

ENG 200/294: Imagining Italy

Summer 2009 | Florence, Italy



“Italy is the place for you – the very place – The Paradise of exiles – the retreat of Pariahs [...]”

Percy Bysshe Shelley
January 17, 1820

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Course website: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~cajsa/imaginingitaly>

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and/or by email. It is the student's responsibility to make note of changes and adjust his/her reading/writing schedule accordingly.

Description of the Course: The goal of this course is to foster the ability of students to interpret a wide range of literary texts and to introduce them to the three major genres of literature: drama, poetry and fictional prose. As well, some attention will be paid to the analysis of non-fiction prose as well. Generally, the course will be a six-week semester divided into three components tied directly to literary genres, beginning with drama, moving forward into poetry, and ending with prose (fiction and non-fiction). Students will attend classes four days per week, with two Fridays spent on field trips to regions surrounding Florence, Italy. As well, the class will take trips to several museums and historical sites in the city, including the Science Museum and the English Cemetery, and one will be held in Casa Guidi (the Italian residence of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning).

The literary works studied during the summer session will examine texts that address Italy in some direct way or indirect way and will be broadly ‘comparative’ in its approach. Thus, while a significant emphasis will be placed on literary works in English, these works will be supplemented by work by other European, Italian, and American writers. Note that due to the compressed weekly schedule, the reading load will be substantial, and students should count on spending several hours per day preparing for next day’s class.

Course Requirements: Given that students will not be able to undertake large-scale research, the course is designed to foster critical thinking and critical response and the ability to synthesize information in support of the writing of comparative essays. As well, the course will offer both midterm and final examinations. Finally, students will keep a reading journal within which to

record their critical impressions of assigned reading. The grade for the class will be generated as follows:

Response Essay 1	20%	200 points
Response Essay 2	20%	“
Response Essay 3	20%	“
Midterm Examination	10%	100 points
Final Examination	20%	200 points
Participation	10%	100 points

Course segments

Week 1: (Grand)Tourists and Other Foreigners Behaving Badly.

Week 2: “Hungry Pride and Gainful Cowardice”: Foreigners Fearing Florentines.

Week 3: Art, Liberty, and the Foreign Pursuit of Italy.

Week 4: Shelley, Machiavelli, and Evil Aristocrats, Fictional and Florentine (aka “Italians Behaving Badly. *Very badly.*”)

Week 5: Victorian Authors and Italian History – Authoring Stories

Week 6: “What happens in Florence stays in Florence”? Authors After Italy.

Texts to be purchased before departure for Italy (better price)/or locally:

Foscolo, Ugo. *The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis*. Hesperus Press, 2002. ISBN 1843910020.

Goethe, Wolfgang von. *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Modern Library, 205. ISBN 0812969901.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Modern Library, 2008. ISBN 0812978056.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *The Cenci*. Valancourt Books, 2008. ISBN 1934555142.

Other texts (handouts or other distribution)

Alighieri, Dante.

Blake, William. “The Lacoön”

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Decameron*, IV, 5. (“Lisabetta”)

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. *Poems Before Congress* (selections)

Browning, Robert. “My Last Duchess”

Boswell, James, *Journals* (selections)

Eliot, George. *Bonfire of the Vanities* (selections)

Forster, E. M. *A Room With a View* (selections)

Keats, John. “Isabella, Or, The Pot of Basil”

Savonarola, Girolamo, on vanities (excerpts).

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. “Ode to the West Wind” other poems, letters, diary.

Stendhal [Henri-Marie Beyle], *Naples and Florence: A Journey from Milan to Reggio* (selections)

Swinburne, Algernon Charles, “Andrea del Sarto”

Virgil. “Book 2: *Laocoön*”, *The Aeneid*.