

**McGill University Faculty of Arts
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures - Italian Studies**

**ITAL 295: Italian Cultural Studies
Italiani per un anno – Italian for a Year: Rituals, Pop Culture, and Mass Media**

Fall 2024

Lecturer: Tania Zampini

Communication plan: McGill email /MyCourses / Zoom; I will answer questions within 24 hours on weekdays.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes a culture, and how is it shaped over time? After Italy's unification in 1861, the emergence of a national culture was slow, often expressed, instead, in regional customs and cultural values not always shared with neighbouring areas. The postwar period of the 1950s, however, brought with it the modernity that allowed for a wider dissemination of standardized Italian language through news, visual images, and music that helped a national Italian culture come into sharper focus. Though regional and local customs persist beyond the 1950s, in the second half of the twentieth century, Italians became unified in the visual and written landmarks that represent them more generally and that have become important parts of Italy's cultural legacy.

This course, taught in Italian, aims to introduce students to Italian popular culture as it has developed primarily from the 1950s to today through Italian film, television, novels, essays, and news articles. It uses as an interpretive key Italy's national holidays from January to December, each of which speaks to movements, institutional entities, or historical moments that have significantly altered Italians' idea of themselves and the values they uphold. In other words, this course aims for students to immerse themselves in national culture by becoming "Italian for a year," observing, understanding, and commenting upon Italian festivities central to its national identity.

PREREQUISITES

This course will be taught entirely in Italian. **Students enrolled in this course must therefore have successfully completed ITAL 215/216. Students who have not completed ITAL 215/6 but have comparable knowledge of Italian acquired at another institution (equivalent to B2 level) are asked to speak to the instructor at the beginning of the term for a linguistic assessment and placement.**

COURSE MATERIALS

Available at le James bookstore:

Oriana Fallaci, *Lettera a un bambino mai nato* (Rizzoli: 1993)

Umberto Eco, *Il fascismo eterno* (La nave di Teseo: 2017).
Stefano Benni, *Pane e tempesta* (Feltrinelli: 2009).
Andrea Pazienza, *Le straordinarie avventure di Pentothal*
Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy* (St. Martin Griffon's, 2008).

Films and series:

Elio e le storie tese, "La terra dei cachi," Festival San Remo, 1996.
Vacanze di Natale, Carlo Vanzina, 1983 (Dailymotion)
Festival San Remo playlist (YouTube)
Lina Wertmüller, *Il giornalino di Gian Burrasca*, Ep. 1: "Cominciano i guai," 19 dicembre 1964;
ep. 7 (YouTube)
Steno, *Un americano a Roma*, 1954. (YouTube)
Sergio Leone, *C'era una volta il west*, 1968. (Criterion Collection)
Canzoni del lavoro playlist
Paolo Virzì, *Tutta la vita davanti*, 2008. (Dailymotion)
Dino Risi, *Il sorpasso*, 1962. (Criterion Collection)
Enza Negroni, *Jack Frusciante è uscito dal gruppo*, 1996. (Dailymotion)
Gabriele Mainetti, *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot*, 2015. (Kanopy)
Dario Fo, *Mistero Buffo* playlist (YouTube)
Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Teorema*, 1968. (Dailymotion; McGill library)
Matteo Garrone, *Reality*, 2012. (McGill library)

MyCourses:

Academic and/or news articles posted weekly
Loredana Lipperini e Michela Murgia, *L'ho uccisa perché l'amavo – FALSO!* (Laterza: 2013).
Michela Murgia, *Il mondo deve sapere* (2006); excerpts
Dario Fo, *Mistero Buffo*; excerpts

METHODOLOGY

This class will be conducted in person as an undergraduate seminar. It will rely heavily on synchronous participation in classroom discussion and group activities. Teaching methods include lectures, class debates, oral presentations, audio-visual presentations, class discussions, and group work.

Readings and viewings must be completed *before* each class.

ASSESSMENTS

This course assesses students' Italian reading comprehension, oral comprehension, oral production, writing production, grammatical proficiency, and critical reasoning skills. Students will demonstrate their familiarity with required course readings and viewings in ***weekly comprehension exercises posted to MyCourses***, where they will respond to multiple choice, true or false, matching, ordering, and short answer questions. Correct use of the Italian language will be evaluated in paragraph-length responses. Students who obtain 84% or lower on each of these weekly comprehension exercise assignments will have the option of submitting a second attempt.

The second – not the highest —will count toward their final grade. These exercises will be open for one week and are to be completed asynchronously. A recommended time limit of 120 minutes will be applied to each.

Compositions (3) addressing Italian film, music, literature, and history, will be graded for content (creativity/analysis) and correct use of the Italian language (form, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar). Students who obtain 84% or lower on each of these compositions will be given the opportunity to submit revised versions to incorporate the instructor’s feedback on their original drafts.

Students will also be asked to prepare a **short research assignment** (300 words) on an Italian song, movie, text, popular figure, or historical movement. These assignments will be twofold in nature: students will be asked both to share their findings with the class in a **scheduled oral presentation supported by visual aids**, and to submit a **written summary of their research to the MyCourses class forum by 10:35am that same day**.

Finally, students will be required to prepare a **group final and integrative project**. Students will be asked to provide an outline of this project at the mid-semester mark (via an individual consultation with the instructor), and a description and draft of it in the penultimate week of the semester. On the last day of lessons, this final project will be presented to the class orally. Its final elaboration will be submitted after the end of the course.

Contribution to class discussion is a fundamental requirement of this course. Students’ participation will be measured according to an impartial points system. Points will be attributed to students after each lesson. Students who attend class and contribute actively (vocally) to large-group discussions at least once, or small-group work will receive two points for that lesson. Students who attend class and participate passively (note-taking, active listening) will receive one point for that lesson. Students who are absent from class will receive no points.

Evaluation Plan

Weekly comprehension exercises (MyCourses quizzes)	20%
Compositions (3)	20%
Final project	40%
Outline: 5%	
Draft: 10%	
Final product: 20%	
Oral presentation of product: 5%	
Research project	10%
Written research: 5%	
Oral presentation of research: 5%	
Participation and attendance	10%

TENTATIVE CLASS CALENDAR

Please note that this calendar is subject to change at the instructor's discretion based upon the pace of the course and other considerations (guest speakers, audio-visual components, etc.). The instructor will confirm required readings and evaluation dates weekly in class, via e-mail, and on MyCourses.

Week 1

Introduzione al corso; "La terra dei cachi," Elio e le storie tese

Week 2

Premessa: regionalismo italiano; cultura 'nazionale' e i mass media: *Carosello*, I quotidiani italiani (*Il Corriere della sera*, *La Repubblica*), fonti "alternative"

Week 3

FEBBRAIO: Festival San Remo: amore e propaganda politica anni '60-'70

FEBBRAIO: Festival San Remo: il festival oggi

Week 4

MARZO: La festa della donna; *Il giornalino di Gian Burrasca*, Ep. 1, Ep. 7

MARZO: La festa della donna; Oriana Fallaci, *Lettera a un bambino mai nato*

COMPOSIZIONE 1

Week 5

MARZO: La festa della donna; *L'ho uccisa perché l'amavo*

APRILE: La festa della resistenza e il dopoguerra italiano; *Il fascismo eterno*

Week 6

APRILE: Festa della resistenza e dopoguerra italiano: *Un americano a Roma*

APRILE: Festa della resistenza e dopoguerra italiano; *C'era una volta il West*

Week 7

MAGGIO: Festa del lavoro; "Chi non lavora non fa l'amore"; Fabrizio De André

MAGGIO: Festa del lavoro; *Il mondo deve sapere*, Michela Murgia

Week 8

Thanksgiving; Reading Week

Week 9

MAGGIO: Festa del lavoro; *Tutta la vita davanti*, Paolo Virzì

COMPOSIZIONE 2

GIUGNO: Festa della repubblica; *Pane e tempesta*, Stefano Benni

Week 10

GIUGNO: *Pane e tempesta*

Progetto finale: schema e consulenza (5%), settimana del 24 ottobre

GIUGNO: *Pane e tempesta*

Week 11

GIUGNO: *Pane e tempesta*

AGOSTO: Ferragosto: *Il sorpasso*, Dino Risi

Week 12

SETTEMBRE: A scuola; Rivoluzione studentesca: *Le straordinarie avventure di Pentothal*

SETTEMBRE: A scuola; *Jack Frusciante è uscito dal gruppo*, Enza Negroni

Week 13

OTTOBRE: Lucca Comics; Cristina D'Avena; *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot*

NOVEMBRE: Ognissanti; *Mistero buffo*, Dario Fo

COMPOSIZIONE 3

Week 14

NOVEMBRE: Ognissanti; *Teorema*, Pier Paolo Pasolini

NOVEMBRE: Ognissanti; *Reality*, Matteo Garrone

Progetto finale: bozza (10%)

Week 15

DICEMBRE-GENNAIO: Cine-Panettone; *Vacanze di Natale*, Carlo Vanzina, 1983

Presentazioni: [Progetti finali](#)

COURSE POLICIES

- Asynchronous activities:
 - Each week, the instructor will post reading comprehension questions on MyCourses (quizzes). These will be available for the entire week but will need to be completed by the week's end (Friday at midnight) to be graded.
- Written work:
 - Students are asked to submit all compositions and their final project in .docx or pdf format via MyCourses. Should their final project include a visual component, alternative arrangements should be discussed individually with the instructor. Submissions made by e-mail will be discarded.
- Late policy:
 - Barring documented extenuating circumstances supported by a doctor's note, submissions made more than 48 hours late will be discarded. Late submissions will receive a penalty of 3% per day late. Extensions should be requested at least one week in advance.
- Make-up work:
 - No make-up quizzes, tests, or assignments will be given in this course. No work for extra credit will be offered.
- Instructor communication and availability:
 - In addition to her office hours, the instructor may be reached by e-mail. The instructor will be checking and responding to e-mail messages between the hours of 9am and 6pm from Monday to Friday. Students may expect a response to their sent messages within 24 hours, excluding weekends.

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 [McGill’s guide to academic honesty](#) for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

« 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 [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#)).

- Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching or other appropriate software (e.g., formula-, equation-, and graph-matching).”
- **Please remember the following points when you write your essay:**
 - It is a violation of the honor code to have your essays proofread by someone else.
 - It is a violation of the honor code to use translation software or online translation tools.
- The following statement should be added at the beginning of every written composition: **“I will be fair and honest in my coursework. I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on any assignment, quizzes or exam”.**

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

LANGUAGE POLICY

“The main language of instruction at McGill is English. You have the right to write essays, examinations, and theses in English or in French **except in courses where knowledge of a language is one of the objectives of the course.**” Accordingly, all work in this course will be submitted or delivered in Italian, the target language.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Student Accessibility and Achievement](#), 514-398-6009.

*As per the university, “The main language of instruction at McGill is English. You have the right to write essays, examinations, and theses in English or in **French except in courses where knowledge of a language is one of the objectives of the course.**” Please see*

<https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2022-2023/university-regulations-and-resources/graduate/gi-lang-policy#:~:text=The%20main%20language%20of%20instruction,the%20objectives%20of%20the%20course>. for more information, and note that all written work for ITAL 295 must be submitted **in Italian**.

END OF COURSE EVALUATION

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Recommended additional viewings and readings:

Alina Marazzi, *Vogliamo anche le rose* (2007)
Lorella Zanardo, *Il corpo delle donne* (2009)
Guido Chiesa, *Lavorare con lentezza* (2004)
Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Comizi d'amore* (1964)
Dacia Maraini, *Donna in guerra* (1975)