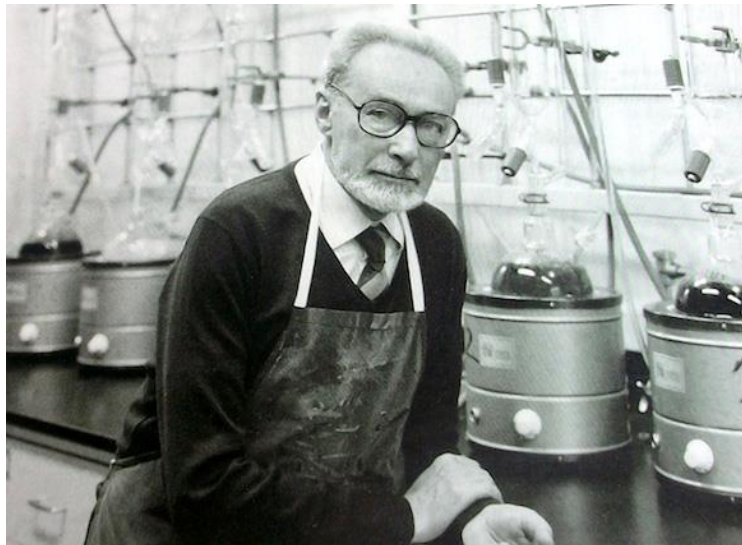


ROIT20610-01

**Literature, Science,
Humanity, and Friendship:
Reading Primo Levi**

Prof. Vittorio Montemaggi

MW 3:30 – 4:45 pm



Taught in English, this course we will explore the profound connections between literature, science, and what it means to be human. We will carry out such exploration by reading together the work of Jewish Italian writer and chemist Primo Levi, doing so in the light of one of the central ethical principles governing Levi's work: friendship. Jewish Italian writer and chemist Primo Levi is considered one of the most important authors of the 20th Century. Levi's *The Periodic Table* (1975) has been referred to as "the best science book ever", and his *If This Is A Man* (1947/1958) is widely regarded as one of the most thought-provoking accounts of humanity ever to have been written. We will read both of these, together with a number of other works by Levi, including poems, essays, short stories, and a novel. By doing so we will give ourselves the opportunity of diving deeply and fruitfully into reflection on some vital questions: what is a human being? what is the relationship between friendship and truth? what is the relationship between suffering and knowledge? how are the humanities and the sciences connected to each other? Cross-listed with Philosophy, Religion & Lit, Peace Studies, European Studies, Science Technology, Values, University Literature.