LITR 202: The European Novel
John Felice Rome Center
Spring 2019
Mondays & Wednesdays | 11:30-12:45am
Dr. Barbara Castaldo
Email: bcastaldo@luc.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment, Mon./Wed., 2:30-3:30pm

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”
— F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Literature is what unites the world through common experience and this unity is what makes us human.”
— From a student feedback on Primo Levi’s references to Dante Alighieri

Course Description
This course explores how modern European authors have used literature to respond to, and make sense of, a complex contemporary world confronting them with dramatic historical events and social issues: Holocaust and World War II; women’s struggles for legal rights and gender equality; racial, gender and class relations of inequality in various other forms, such as in the North-South divide and in the Sicilian Mafia.
What is the role of literature in the relationship with society? What does literature teach us about the past? And how can literature help us to connect with each other in the present? These are some of the questions we will address.
Over the course of the semester, we will read novels and short stories written by 20th century Italian authors (Primo Levi, Leonardo Sciascia, Beppe Fenoglio, Carlo Levi and Sibilla Aleramo). In-class screening of films and videos will enhance understanding of the topics.
Besides reading literary works, students will learn the historical and cultural contexts that informed the texts. The course becomes thus the occasion to learn about Italian culture and history through the lens of literature. Finally, by discussing different narrative strategies (such as autobiography, fiction and non-fiction writing, direct and indirect narration), students will also learn to identify different literary genres and techniques.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of the course students should be able to:
• Know major literary works and key authors of modern 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 in a comparative perspective.
Required Textbooks (available at the JFRC Bookstore)


Additional Readings: A selection of reading material posted on Sakai.

In-Class Screenings

*Bicycle Thief (Ladri di biciclette)*. Dir. Vittorio De Sica, 1948.
*Christ Stopped at Eboli (Cristo si è fermato a Eboli)*. Dir. Francesco Rosi, 1979.

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 twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absences will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a lowering of your final grade. 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 through your Reader Responses. Always bring the assigned text to class. Annotate it with questions and observations before you arrive. If it is a file posted to Sakai, have notes of your comments and page numbers with you. Have the reading in front of you during discussion. 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.

*Reader Responses:* For each new reading you will find a handout on Sakai with a list of topics/questions that we will discuss in class. In order to enhance both your reading and class discussion, you will write down your responses to these questions: choose one or two questions that interest you and address them in a short, informal essay. Include a quotation or two as evidence in support of your claims. These informal (but well-edited) meditations are a chance for you to consider the readings before coming to class. As the semester progresses, your responses should become more analytical and offer connections between the works, the authors, and the literary theories. Your Responses will also be useful when writing your final paper. Please, note that I will occasionally collect and grade your Reader Responses.
**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 on a regular basis for announcements, readings and assignments posted there.

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

**Final Paper** (7-8 pages): 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. The topic for this paper you must develop on your own but in conjunction with the professor. You may either discuss your topic directly with me (preferred option) or write a one-page proposal that outlines your discussion and bibliography. 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. If you decide to write a proposal for your paper, see the handout Paper Proposal on Sakai.

**Assessment Components**

- Quizzes (5) 50% (or each quiz 10%)
- Final Paper 30%
- Attendance 10%
- Participation and Reader Responses 10%

**Grading**

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

**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](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.
Resources at the JFRC
As well as a substantial collection of physical books, the Rome Center Library allows access to a vast range of online resources. In order to learn how to use these to your best advantage, attendance at the Library Resources Session, held at the beginning of each semester, is strongly recommended.

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, and do not feel that you have to wait until your conference to talk with me about your final paper. 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

Week 1
M 1/21 and W 1/23  Introduction. The passage from 19th century to 20th century narrative

Week 2
M 1/28  Suffragette movement, birth of women’s studies and Feminism
REQUIRED READING: Selection from Women's Realities, Women's Choices (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 1 (Sakai)

W 1/30  Sibilla Aleramo: A Woman.
REQUIRED READING: Aleramo, chapters 1-11 (textbook)
READER RESPONSES 2 (Sakai)

Week 3  Please, note: this week we have a regular class on Monday, no class on Wednesday, and a make-up class on Friday

M 2/4  Sibilla Aleramo: A Woman.
REQUIRED READING: Aleramo, chapters 12-22 (textbook)
READER RESPONSES 3 (Sakai)

F 2/8  Sibilla Aleramo: A Woman.
REQUIRED READINGS:
- Aleramo: chapters 12-22 (textbook)
- Aleramo - Campana, Poems (Sakai)
- Women's Studies: Additional Resources (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 4 (Sakai)

Week 4
M 2/11  In-class screening of film: A Journey Called Love
Quiz 1. World War II and the Holocaust. Primo Levi: *If This Is a Man.*
REQUIRED READING: Primo Levi, chapters 1-8 (textbook). Read carefully the “Author’s Preface” (p. 9) and the Poem (p. 11).
OPTIONAL READING: Cannon, *Memory and Testimony in Primo Levi* (Sakai): you can skip from p. 126 up to the second paragraph of page 129.

Week 5
M 2/18
Primo Levi: *If This Is a Man.*
REQUIRED READINGS:
- Primo Levi: chapters 1-8 (textbook)
- Selection from Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 5 (Sakai)

W 2/20
Primo Levi: *If This Is a Man*
REQUIRED READINGS:
- Primo Levi: chapters 9-17 (textbook)
- Dante Alighieri, Canto 26th of *Inferno* (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 6 (Sakai)

Week 6
M 2/25
Primo Levi: *If This Is a Man*
REQUIRED READINGS:
- Primo Levi: chapters 9-17 (textbook)
- Primo Levi and the Holocaust: Additional Resources (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 7 (Sakai)

W 2/27
Quiz 2. The Aftermath of WWII and Italian Neorealism
REQUIRED READING: Calvino, Preface to *The Path to the Spiders’ Nests* (Sakai): read pp. 7-18.

Week 7
M 3/4
Neorealism in literature
REQUIRED READING: Fenoglio, *The Smell of Death - Rain and the Bride* (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 8 (Sakai)

W 3/6
Neorealism in cinema
REQUIRED READING: Fabe, *Italian Neorealism* (Sakai)

Week 8
Spring Break (March 8 – 17)

Week 9
Please, note: this week we have regular classes on Monday and Wednesday, and a make-up class on Friday

M 3/18 and W 3/20
In class screening and discussion of film *Bicycle Thief*
REQUIRED READING: Neorealism: Additional Resources (Sakai)
OPTIONAL READING: Marcus, *De Sica’s Bicycle Thief* (Sakai)
In class screening and discussion of film *Bycicle Thief*
REQUIRED READING: Neorealism: Additional Resources (Sakai)
OPTIONAL READING: Marcus, *De Sica's Bycicle Thief* (Sakai)

**Week 10**

**M 3/25**  
**Quiz 3.** The Southern Question. Carlo Levi: *Christ Stopped at Eboli*
REQUIRED READINGS:
- Mack Smith, *The "Southern Problem"* (Sakai)
- Martin Clark, *The Subversives* (Sakai)

**W 3/27**  
Carlo Levi: *Christ Stopped at Eboli*
REQUIRED READING: Carlo Levi, chapters 1-13 (textbook)
READER RESPONSES 9 (Sakai)

**Week 11**

**M 4/1**  
Carlo Levi: *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. In-class screening of clips from the film
REQUIRED READING: Carlo Levi, chapters 14-25 (textbook)
READER RESPONSES 10 (Sakai)
OPTIONAL READING: Schneider, *The Southern Question and Magic* (Sakai)

**W 4/3**  
Carlo Levi: *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. In-class screening of clips from the film
REQUIRED READINGS:
- Carlo Levi: chapters 14-25 (textbook)
- Carlo Levi and the Southern Question: Additional Resources (Sakai)
READER RESPONSES 11 (Sakai)

**Week 12**

**M 4/8**  
**Quiz 4.** Sicilian Mafia. Leonardo Sciascia: *The Day of the Owl*
REQUIRED READING: Sciascia, pp. 1-60 (textbook)
OPTIONAL READING: Duggan, *The Mafia and the State* (Sakai)

**W 4/10**  
**Topic for final paper due.** Sciascia: *The Day of the Owl*. In-class screening of clips from the film *Mafia*
REQUIRED READING: Sciascia, pp. 1-60 (textbook)
READER RESPONSES 12 (Sakai)

**Week 13**

**M 4/15**  
Sciascia: *The Day of the Owl*
REQUIRED READING: Sciascia, pp. 60-124 (textbook)
READER RESPONSES 13 (Sakai)
Sciascia: *The Day of the Owl*. In-class screening of clips from the film *Mafia*

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- Sciascia, pp. 60-124 (textbook)
- Sicilian Mafia: Additional Resources (Sakai)

**READER RESPONSES 14 (Sakai)**

**Week 14**

*Please, note: this week we do not have class on Easter Monday, and we have a regular class on Wednesday*

**W 4/24**

*Quiz 5. Conclusions*

**READER RESPONSES 15 (Sakai)**

**Th 4/25**

*Final paper due to Sakai by 5:00 pm*

**Week 15**

**M 4/29**

*Conclusions.*