

ITALIANA
INTRODUCTION TO ITALIAN CULTURE, THE LOW, THE HIGH AND THE IN-BETWEEN
SUMMER 2018
Professor Patrizia Palumbo
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Texts: *Senso*. Storielle vane by Camillo Boito. Edizioni Garzanti, Milano, 1990

Other texts (articles and essays) will be provided by the instructor

Course Description

“Italiana. Introduction to Italian Culture, the High, the Low, and the In-between” aims at expanding the students’ knowledge of Italian culture and improving and refining their language skills, through writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Although the students will work on the same materials (articles, essays, poems, visual arts, music, and opera) and discuss the same topics, each assignment will include different levels of difficulty in order to be both appropriate and challenging for all the students in the class.

“Italiana” is a content based course in which the students will be exposed to the issues that are debated today in contemporary Italy, such as Italian identity, immigration, emigration, the cult of celebrity, and the truthfulness and deceptiveness of the brand Made in Italy. Naturally, considerable attention will be given to the cultural history of Venice, the enchanting city that will host the course. The students will learn about the distinctive traits of Venetian culture and compare them to those of other Italian cities. In addition to this, they will read *Senso*, a novella by Camillo Boito set in Venice, and will use the various places inhabited by its protagonists to create their own tour of the city. In order to deepen the students’ knowledge of Italian culture and take full advantage of the opportunities offered by being where this culture was and is produced, part of each class will be devoted to prepare for the visits to selected cultural sites, such as palaces museums and nearby islands, and for events like a concert of music by the Venetian composers Antonio Vivaldi and Tomaso Albinoni. Finally, the students will apply their communicative skills in Italian by conversing with the Italian university students involved in the Columbia University Summer Program and by conducting interviews with the Italian people they will become familiar with on the subjects studied and discussed in class.

Grading System

Attendance and Participation	25%
Homework	25%
Compositions	15%
Quizzes	15%
Final Exam (written and oral)	20%

Syllabus

WEEK 1

Introduction:

- ❖ Welcome to Venice!

Content:

- ❖ History and Geography: Venice, the Gate to the Orient
- ❖ Food for Thought: Venice Grandiose Banquets and the People's Table

Readings:

- ❖ *Senso*, novella by Camillo Boito (first part)
- ❖ "Venezia," poem by Diego Valeri
- ❖ History in verses: "Le ultime ore di Venezia," poem by Arnaldo Fusinato

Homework:

- ❖ Review exercises provided by instructor

Visit:

- ❖ Ca' Rezzonico. The Pomp of Eighteenth Century Aristocratic Palaces

Evening Concert:

- ❖ Church of San Vidal. Music by the Venetian Composers Antonio Vivaldi and Tommaso Albinoni

SETTIMANA 2

QUIZ # 1

Content:

- ❖ Italy Seen by Foreigners
- ❖ A Brief History of the Grand Tour

Reading:

- ❖ *Senso* (second part)

Homework:

- ❖ Exercises provided by the instructor

The students must interview foreign tourists, asking them a series of questions decided in class (ex.: Are they disappointed by Italy? Or does Italy correspond to the

image they had before coming here?) What had shaped their image of Italy? Literature? Art? Film? Advertising?

Video:

- ❖ Analysis of scenes from *Roman Holiday*, directed by William Wyler, *Trip to Italy*, dir. by Michael Winterbottom, *Somewhere*, dir. by Sophia Coppola and from other movies

In class composition:

- ❖ How do foreigners see contemporary Italy? What do you think about their observations? Do their observations reveal something about their own culture?

Visits:

- ❖ Doge's Palace

Excursion:

- ❖ Malamocco. A miniature of Venice. From the beach to the table

WEEK 3

Content:

- ❖ Unwanted: Immigrants and Rom: Cursed by the people and loved by the arts: "Gypsies" in Italian painting and opera
- ❖ Immigrazione in Italia: Modalità d'ingresso
- ❖ Immigrati: da dove vengono e come arrivano in Italia

Readings:

- ❖ *Senso* (third part)
- ❖ "Rom e Sinti, le comunità nomadi in Italia. I miti da sfatare"
- ❖ "Più paura che solidarietà. Così vediamo gli immigrati"

Homework:

- ❖ The students must interview Italian people, asking a series of questions decided in class about immigrants and nomadic communities in Italy

Visit:

- ❖ The House of Carlo Goldoni. Venice and its Theater

SETTIMANA 4

QUIZ # 2

Content:

- ❖ Contemporary Italian Emigration

Readings:

- ❖ *Senso* (quarta parte)
- ❖ “Si salvi chi può. La fuga dei talenti”

Video:

- ❖ Aumenta il numero d'italiani in cerca di fortuna. *Emergency Exit*, documentary by Roberta Fili

Homework:

- ❖ Exercises provided by the instructors
- ❖ Interviews: The students must interview Italian people, asking them a series of questions on contemporary Italian emigration

SETTIMANA 5**Content:**

- ❖ Stardom and Celebrity in Contemporary Italy. Tronisti, Veline, Wags, and Meteorine

Readings:

- ❖ *Senso* by Camilo Boito (fifth part)
- ❖ “Le wag italiane allo stadio”

Films:

- ❖ *Reality*, directed by Matteo Garrone
- ❖ Analysis of clips taken from *To Rome with Love* directed by Woody Allen

Homework:

- ❖ Review Exercises provided by the instructors
- ❖ Interviews: The students must interview Italian people, asking them a series of questions, discussed with classmates and instructor, on the celebrities that most fascinate them. Why and how frequently do they read the news concerning their lives? How does this enrich their lives?

In class composition:

- ❖ The Cult of Celebrity in Contemporary Italy

SETTIMANA 6

FINAL EXAM: The content of the final exam will regard *Senso* by Camillo Boito

Content:

- ❖ Made in Italy

Readings:

- ❖ *Senso* (sixth part)
- ❖ “Dop? Il caso della mozzarella”
- ❖ “Pizzi, ceramiche e centrini. La nuova frontiera dei falsari”

Homework:

- ❖ The students must interview foreign and Italian people, asking a series of questions concerning the brand Made in Italy. Where is Made in Italy really made today?

Visit and Excursion:

- ❖ Venice Lace Museum
- ❖ Murano Glass Museum

BUONE VACANZE!