ITALIAN STUDIES

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

Chair
Jane Tylus

Director of Graduate Studies
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Professors
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Lectors
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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 a reading knowledge of a second Romance language, Latin, and a non-Romance language. (German is recommended). Students are reminded that it is difficult to schedule beginning language courses in addition to a normal graduate program and are therefore advised to acquire proficiency in the languages required for the doctoral program before matriculation. Reading knowledge of Latin may be acquired during the course of the first year. The Latin examination must be passed, usually before the beginning of the third term of study, and all language requirements must be fulfilled before the Ph.D. qualifying examination.

Students are required to take two years of course work (as a rule 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 four 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 members of the department. In the term following the qualifying examination, the student will discuss, in a session with the departmental faculty, 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 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.

Italian and Renaissance Studies

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

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 668a / CPLT 809a / ENGL 668a / RNST 668a, Translating the Renaissance Jane Tylus

Would there have been a Renaissance without translation? We approach this question by beginning with the first modern treatise on translation, by the Florentine chancellor Leonardo Bruni, and moving on to consider the role of translation in Florence’s and Tuscany’s growing cultural and political mastery over the peninsula—and in Italy’s cultural domination of Europe. We go on to explore the translation of “medieval” into “early modern” Europe, the translation of visual into verbal material, and the role of gender in the practice of translation. Students engage in their own translation projects as we dedicate the last part of the seminar to the diffusion of the Petrarchan sonnet tradition in early modern Europe.

ITAL 691a or b, Directed Reading Staff

ITAL 720a / CPLT 684a / ENGL 574a / RNST 684a, Renaissance Epic David Quint

This course looks at Renaissance epic poetry in relationship to classical models and as a continuing generic tradition. It examines epic type scenes, formal strategies, and poetic architecture. It looks at themes of exile and imperial foundations, aristocratic ideology, and the role of gender. The main readings are drawn from Vergil’s Aeneid, Lucan’s Bellum civile, Tasso’s Gerusalemme liberata, Camões’s Os Lusíadas, and Spenser’s Faerie Queene.

ITAL 780a, Il romanzo del Novecento Millicent Marcus

No literary form is better suited to gauging the convulsive changes wrought by Italy’s entrance into modernity than the novel. Infinitely permeable to the forces of historical circumstance, the novel counters these external forces with its own version of the evolving Italian subject in all its personal richness and complexity. We study the evolution of this literary genre throughout the course of the twentieth century and, in the process, adopt a variety of approaches, including, but not limited to, semiotics, psychoanalysis, narratology, gender, ideological criticism, and “la questione della lingua.” In Italian.

ITAL 781b / CPLT 705b, The Decameron Millicent Marcus

An in-depth study of Boccaccio’s text as a journey in genre in which the writer surveys all the storytelling possibilities available to him in the current repertory of short narrative fiction—ranging from ennobling example to flamboyant fabliaux, including hagiography, aphorisms, romances, anecdotes, tragedies, and practical jokes—and self-consciously manipulates those forms to create a new literary space of astonishing variety, vitality, and subversive power. In the relationship between the elaborate frame-story and the embedded tales, theoretical issues of considerable contemporary interest emerge—questions of gendered discourse, narratology, structural pastiche, and reader response among them. The Decameron is read in Italian or in English. Close attention is paid to linguistic usage and rhetorical techniques in this foundational text of the vernacular prose tradition.

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).