Fall 2015 Undergraduate Course Offerings

Italian Language Courses - Elementary through Intermediate (3-4 credits)
Placement tests available to determine level. Contact our office for more information.

Italian Culture
01:560:231 (3 credits)
Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:10 PM - 2:30 PM FH-A6 CAC
Through a series of multimedia lectures and readings, students are introduced to the history and culture of Italy from antiquity to the early modern period. Topics include the emergence of the Italian language and literature, medieval and Renaissance art, sacred and secular music, politics and political theory, and the Italian contribution to the Age of Discoveries. Taught in English. No knowledge of Italian is required. This course satisfies the Core Curriculum Learning Goal: AH (o and p).

A Cultural Tour of Italy
01:560:248 (1.5 credits) Wednesdays 6:00 PM-9:00 PM (first class is on October 28) SC-219 CAC
This mini-course, taught in English, offers students a cultural tour of Italy, focusing on some of its most fascinating cities (Naples, Rome, Urbino, Florence, and Venice), seen from a variety of perspectives and a wide spectrum of media (literary texts, photographs, visual artworks, documentaries, and films). We will address select texts spanning from the Middle Ages to today, identifying traces of Italian identity. We will touch upon crucial paradigm shifts and cultural phenomena, such as the Renaissance and modernity. In order to explore these complex dynamics we will discuss works by foreign visitors as well as Italian masterpieces (by Dante, Boccaccio, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Cellini, etc.). The creations of these authors and artists, striving toward aesthetic excellence, illustrate the development of a rich cultural heritage, imbued with a strong sense of historical continuity.

Italian Composition and Stylistics
01:560:250 (3 credits) Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30 PM - 5:50 PM CAC
Italian 250 aims to improve written proficiency in Italian through an in-depth study of complex syntactic structures and extensive vocabulary building. Taught in Italian, this course focuses on writing and revising. Students will have the opportunity to practice and refine their writing skills by analyzing and discussing in class a varied selection of texts that are drawn from a diverse range of genres (literary texts by contemporary writers such as Sciascia, Buzzati, Baricco; newspaper articles; reviews; and analytical essays). After studying their formal and stylistic features as well as their specific ways of structuring the argument, students are asked to write and revise a minimum of seven compositions in different genres. This course satisfies the Core Curriculum Learning Goals: AH (q) and W (s2, t, v).

Italian Icons
01:560:258 (1.5 credits) Wednesdays 6:00 PM-9:00 PM (first class is on October 28)
This mini-course, taught in English, provides an introduction to Italian culture, seen through some of Italy’s most prominent thinkers and artistic movements. Course begins with love stories from Dante’s Divine Comedy and Boccaccio’s Decameron, followed by a study of Western cultural icons such as Leonardo, Machiavelli, Galileo, and Verdi. Our investigation will also tackle Futurism, a seminal avant-garde movement, and Fascism, a dark, albeit influential, historical period, along with some masterpieces of Italian cinema, touching upon Neorealism and its aftermath. The course examines the worldwide appeal and influence of contemporary Italian cuisine, design, and fashion. Along with literary texts and critical essays, in our investigation we will rely on a wide range of visual materials (ads, slides, clips from documentaries and features films).

Introduction to Literature I
01:560:305 (3 credits) Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:50 PM - 4:10 PM SC-114, BH-211 CAC
This course explores Italian Literature from the beginnings to the 16th century, starting with early texts in Italian vernacular, the religious poetry of the 13th century, and continuing with the writings of canonical writers such as Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarcha, Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Tasso. The course addresses different literary genres (lyric and epic poetry, short story, epistolography) in their historical and cultural context. Active participation in the discussion of literary texts is required.
Dante & Medieval Culture
01:560:315 (3 credits)  Mondays and Wednesdays 3:20 PM - 4:40 PM LSH-A143 LIV
Dante’s *Divine Comedy* has been interpreted as a compendium of medieval culture. It incorporates all disciplines known at the time, such as philosophy, theology, art, history, mythology, spirituality, mysticism, and theatrics. While being the foundational masterpiece of Italian language, the *Comedy* reaches out to numerous other cultures in the Mediterranean area and beyond, to create what we (with our modern sensibility) could easily name an international epic. *(continued)* Among the topics it covers are Jewish tradition, Islam, Provençal poetry, as well as Scholastic philosophy from the University of Paris. Through a close reading of the text this course will investigate all the interactions of these cultures and traditions within Dante’s poetry. We will investigate the rhetorical concept of allegory and show how Dante’s journey is intended to be read at different levels of signification. As narration of an afterlife experience, the poem closely scrutinizes moral issues and their consequences, which are applicable to any era and any place. Students will be required to “translate” such concepts into the contemporary world. Taught in English. No knowledge of Italian is required. This course satisfies the Core Curriculum Learning Goal: AH (o and p).

Advanced Conversation Through Current Events
01:560:321 (3 credits)  Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM MU-113 CAC
Taught in Italian, this course examines various aspects of contemporary Italian culture through the discussion of a variety of print and non-print materials: articles, selected readings, videos, literary and cinematic texts on contemporary Italian politics and society.

Sex, Death, and Damnation: Introduction to Italian Opera
01:560:335 (3 credits)  Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30 PM - 5:50 PM HH-A5 CAC
After an introduction to Western music from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the course will present six masterpieces of Italian opera in the three centuries from Monteverdi to Puccini, using CDs and DVDs. Assignments include two short papers (3-5 pp.), a midterm, and a final exam.

Italian Cinema and Literature
01:560:347 (3 credits)  Mondays and Wednesdays 1:10 PM – 2:30 PM MU-113 CAC
Taught in Italian, this course offers an introduction to Italian literature and cinema, with particular attention paid to the process of filmic adaptation. The course addresses notions and problems of both literary and cinematic language, style, structure, and themes while analyzing the techniques created to transpose the written text onto the movie screen.

Senior Seminar in Italian - Literature, Culture, and Gastronomy of Italy
01:560:493 (3 credits)  Tuesdays 4:30 PM - 7:10 PM IT-204 CAC
Lexicon, images and metaphors of food have an essential role in the Italian literary tradition, and gastronomy is interwoven into all aspects of Italian culture. Through the reading of short stories, poems, and texts of different genres, the course will highlight the diverse roles and functions of food: as nourishment of body and spirit, as social divider or unifier, as means of seduction or communication, as catalyst for an atmosphere or as a statement of power, as stimulus of memories or projection to the future. Food in children’s literature also will be analyzed and related issues – such as the absence or excess of food and the ethic of food and consumerism - will be considered. The course will conclude with a discussion of the Slow Food Revolution, a movement initiated in Italy and now with world-wide following, and its social, economic, ecological, aesthetic and cultural impact. Excerpts from movies of great directors such as De Sica, Fellini, and Visconti, and slides of classical and modern masters such as Annibale Carracci, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Giorgio Morandi, will be included as essential background. No knowledge of Italian is required. This course satisfies the Core Curriculum Learning Goal: AH (o and p).

Honors in Italian
01:560:495 and 01:560:496 (3-6 credits)  By arrangement
Students with a 3.0 or better GPA and an average of 3.5 or better in the major may write choose to write an honors thesis, to be supervised by an Italian studies faculty member of their choice. The honors thesis takes place over the course of two semesters. In the fall, students conduct independent research under the direction of their faculty mentor. In the spring, students complete drafts and submit a final thesis by early April for review by the Honors Thesis committee.