

# The Rutgers ITALIAN Libretto

Spring 2021



## Dear Members and Friends of the Italian Department,

The last sixteen months have been very hard on all of us because of the pandemic. We have gone through a collective trauma, but now, luckily, we have hope for the future. This past academic year continued to pose many challenges to our department. Working together, however, we were able to make effective adjustments, after the swift and stressful transition to online instruction in Spring 2020. Building upon that experience and the numerous workshops organized at Rutgers, while also relying on the expertise and generous advice of Carmela Scala, our Language Program Director, we have been able to teach successful courses.

We held our lively *Food for Thought* meetings via Zoom, with presentations by Alessandro Vettori, Maria Teresa De Luca, and Natascia Cappa. Our doctoral students organized compelling online meetings (see inside), which drew large audiences and stirred dynamic conversations.

As a Department, we hosted a few events via Zoom (see inside for detailed information): on November 9<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Eugenio Refini (NYU) gave a thought-provoking lecture entitled *Staging the Soul: Allegorical Drama as Spiritual Practice in Baroque Italy*; on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dr. Mattia Acetosio (Boston College) presented his recent book, *Echoes of Opera in Modern Italian Poetry: Eros, Tragedy, and National Identity*; on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we organized a talk on *Black Lives Matter in Italy and the Legacy of Colonialism*, held by Fred Kuwornu, a renowned Italian-Ghanaian filmmaker, activist, educator, and producer. His presentation was attended by a wide audience of students and faculty from different departments,

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## Welcome Rosario Scalia Italian Government Lecturer

Thanks to the Italian Consulate.....Rutgers Italian Department has a new instructor. Rosario is an Italian teacher. He taught Italian language and literature in Italian high schools, and Latin at the University of Catania. He received a doctorate in Philosophy and History of Ideas by the University of Catania and a post-doctoral degree at the Federal University of São Paulo (Brasil). As a student, he is currently attending a DML (Doctorate of Modern Language) Program at Middlebury College. Help us in welcoming him to our RU Community [rosario.scalia@rutgers.edu](mailto:rosario.scalia@rutgers.edu)



*(continued from cover)*

as well as community members and visitors; on April 27<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Isabella Magni gave us an engaging talk on her ongoing digital project, “*Petrarchive 2.0*.”

In March, we welcomed our new Lecturer from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Rosario Giovanni Scalia. Rosario comes to us with a rich, extremely valuable experience as a teacher and scholar, with academic interests in classics, philosophy, Italian literature, and mafia narratives. He has been a tremendous addition to our department, tutoring some of our undergraduate students and participating in our Zoom events. We are looking forward to meeting him in person in the Fall.

At the end of the Spring semester, we organized an online celebration of our graduating seniors. It was wonderful to see some of them and their families, though virtually, before they left Rutgers, to congratulate them and wish them the success they deserve, especially after these last momentous semesters!

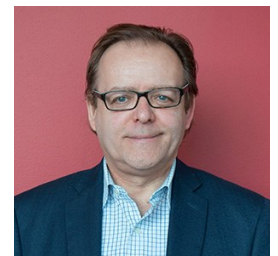
We also held our traditional Alumnae/i Reunion, in an unconventional format, featuring an online lecture by Dr. Marino Forlino (Scripps College), titled *Five Days and “A Thousand and One Nights”*: *Shabrazād’s Shadow in Basile’s “Lo Cunto de li Cunti” and in Garzone’s “Tale of Tales”* (see inside).

This scholarly meeting was followed by our annual Award Ceremony. We thank all our alumnae/i who made an effort to attend these events despite their professional and family obligations. We are especially grateful to our wonderful donors, who supported our department and students during such a challenging time. Their constant generosity has been a tremendous inspiration for all of us: *grazie di cuore!*

Finally, a bit of bittersweet news: Dr. Isabella Magni will no longer be with us next academic year. She was selected as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the HathiTrust Research Center, where she will run exciting humanities projects on under-resourced and marginalized textual communities. We wish Isabella all the best in her new professional engagement, trusting that she will stay in touch and visit us to offer updates on her new and ongoing digital endeavors. Through her seminars, Isabella has advised and inspired many of our doctoral students. Because of her mentorship, some of them will pursue their Digital Humanities undertakings, thus significantly strengthening their CV.

To conclude, serving as Chair this past academic year has been trying, but I am grateful to all our students and my colleagues for their unwavering efforts to sustain our educational and scholarly mission. Special thanks go to our indefatigable Sheri La Macchia, who made our program run smoothly in spite of adverse circumstances.

I wish you all a restful and pleasant summer!



Andrea Baldi, Italian Department Chair



# Congratulations Class of 2021!



## Undergraduate News from the Undergraduate Director, Professor Paola Gambarota

Of course, this academic year was like no other, and our students and instructors worked hard and smartly to rise above all difficulties and complete a successful year. We are happy to report record enrollments in Core Courses such as *Italian Food Culture* and *Classics of Italian Cinema* and that students kept their good spirit, as it was apparent in our synchronous courses. Our students also produced excellent work, and we were able to award numerous prizes: Isabella Rodriguez received the Prize for Best Essay in Italian at the 200 level, Eliana Stavarakis the Stephanie Laggini Award for an Essay in Italian at the 300 level, and Erin McGowan the Prize for Best Essay in English. Gianna Torino received the 2021 Elda & Joseph Coccia, Jr. Sponsored Scholarship, while the newly established Mario A. Marano Memorial

Scholarship for Italian Studies went to Greer Egan.

We are very proud of our majors, who overcame all challenges and graduated on time, two of them with inspiring honors theses: Natalia Castner investigated the “Gomorra” theme as a case study of transmedia narratives (Advisor, Paola Gambarota), and Greer Egan researched the essential issues of migration in Italy (Co-Advisor Andrea Baldi).

We celebrated our graduating students in a virtual event which, after a more formal part, ended with a cordial chat with our students, some parents, and a lovely *nonna*.

I wish all our brave instructors and students a relaxing and happy summer!

## Connect with us...

Instagram @ItalianRutgers

Each week on Tuesdays we highlight one person of our RU community to feature as our: #humansofitalianrutgers

This means students.  
This means alumni.  
This means staff.  
This means faculty.  
This means donors.  
This means friends.  
This means our RU network.

Please help us create content so we can regularly connect with the followers and in turn create a bigger RU Community. We invite you to answer a **short** survey and submit a photo of yourself here:

<https://forms.gle/GkcSRRHUELUSb9k6>

Rutgers Italian Dept. aims to connect YOU to students, staff, faculty, alumni, friends, teachers, and the RU Community. Monthly events. Countless courses in Italian culture and language. Study abroad #rutgersroma

[italian.rutgers.edu](http://italian.rutgers.edu)

Have an old photo from your Rutgers Days you'd like to share? You could be featured on #ThrowbackThursday. Email: [slama@rutgers.edu](mailto:slama@rutgers.edu)

## A Look Back

from Post Doc Associate, Isabella Magni

My two years as Postdoctoral Associate at Rutgers have been challenging yet stimulating. Though the ongoing pandemic did not allow me to take full advantage of the possibilities of in-person activities, both in and outside the Department, I still had the chance to teach digital humanities courses and remotely collaborate with faculty and doctoral students. In the past two years I gave invited talks at various institutions including the Center for Textual Studies and Digital Humanities at Loyola University, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and the College of the Holy Cross and co-organized with my colleagues at the Renaissance Society of America the annual Day of Digital Learning. While starting on a new digital project, a digital edition of the Albizi memorial book, I continued working on my in-progress digital projects: the Petrarch (welcoming two new collaborators, Maria Teresa De Luca and Paolo Scartoni) and Italian Paleography. I published a number of articles in peer-reviewed journals, and I completed an edited volume on materiality and interpretation of early modern texts (co-edited with Jelena Todorovic and Beatrice Arduini), coming out with Brill Publications in June 2021. In the next two years, I will take on the role of Postdoctoral Fellow at the HathiTrust Research Center where I will manage and collaborate with five digital projects that tell the story of historically under-resourced and marginalized textual communities.

Last but certainly not least, I wish to thank staff and faculty for warmly welcoming me in the Department and for making my experience here always stimulating. Immense gratitude also to the Italian students' cohort, both graduate and undergraduate: your passion, dedication and brightness are a true source of inspiration and I look forward to continue working with you all in the years to come. *Grazie di tutto e a presto!*

## Language Program News

from the Director of the Italian Language Program, Carmela Scala

This past year has undoubtedly been very challenging, but it has also been a year of growth both professionally and personally. As the Language Program Director, I have tried my best to guide our Italian instructors and help them deliver engaging and effective online instruction. To this end, I led several workshops on distance learning and teaching. During the Spring Semester, I was on sabbatical, and I worked on my manuscript on best practices to teach language online. During my leave, Tim Curcio, Ph.D., was acting as Language Director.

# Graduate News

from Graduate Program Director, Professor Alessandro Vettori

We have much to celebrate in our graduate program this year. Among the most outstanding accomplishments are the following: Eilis Kierans was awarded the University and Louis Bevier Completion Fellowship in 2021-2022 and Caterina Agostini received the 2021 Rutgers School of Graduate Studies Excellence in Outreach and Service award. Caterina Agostini and Tim Curcio defended their dissertations and were awarded their doctoral degrees. We welcome two new admitted students into our PhD Program: Salvatore Taibi, who won the School of Graduate Studies Dean's Fellowship, and Marius Rusu, who was appointed Teaching Assistant. For the first time ever this year we welcome a RISE (Research Intensive Summer Experience) scholar into our program; Ariana Guzman will be developing a project under the guidance of professors and PhD candidates over the summer. Under the leadership of our new Humanities Dean and together with other Humanities Departments, we continue to explore ways to transform graduate education at Rutgers in order to make our program more up-to-date with current trends and challenges and make our students better prepared for the job market. With other language programs, we created a new Certificate in Second Language Teaching, while we are exploring new ways to increase the presence of Digital Humanities in our department and in our school. Prof. Carmela Scala created a new graduate course in Second Language Teaching; Prof. Isabella Magni created a new Digital Editing course; Prof. Paola Gambarota revamped her course on contemporary poetry. Our PhD candidates continue to cooperate with *Italian Quarterly* by writing book reviews that appear regularly in the journal. Our weekly coffee break brings us together virtually on Zoom every Friday afternoon at 4:00 EST and we talk about our work or simply chat and catch up; we have also started inviting occasional guests, some of them alumni and colleagues in the profession. Anyone who would like to "stop by," please let me know and I'll send you a zoom invite. Happy summer months to all!



## *Italian Quarterly*

The department's journal *Italian Quarterly* published volume 57 during this past year. Peer-reviewed articles included essays on Dante, Petrarca, Manzoni, the Resistance, and *letteratura segretariale* from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to our regular section of book reviews, publications in other sections of the journal included an interview with Claudia Durastanti, a review note on Alexandra Vranceanu's *Il mito dell'Italia nella letteratura romena dell'Ottocento*, and a greatly expanded section on creative reviews, curated by Eilis Kierans (send future queries to [emk177@italian.rutgers.edu](mailto:emk177@italian.rutgers.edu)). Editor Alessandro Vettori and managing editor Sandra Waters invite specialists in literature, culture, film, pedagogy, and history to send article submission to [sandra.waters@rutgers.edu](mailto:sandra.waters@rutgers.edu). To start your subscription, contact the department at [itquarterlybilling@gmail.com](mailto:itquarterlybilling@gmail.com).

## News from Current Graduate Students

### Natascia Cappa

Natascia successfully passed her Comprehensive Exams in October and had the great opportunity to collaborate as Inserra Grader at Montclair State University for the courses *Italian for Spanish Speakers* and *Italian American Cinema* under the supervision of Professor Teresa Fiore. She also published an essay entitled “Juan Rodolfo Wilcock: riflessioni critiche di un poeta,” in the book *L'eternità immutabile: studi su Juan Rodolfo Wilcock*. She is now working on her future research project regarding the literary representation of fascist violence in literature, which is based on a comparison between Italy and Latin America.

### Maria Teresa De Luca

In the past year, Maria Teresa spent a good deal of time thinking about tragedy, and about the expressive powers and limits of language. She presented her research entitled “The tragic representation of a tragedy: Malaparte and the Neapolitan *figliata*” at a *Food for Thought* event in the Italian Department. She also presented her paper, “Can a Language be Virtuous? Dante and the Limits of Language(s) in the *Convivio*” at the Interuniversity Doctoral Consortium Medieval Studies Conference, while another paper on Dante, “Cranes and the divine skywriting in the Heaven of Jupiter,” has been accepted for the Dante Society of America’s sponsored panel at the MLA’s annual meeting in 2022. She has also worked as part of the leadership of the Italian Graduate Society to organize both a colloquium and a round-table panel discussion, and started collaborating as encoder and research assistant with *Petrarchive*, the digital edition of Petrarch’s songbook edited by Isabella Magni, Wayne Storey and John Walsh. She will spend the summer teaching *Italian for Reading Knowledge* to Graduate Students, and preparing for her Qualifying Exam, hopefully under centuries old olive trees in Puglia.

### Chiara Degli Esposti

During this past year I started to work on my dissertation project about cities and migrants in contemporary Italy. Throughout the year, I also dedicated myself to the revision of a couple of papers in view of publication. I am very happy to have been awarded the Laggini Fellowship last

May: thanks to this generous gift, I will be able to carry out research for my final project in the nearby future.

### Giuseppe Grispino

The 2020-2021 year has been a rich one for Giuseppe. He completed his coursework and also started to prepare for his comprehensive examination. During the past year, Giuseppe taught two undergraduate classes and also presented two papers at the Graduate Research Symposium at Rutgers and at the KU Leuven Conference *World Literature and the Minor: Figuration, Circulation, Translation*. During the year Giuseppe also served as a graduate student representative for the Italian department and joined the graduate student mental health committee and the University LGBTQ+ Advocacy Network. Giuseppe also worked with Sheri to relaunch the Instagram pages of the Italian Department. In the future, Giuseppe wishes to continue to deepen his study of translation studies and transnational work, bringing together his love of both China and Italy.

### Steven Jacobs

Steven spent the 2020-2021 academic year taking courses on Italian and French literature, digital humanities, and pedagogy. He also taught Elementary Italian II online in the Fall and Spring semesters. This summer Steven is refining his writing for publication and presentations. He will be working on a book review of *Trust* by Domenico Starnone for the online journal *Reading in Translation*. He is additionally thrilled at the prospect of collaborating on the *Petrarchive* project, an online edition of Petrarch’s songbook. Steven is very grateful to have received a summer research fellowship from the Italian Department to continue his inquiries into the Resistance movement as experienced by women partisans such as Ada Gobetti.

### Eilis Kierans

Eilis spent the year in Madrid exploring tapas culture while honing her Spanish language skills, a humbling process indeed. She has become quite a fan of siesta (a.k.a. cat naps), which proved to be the perfect pick-me-up in the midst of rigorous paper corrections for *Expository Writing*, a course she taught in the fall. Eilis was grateful to teach a couple of synchronous Italian language courses this year—a lighthearted respite from dissertation writing. Given the



circumstances of 2020-2021, Eilis took the opportunity to attend seemingly every virtual conference under the sun. It was a unique opportunity to connect regularly with colleagues from all over the world. In March, she presented her work at the American Comparative Literature Association conference. She will also present her work at the Canadian Association for Italian Studies conference in June. Her paper titled “Coming Out and Leaving Home: Cultural Friction in the Italian American Kitchen” is soon to be published in the edited volume *Queering Italian American Media*. In addition to writing book reviews, Eilis likes editing them. She started a new section of *Italian Quarterly* devoted entirely to creative reviews. In particular, she enjoys helping graduate students improve their writing skills. She is also co-editor of *Other Voices of Italy*, a fresh new series that will introduce the work of marginalized authors to an English-speaking readership. Eilis is elated to have received a Louis Bevier Fellowship for the 2021-2022 academic year. She intends to spend most of the year writing in all of her favorite parks and cafés in Spain.

### Angela Mininni

Angela was born and raised in Bari, Italy, where she received her M.A. summa cum laude in Ancient Philology, Literature and History. Soon after graduation, she moved to the United States to work as an au pair. In 2018, she joined the Italian Department at Rutgers and completed a Master of Arts in Teaching presenting a teaching portfolio focused on cultural differences between Italy and the United States. After one year working in the field, both teaching the language and culture of her country and working on translations for the film-documentary *Gianni Berengo Gardin's Tale of Two Cities* (Donna Serbe-Davis, 2019), Angela decided to use her own experience as an immigrant to continue her education and pursue a PhD with the Italian department, a second home to her. Despite starting this journey in the middle of a pandemic, her first year has been extremely fulfilling. Besides working on her coursework and teaching two undergraduate classes, Angela hosted our “Tavola Italiana” and went back to studying Spanish while being an active resource to the Italian Department. Her research focuses on the healing power of writing in the literary works produced in Italian by immigrant writers.



### Paolo Scartoni



Paolo's year has been exciting both in terms of teaching and research. He taught a class on Italian opera in the fall, and in the spring, an Italian writing course. He presented a paper entitled “The Reason of Music: *Musica Speculativa* and Dante's Illustrious Vernacular” at the annual conference organized by the Renaissance Society of America (RSA), and a paper entitled “*Mi dirizzò con le parole sue: from Counsel to Action in Paradiso*” at the 56<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies. In February, he participated in a Winter School organized by the University of Ferrara and taught by Prof. Paolo Trovato and his collaborators on philology and Dante's *Comedy*. Paolo is working as a research assistant at *Petrarcharchive*, the digital edition of Petrarch's songbook edited by Dr. Isabella Magni, Prof. Wayne Storey, and Prof. John Walsh, based on Petrarch's own copy Vat. Lat. 3195. His main responsibility is the encoding of the manuscript's *chartae* according to the XML-TEI guidelines. He is also working as a contributor at the *Deiphira Project*, the digital edition of a witness of Alberti's *Deiphira* ([Harvard University's Houghton Library, MS Typ. 422](https://www.harvard.edu/houghton/library/ms-typ-422)). The project was presented at the RSA conference and will be launched next September at Georgetown University. With Dr. Isabella Magni, he cotaught a workshop on digital editions and XML-TEI for the *Days of Digital Learning* organized by RSA.

### Federica Soddu

This has been a different and productive year for me. I worked from the warm and rainy Panama, where I joined some dear people and I became friend with some funny, wild animals like sloths, monkeys, crocodiles, parrots, iguanas, raccoons, and others. I also had the chance to practice my Spanish. I prepared and passed my Qualifying Exams and successfully accomplished the task to grade over a hundred papers in a month! At the end of June, I will virtually travel to Mainz, where I'm going to attend the IWL Summer School together with many other students and scholars from all over the world. I'm very excited about that!

## HEARTFUL THANKS

WE APPRECIATE OUR DONORS.



### Program Donations

Your contributions help our department in many ways. Please show your support today.

### Graduate Student Travel Grants and Scholarships

Professional Development Certificate for K12 teachers

### Study Abroad Scholarships for Undergraduate Students

### Name Awards for Essays

### Department Emergency Fund

Click the link below to give a one-time donation or monthly contribution

<https://tinyurl.com/RutgersItalian>

## Graduate Fellowships and Awards

Paragano Family Foundation Endowed  
Scholarship for Italian Studies – Allison Selvig

Joseph E. & Marie E. Laggini Memorial Endowed  
Graduate Fellowship – Chiara Degli Esposti

Dr. Vito and Mrs. Carolyn DeSimone Endowed  
Fellowship for Italian Studies – Raffaella Fusco

Elena Petronio Scholarships –  
Nataascia Cappa, Paolo Scartoni, and Federica Soddu

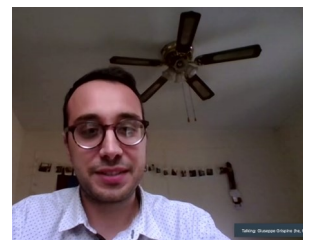
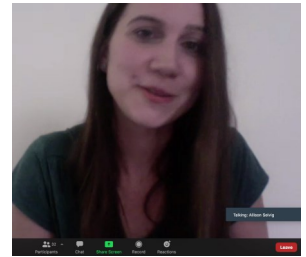
Italian Dept. Summer Research Fellowships –  
Maria Teresa De Luca, Giuseppe Grispino,  
Eilis Kierans, Steven Jacobs, Angela Mininni,  
and Andrew Robbins

William E. Roney Awards  
Innovative Teaching – Raffaella Fusco  
Dedication to Service – Giuseppe Grispino  
Excellence in Scholarship – Eilis Kierans

Best Graduate Paper – Maria Teresa De Luca

Louis Bevier Fellowship – Eilis Kierans

Rutgers School of Graduate Studies Excellence in  
Outreach and Service Award – Caterina Agostini





# Italian Graduate Society

This has been an intense year for the newcomer officers of the Italian Graduate Society, Natascia Cappa, Maria Teresa De Luca, and Giuseppe Grispino. (Pictured on right top to bottom)

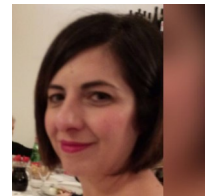
We organized the Colloquium featuring Notre Dame's Professor Maurizio Albahari, whose talk was titled: "Whose Name Was Writ in Water: Mediterranean Crossings and Confines". The event provided an opportunity for discussing the consequences of the asymmetric distribution of wealth, power, and rights around the Mediterranean Sea.

Our Round Table: "Translation, Transformation, Creation?" A Round Table on Contemporary Italian Literature in Translation" involving four speakers from different continents working on translation from Italian into different languages, provided insights on the challenges and opportunities faced by translation and translators in today's globalized society, especially in connection with the theme of 'otherness.'

The events reached more than one hundred students and Professors within and outside the Rutgers community, including people from all over the world who have watched the recording posted on the IGS's brand-new website, Facebook page, and Instagram account.

The IGS will spend the summer working on the next issue of *La Fusta*, and planning their biannual conference that will take place in Spring 2022.

Click hyperlinks here: [website](#), [Facebook page](#), [Instagram account](#).



THE ITALIAN GRADUATE SOCIETY AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY - NEW BRUNSWICK,  
THE MEDITERRANEAN DISPLACEMENT PROJECT AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY - NEWARK  
AND THE GSA PRESENT:

**Whose Name Was Writ in Water:  
Mediterranean Crossings and Confines**

A TALK BY  
**MAURIZIO ALBAHARI**  
(UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME)

Monday, February 22, 2021 at 12:00pm

The talk focuses on the ambivalent role of the Mediterranean Sea in the Italian and European regulation of human mobility. The ongoing management of migration encompasses the Mediterranean into a sovereign ambition to confine it, direct it, and possess it.

At the same time, culturally, geopolitically, and historically the Mediterranean Sea enables the very crossings shaping its diverse societies and aesthetic traditions, and it continues to be crucial to the intersectional engagement of the tension between unbound human equality and the violently unequal allocation of territorialized rights.

Zoom meeting link: <https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/3487399631?pwd=WkZUWkVXWHpqRG4wYjJESVoySjBkZz09>

For more information, contact the Italian Graduate Society: [italian.grad.society@gmail.com](mailto:italian.grad.society@gmail.com)

THE ITALIAN GRADUATE SOCIETY AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

**Translation, Transformation, Creation?**  
A Round Table on Contemporary Italian Literature in Translation

WHEN: April 26<sup>th</sup> 2021, 10:00 EST  
WHERE: <https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/3487399631?pwd=WkZUWkVXWHpqRG4wYjJESVoySjBkZz09>

The round table will feature:

<b>Muauia Al-abdulmagid</b> translator and publicist	<b>Wu Han</b> UIBE, Beijing
<b>Alejandro Patat</b> Università per Stranieri di Siena	<b>Stephen Twilley</b> Public Books

Italian Graduate Society

## Events

On April 27th, Dr. Isabella Magni concluded her two-year post-doc at Rutgers with a talk entitled “Petrarchine 2.0.” As co-editor of *Petrarchine*, the first born-digital edition of Petrarch’s songbook, Dr. Magni gave us a behind-the-scenes look at this ambitious and innovative digital project. She talked about its history, the technical challenges it poses, its value for researchers, students, and readers, and its collaborative nature. At *Petrarchine*, Dr. Magni works with Professors Wayne Storey and John Walsh from Indiana University, co-editors of the project. Thanks to her, our very own graduate students Maria Teresa De Luca and Paolo Scartoni have also joined the team as research assistants.



**PETRARCHINE 2.0**

**TUES**  
**4-27**  
**230PM**

*Petrarchine*  
An edition of Petrarch's songbook  
*Petrarch vulgarium fragmenta*  
Edited by H. Wayne Storey, John A. Walsh, and Isabella Magni

Designed for students, casual readers and specialists, the *Petrarchine* proposes a corrected diplomatic edition and a new edition of Petrarch's songbook, the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (Canzoniere), together with a new 13-part commentary of the material properties, prosody, syntax and early history of the work, a new translation, historical translations in English that demonstrate the influence of Petrarch's vernacular poems in the history of Anglo-American literature, and multiple visual indexes to navigate, for the first time, Petrarch's visual poetics and the material constructions of his songbook. We encourage users to first read our Introduction and consult the Glossary for conceptual and pragmatic use in order to have an overview of the core principles of the edition as well as directions on how to navigate the site.

Petrarchine © 2013-2020 H. Wayne Storey, John A. Walsh, & Isabella Magni.  
Team: H. Wayne Storey, John A. Walsh, Isabella Magni, Maria Teresa De Luca, Paolo Scartoni, & ...

Funding and Support provided by  
The National Endowment for the Humanities

In his multi-media presentation, *Black Lives Matter in Italy and the Legacy of Colonialism*, Fred Kuwornu reminded us of the atrocities of Italy’s colonial campaigns in the Horn of Africa. Through impressive visual documents, he demonstrated a persisting racist attitude in contemporary media and advertising. Discussing how Italians erased their imperialist past from collective memory, he stressed the urgency to reckon with this amnesia and promote inclusive forms of representation of colonized and migrant subjects. Fred’s enlightening talk made us painfully aware of these continuing practices of oppression and discrimination.



**FRED KUDJO KUWORNU**

- filmmaker
- activist
- educator
- producer

**Black Lives Matter in Italy  
and the legacy of Colonialism**

**3/9/21  
12:30pm**



In his talk, titled *Staging the Soul: Allegorical Drama as Spiritual Practice in Baroque Italy*, Professor Eugenio Refini (New York University) explored pedagogical uses of allegorical drama in Italy around 1600, focusing on the influence that Fabio Glisenti's theater exerted on the education of female orphans in Venice's hospitals. Relying on rich archival materials, Refini showed how morality plays functioned as forms of spiritual practice that promoted the inner staging of the 'world' on the 'spiritual' stage of the soul.



This year, Angela Mininni lead Tavola Italiana. Coping with social distancing and getting to meet new people have been some of our biggest challenges. Thankfully, our Tavola Italiana came to the rescue, and transformed Zoom into a crowded piazza, filled with laughter and lots of new friends. During each meeting, students came together to play games each time focusing on a different theme (food, gestures, proverbs...). Pizza was the only big absentee, but no worries: we'll make it up for it next year!



During our last *Rutgers Day* Giuseppe Grispino and Raffaella Fusco jointly organized the mini series *Musica Diversa*. They featured more inclusive and diverse Italian artists than the ones commonly known to the general public. Through questions, mini quizzes, and music links, they interacted with our Instagram audience.





## Alumnae/i Reunion

At our Alumnae/i Reunion, **Dr. Marino Forlino**, RU'15, Assistant Professor and Chair of the Department of Italian and Italian Studies at Scripps College, gave a talk titled, *Five Days and "A Thousand and One Nights": Shabrazād's Shadow in Basile's "Lo Cunto de li Cunti" and in Garrone's "Tale of Tales."* In his engaging lecture, Marino examined the complexity and originality of Basile's collection of short stories, focusing on its structural and formal patterns as well as its multi-layered intertextual relationships with the Middle-Eastern tradition of folktales. He also discussed the adaptation strategies that Garrone fashioned in his cinematic rendition of *Lo Cunto de li Cunti*, with stunning visual effects. In Marino's analysis, the director's *Tale of Tales* aligned with the stylistic innovations of Basile's narratives, creating a realm of optical illusions through the sensuous magic of exotic locations.



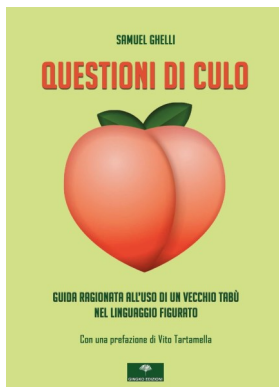
## Alumnae/i News

### **Rossella Di Rosa, Rutgers '16**

Despite the pandemic and its challenges, this year has been very eventful. I started a new job at the University of Pennsylvania, where I direct the Italian language program and serve as Undergraduate Chair. My article on Elena Ferrante's and Margaret Atwood's material narratives just came out in the special issue of MLN, *Elena Ferrante in a Global Context* (2021). In April, I was invited to lecture on Fabrizia Ramondino's ecological thought in Prof. Andrea Baldi's graduate seminar. I also gave a talk at the AAIS virtual conference on Elsa Morante's critique of reason in her last novel *Aracoeli* (1982).

### **Samuel Ghelli, Rutgers '05**

Samuel recently published a book: *Questioni di culo. The use of an old taboo word in Italian figurative language*



It would seem that no word in the Italian language carries as many meanings as the lexeme *culo* (literally “ass”). In this volume, Dr. Samuel Ghelli collects the many idioms that have grown up around the word *culo* in the Italian language, tracing their origins and revealing their background. The phrases included were culled from various sources, including dictionaries and

other reference books, literary texts, periodicals, and more; Dr. Ghelli's research also draws on references from songs, cinema, and social media, where not only coarser expressions easily find space, but new playful epithets are formed, and old sayings are reformulated in new ways. Although filled with cultural references and based on serious academic research, the book has a popular slant. Both the subject matter and the fresh, entertaining tone make this work appealing to both scholars and a wider audience.

### **Ida Marinzoli, Rutgers '16**

The year 2020 was indeed a difficult one for everyone. The unprecedented family and social isolation changed our lives as we adapted to wearing masks, washing hands, and staying 6 feet apart. My family and I followed the scientific recommendations and are grateful that Covid 19 spared us. With widespread vaccination we are seeing some ‘normalcy’

and do anticipate happy days ahead. Staying home, however, gave me some extra time to go through many research papers I wrote for my PhD and I reminisced about the wonderful days in class at Rutgers with Prof. White, Prof. Baldi, Prof. Marsh, Prof. Vettori, Prof. Gambarota and the indispensable administrator Ms. Sheri La Macchia. To all a heartfelt thank you and to my colleagues best wishes in their careers. I am now retired and I enjoy writing for the Canadian “El Boletín” – always dealing with diaspora and identity – the topic that has become my obsession.

### **Giovanna Miceli-Jeffries, Rutgers '83**



Last December, Giovanna was awarded the second place in an Italian literary Prize, the Premio Letterario Nazionale Clara Sereni 2020, in the unpublished narrative category. This literary prize has also received a special recognition from the President of the Italian Republic, Medaglia del Presidente della Repubblica. The jury was composed of a number of prominent figures of the Italian political class, writers and publishers, among them Walter Veltroni and Senator Liliana Segre. The Italian magazine *Noi Donne* published an article about the prize last week as well as excerpts from the finalists' works, which include a write-up about Giovanna and one of the stories of her collection. This collection is part of a larger one that she has written in Italian, based on her memoir already published in 2018 (which she presented at Rutgers), and that she plans to publish in Italy soon.



## M.A.T. in Italian

Is the M.A.T. in Italian degree right for you?

Are you teaching, or intend to teach, at the K-12 level?

Do you want to focus your teaching with emphasis on Italian language, literature, and culture?

Have you studied Italian in college, have formal background or professional teaching experience?

### Our Learning Goals

Achieve mastery in reading and analyzing critically and creatively literary, cultural, and cinematic texts of the Italian tradition.

Demonstrate the ability to teach Italian language, literature, and culture.

Create a comprehensive Teaching Portfolio.

### What you need to do.

Candidates for the M.A.T. must satisfactorily complete ten term courses (30 credits), including the completion of a teaching portfolio. Most graduate courses are offered evenings along with hybrid and online options during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Set your own pace.

### Want more information?

Contact the Acting Graduate Program Director, Professor Andrea Baldi, [abaldi@rutgers.edu](mailto:abaldi@rutgers.edu) 848-932-7031

<https://italian.rutgers.edu/academics/graduate/mat>

*With my MAT in Italian I feel ready to walk into the classroom with confidence. I sharpened my practical and personal skills, while acquiring real expertise in Italian and hands-on teaching experience.*

*Angela, Rutgers MAT Italian, Class of 2019*



## ONLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS



Eager to learn strategies to elevate remote learning of world languages for your classes? Seize this opportunity to look into some of the tools you can learn in our professional development program.

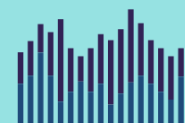
### 1 FLIPGRID

Engagement and collaboration are essential to enhance students' performance in the language class. Flipgrid provides a unique opportunity to engage your students in a fun way through interactive and lively video discussions.



### 2 VOICETHREAD

Want to be there even when you can't be physically there? VoiceThread is the tool for you! You can create interactive lectures and stimulate conversation in the target language while establishing your 'presence' in the online class.



### 3 LANGUAGE INTEGRATION

To promote language learning we need to foster the concept that language can be an inter-disciplinary subject. Here we will learn how to integrate content teaching with language teaching to better serve our students needs and expectations.



**FOUR  
WEEK  
COURSE  
STARTS  
09-01**

Taught by Dr. Carmela Scala  
Director of Italian Language Program  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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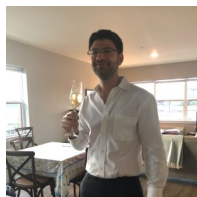
## Best wishes to the two latest Ph.D. graduates



**Caterina Agostini, RU '21**

In March 2021, Caterina Agostini defended her Ph.D. dissertation, *Scientific Thinking and Narrative Discourse in Early Modern Italy*, under the supervision of Professor Laura S. White.

Caterina published "Santorio's Medical Method at the Time of Corpuscularism" in the journal *La parola del testo*, and she wrote book reviews for *Italian Quarterly*, *Forum Italicum*, the *Graduate Journal of Food Studies*, and *Acta Palaeomedica*. She taught an Italian course, online, at Princeton University. Caterina presented conference papers at the MLA and NeMLA conventions, the Brown and Harvard Graduate Student Conference, the Medical Heritage Library, and the Rutgers Online Learning Conference. She gave invited talks in digital humanities at the Renaissance Society of America and The Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies annual meetings, and she also led digital humanities workshops and discussions at the NeMLA convention, the New York City Digital Humanities Week, the Digital Library Federation, and Rutgers Digital Humanities Lab. Caterina wrote invited guest posts for the [National Library of Medicine blog](#) and the [Northeastern University Women Writers Project blog](#), and continued her collaboration at the Storytelling Task Force at *Europeana* and at *PHAROS, The International Consortium of Photo Archives*. Dr. Agostini is the recipient of the 2021 Rutgers School of Graduate Studies Excellence in Outreach and Service Award.



**Tim Curcio, RU '20**

This year was a rewarding culmination of several years of work for Tim. In October 2020 he successfully defended his dissertation, *The Decalogue in the "Decameron."* He taught courses re-

motely at both Rutgers University and The College of New Jersey. Although he continued to develop his online teaching methodology, he is eager to return to some face-to-face courses in the Fall. Lastly, he had the pleasure of substituting as the Acting Director of the Italian Language Program at Rutgers in the Spring of 2021.

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### SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Creating an environment where all students feel equally heard and accepted is the focus of this course. Learn strategies to integrate conversations about equity and inclusion by breaking down barriers of gender and race, while learning a language. Teachers will practice teaching approaches and interactive social justice related activities. A special segment concentrates on ways students can bring their heritage and prior linguistic knowledge into the language classroom.

- 1

**INTEGRATING  
'CULTURES' WITH THE  
CULTURALLY  
RESPONSIVE APPROACH**
- 2

**COOPERATION AND  
COLLABORATION:  
FLIPGRID, VOICETHREAD,  
PLAYPOSIT**
- 3

**FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE:  
APPLY ALL YOU HAVE  
LEARNED IN THE PREVIOUS  
MODULES**

▶

## FOUR WEEK COURSE STARTS

## 10-01-21

Taught by Dr. Carmela Scala  
 Director of the Italian Language Program  
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## News from the Faculty



**Andrea Baldi**

*Professor, Department Chair*

This year has been a time for self-reflection. Doing research and participating in professional conferences gave me a sense of purpose and belonging, beyond our own community. I published an article, “Strategie di smarrimento nelle prose di viaggio di Anna Maria Ortese,” *Italianistica*, XLIX, 3, 2020 [2021], 65-75, and I have a forthcoming essay, “Guardare Napoli “nelle sue crepe”: Anna Maria Ortese e il gruppo *SUD*,” Proceedings of the Conference *Cómplices y rivales*. I have become a member of the research group *MenforWomen. Voces Masculinas en la Querella de las Mujeres*, at the University of Seville. I participated in four online international conferences, giving presentations on: “Guardare Napoli “nelle sue crepe”: Anna Maria Ortese e il gruppo *SUD*”; “Annibale Guasco’s Advertising Strategy: How to Market One’s Daughter as a Prospective Lady-in-Waiting”; “Matilde Serao, alle soglie della modernità”; “The MAT Program, Outreach, and the Challenges of Higher Education.” I continued to serve as a member of the Academic Advisory Board of the NJIHC and was nominated Chair of the *Blue Ribbon Panel*, which selected the 2020 recipient of the Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian.



**Paola Gambarota**

*Associate Professor*

As Undergraduate Program Director in challenging times, this academic year I invested most of my energies making sure that our students receive all necessary support and the best possible experience in our courses. Our SAS deans and our colleagues of the Teaching and Learning Center provided robust and steady assistance and weekly advice (Friday’s workshops “Tea and Teaching”) to help us succeed, and I

am very grateful for all the help we received. I tested my new graduate seminar on “Poetry, Theory and Modernity,” and enjoyed a gratifying ‘remote’ experience in my cinema course, which, with 56 students enrolled, absorbed a good deal of my time. I continue to work on my book manuscript on “American Naples.”



**David Marsh**

*Professor*

In the past year, Prof. Marsh published the following papers: “Lucian and Flaubert” in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*; “Giannozzo Manetti” in the *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*; “Alberti and Lapo on Human Behavior” in *Leon Battista Alberti Intercenales*; “*Seria et iocosa* in Alberti’s *De commodis* and *Intercenales*” in *Serio ludere. Sagesse et dérision à l’âge de l’Humanisme*; “*Ludens cum leone*: Echoes of Martial in Alberti’s Works” in *Alberti Ludens: A Conference in Memory of Cecil Grayson*; “Poggio and Alberti Revisited” in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity: Textual and Material Traditions*. He also reviewed Carmela Vera Tufano, *Lingue tecniche e retorica dei generi letterari nelle Eclogae di G. Pontano*, in *Renaissance Quarterly*; and published fifteen reviews in *Italian Quarterly*.



**Carmela Scala**

*Director of the Italian Language Program*

She has recently published a book, *From Design to Teaching: Granting Our Students an Engaging Learning Experience Online* (Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2021); and an article *How to Foster Equality in The Language Classroom*, in “Rhetoric and Sociolinguistics in Times of Global Crisis,” (IGI Global, 2021.) She received a \$1,000 Open and Affordable Textbooks Award for her project to redesign Elementary Italian (creating a free textbook for 101-102-

131). Recently, she was elected as the AATI Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative.



**Alessandro Vettori**

*Professor*

I published the entry “Religion” for *The Oxford Handbook of Dante* and the entry “Iacopone da Todi in the Oxford Bibliographies in Medieval Studies” ([www.oxfordbibliographies.com](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com)). Two articles are forthcoming: “Sodomy and Exile. Dante and Brunetto” for a Festschrift and “Dante, Costantino, il papa e la povertà francescana” in the Proceedings of a recent conference. Two book reviews are also coming out this year, one in *Speculum* and one in *Italian Culture*. I gave 6 invited talks about my new project on the Revolution of Poverty in Dante and the Franciscans and 3 more talks are scheduled for the summer months. Together with Eilis Kierans and Sandra Waters, I started a new Translation Series with Rutgers University Press entitled “Other Voices of Italy.” I was appointed NEH – National Endowment for the Humanities – peer review panelist in the area of Medieval and Early Modern Studies and member of the AATI Book Award Selection Committee. I became Chair of the Humanities Plus Initiative at Rutgers, while I continue to serve as editor of *Italian Quarterly*.



**Laura S. White**

*Professor*

As we had to transfer our classes from face-to-face to online format, I spent a considerable amount of time learning the new technology. Given also the size of one of my classes (*Italian Food Culture*, 81 students), teaching became absorbing, but in the end rewarding because of learning a new mode (thanks also to my two wonderful assistants!). More time, than in the past, was devoted to mentoring students and this was equally rewarding. I submitted for publication an essay, “Destination Venice.” I continued in

my role as Vice-President for IACE (Italian American Committee on Education), sponsored by the New York Italian Consulate. I also continued serving as member of the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission. Other activities, such as the yearly meeting of the Advisory Board for the Departments of French and Italian at Princeton University were moved to next year because of the pandemic. I also advised Caterina Agostini on her PhD dissertation, which she brilliantly defended in March 2021. I was invited to give talks at two international conferences in Italy, but they were cancelled because of the health emergency.



**Isabella Magni**

*Postdoctoral Associate in Italian and Digital Humanities*

This year has been both challenging and eventful. In the Fall 2020 I gave an online invited [talk](#) at the Center for Textual Studies and Digital Humanities at Loyola University on a new digital edition of the Albizi memorial book. I also continued working on my in-progress digital projects: the [Petrarchine](#) (welcoming two new collaborators, Maria Teresa De Luca and Paolo Scartoni) and [Italian Paleography](#). I completed an edited volume on materiality and interpretation of early modern texts (co-edited with Jelena Todorović and Beatrice Arduini), coming out with [Brill Publications](#) in June 2021, and I taught a stimulating digital humanities graduate course. In the next two years, I will take on the role of Postdoctoral Fellow at the [HathiTrust Research Center](#) where I will manage and collaborate with [five digital projects](#) that tell the story of historically under-resourced and marginalized textual communities. I wish to thank staff and faculty for warmly welcoming me in the Department and for making my experience here always stimulating. Immense gratitude also to the Italian students’ cohort, both graduate and undergraduate: your passion, dedication and brightness are a true source of inspiration and I look forward to continue working with you all in the years to come. *Grazie di tutto e a presto!*





School of Arts and Sciences

**Department of Italian**

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