

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Fall 2010

ITALIAN 2230F/CLC 2291F
The Italian Literary Tradition I: From Dante to the Baroque (former Italian 230F)

Instructor: Luca Pocci
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Classes: Monday and Wednesday 7-8:30pm
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Course Content and Aims

This course is a survey of Italian literature from the Middle Ages to the Baroque. We will focus on Dante's, Cavalcanti's and Petrarca's love poetry, Boccaccio's and Basile's tales, on Machiavelli as playwright and political thinker, and on the visionary utopia of Tommaso Campanella. We will discuss some recurring themes – love, the perception/construction of the other, the secular and the sacred, the nature of power and the ideal state – drawing continuous connections between different works and authors. Special attention will be given to the relationship(s) between the authors under discussion and the historical context in which they lived and wrote. The course is taught in English. All works will be available in English translation. The course aims to achieve the following:

- introduce students to major authors and works in the Italian literary tradition from the Middle Ages to the Baroque;

- illustrate the characteristic features of each of the various genres that will be explored in class (e.g. love poetry, the novella, the political treatise, the utopian dialogue, etc.);
- teach students how to read and discuss poems and prose texts from a literary perspective;
- provide a historical overview of the period considered, with an emphasis on the cultural contexts in which the texts under consideration were created;
- guide students into building analytical and critical skills.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students are expected to have acquired:

- knowledge of various major works in the Italian literary tradition from the Middle Ages to the Baroque;
- an understanding of the contribution of Italian authors to the evolution of a number of literary forms (e.g. love poetry, the treatise on love and the political treatise, the novella, the utopian dialogue, etc.) and themes (e.g. the experience of love, the relation of the secular and the sacred, the nature of power and of the ideal state, etc.);
- an ability to grasp the stylistic and literary features of the given texts;
- an increased awareness of the relationship between literary works and their historical (cultural and political) context;
- an improved ability to express themselves on these and other related topics both orally (through class discussions and presentations) and in writing (through essays).

Course Guidelines

Students are expected to attend all lectures and to complete all required readings before coming to class. Essays must be submitted within the deadline.

Mark Breakdown

attendance and participation	20%
2 oral group-presentations	30%
2 essays (15 pages each)	50%

Guidelines for essays

Essays will assess students' understanding of the texts discussed in class. The topics will be announced far in advance of the deadline (a month before). Accordingly, students are expected to hand in their essays by the due dates (see "course schedule"). A late penalty of 5% per day will apply unless relevant documentation is submitted. The essays will be evaluated for structure, clarity of argument, proper use of academic sources (reference to at least five sources is required), evidence of independent research, and writing quality (style, grammar, punctuation). For citations and bibliography students should follow the MLA format. It is important to keep in mind that a good essay is the result of a coherent structure which, in turn, derives from

- a) the logical development of ideas and/or a thesis;
- b) the internal correlation between the parts and the whole.

All essays should include three sections:

- 1) an introductory section where the text(s) and topic(s) under examination are briefly but thoroughly described and one's principal ideas and/or thesis are clearly introduced;
- 2) a middle section (the main part of the essay) where the text(s) and topic(s) are closely examined and discussed. In this section, the principal ideas and/or thesis must be fully developed and supported by specific evidence and relevant examples. It must also be explained how and why the evidence provided proves the points that one has made and relates back to the main argument presented.
- 3) A conclusion where, to wrap things up, the most important ideas and/or thesis that have been put forward are summarized. This does not mean repeating what one has already said. It means restating one's principal ideas and/or thesis in a concise but different way, so as to make one's conclusion the logical consequence of what has come before.

Guidelines for oral presentations

There will be two group presentations (see "course schedule" for dates). Each group will be formed by 3/4 students and will be assigned a specific topic to cover and present to the rest of the class. The composition of and the topics for the different groups will be determined early on in the course so as to give each group the time and opportunity to meet before the presentations. It is expected that students will decide autonomously how to organize their group work and coordinate their assignment. In other words, the instructor can be consulted for help but will not decide for them. Each student will be evaluated

- 1) for her/his individual performance (i.e., for her/his capacity to develop and illustrate a particular aspect of the topic assigned to her/his group);
- 2) for her/his contribution to the performance of the group (i.e., how her/his individual performance fits in and adds to the discussion of her/his group).

In general, the grading criteria are the following: clarity and quality of exposition, coherence and relevance of each student's discussion, independent research and clear description of sources, capacity to work with a team and to stay within the given time frame (each group will be allotted forty minutes total), effort made to speak using notes rather than reading a "minipaper".



Petrarca

Required Texts (available at the University Bookstore)

Basile, Giambattista. *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*. Nancy L. Canepa trans. Wayne State University Press, 2007. ISBN: 0814328660

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Decameron*. Signet Classics, 2002. ISBN: 0451528662

Campanella, Tommaso. *The City of the Sun*. In *Ideal Commonwealths*. Dedalus Classics, 1989. ISBN 094662626

Dante. *Vita Nuova*. Mark Musa ed and trans. Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0192839357

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince and The Mandrake*. In *The Portable Machiavelli*. Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa ed. and trans. Penguin (Viking portable), 1979. ISBN: 0192837702

Petrarch. *Canzoniere*. Anthony Mortimer trans. Penguin Classics, 2002. ISBN: 0140448160

Peter Brand & Lino Pertile (eds.). *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*. Cambridge University Press: 1999. ISBN: 0521666228



Dante

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 13
General Introduction

September 15
READING:
· Dante, *La vita nuova*
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: "Dante" (pp. 39-69)

September 20
READING
· Dante, *La vita nuova*
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: "Dante" (pp. 39-69)

September 22
READING
· Dante and Guido Cavalcanti (selection of poems)
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: "Poetry" (pp. 5-27)

September 27
READING
· Petrarch, *Canzoniere*: Sonnet I (O You who hear...), Sonnet III (It was the day...),
Sonnet XXXV (Alone and pensive...), Sonnet XLVI (Gold and pearls...),
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: "Petrarch" (pp. 89-107).

September 29
READING
· Petrarch, *Canzoniere*: Sonnet XC (The golden hair...), Song CXXVI (Clear, cool...),
Sonnet CXXXIV (I find no peace...), Sonnet CCLXVII (Alas, the lovely face...),
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: "Petrarch" (pp. 89-107).

October 4
READING
· Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Preface and Introduction; Day I, story 1 (Ser
Cepparello);

- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Boccaccio” (pp. 70-88)

October 6

READING

- Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Day II, story 5 (Andreuccio from Perugia); Day IV, story 1 (Tancredi and Ghismunda); Day IV, story 5 (Elisabetta and the pot of basil);
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Boccaccio” (pp. 70-88)

October 11

Thanksgiving

October 13

READING

- Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Day V, story 8 (Nastagio degli Onesti); Day V, story 9 (Federigo degli Alberighi); Day VI, story 1 (Madonna Oretta); Day VI, story 9 (Guido Cavalcanti); Day VIII, story 2 (The priest of Varlungo)
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Boccaccio” (pp. 70-88)

October 18

READING

- Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Day VIII, story 3 (Calandrino and the heliotrope); Day VIII, story 8 (Two men are intimate friends...); Day IX, story 3 (Calandrino and Master Simone); Day X, story 10 (The marquis of Sanluzzo and Griselda);
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Boccaccio” (pp. 70-88)

October 20

READING

- Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Day III, story 1 (Masetto); Day VII, story 2 (Peronella)
- FILM SCREENING
- *The Decameron* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1971)

October 25

· Presentations

1st ESSAY DUE

October 27

· Presentations

November 1

· Presentations

READING

- Niccolò Machiavelli: From *The Prince*; “Niccolò Machiavelli to Lorenzo de’ Medici” (77-79); Chapter VI (92-95); Chapter IX (107-110)
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: (pp. 181-298)

November 3

- Niccolò Machiavelli: From *The Prince*; Chapter XV (126-28); Chapter XVIII (133-36); Chapter XXV (159-62); Chapter XXVI (162-66)
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: (pp. 181-298)

November 8

READING

- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Mandrake*
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: (pp. 181-298)

November 10

READING

- Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Poetry, Philosophy and Science” (pp. 301-317)

November 15

READING

- Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Poetry, Philosophy and Science” (pp. 301-317)

November 17

READING

- Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Poetry, Philosophy and Science” (pp. 301-317)

November 22

READING

- Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales*: Introduction to the *Tale of Tales*; Day I, 1 (The tale of the Ogre); Day I, 2 (The Myrtle); Day I, 6 (The Cinderella Cat);
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Narrative Prose and Theatre”

November 24

READING

- Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales*: Introduction to the 2nd Day; Day II, 1 (Petrosinella); Day II, 3 (Viola); Introduction to the 3rd Day; Day III, 1 (Cannetella); Day III, (Penta);
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Narrative Prose and Theatre”

November 29

READING

- Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales*: Introduction to the 4th Day; Day IV, 9 (The Raven); Introduction to the 5th Day; Day V, 1 (The Goose); Day V, 6 (Sapia);
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Narrative Prose and Theatre”

December 1

Presentations

December 6
2nd ESSAY DUE
Presentations

December 8
Presentations & Course conclusion

N.B. The schedule for works covered in class is approximate. E-mail will be used extensively for communication. Students must make sure that their UWO account is in order.

Please note: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites (or have special permission from your Dean to waive the prerequisite) and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. If you are not eligible for the course, you may be removed from it at any time, and it will be deleted from your record. In addition, you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions can not be appealed.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's **verbatim** or **paraphrased** text in one's own written work without immediate reference. Verbatim text must be surrounded by quotation marks or indented if it is longer than four lines. A reference must follow right after borrowed material (usually the author's name and page number). Without immediate reference to borrowed material, a list of sources at the end of a written assignment does not protect a writer against the possible charge of plagiarism. The University of Western Ontario uses a plagiarism-checking site called Turnitin.com.

Absenteeism

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness
(<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>)

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading

