



McGill

Department of  
Languages, Literatures, and Cultures  
Italian Studies

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ITAL 230: Understanding Italy  
3 Credits  
Fall 2024

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Office Hours: MW 4-5PM

### Course Description

In this course, you will explore the history and culture of contemporary Italy by examining an archive of movies, TV series, documentaries, and various types of texts produced between 1847 and the present. The course consists of 15 weekly modules comprising live classes and a-synchronous activities such as quizzes, textual analyses, and the social annotation of videos or texts. Besides learning about Italian history and society, you will learn how to examine, discuss, and contextualize various forms of visual and textual evidence with English subtitles or in English translation.



### Required Readings

*The Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories*, edited and translated by Jhumpa Lahiri (London: Penguin, 2020). Available at the McGill Bookstore.

Florence, Italy, ca. 1960. Cathedral and Baptistry in the background. A Fiat 600 at the center of the picture.

Other textual and visual sources required for this course are available on MyCourses under the section “Content.”

### Course Requirements and Method of Evaluation

Constant and active engagement with the material at home and in class is essential to succeed in this course. The course is structured into weekly units consisting of two modules covering a text from the corpus under examination. Rather than a big midterm or final

project, the course entails weekly tasks such as social annotation sessions (see below), in-class discussions (see below), and end-of-module quizzes. The course also includes a midterm and a final assessment. This is a slightly larger quiz comprising two textual analyses. Apart from the midterm and final assessments, you can skip two items from each category without any penalty.

### **Reading Assignment (20%) TIME SENSITIVE!**

Each module entails a social annotation session on Perusall, a platform integrated with MyCourses. Interacting with your classmates online, you will answer questions, annotate specific passages, learn curiosities about the text, and respond to other people's comments. Your performance will be assessed according to the following rubric:

Comment content (40 %): You will earn full credit by submitting four high-quality comments

Reading to the end (20 %): You will receive full credit by reviewing every document page.

Active engagement time (15 %): You must spend at least 30 minutes engaging with the document.

Getting responses (15 %): You must write at least two comments that elicit responses from your group mates.

Upvoting (10 %): You can upvote your colleagues' comments and have your comments upvoted to get full credit.

### **Reading Response (20 %) TIME SENSITIVE!**

On the day before class, you must post a short (200-250 words) personal response based on the reading assignment. This will provide the primary material for the in-class discussion. The note is personal, and you have a lot of freedom in responding to the text. It can include a question that emerged from your social annotation session, a personal experience that relates to the text under examination, previous readings that can shed light on the text's meaning, and also non-textual materials (audio, images, video) that you find pertinent or simply interesting to discuss together. Depending on the time available, at least one reading response from each group will be addressed live in class as an informal presentation.

### **Weekly Quiz (20 %) ASYNCHRONOUS**

Each module ends with a graded quiz that includes multiple choice questions, fill in the blank, matching, ordering, and other types of testing. Each quiz will assess your knowledge of the material discussed in class, the reading assignments on Perusall, or other types of sources (e.g., documentaries). The quizzes will be accessible for the entire course duration.

## **Midterm and final assessment (30 %) ASYNCHRONOUS**

The course also includes a midterm and a final assessment. They are slightly larger quizzes that include two written answers graded manually and focus on a specific source or interpretive technique discussed in class. Once posted, both assessments will remain available for the entire course duration.

## **Attendance/In-class participation (10 %)**

Attendance is mandatory, and participation is essential to earn full credit.

## **STATEMENTS**

### **Copyright**

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law. They may not be copied or distributed in any form or any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that copyright infringements can be subject to follow-up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

### **Statement on Inclusivity**

The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures endeavours to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with your instructor and the [Office for Students with Disabilities \(https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/\)](https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/): 514-398-6009. Students with a documented disability should contact the OSD as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. This letter should be given to the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Please note that it might not be possible to accommodate last minute requests for accommodations.

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information). L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity)).

**Language Policy** In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.