ITALIAN STUDIES

Humanities Quadrangle, 203.432.0595
http://italian.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Jane Tylus

Director of Graduate Studies
Millicent Marcus (Humanities Quadrangle, 5th floor, 203.432.0599)

Professors Millicent Marcus, Jane Tylus

Assistant Professor Christiana Purdy Moudarres

Senior Lectors I Michael Farina, Anna Iacovella

Lectors Simona Lorenzini, Deborah Pellegrino

Affiliated faculty Paola Bertucci (History of Science & Medicine), Howard Bloch (French), Jessica Brantley (English), Francesco Casetti (Film & Media Studies), Joanna Fiduccia (History of Art), Virginia Jewiss (Humanities), Jacqueline Jung (History of Art), Laurence Kanter (Yale Art Gallery), Gundula Kreuzer (Music), Morgan Ng (History of Art), Jessica Peritz (Music), David Quint (English; Comparative Literature), Ayesha Ramachandran (Comparative Literature), Pierre Saint-Amand (French), Christophe Schuwey (French), Gary Tomlinson (Music)

Visiting faculty from other universities are regularly invited to teach courses in the department.

FIELDS OF STUDY

The Italian Studies department brings together several disciplines for the study of the Italian language and its literature. Although the primary emphasis is on a knowledge of the subject throughout the major historical periods, the department welcomes applicants who seek to integrate their interests in Italian with wider methodological concerns and discourses, such as history, rhetoric and critical theories, comparison with other literatures, the figurative arts, religious and philosophical studies, medieval, Renaissance, and modern studies, and the contemporary state of Italian writing. Interdepartmental work is therefore encouraged and students are accordingly given considerable freedom in planning their individual curriculum, once they have acquired a broad general knowledge of the field through course work and supplementary independent study.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

The department recognizes that good preparation in Italian literature is unusual at the college level and so suggests that students begin as soon as possible to acquire a broad general knowledge of the field through outside reading. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency in two languages in addition to English and Italian; these could be other Romance languages, Latin, or non-Romance languages relevant to the research interests of the individual student. Students are reminded that it is difficult
to schedule beginning language courses during the academic year and are therefore encouraged to take them in the summer. (Yale Summer Session offers online language-for-reading courses as well as Latin instruction each summer, for which incoming and continuing students will receive a tuition fellowship.) All language requirements must be fulfilled before the Ph.D. qualifying examination.

Students are required to take two years of course work (normally sixteen courses), including two graduate-level term courses outside the Italian department. After consultation with the director of graduate studies (DGS), students who join the graduate program with an M.A. in hand may have up to two courses waived. Students who have had little or no experience in Italy are generally urged to do some work abroad during the course of their graduate program. At the end of the first and second years, students’ progress is analyzed in an evaluative colloquium. The comprehensive qualifying examination must take place during the third year of residence. It is designed to demonstrate the student’s mastery of the language and acquaintance with the literature. The examination, which is both written and oral, will be devised in consultation with a three-member committee, chosen by the student. In the term following the qualifying examination, the student will discuss, in a session with faculty members, a prospectus describing the subject and aims of the dissertation. Students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus. Admission to candidacy normally occurs by the end of the sixth term.

Teaching is considered to be an important component of the doctoral program in Italian Studies. Students will be appointed as teaching fellows in the third and fourth years of study. Guidance in teaching is provided by the faculty of the department and specifically by the director of language instruction.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAMS

Italian and Early Modern Studies

The Department of Italian Studies also offers, in conjunction with the Early Modern Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in Italian and Early Modern Studies. For further details, see Early Modern Studies.

Italian and Film and Media Studies

The Department of Italian Studies also offers, in conjunction with the Film and Media Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in Italian and Film and Media Studies. For further details, see Film and Media Studies. Applicants to the combined program must indicate on their application that they are applying both to Film and Media Studies and to Italian Studies. All documentation within the application should include this information.

MASTER’S DEGREES

Only candidates for the Ph.D. degree will be admitted to the program, but the department will, upon request, offer the M.A. and the M.Phil. degrees to students who have completed the general Graduate School requirements for those degrees. (See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.)
Program materials are available upon request to the Director of Graduate Studies, Italian Studies, Yale University, PO Box 208311, New Haven CT 06520-8311.

COURSES

ITAL 691a, Directed Reading  Millicent Marcus

ITAL 783a / FILM 779a, Italian Film Ecologies: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow  Millicent Marcus

Landscape and the natural environment have never occupied “background” status in Italian film. Given the spectacular visual presence of its terrain—thanks to the relative proximity of mountain chains and the long seacoast—and given the pivotal importance of farming and pasturage in this traditionally agrarian economy, the synergy between the human and natural worlds has played a prominent role in Italian filmmaking since the very inception of the industry. Most recently, two developments have pushed this issue to the forefront of scholarly attention: the advent of ecocriticism, which found one of its earliest and most influential champions in Serenella Iovino, and the establishment of regional film commissions, grassroots production centers that sponsored cinematic works attuned to the specificity of “the local.” The course includes study of films that predate our current environmental consciousness, as well as recent films that foreground it in narrative terms. In the case of the older films, which have already attracted a great deal of critical commentary over time, we work to shift our interpretive frame in an “eco-friendly” direction (even when the films’ characters are hardly friends of the environment). Among the films considered are Le quattro volte, Il vento fa il suo giro, L’uomo che verrà, Gomorra, L’albero degli zoccoli, Riso amaro, Red Desert, Christ Stopped at Eboli, and Il ladro di bambini. We screen one film a week and devote our seminars to close analysis of the works in question.

ITAL 948a, Theorizing the Modern Subject  Serena Bassi

This class introduces graduate students in the Humanities and the Social Sciences to Italian critical theory from the 15th century to the present by focusing on different ways of thinking about the emergence of the modern subject, subjectivity and subjection. We read political thinkers and cultural critics like Machiavelli, Vico, Leopardi, Gramsci, Negri, Federici, Lazzarato, Agamben, Braidotti, and Eco. The theorists we read ask us to think about the multiple ways in which one becomes a modern subject by being hailed by particular ideas of what it means to be human, as well as by the State and by capitalism. Our journey into Italian thought is structured through four units: 1) Beyond the Modern Subject: Theorizing the Post-Human; 2) Subjectivity: Theorizing the Modern State; 3) Subjection: Theorizing Modern Economies; 4) The Modern Subject Before Modernity: Italian Renaissance Thought and the Human. During the course, students also draft, redraft, write, and edit a publishable article-length original piece of research working with one or more sources they have read in the class.

ITAL 999a, Preparing for Doctoral Exams and Prospectus Writing  Jane Tylus

The aim of this seminar is to give third-year students the opportunity to work together on the three projects that will occupy them throughout Year 3: the oral comprehensive exam (for early November), the written exam on the three topics lists (for March–April), and the writing of the prospectus, to be defended in September of Year 4. Weekly meetings are run and coordinated by a faculty member in Italian, generally the graduate adviser. Each week of the first nine weeks is devoted to a specific topic on the comprehensive lists requested by the students themselves. Students are in conversation...
with each other, with the presiding faculty member, and with an additional guest lecturer who is an expert in the areas under discussion. Following the ninth week, there is a dry run of the oral exam. The remaining four weeks are devoted to discussing the composition of the topics lists and to the writing of the prospectus. Informal meetings may continue through the spring to discuss these issues as well. Prerequisite: completion of all other graduate course work (15 credits).