Syllabus -- LITR 280 – World Masterpieces in Translation

Voyage to Calabria:
The Southern Question through Comparative Readings of Italian American and Italian Writers

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J-Term January 2 – 12, 2020 (syllabus revised 09/05/2020)

Course Description: (LOCUS) This course will study literary masterpieces, in translation, of a selected culture or nation.

This J-Term course will be held in the region of Calabria, Italy and include numerous excursions and field trips to complement the material studied in the classroom. The proposed experiential components of the course will be organized through the non-profit “Italian Diaspora Studies” institute, in affiliation with the University of Calabria

Detailed Course Description: Since Italy’s Unification, emigration has been a crucial component of the history of Calabria. As a consequence, the region is very often portrayed in novels and memoirs by Italian authors who have emigrated and/or by their descendants. Moreover, in the last few years many contemporary Italian American writers, mostly of Calabrese origin, have written about Calabria, for example: Paul Paulicelli (Under the Southern Sun, 2003), Mark Rotella (Stolen Figs and Other Adventures in Calabria, 2003), Peter Chiarella (Out of Calabria, 2007; Calabrian Tales, 2002), Michael Caputo (The Coin From Calabria: Discovering the Historical Roots of My Calabrian People, 2012; Under a Lion Sun: Childhood Days of Joy and Sorrow in Old Calabria, 2015), and others.

This course will look at the history of the region and into the notion of the so-called ‘Southern Question’, comparing some literary representations offered from both outside and from inside. It will offer the basic frameworks to understand the cultural context, illustrating the region’s complex history of migration(s), the prejudices against the Southern people, and the current debate on the so-called «Neoborbonism». Some reference will be given to the Grand tour travelers, such as Norman Douglas, author of the well-known Old Calabria, who contributed to build a romantic stereotype within the image of the region.

Within Italian Americana, larger space will be given to Helen Barolini’s Umbertina, in comparison with two memoirs listed below.

The Italian text given most consideration will be Cesare Pavese’s The Political Prisoner (Il carcere), compared with and Corrado Alvaro’s Revolt in Aspromonte (Gente in Aspromonte). These literary representations will be treated as tools to understand the history and culture of Calabria as well as embrace the sense of memory, heritage and identity from an historical and anthropological point of view. Castagna, the small village where Barolini begins her family’s historical narration is at the same time a real and a symbolic place, that plays a significant role in the construction of the Italian American identity of its descendants. Being in Brancialeone after a sentence to political confinement, the Piedmontese Pavese portrays Calabria through an outsider’s gaze that shows little sympathy, while Alvaro defends his country of birth, nonetheless denouncing its ruinous abandonment and decay.

Course Outcomes: (LOCUS) Students will gain an appreciation of the literary masterpieces of another culture or nation
Readings

Rose Musacchio Higdon, with Hal Higdon, *Falconara. A Family Odyssey*, Roadrunner, IN, 1993 (Kindle ed. 2010). (selected passages)

Suggested Readings


Class #1: Overview of Calabrian history; Norman Douglas, *Old Calabria*

Class #2: Helen Barolini and *Umbertina*

Class #3: Calabria and the ‘Southern Question’ in *Umbertina*

Class #4: Tina’s trip to Castagna. Memoir, Heritage and the Historical Novel

Class #5: Comparison among *Umbertina* and the memoirs by Rose Musacchio and Joseph Luzzi

Class #5: Calabria as a Prison in Cesare Pavese

Class #7: Alvaro and Pavese on Calabria

Assignments and Grading:

Attendance and Participation: 25%
Since the sharing of opinions and ideas is an essential part of the learning experience, students are expected to attend class regularly AND to contribute to classroom discussion. You can expect a positive, non-judgmental atmosphere in this classroom at all times. As the process of formulating an idea is as important as the idea itself, you should be experimenting with your ideas and participating in discussions. The results can be surprising, exciting and really rewarding, and nobody’s going to laugh at you if what you say doesn’t quite work out. Say it anyway. It will probably lead you and the group on to a really compelling idea. Likewise, please ask questions. If something is unclear to you, it will almost certainly be unclear to someone else in the room.
Guided Journaling of Tours and Excursions: 20%
Students will be required to maintain a journal of the experiential learning components of the course in which they will record their meaningful reflections and reactions to the various activities and excursions that they engage in. The journal will serve as a tool for cultural exploration and self-discovery, and students’ entries should aim to integrate their personal responses and impressions into their academic learning, particularly with regard to the first part of the course.

Written Response Postings (two 3-5 page papers): 25%
Students will write two reader response papers based on the works that they will read during the course. In these essays, you will be expected to briefly summarize the works in question and detail your informed reaction to them. Your response essay should reflect your understanding of the themes and topics covered in the works studied through the prism of your personal values and perceptions. Students will be expected, also, to incorporate the cultural and historical perspectives they have gained through their explorations of Calabrian history and culture into their responses to the literature.

Final Exam: 30% (Will consist of 6 essay questions. Length requirement: each essay should be approximately 200 to 500 words.
The final exam will be in the form of short essay questions in which you will be asked to synthesize the material studied in both parts of the course to demonstrate your understanding of the historical and cultural underpinnings of Calabria with regard to the literature of the representative writers studied who offer perspectives on both sides of the immigration/emigration experience.

Grading Scale
Letter grades for assignments and the final course grade will be assigned based on the LUC grading system as follows:
The letter grades A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, F, WF are assigned the following credit points for purposes of grade point average (GPA) calculations: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.00; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.00; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.00; F = 0; WF = 0

CLASSROOM POLICIES
1. Courtesy in class You are expected to behave courteously towards your classmates and your professor. Discourteous behavior—raising your voice, disregarding classroom policies, showing disrespect for others—will negatively affect your final grade.
2. Arrive on time Do not arrive late for class: you will lose a ½ point from your final grade every time you arrive more than 5 minutes late. If you know ahead of time that there will be an issue, let me know and we can make arrangements.
3. Come to class prepared with your books and any due homework.
4. No cell phones and computers Unless you are on call for emergencies, turn off cell phones during our meetings. Receiving calls or texting during class is considered a violation of policy and if you are found to be in violation I reserve the right to report you to the Vice President for Student Affairs. Do not bring computers to class unless you check with me first.
5. No eating during class No food in class, but you may bring coffee or other drinks if you like.
6. No leaving during class The only exception to this rule will be if you are ill, so be sure to use the restroom before class. If you disregard this rule, your attendance/participation grade will be lowered.
7. No plagiarism: You are responsible for knowing the definition of plagiarism and cheating. If you are caught plagiarizing, cheating, copying, using internet services for the
production of your writing assignments, you will automatically be given a zero for the assignment, and possibly referred to the Department Chair. For more specific information, see the definition of plagiarism printed below.

8. **Absence policy** Attendance is absolutely essential for a course based on in-class discussion and the sharing of ideas. You are allowed up to 3 excused absences (illness, job interview, etc.) with PRIOR notification and/or email to instructor. Each further or unexcused absence will lower your final grade by 1 full point. Numerous absences also negatively affect all other in-class portions of the grade breakdown.

9. **Timeliness** All work for the course must be completed ON TIME in order for you to receive credit. If unusual circumstances arise that will prevent you from meeting deadlines, you must inform the instructor in advance and/or provide documentation.

10. **Class cancellation** If this class is to be cancelled on a particular day because of instructor illness or other reasons, students will be notified via their LUC student email address as soon as possible.

**Plagiarism, Cheating, and Loyola University Chicago Policy**

**Plagiarism:** There is a growing problem of plagiarism among students especially through the (mis)use of the internet. For academic dishonesty and plagiarism (which includes quoting without using quotation marks and indication of the source used) please visit:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism

For consequences please read the section on Academic Integrity as defined in the Loyola University Chicago Standards and Policies Handbook