

ITALIAN STUDIES (ITAL)

*** ITAL 0030a / HUMS 0204a, Six Global Perspectives on Knights** Alessandro Giammei

What do Batman (the Dark Knight) and Orlando (Charlemagne's wise paladin) have in common? What is the thread that connects the Jedi knights of *Star Wars* and those that sat around King Arthur's round table? How did medieval history and Renaissance poetry inform the expanded universes of superhero movies and fantasy literature, along with the inexhaustible fan-fiction that further extends and queers them? Chivalry, as a code of conduct and a network of symbols, inspired some of the most entertaining stories of the so-called Western canon, blurring the divide between high and popular culture. It offered storytellers (and nerds) of all ages a set of norms to question, bend, and break—especially in terms of gender. It challenged the very format of books, re-defining for good concepts like literary irony, seriality, and inter-mediality. This seminar proposes six pretty good trans-historical archetypes of fictional knights, combining iconic figures such as Marvel's Iron Man and Italo Calvino's Agilulfo, Ludovico Ariosto's Bradamante and *Game of Thrones'* Brienne of Tarth, Don Quixote and the Mandalorian. By analyzing together their oaths, weapons, armors, and destinies we aim to develop reading and writing skills to tackle any text, from epic and scholarship to TV-shows and comic-books. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Students enroll concurrently with HUMS 0299, Six Global Perspectives Lab. WR, HU o Course cr

*** ITAL 1100a, Elementary Italian I** Staff

A beginning course with extensive practice in speaking, reading, writing, and listening and a thorough introduction to Italian grammar. Activities include group and pairs work, role-playing, and conversation. Introduction to Italian culture through readings and films. Conducted in Italian. L1 1½ Course cr

*** ITAL 1300a, Intermediate Italian I** Staff

The first half of a two-term sequence designed to increase students' proficiency in the four language skills and advanced grammar concepts. Authentic readings paired with contemporary films. In-class group and pairs activities, role-playing, and conversation. Admits to ITAL 140. Conducted in Italian. ITAL 120 or equivalent. L3 1½ Course cr

ITAL 1310a / CPLT 1830a / HUMS 180, Dante in Translation Staff

A critical reading of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and selections from the minor works, with an attempt to place Dante's work in the intellectual and social context of the late Middle Ages by relating literature to philosophical, theological, and political concerns. No knowledge of Italian required. Course conducted in English. HU o Course cr

ITAL 1315b / HIST 1280b / RLST 1600b, The Catholic Intellectual Tradition Carlos Eire

Introductory survey of the interaction between Catholicism and Western culture from the first century to the present, with a focus on pivotal moments and crucial developments that defined both traditions. Key beliefs, rites, and customs of the Roman Catholic Church, and the ways in which they have found expression; interaction between Catholics and the institution of the Church; Catholicism in its cultural and sociopolitical matrices. Close reading of primary sources. HU o Course cr

* **ITAL 1316a, Science and Fiction in Modern Italy** Pierpaolo Antonello

This course explores the diverse ways in which science has been represented, conceptualized, questioned, and reimaged in 20th-century Italian fiction. We will examine how science functions both as a form of modern myth-making and as a mode of experience with profound cognitive and ethical dimensions. Often marked by irony and whimsy, the narratives we study engage with imagined technological futures, portrayals of the posthuman, and the ethical responsibilities of scientists. These literary works are exemplary in the way they define the multifaceted relationship between science and literature, resulting in innovative and influential experiments in narrative form. Our discussion will include critical texts by authors such as Italo Svevo, Dino Buzzati, Italo Calvino, Primo Levi, Leonardo Sciascia, and Daniele Del Giudice. The course will be conducted in English, and all required texts are available in English translation.

ITAL 1500a, Advanced Composition and Conversation: Staff

Discussion of social, political, and literary issues in order to improve active command of the language. Development of advanced reading skills through magazine and newspaper articles, essays, short stories, films, and a novel; enhancement of writing skills through experiments with reviews, essays, creative writing, and business and informal Italian. Classroom emphasis on advanced speaking skills and vocabulary building. Prerequisite: ITAL 140 or equivalent. 15

* **ITAL 3386a / HSAR 4405a / HUMS 3386a, The Dark Side of The Italian**

Renaissance: Sex, Scandals, and Secrets Simona Lorenzini and Deborah Pellegrino

The course explores the more controversial, hidden, and overlooked aspects of the Italian Renaissance. While this period is celebrated for its artistic, cultural, and intellectual achievements, it also had its fair share of intrigue, corruption, and moral complexities. Through love poems, secret letters, intricate networks, and political conspiracies, the course paints a vivid picture of the social and cultural landscape of Renaissance and early modern Italy. We look at the complex figure of Michelangelo, both as an artist and poet, focusing on his queer relationship with Tommaso de' Cavalieri and his friendship with Vittoria Colonna. We then discuss how Renaissance art, often commissioned by powerful individuals—such as Isabella D'Este's patronage of Leonardo da Vinci—was used to promote political or social agendas. We examine the alliances, betrayals, and murders that took place in Renaissance courts and how they shaped the political arena. Topics include the assassination of Lorenzo de' Medici's brother, Caterina de' Medici's agency, and Borgia's rise to power as well as the use of poison as a political instrument in power struggles and schemes to eliminate rivals. The course highlights radical and sharp-witted women writers, such as Moderata Fonte and Arcangela Tarabotti, who protested against a patriarchal society, and gave voice to those who challenged gender norms. By uncovering these compelling narratives through the intersection of literature, religion, history, art, and sexuality, the course offers a more nuanced and critical view on this acclaimed era. This course counts as language across the curriculum (LxC). HU

* **ITAL 3387a / HIST 3265a / RLST 3145a, Francis of Assisi and His Legacy** Carlos Eire

Francis of Assisi is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in European history. As one of Catholicism's most revered saints (often considered to be the greatest

male saint ever), his radical message of voluntary poverty, humility and fraternity significantly revived the Catholic church in a moment of profound crisis, and has since been accepted as one of the foundational elements of European thought, receiving universal admiration from diverse thinkers who are often unaffiliated with the Catholic tradition. This course seeks to take both challenges head on. Its pedagogical intent is three-fold. First, by offering a comprehensive overview of the layered accumulation of narratives that has given us the Francis figure so beloved today, it encourages students to examine the ambiguous boundaries of “reliability” with regard to historical narratives, especially those with a mythopoetic flavor. Other than the well-known “Little Flowers”, students are also exposed to less-known “lives” of the saint and are expected to critically compare these sources. Second, students are invited to Socratically wrestle with Francis’ spiritual legacy in light of its obvious conflict with prevalent notions of the “good life” in contemporary America. Third, students will gain a robust understanding of the Franciscan tradition which has left its footprint in vast regions outside of Europe (Jerusalem, East Asia, the Americas), has generated an important school of theology, and continues to stoke prominent public debates through controversial modern figures such as Padre Pio. Background readings on medieval religious history will also be provided. Topics will include orthodoxy and heresy, factional conflict within religious orders, missionary activities, mysticism, female religious life, and faith and the visual arts. L4, HU

* **ITAL 3460a / MUSI 4300a, The Castrato** Jessica Peritz

This seminar locates the intriguing, anxiety-inducing figure of the castrato at the nexus of fact and fiction, working to disentangle the historical realities of castrato lives from fantasies (both popular and scholarly) about castrato bodies, voices, and sexualities. Though the practice of castration has a long and complicated global history, the Italian term *castrato* denotes a particular group of people within that history: the many thousands of Italian boys, mostly from poor families, who were subjected to surgery between 1550 and 1850 with the express purpose of altering their voices for music-making. As the most celebrated performers of vocal music in early modern Europe, castrati were adored, worshipped, and heaped with wealth – but also mocked, shunned, and denied basic human rights. These and other contradictions characterize the castrato’s fraught place within music history, while also resonating across time with twenty-first-century concerns about constructions of gender, sexuality, race, class, and (dis)ability. HU

* **ITAL 4157a, Italian through Opera and Film** Anna Iacovella

Exploration of opera and contemporary Italian film to improve Italian grammar and conversational skills. Exercises include performances and presentations. Works include the operas *La Bohème*, *Otello*, and *I pagliacci*. L5, HU

* **ITAL 4162a, Introduction to Italian Literature: From the Duecento to the Renaissance** Simona Lorenzini

This is the first course in a sequence studying Italian Literature. The course aims to provide an introduction and a broad overview of Italian literature and culture from the Duecento to the Renaissance, specifically focusing on authors such as Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Ariosto, and literary and artistic movements such as Humanism and Renaissance. These authors and their masterpieces are introduced through readings, works of art, listening materials, videos, and films. Great space is left for in-class discussion and suggestions from students who may take an interest

in specific authors or subjects. This course is interactive and open, and the authors mentioned here are only indicative of the path that we follow. At the end of the course, students are able to analyze and critique literary works of different genres and time periods. The course is conducted in Italian. Prerequisite: ITAL 140 or equivalent. L5, HU

*** ITAL 4305a / FILM 3057a, 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. HU