

ROIT40550-01

Italian Theater: From the commedia dell'arte to Goldoni

Prof. Francesco Cotticelli

TR 2:00 – 3:15 pm



Before the expression “Commedia dell’Arte” established itself in the tradition of Western countries, all performances which were staged resorting to the techniques of improvisation were known as “Commedie all’italiana”, “commedie mercenarie”, or “commedie improvvisate”. The aim of the course, taught in English, is to explore the world of those practitioners who founded the modern theater, focusing on their adventurous lives and careers, on their professional methods, on the materials they used to revive old plots and stock characters, raising admiration for their unprecedented skills, or posing questions about the relationship between scripts and scenarios, memory and transformation. Starting from an overview of Italian dramaturgy between the 16th and the 17th century, the course will examine through the lens of theater sources (above all, Perrucci’s treatise *Dell’arte rappresentativa premeditata, ed all’improvviso*) the basic materials of improvising actors (*generici, lazzi, canovacci*), their interactions with two masterpieces of European theater (*Convitato di pietra-Don Giovanni; Basalisco del Bernagasso*), following the thread which leads directly to Goldoni’s early plays and the attempts to reform comic theater by providing actors with a new discipline and new resources. The course will be taught in English; English translations will be provided for all materials. Cross-listed with: LLRO, English, FTT, European Studies.