Instructor: Piergabriele Mancuso, Ph.D.
Class schedule: Monday and Wednesday, from 9.00am to 10.45am
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11.00am to 12.00am
Instructor e-mail: gmancuso@bu.edu
Credit value: 4 credits

COURSE OUTLINE

Venice was one of the most important and long-lasting maritime empires and political entities of the Western World. The city was founded around the end of the 7th century under the aegis of the Byzantine Empire by groups of Venetici, northern Italian population living in the Veneto and Friuli Venezia-Giulia areas. Venice ruled over several territories, from continental Italy down to the Western coast of the Adriatic sea, Greece, southern Italy and the Middle East. Venice had a very complex and stable government system - an oligarchic Republic led by a Doge (an Italianised term from the Latin dux, “leader”) - based on an efficient diplomacy and very strong military structure. At the peak of its power Venice was one of the most important trade centres, a city where different ethnic and religious communities were living together and in peace.

The aim of the course is to outline and analyse the most important phases of Venetian history. Although we will study in detail some of the problems concerning the political and cultural relations between the Venetian Republic and the hosted minorities (particularly the Armenians, the Jews, and the Greeks), the course is on political and social history. The course will include two visits, one to the Dogal Palace and one to the Jewish Ghetto, its synagogues and the surrounding area. The course includes two video-screening sessions, one of a film and another one of a late 19th century Italian opera based on two major literary works (Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice and Arrigo Boito/Giuseppe Verdi’s Otello, after Shakespeare’s homonymous play) concerning and based in Venice. Students will be required to read the original texts and comment on them in class, as well as to compare the compare them to the operatic and cinematic renditions, with specific emphasis on Venice as a place and historical metaphor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive and critical view over Venetian history and the main features of its socio-political and social heritage. We
will study the development of Venice’s major historical events, the main factors that determined its economic and political development in late ancient and early medieval Italy up to the 15th-21st century in a broader European and world context. On-site visits are mandatory as they provide crucial in situ information directly related to the course topics. The course will be taught in Italia. While readings and home assignments will be done mainly in Italian but also in English, all exams - including presentations - will be done solely and exclusively in Italian.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

In order to pass the examination, students will be required to study at least the course pack (dispense) prepared by the instructor, which will be available at a suggested copy shop. Some other texts will be provided in photocopies during the course, including those necessary to study in order to prepare the class presentations. Lectures are part of the study load, so please take note of the lectures, for some themes and subjects presented in them are not in the textbooks.

**COURSE TEXTBOOKS:**


**FURTHER READINGS (INCLUDED IN THE COURSE-PACK) AND FILMS (AVAILABLE TO WATCH AT THE BU PADUA ACADEMIC CENTER):**

- D. Katz, "Clamber not you up to the casements": On ghetto views and viewing,” in “Jewish History”, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2010), pp. 127-153

**Course Requirements**

1. Careful reading (with dictionary if necessary) and full comprehension of all the texts included in the syllabus.
2. **Active participation** in class discussion and completion of all assignments and homework.
3. One in-class presentation on a topic chosen from a list proposed by the teacher or on a subject proposed by the student and approved by the teacher. Possible topics include Venice’s artistic heritage (from music to visual arts and architecture) and socio-cultural traditions (e.g. Venice’s diplomacy; Venice’s culinary tradition, spiritual-religious heritage and language, etc…).
4. A mid-term written exam
5. A final oral exam.

**Components of the Final Grade**

1. Attendance and class participation: 15%
2. Mid-term written exams: 20%
3. Class presentation 15%
4. Final paper 25%
5. Final oral exam: 25% (includes all topics studied and discussed in class during course, including visit’s topics and student’s presentations.

- Attendance and class participation: Students are expected to be punctual, ask and answers questions (especially when concerning homework and course readings), express curiosity and participate actively in the discussions. Before each class students will be asked to make short review (3-5 minutes max) summarising and explaining the main topics and contents of the past class. Field trips are part of the curriculum and participation is absolutely mandatory.

- Mid-term written exam: the exam consists of 15 multiple choice questions and three questions with long answers (ca. 500 words each) on any aspect of the topics studied in class and the field trips during the first part of the course, from the time of Venice’s birth to the beginning of the Most Serene Republic’s political and territorial decadence (1508-09). Students are expected to offer concise but also comprehensive analyses as well as to offer a general chronological contextualization together with the exact and punctual references to the events, places and most prominent historical figures. Mid-term exam will be done on Monday 5 October 2015.

- Class presentation: An in-class presentation on a subject or topic approved by the professor. Presentations should last no more than 40/50 minutes. Use of PowerPoint and other similar technological devices and tools are strongly encouraged.

- Final paper: A comprehensive analysis on a selected topic assigned by the teacher and concerning any aspect of Venetian history, Venetian culture and artistic local lore, 5–6 pages longs, written in Times New Roman 12 double-spaced and justified, together with footnotes and bibliography that can include also a list of relevant websites. Bibliography is required for evaluation, but it should be not included in the 5-6 pages paper. Students will send their work by e-mail (gmancuso@bu.edu) to the instructor by Monday 14th December.

- Final oral exam: students will be asked to answer orally questions concerning any topic studied during the course, (from the beginning of Venice’s civilization to its fall in 1797 and subsequent foreign Franco-Austrian dominations, up to Venice’s incorporation into the Kingdom of Italy in 1866), including on-site visits, guest speaker’s lecture and fellow students’ presentations done during the course. The instructor will provide a list of specific questions on concepts and facts discussed during the course on which students are expected to show their historical and critical competence. Students will be sitting this exam on Wednesday 16 December 2015.

**BUSA Padua Italian Studies Program Learning Outcomes**

1. Demonstrate increased proficiency in Italian language from elementary to low-intermediate level.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of Italian culture with respect to three of the following areas: history, politics, economics, religion, literature, film and the arts.
3. Develop an awareness of the cultural difference and an understanding of culture’s role in shaping beliefs and practices
4. Develop new perspectives on one’s own culture and an ability to think critically about one’s own values and beliefs

BU POLICIES

ATTENDANCE
Boston University Padua students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip required for the class. Students should note that attendance will be taken into account by faculty when determining final grades.

PLAGIARISM
Simply stated, plagiarism is taking another’s work and presenting it as your 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 Academic Conduct Code: http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/

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.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 617-353-3658 to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests. For more information, please visit: http://www.bu.edu/disability
## CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER WEEK 1

**2 Wednesday (1)**  
Introduction to the course. Study and research methodologies, class participation and grading criteria.

**4 Friday**  
FIELD TRIP TO PADOVA SURROUNDINGS

### WEEK 2

**7 Monday (2)**  
**READINGS:**  

**9 Wednesday (3)**  
Rialto and the birth of a city on sea. The creation of an Italian “comune” and its transformation into an elitarian “res-publica”. 
**READINGS:**  

### WEEK 3

**14 Monday**  
NO CLASS (make-up on Thursday 17 Sept.)

**16 Wednesday (4)**  
Republica Serenissima (Most Serene Republic). Trade and war: Venice and the Crusades. 
**READINGS:**  

**17 Thursday (5)**  
Venetian pragmatism in a time of holy wars. The fourth crusade and the Venetian conquest of Constantinople (1204). 
**READINGS:**  

### WEEK 4

**21 Monday (6)**  
The structures of the Venetian republic: the Doge, the Maggior Consiglio and the hierarchy of power. 
**READINGS:**  
23 Wednesday          NO CLASS (make-up on Friday 25 Sept.)
25 Friday (7)          On-site class (9.00am-10.45am)=: “Venetian Padua – The signs, symbols and most important places of the Venetian political and military presence in the city of Padua – Piazza Capitaniato, the winged lion and the clock tower. Meeting at BU site at 9.00am SHARP.

WEEK 5
28 Monday and          NO CLASSES
30 Wednesday

OCTOBER
WEEK 6
5 Monday (8)           Perfectioning the elitarian structure: the “Serrata del Maggior Consiglio” and the beginning of the Venetian-Genoese long war (1378). The “Stato da Terra”: the Serenissima in the Italian inland.
READINGS:

7 Wednesday (9)        The wars against the Turks and the League of Cambrai (1508).
READINGS:

WEEK 7
12 Monday and          NO CLASSES (make-up on Thursdays 15 and 22 October)
14 Wednesday
15 Thursday (10)       N.B. MIDTERM WRITTEN EXAM

WEEK 8
19 Monday (11)         The peak of the Serenissima and the beginning of the decadence (1517-1628).
READINGS:
N.B. Read William Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice (text in the course-pack).

21 Wednesday (12)      Set in Venice. Venice in the background: The Merchant of Venice, directed by Michael Radford, featuring Al Pacino. Screening of selected scenes and
analysis of Shakespeare’s play with special emphasis on Venice and its political institutions and juridical tradition.

23 Friday

N.B. 2-Day Programme field trip to MILANO

WEEK 9
26 Monday (13) and
28 Wednesday (14)

THE VENETIAN GHETTO ON ITS 500TH ANNIVERSARY: 29 MARCH 1516-2016, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Venetian Jewish ghetto - The main characteristics of the Venetian Ghetto. The Venetian Ghetto as a pattern of segregation and inclusion in early modern Italy.

READINGS:

N.B. 28 Wednesday (11am-1pm)

Guest speaker: Prof. Shaul Bassi, Ca’ Foscari University, Venice and President of Beit Venezia (former Venice Centre for International Jewish Studies). Lecture on *Shakespeare’s Shylock and Venetian Jewry in Early Modern Venice*. t.b.c.

WEEK 10
NOVEMBER
2 Monday (15)

The crisis of the Venetian trade. The maritime empire and the battle of Lepanto, 1570-1571, between myth and reality.

READINGS:

4 Wednesday (16)

The Last Interdict (part I): The Last Interdict (part I): 1607. Venice’s fight for religious freedom and political
autonomy - Paolo Sarpi’s legacy and the problem of religious freedom in Venice.

**Readings:**

**The Last Interdict (part II): The Legacy of Paolo Sarpi**

**N.B. 6 Friday (17)**
Trip to Venice and on-site class. Visit to the Jewish Ghetto, the Jewish Museum, the synagogues, and the Dogal Palace. Meet in front of Mondadori bookshop at 9.00am (sharp!) to take the 9.21am RV 2711 train to Venice. Visit will end at approximately 3.30pm. Return to Padova with 27182 RV train at 4.12pm.

**Week 11**
**9 Monday (18)**
The Threaty of Passarowitz (1718) and the Austrian-Ottoman war and peace agreements.

**Readings:**

**11 Wednesday (19)**
Ludovico Manin, the last Doge (1787). Venice under the sphere of French influence.

**Readings:**

**Week 12**
**16 Monday (20)**
“The Venetian French Party”

**Readings:**

**18 Wednesday (21)**
12 May 1797: the end of the Serenissima Repubblica.

**Readings:**

**N.B. 20 Friday**
Programme field trip to Ferrara
WEEK 13
23 Monday (22) Venice, from the French and Austrian dominion to Italian independence 1797-1866.
READINGS:
Scandaletti, Storia di Venezia, pp. 288-316
and on-site class: “The Caffè Pedrocchi: a coffee house, a venue for intellectuals, free-thinkers, freemasons and 19th century Italian political and social reformers”.

25 Wednesday (23) “A view on Venetian architecture and art history. The Palladian style and the birth of European and American Neo-Classic culture”
READINGS:
Howard, The Architectural History of Venice, pp. 45-126;
Scandaletti, Storia di Venezia, pp. 212-229 and presentation session.

WEEK 14
30 Monday (24) Venice in William Shakespeare’s plays, from Othello to Merchant of Venice. Analysis of the original text and screening of selected passages from Giuseppe Verdi’s Otello. Acts I-III.
READINGS:
W. Shakespeare’s Othello and Arrigo Boito’s Othello (full texts in the copy pack); Stamatov, Interpretive Activism, pp. 345-366; Wills, Verdi’s Shakespeare, pp. 93-106.

2 Wednesday NO CLASS

WEEK 15
7 Monday National Holiday
9 Wednesday (25) “Post-modern, plastic Venice”: Venice in the age of mass tourist and global knowledge: current issues and future perspectives. The M.O.S.E. system
READINGS:
Hansson, Norms in Technology, chapter 6; Bosworth, Italian Venice, pp. 201-267 and presentation session.

WEEK 16
14 Monday (26) Overview and general discussion about the course and FINAL PAPER DUE

16 WEDNESDAY (27) FINAL ORAL EXAM

Piergabriele Mancuso, 2015®