learn about the creation of a common Italian language through the collective efforts of writers and scholars. We will examine how literature narrated the historical moment of Italian political unification (Risorgimento), fueled nationalist feelings during the two World Wars, and in recent times challenged the very idea of homeland.

We will analyze works of prose and poetry, literary as well as cultural texts, related to the main themes of Italian identity and culture. Readings of critical theory will add a comparative and more philosophical approach: by discussing how a society create and share a sense of common identity and cohesion, we will try to reach a broader understanding of the human value attached to national identity, while also thinking critically on the minoritized identities that have been marginalized by the dominant model of nationhood.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Know major literary works and key authors of Italian literature.
- Understand the relation of those literary works to Italian society and culture.
- Know core themes and ideas in history and culture.
- Understand and describe literary works as modes of social inquiry representing specific historical and cultural contexts.
- Develop skills in reading, thinking, and writing critically through the composition of an academic essay and written homework assignments.
- Develop analytical skills and argue interpretations through class discussions.
- Identify different issues, authors, and works of art from a comparative perspective.

Required Textbooks available at the Anglo-American Bookstore in Rome


Additional Readings: Readings posted on Sakai.

Films

Attendance Policy
In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absences will be permitted. **Unexcused absences beyond this will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”**. The collective health of the JFRC is everyone’s responsibility. **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.** Travel does not constitute reason to miss class or quizzes. Consistent tardiness to class will also affect your final grade.

Required Work
The course will fulfill its learning outcomes if you comply with the following requirements:

*Participation:* This course relies largely on class discussion, and the success of discussions depends upon your **active** presence, thus your presence and contributions are crucial - both to me and to your classmates. To help stimulate class discussions, you should come to class prepared on the assigned readings, and you should participate actively. I would like **everyone to speak at least once every class.** Always bring the assigned text to class. Annotate it with questions and observations before you arrive. Have the reading in front of you during the discussion. If it is a file posted to Sakai, have notes of your comments and page numbers with you. I recommend you take notes as we discuss: you will find your notes invaluable when you need to prepare for the quizzes or if you write a paper on the text.

*Team Presentations:* Each team will prepare one 20-25 minute presentation (about 5 minutes for student). The presentations will present one specific aspect related to national identity. Please note that each student will be graded individually for his/her work with the team, and that the presentation will be evaluated based on the new content provided (not addressing topics already explored in the course material) and on the effective use of the time requirement. Read the file Team Presentations on Sakai for suggestions on the topics and how to organize your presentation.

*Quizzes:* There will be four in-class quizzes (multiple-choice questions) on all material covered. Note-taking is essential to succeed in the quizzes. The quizzes will be taken as scheduled: there will be no make-ups for traveling reasons. Quizzes may be made up only in the event of serious illness and provided a doctor’s letter is presented.

*Final Paper* (5 pages, double-spaced): The final essay will show your ability to choose a focused question and thesis to guide your discussion, and to follow the conventions for writing about literature. See the two Handouts on Sakai: Requirements for the Final Paper, for suggestions on choosing a good topic and for detailed instructions on writing your paper; and the handout Resources on Literature, for suggestions on researching your topic.

*Textbook (TB):* The kind of reading we will practice requires marking up a material text, thus electronic textbooks cannot be accepted. You are required to bring your textbook to each class.

*Sakai:* This course will be using Sakai. You are required to check the course site regularly for announcements, readings and assignments posted there.

*Classroom Etiquette:* I expect you to be courteous and mannerly in all verbal and written communications (e-mails) with your classmates and with your professor. Classroom etiquette also includes the following: no
electronic devices of any kind (laptops, cell phones, etc.); no tardiness or early departure from class (you should inform the professor in advance when you may have to arrive late or leave early); no consistent bathroom breaks or other disruptions; no packing up until the class is completely over; no talking or whispering to classmates during lectures or when other students are talking or presenting. Repeated failure to respect classroom etiquette will affect your participation grade.

Assessment Components
- Quizzes (4) 40% (or each quiz 10%)
- Final Paper 25%
- Team Presentation 10%
- Participation to Class Discussions 15%
- Paper Proposal 5%
- Attendance 5%

Grading
- 94-100: A
- 90-93: A-
- 87-89: B+
- 84-86: B
- 80-83: B-
- 77-79: C+
- 74-76: C
- 70-73: C-
- 67-69: D+
- 60-66: D
- 59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty
Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

I expect that all work you produce for this course will be your own and that you will not submit work you have already completed for other courses. Doing your homework together and submitting the same Reader Responses will be considered plagiarism. Cutting-and-pasting part or all of another person’s writing into your paper or paraphrasing or otherwise copying work without citing the source of the words and ideas will be considered plagiarism. If you have any questions about using or citing texts, please talk with me.

Late or Missed Assignments
Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Accessibility Accommodations
Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

And finally… Welcome to this class! I find the study of literature both intellectually and emotionally fascinating (as well as a lot of fun), and I look forward to exploring it together. Please do not hesitate to converse with me about the course or the readings throughout the semester. As far as possible, I want to make sure the class meets your own academic goals as well as those I have outlined in this syllabus.

Course Schedule (syllabus may vary, make sure to check the updated copy in Sakai)

Week 1 Introduction to the course. What is a nation? The notion of Italy.
Th 9/8
Week 2  
Th 9/15  
Our Motherland: Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

Week 3  
Th 9/22  

Week 4  
Th 9/29  
Our Motherland: Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and Antonio Gramsci’s *The Modern Prince*.

Week 5  
Th 10/6  
**Quiz 1.** The language question in the Middle Ages: Dante Alighieri, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.

Week 6  
Th 10/13  
The language question during the Risorgimento: Alessandro Manzoni.

**Fall Break (October 14 – 18): the break will not affect our class**

Week 7  
Th 10/20  
**Topic for final presentation due.** Discussion of presentation topics. The language question in our times: Pasolini and Calvino.

Week 8  
Th 10/27  
**Quiz 2.** The Risorgimento. Giuseppe Verdi: *Nabucco* and *The Battle of Legnano*. Antonio Gramsci’s interpretation of the Risorgimento (from *The Prison Notebooks*).

Week 9  
Th 11/3  

Week 10  
Th 11/10  
**Quiz 3.** A united nation and its nationalism. *Futurist Political Manifestos*. Gabriele D’Annunzio’s *Ode to the Latin Resurrection*.

Week 11  
Th 11/17  
**Team presentations.** Imagine there’s no countries. A united Italy and its dissident voices. Annie Vivanti, *Ego*. Pasolini, *To My Country*. Gaber, *I Don’t Feel Italian*.

Week 12  
Th 11/24  
**Team presentations. Topic for final paper due.** Discussion of final paper topics.

Week 13  
Th 12/1  
**Quiz 4. Final paper due today.** Conclusions.

Week 14  
Dec 5-8  
**Final exam week.**