Italian Fall 2016 Course Descriptions

Undergraduate

ROIT 20300 – Let’s Talk Italian             W 3:30-4:30
Patrick Vivirito
This is a one-credit conversation course meant to accompany your regular classroom study of Italian language, literature, and culture. It will not review grammar, but allow you the opportunity to practice your Italian with other language students while considering specific aspects of Italian culture. There will be no written work. The instructor may send articles or assign brief research assignment or vocabulary preparation prior to class to facilitate discussion.

CSEM 23101 - On Humor: Understanding Italy  MW 2-3:15
J. Welle
This College Seminar explores questions of humor, laughter, and comedy through a rich variety of classical and modern texts. We begin with examples of Greek and Roman comedy, and proceed to examine Commedia dell’arte, an improvisational form of theatre originating in Italy that was influential throughout Europe for over two centuries. We encounter Shakespeare and Goldoni and analyze their relationship to both classical comedy and to Commedia dell’arte. Having traced the contours of ancient comedy and the roots of modern comedy, we turn to a major twentieth-century thinker on humor: Luigi Pirandello. Pirandello’s tragic-comic vision is explored through short stories and a masterpiece of modern theatre, “Six Characters in Search of an Author.” Next, we analyze a series of Italian film comedies discussing them in the historical context of Italy over the second half of the twentieth century.

Throughout this trajectory, our primary focus will be on the nature of humor and comic forms as expressed in classical comedy from Ancient Greece and Rome up to contemporary film comedies; our secondary focus will be on why comedy from the ancient classical inheritance through the Commedia dell’arte to contemporary film comedy provides a key to understanding Italy both as an heir to an ancient civilization and as a lively modern country.

Students will be evaluated on their preparation for and participation in class discussions, on leading class discussions, on oral presentations, and on a final exam. To further develop skills of speaking and oral presentation, the course will also incorporate aspects of “Readers’ Theatre” as students will learn to read sections from the various plays out loud in class with dramatic effect.

ROIT 30207 – Survey of Italian Renaissance Art TR 2-3:15
R. Glass
This course provides an introduction to the art and architecture produced in Italy from around 1300 to the mid-sixteenth century. Studying some of Western art history’s best known artists, such as Donatello, Botticelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian, we will explore the ways in which art was commissioned, made, and functioned in Renaissance Italy, and various approaches art historians have taken in interpreting its meaning. Topics will include artistic media and techniques; stylistic and iconographic analysis; humanism and renewed interest in the legacy of classical antiquity; sacred images and spaces; patronage, identity, and the social functions of art; and the changing status of artists and the arts themselves. Taught in English; counts as an Italian Studies course for the Majors and Minor. CROSSLIST ARHI 30310

ROIT 30310 – Passage to Italy
A. Leone, C. Moevs
TR 11-12:15 / MW 3:30-4:45
In this fifth-semester course you will survey the rich panorama of Italian culture from the origins to the present, and learn to analyze and understand works drawn from the major literary and artistic genres (lyric poetry, prose, theatre, epic, novel, film, opera, contemporary song, as well as art and architecture). At the same time you will review and consolidate your grasp of the Italian language at an advanced level. In short, the course should give you the tools to make your own passage into the rich, enchanting, beautiful world of Italy. Taught in Italian; counts as a Lit-Culture course for the major. Pre-requisite: ROIT 27500 or 20215 or equivalent. Strongly recommended for majors and supplementary majors. LANG - College Language Req, LIT - Univ. Req. Literature, MESE - European Studies Course.

ROIT 30711 – Medieval and Renaissance Italian Literature and Culture
C. Moevs
TR 2-3:15
This course helps you to understand and interpret the most important works of medieval and Renaissance Italian literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, in their historical, social, and cultural context. We will analyze key texts from Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, and Ariosto, among others, and learn to appreciate key works of art and architecture by Duccio, Giotto, Ghiberti, Donatello, Brunelleschi, Alberti, Masaccio, Botticelli, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael, among others. We will seek to make the historical and social context come alive, especially in Florence, Rome, Milan, Urbino, and Venice, and focus on some of the most extraordinary personalities of an age of great personalities (e.g., Isabella d’Este, Federico da Montefeltro, Michelangelo, Pietro Aretino). The ultimate aim is to reflect in an informed and sensitive way on the great political, social, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual changes that occur between 1200 and 1550 in Italy, the epicenter of one of the most extraordinary periods of human accomplishment in world history, and on how those changes reflect a profound and shifting understanding of self, of the world, and of God. The course also aims to help you speak, understand, and write Italian with more confidence, accuracy, and ease (we will spend a little time in each class reviewing and practicing more sophisticated structures in the language). Requirements include brief discussion forum entries, four brief
analytical papers (2-3 pages each), a midterm, and a final. Taught in Italian; counts as a Lit-Culture course; required for majors and supplementary majors in the Lit Culture concentration; this course or ROIT 30721 required for majors in the Italian Studies concentration. Cross-listed with MI 30577.

**ROIT 40114 – Dante’s Divine Comedy: The Christian Universe as Poetry**

Z. Baranski

Dante is the greatest religious poet of Western culture, and his great epic poem, the *Divine Comedy*, offers a remarkable and original synthesis of his view of the fundamental relationship between God and humanity. The course offers an introduction to Dante’s *Commedia* (the title of the poem is *Comedy* and not *Divine Comedy* as is commonly believed) by focusing on the first of its three parts, *Inferno*, while also paying significant attention to its other two parts, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. Classes principally concentrate on providing readings of individual cantos. (The course is divided into 4 introductory lectures, 12 classes on *Inferno*, 7 on *Purgatorio*, and 6 on *Paradiso*.) At the same time, broader issues central to Dante’s masterpiece will be discussed. In particular, attention will be paid to Dante’s ties to classical and Christian culture, his political views, his ideas on language, his involvement in contemporary intellectual debates, his efforts to use poetry for ethical and religious ends, and his literary experimentation (including his perplexing choice of title for his masterpiece). The course is taught in English. Dante’s poem, too, will be read in English translation, though students with a reading knowledge of Italian are encouraged to read it in both languages. The translation is that found in the annotated bilingual edition by Robert and Jean Hollander (the three-volume—*Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*—paperback edition is published by Anchor Books, an imprint of Random House). Counts as an Italian Studies course for the Major or Minor. Cross list with MI 40565/MI 60552, LLRO 40114.

**ROIT 40733 – Italo Calvino: Dal neorealismo al postmodernismo**

M. McLaughlin

Italo Calvino (1923-85) was Italy’s finest twentieth-century novelist. His works have been translated into over 45 languages in 60 different countries, and some of these (such as *Il barone rampante* and *Le città invisibili*) have become cult or classic works in the English-speaking world. This course highlights the constant variety and innovation in Calvino’s output, starting with his early neorealist work, *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (1947), before exploring his fantasy trilogy *I nostri antenati* (1960), and then moving on to his most famous postmodern works, *Le città invisibili* (1972) and *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore* (1979). The course will be taught in Italian. Counts as a Lit-Culture course for the Major or Minor.
**NOTE:** ALMOST ANY COURSE IN THE UNIVERSITY OR FROM ABROAD WHOSE CONTENT IS AT LEAST HALF ON AN ITALIAN SUBJECT (INCLUDING CLASSICS, ART HISTORY, HISTORY, MUSIC, POLITICALS, ETC....) MAY COUNT AS AN ITALIAN STUDIES COURSE (A COURSE IN ENGLISH ON AN ITALIAN SUBJECT) TOWARD A MAJOR OR MINOR. IT NEED NOT HAVE AN ROIT CROSSLIST. BUT IF IT DOES NOT HAVE AN ROIT CROSSLIST YOU MUST HAVE IT APPROVED BY YOUR ADVISER TO COUNT FOR A MAJOR OR MINOR.

**Graduate**

**ROIT 63010 – Introduction to Advanced Studies in Italian**  TBD
C. Moevs, J. Welle, Z. Baranski
A two-semester course, meeting one hour a week, co-taught by all the Italian T&R faculty. The course will ensure a solid foundation in the precise analysis of literary texts and other cultural artifacts in the context of Italian Studies, including a survey of metrics, rhetorical figures, narrative techniques, and film analysis. It will also provide an introduction to key terms and forms of critical and literary theory, and develop the skills necessary to pursue advanced independent research projects, including familiarity with bibliographic resources and research methods. During the course of the year students will also review a university-level manual/anthology of Italian literature. Required in their first year of all Master's and Doctoral candidates specializing in Italian. Passing the final exam of this course is a prerequisite for continuing studies in Italian.

**ROIT 63253 – Leon Battista Alberti and the Italian Renaissance**  TR 2-3:15
M. McLaughlin
Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) is one of the most well-known figures of the Italian Renaissance. His extraordinary range of abilities as a writer, architect, art theorist and even athlete earned him the title of the first Renaissance or Universal man, according to Jacob Burckhardt in his influential work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). Naturally Burckhardt's categories have been seriously contested over the last 150 years and interest in Alberti has risen enormously recently (the secondary bibliography has increased exponentially in the last 50 years). This course will deal with major problematic concepts such as Renaissance and Humanism as well as exploring the controversial figure of Alberti. The key works to be studied are his autobiography (*Vita*), his dialogue on the family (*I libri della famiglia*) and his treatises on painting (*Della pittura*) and architecture (*De re aedificatoria*). The course will be taught in English. Crosslist LIT 73028, MI 63569.

**ROIT 63510 – Film and Literature in Italy**  W 3:30-6:15
This course examines one of the key dynamics of the twentieth century in Italy: the interactions between film and literature. Three interrelated phenomena will be analyzed: 1) the interactions with, and contributions to, cinema and film culture by literary writers, 2) films based on literary texts, and 3) the influence of film on literature. From pre-cinematic media such as the magic lantern and the illustrated book in the nineteenth century to the emergence of digital forms of cinema and new media technologies in the 1990s, Italian writers react to the moving image and take part in shaping both its development and its cultural reception. Along the way, Italian writers produce a rich body of “cinema literature”: interviews and articles, criticism, theoretical interventions, and manifestos, as well as poems, short stories, novels, and plays that demonstrate the impact of cinema on literature. In sum, the relationship between film and literature in Italy sheds light on literary history, on the history of cinema, on the history of intellectuals and media, and on cultural history more broadly. In addition to weekly films, and the preparation of readings, assignments will include 1) class presentations of articles, films and readings, 2) leading class discussions, 3) a research presentation, 4) a research paper. CL LIT 73981