

Boston University Study Abroad Padua

FALL SEMESTER 2014

COURSE: CAS LI 355 ITALIAN MIGRANT LITERATURE

INSTRUCTOR: Laura Lenci (lencilau@bu.edu)

CLASS SCHEDULE: Tuesday and Thursday 11:15am-1.00pm

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

COURSE VALUE: 4 credits

Course Overview

It is difficult to define Italian Contemporary Literature today. In fact, the recent history of Italy demonstrates a progressive change in the identity of the Italian population, due to the strong flux of migration into the country: these changes involve on many levels not only the perspective on the history, culture and language, but also the perception of reality. Like art, literature shows how a peaceful development of cultures is possible and synthesizes positive and critical aspects through an esthetic use of language. In literary fiction language and experience, otherness and identity, tolerance and intolerance live together. How will the “other” meet the Italian experience and translate it into its own experience? How is the conflict between Italian citizenship and “foreign” roots, or, better said, between “one’s own” roots and an Italian “foreign” citizenship overcome? How is it possible to express the “I” in a specific language and at the same time represent a world that doesn’t belong to Italy? There are many authors today writing in Italian, although their native language is not Italian. And many of them are now recognized for their excellent works as a part of current Italian literature. This course offers therefore a unique opportunity for students to study a particular field of Italian Literature and to appreciate not only the language, but also the path to integration among many different cultures within our country. Students will also discover authors like Helga Schneider, Giorgio Pressburger, Ornella Vorpsi, Tim Parks, Igiaba Scego and many others not only through their books, but also meeting them. Students are also expected to read excerpts from their masterpieces, from articles and essays about the topic of the course and finally to read two books from the reading list provided.

Bibliography:

- Course pack including critical essays and articles
- One entire book studied during the course, chosen by the student
- Interviews, videos and documents listed below

Works:

AA.VV., *Pecore nere*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2005.

Carmine Abate, *Il muro dei muri*, Milano, Mondadori, 2006.

Carmine Abate, *La moto di Scanderbeg*, Roma, Fazi, 1999.

Helena Janeczek, *Cibo*, Milano, Mondadori, 2002

Gëzim Hajdari, *Stigmati*, Lecce, Besa, 2007.

Kossi Komla-Ebri, *Imbrazzismi. Quotidiani imbarazzi in bianco e nero*, Milano, Edizioni dell'Arco, 2002.

Amara Lakhous, *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio*, Roma, Edizioni e/o, 2006.

Amara Lakhous, *Divorzio all'islamica a Viale Marconi*, Roma, Edizioni e/o 2010.

Jarmila Ockayová, *Verrà la vita e avrà i tuoi occhi*, Milano, Baldini e Castoldi, 1995.

Tim Parks, *Italiani*, Milano, Bompiani, 2002.

Giorgio Pressburger, *Storie dell'Ottavo Distretto*, Milano, Marietti, 1986.

Giorgio Pressburger, *L'orologio di Monaco*, Torino, Einaudi, 2003.

Ornela Vorpsi, *Il paese dove non si muore mai*, Torino, Einaudi, 2005.

Ornela Vorpsi, *La mano che non morde*, Torino, Einaudi, 2007.

Igiaba Scego, *La mia casa è dove sono*, Milano, Rizzoli, 2010.

Helga Schneider, *Il rogo di Berlino*, Milano, Adelphi, 1995.

Videos:

www.scrittoreperunanno.rai.it

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGBoagpQoVM (scontro di civiltà)

<http://youtuberepeat.org/?videoid=gzk5HfFVL38> (lakhous)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILPVNu-TeVc> (abate)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Vi4-m4Pwh0&feature=youtu.be> (vivere per addizione)

Critic readings

● AA.VV., *Scrittori italiani di origine ebrea ieri e oggi: un approccio generazionale*, Utrecht, University Library Utrecht, 2007

● Giuseppina Commare, "La letteratura migrante come fattore di integrazione europea", in *I quaderni europei*, Catania, Università di Catania, 2008

● Roberto Derobertis, <Insorgenze letterarie nella disseminazione delle migrazioni>, in *Scritture migranti*, Università di Bologna, 2007 (www.scritturemigranti.it)

- Paola Ellero, <Letteratura migrante in Italia>, in *Lingua Nostra, e Oltre*, Università di Padova, 2010 (www.maldura.unipd.it/masters/italianoL2/Lingua_nostra_e_oltre)
- Federico Faloppa, *Lessico e alterità: la formulazione del "diverso"*, Firenze, dell'Orso, 2000.
- Emilio Franzina, *Merica!, Merica!*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1980.
- Andrea Gazzoni, <L'intentio poetica dell'esilio: Gëzim Hajadri>, in *Scritture migranti*, Università di Bologna, 2007 (www.scritturemigranti.it)
- Édouard Glissant, *Poetica del diverso*, Roma, Meltemi, 1998.
- Philip Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989 (ital. trans. *Il patto autobiografico*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1986).
- Tzvetan Todorov, *L'uomo spaesato. I percorsi dell'appartenenza*, Roma, Donzelli, 1996.
- Francesco Pompeo, *Il mondo è poco, un tragitto antropologico nell'interculturalità*, Roma, Meltemi, 2002.
- Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York, Random House, 1993 (ital. trans. *Cultura e imperialismo*, Roma, Gamberetti, 1998).
- Raffaele Taddeo, *Letteratura nascente. Letteratura italiana della migrazione*, Milano, Raccolto, 2006.
- Hayden White, "Historical Text as Literary Artifact", in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins UP, 1978 (ital. trans. *Forme di storia. Dalla realtà alla finzione*, Roma, Carocci, 2006).

on-line Magazines

www.elghibli.org

www.scritturemigranti.it

www.eksetra.net

www.letteranza.org

<http://www.disp.let.uniroma1.it/kuma/kuma.html>

<http://collettivoalma.wordpress.com> (blog founded in January 2011 by and for Italian migrant writers)

Students are expected to

1. Accurately read the texts indicated in the syllabus, before every class.
2. Actively participate in the class discussions.
3. Read an entire book studied during the course.
4. Present the biography of the author, on whom the lesson is focused, and discuss current criticism on the author. Each student will present their reflections to the class and will lead a discussion session. Presentation schedule will be decided during the first two classes.
5. Complete an essay question written midterm exam (open questions).
6. Complete two 2-pages response papers, responding to a topic or question proposed by the instructor, at the end of the fourth and the eighth weeks. Papers will have a grade expressed in numbers: mistakes will be indicated and every student will have a possibility to revise his/her paper and work to receive a better grade.

7. Write a final research paper. The final 6-paper will be preceded by a detailed outline with bibliography, and by a draft that is to be turned in to your professor*, handed into the Academic Office, and that the teacher will edit. The written paper will be done in Italian. The written paper should indicate thorough research and critical use of bibliographic sources, making use of at least two books and websites indicated by the teacher in the bibliography.

8. Complete a final oral exam about topics and works covered during the course.

* Late submission of the research paper will result in the automatic lowering of a grade.

Assessment Method

Attendance, class participation: 15 %

Class presentation: 10%

Midterm written exam: 20%. The 2 hours exam paper contains two essay questions which will be handed out in Lesson XII

Two response papers: 15% (2 pages each, in Italian, Times New Roman 12, double spaced, margins 2cm)

Final oral exam: 20% (includes all topics discussed in class during second part of the course)

Final paper: 20% (6 pages, in Italian, Times New Roman 12, double spaced, margins 2cm)

BU Grade Chart

Grade	Honour	Points
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.7	90-92
B+	3.3	87-89
B	3.0	83-86
B-	2.7	80-82
C+	2.3	77-79
C	2.0	73-76
C-	1.7	70-72
D	1.0	60-69
F	0.0	Below

"A" grade will be assigned to serious, ambitious, hard-working, punctual students. All students are expected to dedicate their time and to engage with enthusiasm/participation/contribution to all class-work and exercises. Two unexcused absences will bring the class grade down half grade. **Three or more unexcused absences can put the student in jeopardy of failing the course. It is the student's responsibility to make up work from a class missed for an excused absence.**

A note on note-taking

As a result, your notes from class are of fundamental importance, because the evaluation of all of your assignments and exams will be based primarily upon your command of and ability to apply the material discussed in both in-class lectures and homework. Since we will be learning in a variety of different authors and works and under varying circumstances, I wanted to point out that your note-taking materials should put you in the condition to facilitate the readings of works and criticisms proposed in the syllabus.

BU POLICIES

Attendance

Boston University Padua students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trips required for the class. Students should note that attendance will be taken into account by faculty when determining final grades. Students absent from class for medical reasons need to provide a local doctor's note. Please notice that weekend trips and family visits are not acceptable reasons for either lateness or absence.

Plagiarism

Simply stated, plagiarism is taking another's work and presenting it as you own. Dictionary definitions of plagiarism frequently include terms such as 'theft' or 'steal'. Plagiarism is, in fact, intellectual theft. It is one of the most serious forms of academic misconduct. Plagiarism committed by a student will certainly result in course failure and may result in suspension or dismissal. For more details please see

Boston University's *Code of Student Responsibilities*: <http://www.bu.edu/lifebook/university-policies/policiescode.html>

Religious Holidays

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.' See Chapter 151C of the General Laws, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Syllabus

I Lesson – Sept. 2nd

Topics - Course presentation. The canon and Italian literature today. Cultural, linguistic and historical fragmentation as a description of Italian identity. Writing in a second language: Joyce translator of himself and Svevo's works as an example of middle-European melting pot.

Texts - excerpts from literature and conversations in dialect (and translation into current Italian), excerpts from Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* and from Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno* (chapter V).

Criticism - Giuseppina Commare, "La letteratura migrante come fattore di integrazione europea", in *I quaderni europei*.

II Lesson – Sept. 4th

Topics - Human nomadism: from the Greek-Roman ancient concept of "otherness" to the modernity. Italian as a neutral language that doesn't indentify a colonial empire. Definition of "migrant writers" with respect to the concept of "glocal".

Texts - Konstantinos Kavafis' poem "Aspettando i barbari"; Italo Calvino, "Eufemia" in *Le città invisibili*.

Criticism – essay on migrant literature definition

III Lesson – Sept. 9th

Topics -Emigration, immigration and migration: Italian history and histories.

Texts - Excerpts from travel memories, letters and immigrants experiences in the northeastern part of Italy, Giovanni Pascoli, *Italy*;

Criticism - Excerpts by Emilio Franzina's essay *Merica! Merica!*; excerpts from Benedetto Croce and Gian Luigi Beccaria on the question of the use of language.

GUEST SPEAKER – Prof. Gadi Luzzatto

IV Lesson – Sept. 11th

Topics - The concept of "transculturation" and progressive transformation of Europe: from literature on the foreigner to literature written by foreigners. Living in between spaces.

Texts - Igiaba Scego "Dismatria" in AA.VV., *Pecore nere* and Amara Lakhous' *Divorzio all'islamica a Viale Marconi*.

Criticism - Excerpts from Tzvetan Todorov, *L'uomo spaesato. I percorsi dell'appartenenza*; excerpts from *Lessico e alterità. La formulazione del diverso* by Federico Faloppa.

V Lesson – Sept. 16th

Topics - Linguistics minorities as a part of the Italian portrait. Italian recent emigration: German-Italian-Arbëresh: the case of Carmine Abate.

Texts - Tales from *Il muro dei muri* by Carmine Abate.

Criticism – articles on Carmine Abate

h. 2.00-3.00 pm GUEST SPEAKER – Dr.ssa Mariachiara Berizzi. Seminar on the Italian linguistics varieties and minorities

VI Lesson – Sept. 18th

Topics - **Carmine Abate**. Analysis of linguistic aspects and style and consideration on the metamorphosis of the autochthon language. Migration to Italy.

Texts - excerpts from *La moto di Scanderbeg* by Carmine Abate.

Criticism – article on Carmine Abate poetry

2-pages response paper.

Friday, Sept. 19th – ALL DAY PROGRAM FIELD TRIP TO FLORENCE

VII Lesson – Sept. 23rd

Topics - First phase of immigration to Italy. The questions of co-authorship, translation in Italian and bilingualism: the language pertinence as a conquest of a recognized social identity. Tolerance and intolerance. Intercultural questions. First African immigration: the case of **Kossi Komla-Ebri**.

Texts - Giuseppe Ungaretti's "In memoria", tales from the anthology titled *Vu' cumprà*, excerpts from *Imbarazzismi* by K. Komla Ebri.

Criticism - Article titled «Letteratura migrante in Italia» by Paola Ellero in *Lingua Nostra, e Oltre*; excerpts from Taddeo's *Letteratura nascente, Letteratura italiana della migrazione*.

VIII Lesson – Sept. 25th

Topics - Philosophical and anthropological concept of "identity". Archetype of "otherness": Robinson Crusoe. Acceptance vs. rejection. The question of recognizing of citizenship and belonging to a group. When otherness becomes identity. **Tim Parks'** anthropological view of Italy.

Texts - Excerpts from *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe; excerpts from *Italiani* by Tim Parks.

Criticism - Excerpts from Levy-Strauss works.

2-pages response paper.

Sept. 28th

h. 2.00-3.00 pm GUEST SPEAKER – Dr.ssa Claudia Baldelli. Seminar on the Italian dialects.

IX Lesson – Sept. 30th

Topics – The use of irony in Tim Parks' works.

Texts – excerpts from *Italiani* by Tim Parks

Criticism – article on Tim Parks

X Lesson – Oct. 2nd

Topics - Sedentarianism-nomadism. The metaphor of the bridge as horizontal displacement of identity. The exil and the poetry of **Gëzim Hajadri**.

Texts - Poems by Gëzim Hajadri.

Criticism - *Poetica del diverso* by Édouard Glissant; excerpts from *Culture and Imperialism* (ital.trans. *Cultura e imperialismo*) by Edward Said; article titled «L'intentio poetica dell'esilio: Gëzim Hajadri» by Andrea Gazzoni

XI Lesson – Oct. 7th

Topics- **Gëzim Hajadri** (part II)

Texts – Articles by **Gëzim Hajadri**

Criticism – article on Gëzim Hajadri poetry

XII Lesson – Oct. 9th

Written mid term exam.

XIII Lesson – Oct. 14th

Topics - **Jarmila Ockayová**.

Texts - Excerpts from *Verrà la vita e avrà i tuoi occhi* by Jarmila Ockayová; Cesare Pavese, “Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi”

Criticism - Interview with J. Ockayová by Paolo Pegoraro; «Insorgenze letterarie» by Roberto Derobertis, in *Scritture migranti*.

XIV Lesson – Oct. 16th

Topic - The question of truth: between literature (fiction) and life-experience (document). The cases of **Helga Schneider** and **Helena Janeczek**.

Texts - excerpts from Helga Schneider's *Il rogo di Berlino*

Criticism - excerpts by Philippe Lejeune's essay *On Autobiography*.

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 18th and 19th – TWO DAYS PROGRAM FIELD TRIP

Oct. 21st – NO CLASS

XV Lesson – Oct. 23rd

Topic - **Helena Janeczek**.

Texts - Poems by Helena Janeczek and excerpts from *Cibo*

Criticism - Excerpts from Hayden White's "Historical Text as Literary Artifact", in *Topics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*.

Friday, Oct. 24th – COURSE FIELD TRIP TO TRIESTE

XVI Lesson – Oct. 28th

XVII Lesson – Oct. 30th

Topic- Article 3 of Italian Constitution. The Conflict between the “one’s own” roots and Italian citizenship. **Ornela Vorpsi**. Life, travelling and language as ingredients of representation of the “I” and of the experienced reality.

Texts- Ornela Vorpsi, *Il paese dove non si muore mai*, Torino, Einaudi, 2005, pp. 5-12 and 30-41; O. V., *La mano che non mordi*, Torino, Einaudi, 2007, pp. 3-27.

Criticisms- Article by Massimo Rizzante in the on-line review *Nazione Indiana* titled “La bellezza andrà all’inferno? Lettera a Ornela Vorpsi” (<http://www.nazioneindiana.com/2008/05/15/la-bellezza-andra-allinferno-lettera-a-ornela-vorpsi/>)

XIII Lesson – Nov. 4th

Topic- **Ornela Vorpsi**'s poetry and style.

Texts- Ornela Vorpsi, *La mano che non mordi*, Torino, Einaudi, 2007, pp. 3-27.

Criticisms- article on Ornela Vorpsi works

XIX Lesson – Nov. 6th

Topics - Second generation writers. The question of religion and civil society in the process of integration. Literature as a way to integration.

Texts - Tale titled “Salsicce” by **Igiaba Scego**, in AA.VV., *Pecore nere*;

Criticism - “Europa in estinzione?” by G. Piombini, in AA.VV., *L'Europa fra radici e progetto*.

XX Lesson – Nov. 11th

Topics - The conquest a place and of a voice in the Italian cultural landscape. The question of citizenship with respect to culture and geographic limitations.

Texts - Excerpt from *Porto il velo, adoro i Queen: nuove italiane crescono* by **Sumaya Abdel Qader** / Amara Lakhous' *Divorzio all'islamica a viale Marconi* and “Documenti, prego” by **Ingy Mubiayi**, in AA.VV., *Pecore nere*.

Criticism - Essay by Igiaba Scego and interview with her (www.scrittoreperunanno.rai.it)

XXI Lesson – Nov. 13th

Topic- Cartography of identity. Remapping the space through the language.

Texts – Excerpts from Igiaba Scego's *La mia casa è dove sono*, Torino, Loescher, pp. 20-37 and Amara Lakhous' *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio*.

Criticism - articles on the history of Somalia.

Proposal of final paper title.

Friday, Nov. 14th – ALL DAY PROGRAM FIELD TRIP

XXII Lesson – Nov. 18th

Topics - The *topos* of Jewish wandering : in and out Italian literature and culture. Is there a place? The case of **Giorgio Pressburger**.

Texts - Excerpts from *L'orologio di Monaco* by Giorgio Pressburger.

Criticism - Essay titled "L'ineluttabilità del destino nell'opera narrativa di Giorgio Pressburger" by Inge Lanslots, in AA.VV., *Scrittori italiani di origine ebrea ieri e oggi: un approccio generazionale*.

Proposal of final paper title.

XXIII Lesson – Nov. 20th

Topics – Giorgio Pressburger's poetry

Texts –Excerpts from *L'orologio di Monaco* and *Storie dell'Ottavo Distretto* by Giorgio Pressburger

Criticism – article on Pressburger's works.

XXIV Lesson – Nov. 25th

Topics - Organization, diffusion and instruments: on-line reviews, editors, events, associations and national conventions.

Texts - Articles from the most important reviews: "Manifesto" (www.elghibli.org)

XXV Lesson – Nov. 27th

Final reflections on the language: testimonials, questions and observations by Christiana de Caldas Brito, Tahar Lamri and others. (Part I)

Texts: essays on the language written by migrant writers.

XXVI Lesson – Dec. 2nd

Final reflections on the language: testimonials, questions and observations by Cristina Ali Farah, Igiaba Scego and others. (Part II) - Conclusions and review.

Texts: essays on the language written by migrant writers.

XXVII Lesson – Dec. 4th – NO CLASS

Presentation of final paper draft.

XXVIII Lesson – Dec. 15th

Final written and oral exam.