

# Department of Italian Studies

Professor: *Jacoff, Ward*

Associate Professor: *Parussa (Chair)*

Senior Lecturer: *Laviosa*

Lecturer: *Pausini*

Italian Studies is a vast field, covering at least ten centuries and featuring master works in every artistic and literary genre. Whether in the Middle Ages, Renaissance or in the modern world, Italian culture has always been in the forefront of innovation and excellence. Many of the great names of world culture in the fields of art, literature, political science, philosophy and cinema are Italian. However, many of Italian culture's lesser-known names and works are equally rich and worthwhile studying. Our courses expose students to the wealth of Italian culture allowing them access to and familiarity with the nation's cultural heritage and its contemporary life. As all our upper-level courses and most of our intermediate level ones are conducted in Italian, students have ample opportunity to hone their language skills.

## Goals for the Major

Through the courses it offers, the department aims:

To bring those students who take only language courses to a high level of competence in the language;

To bring those who take their studies further to a level of proficiency so that they can enjoy a full intellectual life in the language.

To expose students to the names and works from a variety of genres that form (but also contest) the nation's literary tradition and cultural heritage;

To introduce students to the crucial moments and events of Italian history and political life, starting in the Middle Ages and going on to the present;

To give students a methodological grounding that will serve them well should they opt to pursue their interest in Italian Studies at graduate school.

All courses, unless otherwise listed, are conducted in Italian. In all courses given in Italian, except seminars, some work may be required in the language laboratory.

Qualified students are encouraged to spend their junior year in Italy on the Wellesley-Bologna program. See Special Academic Programs, Study Abroad.

The Department of Italian Studies offers both a major and a minor. See Requirements for the Major.

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## ITAS 101-102 Elementary Italian

*Laviosa, Pausini, Ward*

These courses focus on the development of basic language skills. Viewing of language video programs, television programs and films, listening to traditional and modern songs, and reading of passages and short stories offer an introduction to Italy and its culture. *Three periods. Each semester earns one unit of credit. However, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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## ITAS 103 Intensive Elementary Italian

*Pausini*

This course is for students with little or no previous knowledge of Italian. It covers the same material as in ITAS 101 and 102 over five class periods per week. The course aims to develop skills in speaking, oral, and reading comprehension, writing, and the fundamentals of grammar. This is an intensive course developed especially for students with a strong interest in Italian Studies and who intend to spend a semester or year abroad.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.25

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## ITAS 201-202 Intermediate Italian

*Laviosa, Parussa, Ward*

The aim of these courses is to develop students' fluency in spoken and written Italian. The reading of short stories, articles from Italian newspapers, and selected texts on Italian culture as well as the writing of compositions are used to promote critical and analytical skills. Listening is practiced through the viewing of Italian films, cultural videos, or television programs. Both reading and listening activities are followed by in-class discussions. *Three periods. Each semester earns one unit of credit. However, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: 101-102 (201 for 202) or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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## ITAS 202W Intermediate Italian in Rome

*Laviosa*

This intensive three-week program is a rigorous linguistic and a valuable culture full-immersion experience in Italy. Like 202 on campus, the course consists of a fast-paced grammar review with practice of all language skills through readings of literary texts and newspaper articles, oral discussions, and presentations on Italian current events, and compositions on cultural topics examined in class. The course

includes a rich program of guest speakers, both Italian university professors and artists, guided visits to sites of historical significance, and attendance at film screenings and theatre performances. *Students must have received credit for ITAS 201 in order to receive credit for ITAS 202. Not offered every year. Subject to Dean's Office approval.*

Prerequisite: 201, or permission of the instructor. Application required.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Wintersession

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 203 Intensive Intermediate Italian**

*Pausini*

This course is for students who have taken 103 or both 101 and 102. The course covers the same material as 201 and 202 over five class periods per week. The aim of the course is to improve and strengthen the skills acquired in Elementary Italian through reading authentic literary and journalistic texts, viewing of contemporary films, writing compositions, and grammar review. This is an intensive course developed especially for students with a strong interest in Italian Studies and who intend to spend a semester or year abroad.

Prerequisite: 103 or both 101 and 102

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.25

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### **ITAS 209 Italian-Jewish Identity (in English)**

*Parussa*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** In the light of events like the high-profile trial of a Nazi war criminal and Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter on the responsibilities of Christians in the Holocaust, this course aims to discuss the question of Jewish identity in contemporary Italian culture. Students will read prose and poetry, essays and articles, as well as watch films that address issues such as religious and national identity in a culturally, racially, and linguistically homogeneous country like Italy. The course will also give students an overview of the formation and transformation of the Jewish community in Italian society. In addition to well-known Jewish Italian writers like Primo Levi and Bassani, students will read pertinent works by non-Jewish writers like Loy.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 211 Introduction to Italian Cultural Studies**

*Laviosa*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.**

Prerequisite: 202 or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 212/CAMS 224 Italian Women Directors: The Female Authorial Voice in Italian Cinema (in English)**

*Laviosa*

This course examines the films of a number of major Italian women directors across two artistic generations: Cavani and Wertmüller from the 1960s to the 1990s; Archibugi, Comencini and others in the 1990s. Neither fascist cinema nor neorealism fostered female talents, so it was only with the emergence of feminism and the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s that a space for female voices in Italian cinema was created. The course will explore how women directors give form to their directorial signatures in film, focusing on their films' formal features and narrative themes in the light of their sociohistorical context. *Students may register for either ITAS 212 or CAMS 224 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 214 Comedy Italian Style**

*Laviosa*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course will explore the development of comedy as a cultural, aesthetic, and political force. Presented through different artistic expressions, comedy will be examined as a reflection of Italian society and customs. Italian comedy often revolves around dramatic human themes and controversial political subjects, while the point of view of the author is humoristic or satirical. This course will discuss De Filippo's tragic-comic Neapolitan theater, Fo and Rame's subversive theatrical texts, and the political satire of contemporary women comedians such as Finocchiaro and Guzzanti. Comedy will be analyzed also in cinema through the performances and directorial styles of Totò, Troisi, Benigni, Nichetti, and Verdone. Finally, this course will discuss poetic texts by De André and Gaber, authors and performers of satirical songs.

Prerequisites: 202 or equivalent or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature or Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 261 Italian Cinema (in English)**

*Ward*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** A survey of the directors and film styles that paved the way for the golden age of Italian cinema, this course examines, first, the early Italian cinema of the first two decades of the twentieth century, going on to fascist cinema before embarking on an in-depth journey into the genre that made Italian cinema famous, namely, neorealism. We will analyze major films by Rossellini, Visconti, De Sica, and Antonioni (among others) with a view to understanding the ethical, social, political and philosophical foundations of the neorealist aesthetic.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video or Language and Literature  
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

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### ITAS 263 Dante (in English)

Jacoff

The course offers students an introduction to Dante and his culture. The centrality and encyclopedic nature of Dante's *Divine Comedy* make it a paradigmatic work for students of the Middle Ages. Since Dante has profoundly influenced several writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, knowledge of the *Comedy* illuminates modern literature as well. This course presumes no special background and attempts to create a context in which Dante's poetry can be carefully explored.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

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### ITAS 271 The Construction of Italy as a Nation

Ward

The course aims, first, to give students who wish to continue their study of Italian the chance to practice and refine their skills, and second, to introduce students to one of the major themes of Italian culture, namely, the role played by Italian intellectuals in the construction of Italy as a nation. We will read how Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli imagined Italy as a nation before it came into existence in 1860; how the nation came to be unified; and how the experience of unification has come to represent a controversial point of reference for twentieth-century Italy. Other figures to be studied will include Bembo, Castiglione, Foscolo, Gramsci, Tomasi di Lampedusa, D'Annunzio, Visconti, Levi, Blasetti, and Rossellini.

Prerequisite: 202 or permission of the instructor.  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

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### ITAS 272 Small Books, Big Ideas. A Journey Through Italian Identities

Parussa

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** Unlike other European literatures, contemporary Italian literature lacks a major work of fiction representing the nation's cultural identity. Rather, Italian literature boasts the small book, brief unclassifiable narratives that express the variety and complexity of Italian culture. Realistic novels or philosophical short stories, memoirs or literary essays, these works are a fine balance between a number of literary genres and, as such, are a good entranceway into the multifaceted and contradictory identity of Italy as a nation. The course will combine a survey of contemporary Italian literature with a theoretical analysis of how Italian identity has been represented in works by Moravia, Calvino, Ortese, and others.

Prerequisite: 201 as a prerequisite and 202 or 203 as a corequisite or permission of the instructor.  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

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### ITAS 274 Women in Love: Portraits of Desire in Italian Culture

Parussa

This course is dedicated to the representation of female desire in Italian culture. From Dante's *Francesca da Rimini* to Pasolini's *Medea*, passing through renowned literary characters such as Goldoni's *Mirandolina*, Manzoni's *Gertrude*, and Verdi's *Violetta*, the course will explore different and contrasting voices of female desire: unrequited and fulfilled, passionate and spiritual, maternal and destructive, domestic and transgressive. In particular, the varied and beautiful voices of women in love will become privileged viewpoints to understand the changes that occur in Italian culture in the conception of desire and other intimate emotions, as well as in the notion of gender and sexuality. Students will read texts by men and women from a wide variety of literary genres and artistic forms including not only prose and poetry, but also theater, opera, and cinema. They will also read important theoretical essays on the conception of love in Western cultures by Barthes, de Rougemont, Giddens, and Nussbaum.

Prerequisite: 202 or 201 with permission of the instructor.  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Spring Unit: 1.0

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### ITAS 310 Fascism and Resistance in Italy

Ward

This course examines the two fundamental political and cultural experiences of twentieth-century Italy: the 20-year fascist regime and the resistance to it. We will study the origins of fascism in Italy's participation in World War I and its colonial ambitions, and then follow the development of fascism over the two decades of its existence and ask to what extent it received the consensus of the Italian people. We will go on to examine the various ways in which Italians resisted fascism and the role the ideals that animated antifascist thinking had in the postwar period. Authors to be studied include: Marinetti, D'Annunzio, Pascoli, Croce, Gobetti, Rosselli, Bassani, Ginzburg, Carlo and Primo Levi, and Silone.

Prerequisite: 211, 271, 272, or 273, or permission of the instructor.  
Distribution: Language and Literature  
Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

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### ITAS 311 Theatre, Politics, and the Arts in Renaissance Italy

Parussa

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** The flourishing Italian theatre in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is an extraordinary and unmatched phenomenon in the history of Italian culture. In Italian courts and city squares, theatre became the center of a dynamic relationship between

power and culture. Under the aegis of princes and popes, artists of all kinds worked for the stage to celebrate and criticize the same power that both fostered and limited their intellectual freedom. The stage became a mirror in which Renaissance Italy, while attempting to admire its beauty, came face to face with its distorted image. The course will include readings of major plays by Bibiena, Machiavelli, and Ariosto. Attention will also be given to the paintings, drawings, and sketches used in the staging of these plays.

Prerequisite: 211, 271, 272, 273, or 274, or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 312 *Rinascimento e Rinascimenti*: Cultural Identities in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy**

*Parussa*

The Renaissance witnessed deep cultural transformations that have influenced contemporary ways of thinking. Cultural notions of class, gender, and religion find their roots in the cultural debate that animated Italian courts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Exploring how these notions have been both shaped and challenged, the course will suggest that it is more appropriate to think of the Renaissance as a plural rather than a single entity. In particular, attention will be given to themes such as the *donna angelicata* and the poet, the *cortegiano* and the peasant, the *principe* and the artist. The course will give students a solid introduction to the literature of the period and provide them with a theoretical framework for a thorough discussion of the material at hand.

Prerequisite: 211, 271, 272, [273], or 274, or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 314 The Other Half: History and Culture of the Italian South**

*Ward*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course aims to introduce advanced level students to the rich and varied cultural and historical landscape of the Italian South, the *mezzogiorno*. Taking as its starting point the medieval court of Frederick II and the deep-seated repercussions its influence had on Italian cultural life, the course goes on to examine the works of southern thinkers and writers like Bruno, Campanella, and Vico, as well as the Neapolitan Enlightenment and the Southern question. In addition, we will examine twentieth-century writers like Carlo Levi, Tomasi di Lampedusa, Verga, Sciascia and Consolo, who were either born in southern Italy or have written about it.

Prerequisite: 211, 271, 272, or [273], or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 320 The Landscape of Italian Poetry**

*Parussa*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** The course is dedicated to the representation and exploration of landscape in the Italian poetic tradition. By studying how the varied and beautiful Italian landscape found expression in the literary works of major poets, students will be exposed to a rich body of work and the tradition it both follows and renews. In particular, the course will focus on a series of specific themes, giving special attention to language and style. These will include: the opposition between rural and urban landscapes; the tension between dialects and the national language; the complex dynamics of tradition and innovation. Through initial exposure to selected classical poets, including Dante and Petrarch, students will gain in-depth knowledge of the main formal structures of Italian poetry, from the classical sonnet, going on to free verse. In addition, we will read poems by the Italian greats of the twentieth century, namely Ungaretti, Saba and Montale, as well as works by contemporary poets, such as Caproni, Sereni and Valduga.

Prerequisite: 211, 271, 272, [273], or 274, or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 349 The Function of Narrative**

*Ward*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** Beginning with Boccaccio and going on to Manzoni and Verga, the course introduces students to the major figures of the Italian narrative tradition. We then go on to study twentieth-century narrative texts, all the time seeking answers to the question of why narrative is such a fundamental human need. Why, for example, do we narrate our experience of life and the sense we have of ourselves, even in the form of diaries? Do the stories we tell faithfully reflect reality or do they create it? The course concludes with a reflection on narrative technique in cinema illustrated by the films of Antonioni. Other authors to be studied may include Faa Gonzaga, Calvino, Ceresa, Rasy, Pasolini, Celati, and Benni.

Prerequisite: 211, 271, 272, or [273], or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 350 Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open by permission to students who have completed two units in literature in the department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 360 Senior Thesis Research**

Prerequisite: By permission of department. See Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **ITAS 370 Senior Thesis**

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

### **Requirements for the Major**

The major in Italian Studies offers students the opportunity to acquire fluency in the language and knowledge of the culture of Italy in a historical perspective. Students are strongly urged to begin Italian in their first year. ITAS 101-102 count toward the degree, but not the major. Students majoring in Italian are required to take nine units above the 100 level. One of such courses must be 211, 271, 272, [273], or 274. Two of the nine courses must be at the 300 level and be taken in the department. The requirement to take two courses at the 300 level may not be met by taking 350 (Research or Individual Study), 360 (Senior Thesis Research) or 370 (Senior Thesis). Students are encouraged to consult with the chair about the sequence of courses they will take. Courses given in translation count toward the major. Qualified students are encouraged to spend their junior year abroad in Italy on the Eastern College Consortium program in Bologna (of which the Department of Italian Studies is a participant) or on another approved program.

### **Requirements for the Minor**

The minor in Italian Studies requires five units above the 100 level. Courses offered in translation count towards the minor.

### **Honors**

The only route to honors in the major is writing a thesis and passing an oral examination. To be admitted to the thesis program, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. See Academic Distinctions.