

## CET Syllabus of Record



**Program:** CET Siena

**Course Code / Course Title:** (SN/ITTR 2710) Italian Cultural History

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Italian Studies / Sociology, History, Political Science

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites/Requirements:** None

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### Description

This course introduces students to Italian society by examining the principal aspects of the country's contemporary culture from an historical perspective. Our primary goal is to consider how developments over the past century (and from a few early periods) have influenced the lives of, and formed the outlook of, today's Italians. In other words, we are engaged in the historical search for something quite elusive: Italian "identity." Two key concepts guide this search: nationalism and civic participation.

The course explores how the past has influenced the lives and formed the outlook of contemporary Italians. It will explore and interrogate Italian cultural identities giving particular attention to issues such as the relationship between national and regional belonging, civic participation and its representations, migration, gender relations, and the interaction between local, national and supranational dimensions in Italian culture and history.

Questions about the role of the family, religion and demographic trends reveal the important developments of the Italian home. Civic participation and Italy's political life under both dictatorship and democracy are explored. The examination includes the effects of WWII and, later, global terrorism. The most famous representations of contemporary Italy—the items most associated with "made in Italy"—are also considered. The course concludes with a contrast of Italian and European attitudes as seen through the development of many European Union initiatives.

### Objectives

During this course, students:

- Acquire a significant understanding of contemporary Italy and the country's recent history, social developments and culture through a multi-disciplinary approach using methods from history, sociology, geography, cultural anthropology, social psychology, and political science.
- Are encouraged to explore their own cross-cultural comparison of Italian and American attitudes and culture.

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## Course Requirements

In this course, class lectures are supported by readings and films (taking advantage of Italy's magnificent post-war and contemporary cinema). Students read chapters from analytical and historical works, as well as selected representative fiction. Class sessions devote time to discussion, in which students are expected to participate actively.

The following are required of all students: regular attendance, midterm and final examinations, two short papers, an in-class presentation, and active participation in and contribution to all discussions. Examinations include essay questions and historically significant terms.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class session. Reading assignments average 20 to 40 pages per class.

## Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Participation:          | 15% |
| Midterm Examination:    | 20% |
| Short Papers (2 @ 15%): | 30% |
| In Class Presentation:  | 10% |
| Final Examination:      | 25% |

## Readings

Foot, John M. 1999. "Mass Cultures, Popular Cultures and the Working Class in Milan, 1950–70." *Social History* 24 (2): 134–57.

Forgacs, David. 2013. "I Watussi". *Modern Italy* 18(4): 437-443.

Forgacs, David. 2013. "Looking for Italy's public sphere". *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 18(3): 348-361.

Forgacs, David, and Robert Lumley. 1996. *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ginsborg, Paul. 2012. Review of *European Romanticism and the Italian Risorgimento*. In *The Risorgimento Revisited. Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth Century Italy*, edited by Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall, 19-35. Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Leotta, Alfio. 2011. "Do not Underestimate the Consequences of Love: the Representation of the New Mafia in Contemporary Italian Cinema". *Italica* 888(2): 286-296.

Mancini, Paolo. 2011. "Between Commodification and Lifestyle Politics. Does Silvio Berlusconi provide a New Model of Politics for the Twenty-First Century?" *Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*: 17-32.

Mancosu, Gianmarco. 2021. "Watching films in East Africa (1936-41). Fascist ambitions, contradictions, and anxieties". *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 26 (3): 261-290.

O'Rawe, Catherine. 2017. "Back for good: melodrama and the returning soldier in post-war Italian cinema". *Modern Italy* 22(2): 123-142.

Paulicelli, Eugenia. 2010. "Fashioning Rome: Cinema, Fashion, and the Media in the Postwar Years". *Annali d'Italianistica* 28: 257-278.

Pescosolido, Guido. 2019. "Italy's Southern Question: long-standing thorny issues and current problems". *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 24(3): 441-455.

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- Reiman, Alyssa. "Claiming Livorno: Citizenship, Commerce, and Culture in Italian Jewish Diaspora". In *Italian Jewish networks from the seventeenth to the twentieth century: bridging Europe and the Mediterranean*, edited by Francesca Bregoli, Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, Guri Schwarz, 81-100. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Rhodes, Martin. "Tangentopoli – More than 20 years On". In *The Oxford Handbook of Italian Politics*, 309-324. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Ricci, Steven. "Italy and America: Fascination and (Re)Negotiation." In *Cinema and Fascism: Italian Film and Society, 1922-1943*, 125-155. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2008.
- Sciortino, Giuseppe. "Immigration". In *The Oxford Handbook of Italian Politics*, 632-644. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

### Additional Resources

- Amelio, Gianni, dir. *Colpire al cuore*. 1982; Enzo Porcelli.
- Bellocchio, Marco, dir. *Buongiorno Notte*. 2003; 01 Distribution.
- Bellocchio, Marco, dir. *Vincere*. 2009; 01 Distribution.
- Comencini, Cristina, dir. *La bestia nel cuore*. 2005; Lionsgate Films.
- Crialesi, Emanuele, dir. *Nuovomondo*. 2007; 01 Distribution.
- Crialesi, Emanuele, dir. *Terraferma*. 2007; 01 Distribution.
- De Sica, Vittorio, dir. *Ladri di biciclette*. 1948; Produzioni De Sica.
- Fellini, Federico, dir. *La dolce vita*. 1959; Riama Film.
- Garrone, Matteo, dir. *Gomorra*. 2008; Rai Cinema.
- Giordana, Marco Tullio, dir. *I cento passi*. 2000; Rai Cinema.
- Hofer, Gustav and Luca Ragazzi, dir. *Italy Love It or Leave It*. 2011; Filmstransit.
- Marazzi, Alina, dir. *Vogliamo anche le rose*. 2007; Mikado Film.
- Miniero, Luca, dir. *Benvenuti al sud*. 2010; Medusa Distribuzione.
- Moretti, Nanni, dir. *Il Caimano*. 2006; Sacher Film.
- Risi, Dino, dir. *Il sorpasso*. 1963; INCEI Film.
- Rohrwacher, Alice, dir. *Le meraviglie*. 2014; BIM Distribuzione.
- Rossellini, Roberto, dir. *Roma città aperta*. 1945; Minerva Film.
- Scola, Ettore, dir. *C'eravamo tanto amanti*. 1974; Deantir.
- Taviani, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, dir. *La notte di San Lorenzo*. 1982; Rai.
- Vanzina, Carlo, dir. *Vacanze di Natale*. 1983; Filmauro.
- Wertmuller, Lina, dir. *Pasqualino Settebellezze*. 1975; Medusa Distribuzione.

### Outline of Course Content

Note: Students cover approximately one topic every two weeks.

#### TOPIC 1 – Introduction to the Nation

Background: Cultural History; Geography: land forms and regional variations; Identity: Ancient Past to the 19th Century; Overview: Italy—19th, 20th, 21st Centuries; Renaissance Florence; *Risorgimento*, Nationalism (then and now).

#### TOPIC 2 – Italian Identity

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“Making Italy”, the Prospects and “Making Italians: the 20th Century”; Economic Miracle: 1950s and 1960s; The Southern Question; Migrants and Migration

TOPIC 3 – Southern Italy  
The Southern Question and Organized Crime

TOPIC 4 – Italian Identity at Home  
Family, Family and Gender, Demography, Religion, Italian Minorities

TOPIC 5 – Participation in Civic Life and Politics  
20th Century—Dictatorship to Democracy: Fascism, World War, Resistance, Liberation, and Regime Change. The Republic and its Constitution; Terrorism; 1st to 2nd Republic; Berlusconi.

TOPIC 6 – Italian Icons  
Production and Consumption

TOPIC 7 – Italy and Europe  
Italians and Europeans. The European Union, Multiculturalism in Europe