

The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Fall 2009

**ITALIAN 2230F/CLC 2291F**

**The Italian Literary Tradition I: From Dante to the Baroque (former Italian 230F)**

**Instructor:** Luca Pocci

**Office:** University College 357

**Classes:** Monday and Wednesday 7-8:30pm, UC 207

**Office Hours:** TBA

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**Course Content and Aims**

The course aims to introduce students to major authors and works in the Italian literary tradition 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.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course the students will have become acquainted with some of the major works of Italian literature from the Middle Ages to the Baroque. They are expected to have grasped the way in which the transformation of literary genres, themes, and devices reflects changes in terms of cultural and political values. At the same time they should have acquired a good understanding of the contribution of Italian authors to the evolution of the literary forms (lyric poetry; the treatise on love; the novella; the Renaissance comedy) and themes (the experience of love; the relation of the secular and the sacred, the nature of power and of the ideal state) which play a central role in European literature and civilization in the historical period under examination. Students will improve their ability to express themselves on these and other related topics, both orally (through in-class presentations) and in writing (in the form of 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%



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 14  
General Introduction

September 16  
READING:  
· Dante, *La vita nuova*  
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Dante” (pp. 39-69)

September 21  
READING  
· Dante, *La vita nuova*  
· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Dante” (pp. 39-69)

September 23

READING

- Dante and Guido Cavalcanti (selection of poems)
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Poetry” (pp. 5-27)

September 28

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 30

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 5

READING

- Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Preface and Introduction; Day I, story 1 (Ser Cepparello);
- *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “Boccaccio” (pp. 70-88)

October 7

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 12

**Thanksgiving**

October 14

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 19

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 21

READING

· Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*: Day III, story 1 (Masetto); Day VII, story 2 (Peronella)

FILM SCREENING

· *The Decameron* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1971)

October 26

· Presentations

**1<sup>st</sup> ESSAY DUE**

October 28

· Presentations

November 2

· 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 4

· 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 9

READING

· Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Mandrake*

· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: (pp. 181-298)

November 11

READING

· Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*

· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Poetry, Philosophy and Science” (pp. 301-317)

November 16

READING

· Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*

· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Poetry, Philosophy and Science” (pp. 301-317)

November 18

READING

· Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*

· *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*: “The Seicento: Poetry, Philosophy and Science” (pp. 301-317)

November 23

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 25

READING

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

November 30

READING

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

December 2

Presentations

December 7

**2<sup>nd</sup> ESSAY DUE**

Presentations

December 9

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.

**Prerequisite:** CLC 1020, or permission of the Department.

**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