The Writing of Fiction and Poetry in Rome - ENGL 318R / ROST 390 / A2W

John Felice Rome Center

Summer 1, 2019 – Monday and Wednesday, 09:00am-12:20pm

Location: Classroom TBA & On Site

Prof. Andrew Rutt

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Office Hours: Room 102 – Mondays from 12.30 by appt. & after class on Wednesday by appt.

The city must never be confused with the words that describe it. And yet between the one and the other there is a connection.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

**Course Description**

The Writing of Fiction and Poetry in Rome course seeks to be a threshold through which the course participants encounter the literary context of the eternal city, and concurrently a creative space for the students to engage their literary skills and contribute their voice. This On-Site, Writing Intensive, Core Course aims to develop those creative, editorial, and reading habits needed for fiction writing and offer guidance in generating original fiction and poetry that utilizes Rome in all its shades and nuance for inspiration. Students will examine works of literature that reflect the city’s vast influence on Western creativity and culture throughout the ages while simultaneously navigating the Eternal City, itself. On site classes take place amidst the quintessential intersection of the ancient, medieval, and modern world, inviting students to respond to, participate in, problematize, and incorporate Rome’s layered history and influence—as well as their own experience of it—into their prose and poetry. Through the studied practice of descriptive writing and the examination of the Rome setting as a vital literary component, students will produce their own fictional interpretations of the Eternal City. Each student’s work will be presented to the class in a traditional workshop format, with emphasis an analysis of the kernel points posed by the texts and a justification for the choices made in the process of production.
Note: Engl 318 is an elective for non-English majors and English majors not in the CW Concentration, it is a requirement for English majors in the CW Concentration.

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the technical vocabulary and critical skills necessary for discussing, analyzing and formulating arguments about fiction writing and poetry, and will produce a portfolio of their own original fiction and poems. Through experiential learning, students will gain a deeper understanding of the multidimensional and ongoing influence of the city of Rome upon Western culture, history, art, and ideas and, in particular, poetry and literary fiction.

**Required Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Fiction: The Practical Guide from New York's Acclaimed Creative Writing School</td>
<td>GothamWriters Workshop</td>
<td>Bloomsbury USA</td>
<td>1582343306</td>
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**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.
The Writing of Fiction and Poetry in Rome course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absence(s) will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”.

**Assessment Components**

- Participation: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Portfolio: 25%
- Presentation: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%

**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](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml). You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.
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.

Course Schedule

The following schedule is indicative of the course content. An updated syllabus including important dates for the mid term and final exams along with the dates for the submission of coursework will likewise be communicated on the first day of class.

First Week:
‘From Rome with Love’: Foreign views on the Eternal City
In the first week of the course we will explore the interpretation of Rome as seen from a foreign point of view. The students will come face to face, through the writing activities that we introduce, with their own knowledge, perceptions, and preconceptions of the Italian culture in an international context. We will explore current and predominant ideas of Italian culture in preparation for the weeks that follow where we will seek to get closer to a deeper understanding of the ‘art of writing’ texts that have Rome as their protagonist.
The students will watch and discuss sections of screenplays from films as To Rome With Love (Woody Allen), Eat Pray Love (Ryan Murphy) and parts of the book Un Amico Italiano: Eat, Pray, Love in Rome, written by Luca Spaghetti (Penguin). In the first week, the students will meet author Luca Spaghetti, who, in his book, describes his encounter in Rome with Elizabeth Gilbert (author of Eat Pray Love), and how he became a character of her bestseller.

Second Week
‘La dolce vita’: fascination and corruption of a city
The theme of the second week will focus on Rome’s grandeur, where the city’s glorious past collides with the contradictions of contemporary life. The main text this week will be a section of Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Rome based novel, Il Piacere (Pleasure), where the elegant and refined protagonist lives his life “as a work of art” in an aristocratic and dissipated Rome. During this week, we will also work together to roleplay sections of
screenplays from films, for example, La dolce vita (Federico Fellini) and Fantasmi a Roma (Antonio Pietrangeli).

Third Week

“Stupenda e misera città” (Stupendous, miserable city): the periphery of Pier Paolo Pasolini

The title for this week originates from the poem Il pianto della scavatrice (The Tears of the Excavator) by Pier Paolo Pasolini and in the encounter this week we will dedicate ourselves to Pier Paolo Pasolini and his relationship with Rome. The students will read and discuss a selection of Pasolini’ work; for example, the aforementioned poem and parts of the screenplay of Pasolini’ films Accattone and Mamma Roma. The Roman’s contradictions, their cynicism and generosity will further be explored by translating an extract of Alberto Moravia’s Racconti romani (Roman Tales).

Fourth Week

Has Rome Lasted Too Long? Young Generations in Comparison

Andy Warhol once said; “Rome, Italy, is an example of what happens when the buildings in a city last too long”. Though resistant to change, young generations living here today are protagonists of a gradual opening up to modernization and multiculturalism. The students will read and discuss parts of In altre parole (In Other Words) by Jhumpa Lahiri (Mondadori), where the Indian American writer (Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 2000) chronicles her choice to write in Italian after a period spent in Rome. The movies this week will be Un Americano a Roma (Staino) and Caro diario (Nanni Moretti).

Fifth Week

“La grande bellezza” (The Great Beauty): a past to struggle with in every day life

Living in Rome today: the desolation, the contradictions, the disorder encountered in everyday life, and yet Rome is still able to inspire fascination and spirituality. The students will confront the numerous English translations during history of Literature of Animula vagula blandula (Little soul, you charming little wanderer) the famous farewell to life by the Roman Emperor Hadrian. They will read and discuss the poem Pei vicoli di Roma camminavamo abbracciati (Embraced we walked through the alleys of Rome) by the contemporary Roman poet, Claudio Damiani as well as other poems by contemporary Italian poets about the current Rome and the recurrence of her glorious past in everyday life.
The film to conclude the week and to compare and contrast with Hadrian the Emperor’s meditative poem will be the Oscar award winning La grande bellezza (The Great Beauty), by Paolo Sorrentino.