



Introduction to ITALY TODAY

Who are the neo-fascists? What is the five star movement? How do 'colf', 'zingaro', 'qualunquismo', or 'grillino' translate? What does it mean to be a woman, an immigrant, or a queer person in the land of ultra-traditionalism, of the pope, and Berlusconi? This course will explore these questions through a variety of materials in Italian: stories, comic books, TV shows, poems, newspaper articles, public art, essays, videos, and songs. We will deal with issues of identity, historical memory, politics, and society. We will immerse ourselves in the culture and language of contemporary Italy through ten key-themes.

Class Code:
ITA 208

Weekly Meetings:
Tuesday · 3:00 - 4:20
Thursday · 3:00 - 4:20

Instructor:
Alessandro Giammei

Office Hours:
Thursdays 1:30-2:30
and by appointment
205 Scheide Caldwell House

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Reading / Writing assignments:

10-15 pages of readings in Italian per week
5 response papers (3 pp.)

Prerequisite and Restrictions:

Classes, readings and assignments in Italian language

Assessment Components:

Mid Term Exam	- 20%
Take Home Final Exam	- 20%
Response Papers	- 20%
Oral Presentations	- 20%
Class Participation	- 20%

Some online resources:

ansa.it



nazioneindiana.com



iltascabile.com



ilsole24ore.com



termometropolitico.it



zerocalcare.it



Topics

The first half of the semester will be devoted to 5 themes related to society and individual identity: Race, Gender, Nationality, Generations.

The second half will be about 5 major institutions (or anti-institutions): Parties, Schools, Populist Organizations, Organized Crime, the Catholic Church

Expectations

In class you will be asked to discuss, contribute, and be vocal in Italian. Topics may be controversial, and you are welcome to challenge texts and other cultural materials. It is important to try and stay focused on the theme of the class, and to let everyone speak.

Before class: being prepared on the readings is fundamental. You are encouraged to use online resources and socialmedia to further investigate people, events, and ideas mentioned or discussed in the readings. You are also encouraged to use my office hours for clarifications, discussions, and questions on both language and content.

Material

All **readings** are going to be on blackboard. Please, read them before our Tuesday class (when longer readings are in program I will ask you to read part for Tuesday and part for Thursday). You are very welcome to ask for **additional readings** on topics that you are particularly interested in, especially when you have to give an oral presentation or write a response paper. Some **audio/video** material will be used in class to approach themes and questions, and I will upload streaming links or downloadable files on blackboard. The style, language, and context of texts is extremely diverse: the idea is to familiarize you with actual Italian material from different sources, but of course some genres and formats are easier than others. You are always encouraged to ask for explanations, to investigate new words and concepts, and to be vocal in class about questions and cultural issues.

You are also very welcome to suggest additional material (texts, films, songs, shows) and to bring it to the attention of the class. The syllabus can be modified (within reason) to meet the interests and curiosities of the participants.

Short Papers

You will write **5 short response papers (3 pp.) in Italian** on the themes covered in class. One of these (number 3, right after the spring break) will be an individual project on a political figure to be followed on blogs and social media. The other four will be based on sub-topics that we will choose together based on your personal interests. Papers will be evaluated both for their **content** and their **language**.

Keywords and Oral Presentations

Each Tuesday class will start with a quick discussion about the weekly **keywords**. Each of you will choose one keyword from the list and will define it for the class. After this, one student will give a **5-10 minutes oral presentation**. The presentations will discuss the weekly topic using 3-5 images chosen by the presenter. **Presentations will be scheduled at least one week in advance and will be guided.**

Course Calendar

February 7 - 9 America Amore	Italian identity and Italian style in the American imagery, cultural exchanges and colonization, the Italian-American stereotype, the Italian-American epic.
Keywords — Spaghetti Funk — Zio d'America — Complottismo — Guido — Paninaro	Readings Federico Rampini, from <i>Il tradimento</i> [Op-ed]
	On Thursday 9, at 7:30 pm, there is a screening of the documentary <i>Blaxploitalian</i> at the Princeton Garden Theatre. I reserved tickets for everyone, the film introduces next week's theme.
February 14 - 16 Race and Integration	Ethnic diversity, racism vs. integration, gipsies and nomadic peoples, cultural and political views on race, the dark heritage of fascism
Keywords — Leghista — Vucumprà — Meticciano — Campo Nomadi — Leggi Razziali	Readings Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>Il confine</i> [short story] Pino Petruzzelli, from <i>Non chiamarmi zingaro</i> [interviews]
	On Tuesday, the trans-lingual American writer Jhumpa Lahiri will join our class as a guest. First short paper (3 pp.) due on Thursday.

February 21 - 23
Gendered Violence

Masculinity, femininity, violent patriarchal roles, gendered gazes on society, new-feminism and historical feminism, “maschilismo” and forms of male chauvinism

Keywords

- Obiettore
- Femminicidio
- Maschilista
- Delitto Passionale
- Branco

Readings

- Dacia Maraini, *Marina è caduta per le scale* [short story]
- Dacia Maraini, *Cronaca di una violenza di gruppo* [short story]

On Thursday, Italian writer Dacia Maraini will join our class as a guest.

February 28 - March 2
Migrations

The Italian of the migrants, economical and societal role of migrant workers, the myth of the Italian migrant and the fear of immigrants

Keywords

- Badante
- Colf
- Extracomunitario
- Catena Migratoria
- Piazza Vittorio

Readings

- Gian Maria Annovi, *La scolta* [poem]
- Arianna Giorgia Bonazzi, *Sulle tracce della colf* [reportage]

Second short paper (3 pp.) due on Thursday.

March 7 - 9
Joblessness

The evolution of the Italian job market through globalization and the financial crisis, ideas of future, political and cultural perspectives on inoccupation

Keywords

- Precariato
- Fuga dei Cervelli
- Jobs Act
- Tempo Indeterminato
- Cassintegrato

Readings

- Michela Murgia, *Il mondo deve sapere* [satirical memoir]
- Aldo Nove, *Intervista a due cassintegrati* [interview]

On Thursday, Sardinian writer and political activist Michela Murgia is going to join our class via skype as a guest.

March 14 - 16
No Country for Giovani

Gerontocracy and generational resentment, the path to independence for young Italians, governmental action and rhetoric on the younger generations

Keywords

- Bamboccioni
- Ministro della Gioventù
- Voucher
- Bimbominkia
- Conflitto Generazionale

Readings

- Zerocalcare, *Perché non possiamo dirci trentenni* [comic]
- Marta Fana, *Caro Poletti, avete fatto di noi i camerieri d'Europa* [public letter]

Midterm exam on Thursday.

March 28 - 30
Political Parties

The fragmented political landscape, recent elections, populism and anti-europeanism, political disaffection, the collapse of the total-party

Keywords

- Casta
- Tesseramento
- Grillino
- Berlusconi
- Smacchiare il Giaguaro

Readings

- politicasemplice.it [website]
- Sergio Rizzo, Gian Antonio Stella, from *La Casta* [investigative report]

Third short paper* (3 pp.) due on Tuesday.

* This paper is a commentary on a political figure that I will ask you to follow during the spring break on twitter and on blogs. Each student will have a different figure to write about.

April 4 - 6		
Educational Pride		
The "liceo" system, classicism as an enduring cultural legacy, attempts of reform and cultural reactions, Italian universities		
Keywords	Readings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ginnasio — Liceo Classico — Tre Più Due — Analfabetismo di Ritorno — Meritocrazia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Gardini, from <i>Viva il Latino</i> [essay] Andrea Marcolongo, from <i>La lingua geniale</i> [pamphlet] 	On Thursday, Italian scholar Martina Piperno is going to join our class as a guest.
April 11-14		
Neo-fascism and populism		
Anti-establishment reactions to corruption, the recent history of neo- and post-fascism, the many souls of the five star movement, politics on the web		
Keywords	Readings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Qualunquismo — Destra sociale — Chinghiamattanza — Centro Sociale — Campo Hobbit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vincenzo Latronico, from <i>La mentalità dell'alveare</i> [dystopian novel] Anna Lamberti Bocconi, from <i>Canto di una ragazza fascista dei miei tempi</i> [poem] 	Fourth short paper (3 pp.) due on Thursday.
April 17 - 20		
Gomorra		
New versions and evolutions of organized crime in the South and the North, the presence of the mafia in institutions, legal activities of the new-mafia		
Keywords	Readings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Camorra — Mafia Capitale — Ecomafie — Mondo di Mezzo — 41bis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matteo Garrone, <i>Gomorra</i> [film] <i>Ecco la 'mafia capitale'</i> [report] 	A screening of the film will be scheduled this week at Forbes College.
April 25 - 27		
Catholic Bodies		
Religious, political, and economical control over bodies, reproductive rights, euthanasia, the legacy of the democrazia cristiana		
Keywords	Readings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Papa-boys — Cattocomunista — Consultorio — Beghina — C.E.I. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giulia Blasi, <i>Il Fertility Day e il corpo come pubblico demanio</i> [report] Piergiorgio Welby, <i>Lasciatemi morire</i> [pamphlet] 	This week we will be in touch with the Italian writer, journalist and radio host Giulia Blasi, either via skype or email.
May 2 - 4		
New Italian Style		
Workshop on the image of Italy today		
Keywords	Readings	
You choose.	Paolo Sorrentino, <i>The Young Pope</i> [TV show]	<p>Last short paper (3 pp.) due on Thursday.</p> <p>This week we will workshop projects for the final exam.</p>