ENG 202 - Studies in Fiction

Contemporary Grand Tours. 
Modern English-Language and Italian Writers travelling throughout the Italian and the American Culture

SPRING 2017
Professor Alessandro Raveggi, Ph.D.
E-mail: alessandro.raveggi@gmail.com
Room 107

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers the opportunity to read and discuss a selection of texts written by relevant English-language and Italian Writers (Hawthorne, James, Hemingway, Calvino, Pavese, Malaparte, Levi, Lahiri, Ondaatje, Malamud), underlining a mutual influence and attraction between Italy as a Land of the Past History and America as a Land of Modernity, and under the broad topic of Travel Experience. In each writer, using chapters, short stories or excerpts from famous novels or collections, we will focus on their peculiar interpretation of travel experience and the way to express it, also using categories such as: Love, Adventure, Identity, Cultural Difference, Loss, Dislocation, Community, Emigration, Urban Wanderings. Throughout this path, which ideally connects the presence of the American First-comers to Italy in the XIX Century to the Contemporary Italy and its authors, the student will be able to confront his/her own experience traveling in Italy and in Europe in a dynamic and personal way. To this purpose, the class will include other media such as movies, radio broadcasting, and paintings, as well as two Site Visits to relevant museums for the Anglo-American community and the idea of Florence as a Modern City for contemporary foreign travellers. In this vein, students will be required to actively participate in class, to write two assigned papers based on visits and conduct a presentation in class in group as discussion leaders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students are expected to accomplish the following objectives:

- learn how to think critically and autonomously, engaging in complex reasoning and expressing their thoughts clearly throughout their written works and presentations in class, class discussions and written assignments;
- learn the critical instruments to read, study and understand texts and be able to use them to discuss Modern Italian and American issues, with constant references to additional readings, screenings, site-visits, other media resources, but also to contemporary issues related to the program;
- reach a methodology to answer and rise questions about Modern Literature and Culture's topics and travel experiences, related to his/her personal travel and cultural experience in Italy and Europe;
- participate in class in group works and presentations, showing the ability to set up a discussion (as a discussion leader), to defend his/her thoughts, supporting them with objective references.
- understand how literary interpretation and narrative analysis is an objective and significant instrument to problem solving, learning, or discovering solutions for other fields as well.

REQUIRED READINGS

- **Course Reader**
  - **One book chosen from this LIST 1 (before the Midterm):**
    E. Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, Scribner, 2014
  - **One book chosen from this LIST 2 (before the Final Exam)**

CLASSES MEET AND OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10.30 to 11.30 AM
Office hours: by appointment

Teaching Method

As a scholar, I have discovered that teaching is a mutual learning relationship. This is why I always favor classroom dynamics that allow vivid debate and constant students’ feedback. I use specific methodologies depending on the topics of my course and the audience’s level. These include class discussion, group work, oral presentations and assignments about a book, an article, an author or a larger topic. In my Literature class, I frequently use different materials and tools: excerpts from books, digital documents, movies and documentaries, and, when possible, encounters and readings with contemporary authors. I invite my students to come and see me during office hours to discuss readings and papers they are working on. I constantly try to motivate them by relating the texts I present in class to their personal interests and taste, and by responding to their knowledge development in a critical but constructive way. My aim is to help them think clearly about issues on literature, culture and contemporary moral issues, inciting them to build reasoned and original textual interpretations and a critical stance on the questions.

GRADING CRITERIA

Essays and papers will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. CLEARNESS:
   how clearly and specifically the thesis statement sets forth the subject and the purpose of the essay;
2. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING:
   how well the essay demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the material with references to assignments and class discussions;
3. COMPLETENESS + COMPLEXITY OF IDEAS:
   how well the essay deals with the topic—completeness of thought, depth of understanding, complexity of ideas;
4. SUPPORTING IDEAS:
   how well the examples support or illustrate the points made and how extensive and thorough the use of such support material is.
5. COHERENCY:
   how coherent, logical, and well-ordered the ideas, thoughts, and examples are;
6. ORIGINALITY: how original the ideas are;
HOW YOUR PAPER WILL BE GRADED:

A (Excellent)  Ideas and analysis. Greatly exceeds expectations and develops in a consistently excellent manner. Readers will learn something from this piece of writing. Ideas are original or especially insightful for the level of the class. Organization. Organizational plan is clear, as is the thesis and purpose of the piece. Thesis is original and interesting. Development and support. Develops its points effectively, logically, and in an original shape. Assertions are supported by evidence. Paragraphs are unified, coherent, and complete. Style and Mechanics. Sentences are fluent, elegant, and a pleasure to read. They are free from errors, although there may be a minor error in the piece. Papers will be free or almost entirely free from mechanical errors.

B (Good)  Ideas and analysis. Exceeds expectations and develops in a good but perhaps predictable shape. Paper will cover the most logical points about a piece of writing but may not provide as much new analysis. Organization. Organization and thesis are discernable but could be clearer. Thesis is solid but less innovative than in an excellent paper. Some transitions may be missing. Development and support. Includes a thesis idea that is generally supported by evidence, although some unsupported generalizations may occur. Some paragraphs may lack unity. Style and Mechanics. Demonstrates correct sentence construction for the most part, although some sentences may be awkward or unclear. Minor errors in grammar may occur. One or two instances of an incorrect use of words, spelling errors, or punctuation errors such as missing possessive apostrophes may occur.

C (Satisfactory)  Ideas and analysis. Meets expectations but does not go beyond them. May respond to the assignment in a satisfactory but predictable or superficial way. May have more plot summary than analysis. Organization. Exhibits generally logical organization but may not provide a clear connection to the thesis. Development and support. Development may consist of obvious generalizations that only tell readers what they already know or lack support from the text. Support may be limited or lacking. Style and Mechanics. May demonstrate little sentence variety. Grammatical errors such as comma splices, fragments, agreement errors, vague or awkward phrasing may obscure the meaning of an otherwise good paper. May contain odd word choices, consistent errors in punctuation, or problems with usage.

D (Unsatisfactory)  Ideas and analysis. Limited ideas and cursory development; does not meet expectations or the terms of the assignment on one or more dimensions. Organization. Focus may be unclear or the essay may lack an arguable thesis. May lack adequate organization or sufficient support for its argument. Paragraphs may be scantily developed. Development and support. Relies on generalizations rather than support. Paragraphs may lack unity, coherence, and completeness. Style and Mechanics. Contains many errors in sentence construction, including comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, agreement problems, and awkward sentences. Some parts may be difficult to read and interpret. May demonstrate significant deficiencies in punctuation, word choice, and spelling.

F (Unacceptable)  Ideas and analysis. Fails to meet expectations for ideas and analysis. May include too much plot summary or so many quotations that analysis is missing. Organization. Focus many be diffuse or unclear. Sentences and paragraphs do not follow a logical outline. Development and support. Thesis may be missing. Generalizations may be used in place of analysis. Insufficient development for the requirements of the assignment. Style and Mechanics. Serious errors such as comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, and agreement problems obscure meaning. A paper at this level may be difficult, frustrating, or confusing to read. Contains numerous errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A paper will receive an “F” if it is plagiarized in whole or in part.

Gonzaga in Florence Attendance Policy

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

One extra absence:
1. by lowering the attendance and participation grade as determined by the professor

Two extra absences
2. by lowering the final grade by a whole letter grade

Three extra absences
3. by grading the whole course F
Course: ENG 202 Studies in Fiction SPRING 2017
Professor Alessandro Raveggi - alessandro.raveggi@gmail.com
Office hours: by appointment

ASSESSMENT

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Class attendance, group work and participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Two (2) Written Assignments (2-3 pages each)</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>Presentation in Class – In group (dates TBA)</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>Midterm Exam (1 Take Home Paper + Short Answers) THU FEB 23</td>
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<td>30%</td>
<td>Final Exam (1 Take Home Paper + Short Answers) Date TBA</td>
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Class evaluation: online evaluations will be required for each course.

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TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Note: We will stick to this schedule as closely as possible, but please be advised that this calendar is subject to some minor modification. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get in touch with a class member or with me to find out the following week’s material and activities.

WEEK 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION / First Americans in Italy

Mon Jan 9: Introduction to the Course + Presentation of the Program and students
Tue Jan 10: Introduction to American Writers in Italy: Hawthorne, James…
Thu Jan 12: N. HAWTHORNE, excerpts from The Marble Faun (Selection - Reader)

WEEK 2: HENRY JAMES and The Portrait of a Lady

Mon Jan 16: H. JAMES, The Madonna of the Future (Short Story - Reader)
Tue Jan 17: H. JAMES, The Portrait of a Lady (Selection - Reader)
Thu Jan 19: J. CAMPION - Introduction to Jane Campion’s Victorian Cinema – Screening of the movie based on the James’s novel + discussion

WEEK 3: LOSS – WWI Italian Culture & Lost Generation in Italy + SITE VISIT (TBC)

Mon Jan 23: E. HEMINGWAY, From A Farewell to Arms (Selection – Reader)
Tue Jan 24: E. HEMINGWAY, A Very Short Story and In Another Country (Short Story – Reader)
Wed Jan 25: (10:30 – 12:30 am) SITE VISIT TO STIBBERT MUSEUM (TBC)

WEEK 4: NEO-REALISM and the American Dream (Pavese and Calvino)

Mon Jan 30: C. PAVESE, The Moon and The Bonfires (Selection – Reader)
Tue Jan 31: C. PAVESE, The Moon and The Bonfires (Selection 2 – Reader)
Thu Feb 2: I. CALVINO on America (Hermit in Paris) (Selection – Reader) and Group Work – 1st assignment due (Stibbert Museum)
WEEK 5: NEO-REALISM and the Americans (Calvino and Rossellini)

Mon Feb 6: I. CALVINO, The Path to the Spiders’ Nest (Selection – Reader)
Tue Feb 7: R. ROSSELLINI - SCREENING of the movie Paisà by R. Rossellini
Thu Feb 9: R. ROSSELLINI - Group Work on the movie Paisà

WEEK 6: CURZIO MALAPARTE

Mon Feb 13: C. MALAPARTE, Kaputt
Tue Feb 14: C. MALAPARTE, The Skin (Part I)
Thu Feb 16: Discussion on the Final Presentation’s Topic – Guideline for Take Home Part – C. MALAPARTE, The Skin (Part II) - Study Guide for Midterm Exam delivering

WEEK 7: LIBERATION / Midterm Exam

Mon Feb 20: Review for MIDTERM EXAM
Tue Feb 21 Review for MIDTERM EXAM
Thu Feb 23: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK: MON-FRI FEB 27 – MARCH 3

WEEK 9: SITE VISIT MUSEO NOVECENTO + CONTEMPORARY SUGGESTIONS

*Schedule TBC (2 hrs. / 1 or 2 groups) – SITE VISIT #2: Museo 900 Firenze – 2nd assignment (Reaction Paper on the museum)
Thu March 8: MUSEO 900 / Discussion in class on the Museum

WEEK 10: CARLO LEVI – TRAVELING SOUTHWARD AND ABROAD

Mon March 13: C. LEVI, Christ Stopped at Eboli (Selection 1 - Reader)
Tue March 14: C. LEVI, Christ Stopped at Eboli (Selection 2 – Reader) with movie screening
Thu March 16: C. LEVI, Essays on India (excerpts – Reader)

2nd assignment due on MUSEO 900

WEEK 11: CONTEMPORARY SUGGESTIONS: Ondaatje and Malamud

Mon March 20: M. OndaatJE, The English Patient (Selection 1 – Reader)
Tue March 21: M. OndaatJE, The English Patient (Selection 2 – Reader)
Thu March 23: B. Malamud, A Maid’s Shoes (Short story - Reader) - Group work

WEEK 12: CONTEMPORARY SUGGESTIONS: Lahiri

Mon March 27: J. Lahiri, Going Ashore (Short story – Reader – PART 1)
Tue March 28: J. Lahiri, Going Ashore (Short story – Reader – PART 2)
Tue March 30: Final presentations in class (in group – 40’) + STUDY GUIDE FINAL EXAM delivering
WEEK 13: GENERAL REVIEW

Mon April 3: Final presentations in class (in group – 40’)
Tue April 4: General Review on the program (Study Guide)
Thu April 6: General Review on the program

WEEK 14: FINAL EXAMS

Final Exam TBA (April 7-13)

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

ALESSANDRO RAVEGGI (Firenze, 1980) Author and Professor of Modern Italian Literature at New York University and ISI Florence, World Literature at Pepperdine University and Studies in Fiction at Gonzaga University. He held a post-doc at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México for 2 years. He is the author of several books and publications in fiction, non-fiction and poetry. http://about.me/alessandroraveggi

I am looking forward to working with you this semester!