**War and Experience. Twentieth-Century Italian Narratives**

**16:560:674**

Th 4:30-7:10

AB5050

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The clash between institutional representations of war (e.g., by government, public media, school) and the lived experiences of war produces the need to make sense of those experiences and to integrate them into public discourse. How was fighting and dying in war legitimized in the twentieth century and what did war mean to those who fought it? This seminar explores the ways in which the arts have been used to frame and understand the modern experience of war. Drawing on classic theories (e.g., Benjamin, White, Fussel, Leed, Barthes, Jameson), we will analyze how cultural and formal paradigms interact with lived historical events in memoirs, fictional narratives, poems, postcards, photographs, and films. Our discussion will concentrate on two themes, namely, the relation between experience and representation and the question of the medium: how did different genres and media affect the articulation of the war experience?

**Required Texts**

- Electronic Texts in PDF

- Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Notturno (*available also online through the library*)*

- Erich. M. Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

- Emilio Lussu, *A Soldier on the Southern Front*

- Ennio Flaiano, *A Time to Kill*

*-* Curzio Malaparte, *The Skin*

**Suggested Readings (historical background)**

Spencer Di Scala, *Italy From Revolution To Republic*

**Course Requirements**

- Participation in class discussion, weekly presentations, and presentations for the essay (50%)

- Essay (50%)

**SEMINAR** **SCHEDULE**

**I Week, 9/5 Narrating War. Memory and Experience**

Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller” (only sections I-XV)

Joanna Bourke, “ ‘Remembering’ War”

Dominick LaCapra, “Writing History, Writing Trauma” (only pp. 1-16)

**Optional Readings:** Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity”

**II Week, 9/12 Avantgarde Art as War, War as Avantgarde Art**

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Manifesto of Futurism*; *Technical Manifesto*; *Destruction of Syntax*

Eric Leed, “The Structure of the War Experience, ” *No Man’s Land*

Cinzia Sartini Blum, “Rhetorical Strategies and Gender in Marinetti’s Futurist Manifestos”

**Optional Readings:** Ialongo, *Marinetti and His Politics*; Cohen, “Fatal Symbiosis;” Saint-Amour, *Tense Future*

**III Week, 9/19** **The Myth of the Aviator and the Cult of Martyrs in D’Annunzio’s Experimental Narrative**

Gabriele D’Annunzio, *Notturno (available also online through the library)*

Spera, “Le forme del racconto notturno”

Astrid Erll, “Wars We Have Seen”

**Optional Readings:** Kohns, “An Aesthetics of the Unbearable;” Eric Leed, “Myth and Modern War,” *No Man’s Land*

**IV Week, 9/26 Languages of the Poet Soldier**

Giuseppe Ungaretti, selections from *L’Allegria*; Ungaretti, “Ungaretti commenta Ungaretti;”

Umberto Saba, selections from *Military Poems* and *History and Chronicle of the Songbook*

Enzo Traverso, “From Field of Honor To Slaughterhouse,” *Fire and Blood*

**Optional Readings:** Cooper, “Giuseppe Ungaretti’s Disanimate Modernism;” Gambarota, “Beyond Revealed Religions”

**V Week, 10/3** **World War I and Aesthetic Value Judgments**

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Hutchinson, “Partial Accusation?”

**Choose one of the following:** Bloom, “Introduction;” Franklin, “The Paris Review Perspective;”Murdoch, “On All Quiet on the Western Front”

**VI Week, 10/10 Propaganda and Illustration.** **Postcards, Posters, and Photos in WWI**

WJT Mitchell, “What do Pictures Really Want?”

Enzo Traverso, “Imaginaries of Violence,” *Fire and Blood*

Nicola della Volpe, “Grande guerra e propaganda”

Piero Delbello, “La cartolina postale”

JuliaAdeney Thomas, “The Evidence of Sight”

**Optional Readings:** Barthes, “The Rhetoric of the Image;”

**VII Week, 10/17 To Mutiny or Not to Mutiny**

EmilioLussu, *A Soldier on the Southern Front*

Jameson, “War and Representation”

**Optional Readings:** EricLeed, “War in the Labyrinth”, *No Man’s Land*

**VIII Week, 10/24** **Resisting the Colonial Gaze?**

Ennio Flaiano, *A Time To Kill*

Lucia Re, “Italy’s First Post-Colonial Novel”

*If Only I Where That Warrior* (docum. film)

Postcards (Enrico de Seta)

**Optional Readings:** Marrocu, “Flaiano in Africa;” Mengozzi, “Lo sguardo e la colpa;” Trento, *From Marinetti to Pasolini*; De Donno and Srivastava, “Editorial. Colonial and Postcolonial Italy”

**IX Week, 10/31 War Films, Between Documentary and Melodrama.**

Rossellini, *The White Ship*

Ruth Ben Ghiat, “Rossellini’s War Trilogy”

Bordwell and Thompson, “Documentary Versus Fiction”

**Optional Readings:** Pietro Cavallo, “La seconda guerra mondiale in pellicola”

**X Week, 11/7 Narratives of Liberation/Occupation**

Curzio Malaparte *The Skin*

Marisa Escolar, “Sleights of Hand: Black Skin and Curzio Malaparte's *La pelle*”

Clips from Rossellini, *Paisan*

**Optional Readings:** Kundera, “The Skin, Malaparte’s Arch-Novel;” Biondi, “Malaparte e le guerre”

**XI Week, 11/14 Images of Liberation/Occupation**

IWM Archive photos and photos from *Life*

Ellwood, “The Trauma of Liberation”

Film: *Naples is a Battlefield* (IWM Digital Archive)

Griffin, “The Great War Photographers”

Thompson and Bordwell, “Wartime Documentaries”

**XII Week, 11/21 Women and Men of the Resistance**

Stories from *Resisting Bodies* or ‘Alternate’

Renata Viganò, Selections from *Partisan Wedding*

Beppe Fenoglio, Selections from *The Twenty-three Days of the City of Alba*

Donald Sassoon, “Italy After Fascism. The Predicament of Dominant Narratives”

Liliana Cavani *La Donna nella Resistenza (*docum. film)

**Alternate**: Zangrandi, *I giorni veri*

**XIII Week, 11/26 On the Other Side: The Experience of a Saló Soldier**

GioseRimanelli, *The Day of the Lion*

Thomas Cragin, “Ma qual è la nostra patria, sergente? *Tiro al piccione* and the Politics of Memory”

**Optional Readings:** Postmann, “To Hell and Back”

**XIV Week, 12/5 Presentations of essays**

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