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: this 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, Ornela 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.

The course will also include two guest speakers who will respectively held a seminar on:
“Italian linguistic minorities and alloglot islands” – Dr. Mariachiara Berizzi, University of Padua;
“The representation of the foreigner in modern Italian cinema of and on migration” – Prof. Giovanna Faleschini Lerner, Franklin and Marshall College (skype conference)
The two-days program field trip to Milan is also relevant for the course.

If included in the local cinema network, students accompanied by instructor will enjoy the showing of Laura Bispuri’s movie titled “Vergine giurata” with Alba Rohrwacher and inspired on Elvira Dones’ novel.

Bibliography:
- Course pack including critical essays and articles – all stuff is also available on Belackboard as digital support for your study outside class.
- One entire book studied during the course, chosen by the student for his/her final paper
- Interviews, videos and documents listed below

Works:

**Other quoted texts or relevant for the course:**

**Videos:**
[www.scritréripérunanno.rai.it](http://www.scritréripérunanno.rai.it) (scego)
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGBaagpQoVM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGBaagpQoVM) (scontro di civiltà)
[http://youtuberepeat.org/?videoid=gzk5HfFVL38](http://youtuberepeat.org/?videoid=gzk5HfFVL38) (lakhous)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPVNu-TeVc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPVNu-TeVc) (abate)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vf4-m4Pwh0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vf4-m4Pwh0&feature=youtu.be) (vivere per addizione)

**Critic readings:**
*AA.VV.*, *Scrittori italiani di origine ebraica e oggi: un approccio generazionale*, Utrecht, University Library Utrecht, 2007
Roberto Derobertis, *Insorgenze letterarie nella disseminazione delle migrazioni*, in *Scritture migranti*, Università di Bologna, 2007 ([www.scitturemigranti.it](http://www.scitturemigranti.it))
Paola Ellero, *Letteratura migrante in Italia*, in *Lingua Nostra, e Oltre*, Università di Padova, 2010 ([www.maldura.unipd.it/masters/italiano2/Lingua_nostra_e_oltre](http://www.maldura.unipd.it/masters/italiano2/Lingua_nostra_e_oltre))

Andrea Gazzoni, "L'intentio poetica dell'esilio: Gëzim Hajadri", in *Scritture migranti*, Università di Bologna, 2007 (www.scritturemigranti.it)


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**on-line Magazines**

www.elghibli.org

www.scritturemigranti.it

www.eksetra.net

www.letterranza.org

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


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**Assessment Method**

*Attendance, class participation*: 15 %

*2 Class presentations*: 10%

*Midterm written exam*: 20%.

*2 response papers*: 15%

*Final oral exam*: 20%

*Final paper*: 20%

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**Attendance, class participation:**

Students are expected to accurately read the texts indicated in the syllabus, before every class; actively participate in the class discussions; read an entire book studied during the course and write the final paper on this book.

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**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.

2 Class presentations:
The first presentation consists in the presentation of the biography of the author, on whom the lesson is
focused, and of a discussion on 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.
The second presentation consists in a group presentation, where students will organize a roundtable and
will critically present and discuss the theoretic and aesthetic positions of authors indicated by the instructor
by the end of the course. Articles and stuff for this presentation will be provided by the instructor.

2 Response papers:
Response papers (3 pages each, in Italian, Times New Roman 12, double spaced, margins 2cm) will be
written in Italian and will discuss and critically synthetize topics or questions analyzed in class on Carmine
Abate’s works and on Helena Janezeck’s works at the end of week 5 and week 10. 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.

Response paper 1 due: Monday, September 28 within 2.30pm
Response paper 2 due: Monday, November 2 within 2.30pm
Late submission of the papers will be not accepted, except in case of illness.

Midterm exam:
Students will complete a 2-essay questions midterm exam (open questions) referring to texts discussed and
analyzed in class. These texts will be provided at the beginning of the midterm exam session by the
instructor.

Final paper:
Each student will write a final research paper (6 pages, in Italian, Times New Roman 12, double spaced,
margins 2cm).
The final 6-pages 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 and follow the academic rule of texts quotation, as well as footnotes. Not
included in the 6-pages, the final paper will also include a first page with title, name of the course and of
student and a critic bibliography and sitography. The non-respect of these academic criteria will affect the
paper grade. Please ask your professor if you may need support. Final paper will be due on Dec. 14.
Each day of lateness in the submission of the paper will be penalized of one letter grade.

Final oral exam:
The final oral exam includes all topics discussed in class during second part of the course. However,
connections and references to authors, topics and works studied during the first part of the course will be
appreciated a lot and well evaluated.
BU POLICY
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

Disabilities Accomodations
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

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 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.
Texts have to be read before class.
Criticism readings have to be prepared before class.

The first part of each class is dedicated to the discussion on texts and criticism.

I Lesson – Sept. 2
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).

Friday, Sept. 4 – ALL DAY PROGRAM TRIP – PADUA SURROUNDING

II Lesson – Sept. 7
Topics - Human nomadism: from the Greek-Roman ancient concept of “otherness” to the modernity. Italian as a neutral language that doesn’t identify a colonial empire vs. the Italian responsibilities in the colonial question. Definition of “migrant writers” with respect to the concept of “glocal”.
Texts - Konstantinos Kavafis’ poem “Aspettando i barbari” (D, 21); Italo Calvino, “Eufemia” in *Le città invisibili* (D, 22)
Criticism – Daniela Brogi, “Smettiamo di chiamarla «letteratura della migrazione?»”, in *Nazione Indiana* (D, 14-20)

III Lesson – Sept. 9
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* (D, 23)

IV Lesson – Sept. 14
Topics - The concept of “transculturation” and progressive transformation of Europe: from literature on the foreigner to literature written by foreigners. Living in between spaces. The case of Igiaba Scego.
Texts - Igiaba Scego *Dismatria* in AA.VV., *Pecore nere* (D, 28-36)
Criticism - Excerpts from Tzvetan Todorov, *L’uomo spaesato. I percorsi dell’appartenenza* (D, 45-48)

V Lesson – Sept. 16
FIRST PRESENTATION AUTHOR AND SUBJECT
Topics - Linguistics minorities as a part of the Italian portrait. Italian recent emigration: German-Italian-Arbëresh: the case of Carmine Abate.
Texts - Tale Bruciori from *Il muro dei muri* by Carmine Abate (D, 57-60)
Criticism – tale L’idolo lontano lontano (D, 50-56) and Vivere per addizione (D, 66-69) and Storia delle mie storie (D, 70-71)

VI Lesson – Sept. 21
Topics - Carmine Abate. Analysis of linguistic aspects and style and consideration on the metamorphosis of the autochthon language. Migration to Italy.
Texts - Tale Prima la vita from Vivere per addizione by Carmine Abate (D, 61-65)

h. 1.00-2.30 pm  GUEST SPEAKER – Dr.ssa Mariachiara Berizzi. Seminar on the Italian linguistics varieties and minorities

VII Lesson – Sept. 23
Texts - Giuseppe Ungaretti’s “In memoria”, tales from the anthology titled Vu’ cumprà (D, 81-84), excerpts from Imbarazzismi by K. Komla Ebri (D, 85-90)
Criticism - Article titled ‘Letteratura migrante in Italia’ by Paola Ellero in Lingua Nostra, e Oltre (D, 73-80) and Kossi Komla-Ebri, Oralità dalla tradizione orale alla scrittura (D, 91-93)

VIII Lesson – Sept. 28
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: La pasticceria Grazia (D, 95-99)
Criticism - Excerpts from Levy-Strauss works on identity (D, 105-110)

3-PAGES RESPONSE PAPER on Carmine Abate due within 2.30pm (lencilau@bu.edu)

IX Lesson – Sept. 30
Topics – The use of irony in Tim Parks’ works.
Texts – excerpts from Italiani by Tim Parks: Il Bepi and Epilogo (D, 100-104)
Criticism – article on Tim Parks

X Lesson – Oct. 5
Topics - Sedentarianism-nomadism. The metaphor of the bridge as horizontal displacement of identity. The exil and the poetry of Gëzim Hajdari.
Texts - Poems by Gëzim Hajdari.
Criticism - article titled ‘L’intentio poetica dell’esilio: Gëzim Hajdari’ by Andrea Gazzoni (D, 119-130)

XI Lesson – Oct. 7
Topics- Gëzim Hajdari (part II)
Texts – Poems by Gëzim Hajdari.
Criticism – article by Silvia Vajna de Pava, La peligorga canta in italiano: la poesia di Gëzim Hajdari e i suoi apporti interculturali, in www.elghibli.it
Oct. 12 - WRITTEN MID TERM EXAM

XII Lesson – Oct. 14
Topics - The dignity of the non-native writer: the question of the cultural and linguistic enrichment. The reflexion on the language goes through the modern philosophical and linguistic thinking that recognizes, inside the general linguistic system, the power of an individual proper expression. The case of Jarmila Ockayová.
Texts - Excerpts from Verrà la vita e avrà i tuoi occhi by Jarmila Ockayová (D, 147-159); Cesare Pavese, Verrà la morte e avrà i tuoi occhi (D, 160)
Criticism – Jarmila Ockayová, Dalle parole di nostalgia alla nostalgia di parole (D, 161-165) and Al di là della parola (D, 167-169)

XIII Lesson – Oct. 19
Topic - The question of truth: between literature (fiction) and life-experience (document). The case of Helga Schneider and the beginning of the literature of testimony (e.g. Edith Bruck)
Texts - excerpts from Helga Schneider’s Il rogo di Berlino (D, 171-179)
Criticism - excerpts by Philippe Lejeune’s essay On Autobiography (D, 185-188) and Cristina Mauceri, Helga Schneider: la scrittura come testimonianza (D, 1181-1184)

Oct. 21 – NO CLASS

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23 and 24 – TWO DAYS PROGRAM FIELD TRIP TO MILAN

XIV Lesson – Oct. 26
Topic - Helena Janeczak. Telling the truth? The story telling as self reinterpretation of the history.
Texts - Poems by Helena Janeczak and excerpts from Cibo (D, 191-196)
Criticism - Excerpts from Hayden White’s ”Historical Text as Literary Artifact”, in Topics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (D, 205-216)

XV Lesson – Oct. 28
Topic - Helena Janeczak. The question of history vs. History and the role of historical memory.
Texts - Poems by Helena Janeczak and excerpts from Lezioni di tenebra, Le rondini di Monnecassino
Criticism – Article by Helena Janeczak, What went wrong, in http://www.minimaetmoralia.it/wp/, 5 ago. 2014 (D, 197-204)

GUEST SPEAKER - Dr. Nicola Brarda, Université Paris III. Lecture and workshop on Helena Janeczak
(Students are expected to read the abstract and hand out + Lezioni di Tenebra and Le Rondini di Montecassino excerpts provided by Dr. Brarda before class)

XVI Lesson – Nov. 2
Topic- Article 3 of Italian Constitution (D, 217). 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. The poetry of looking.
Texts- Ornela Vorpsi, Il paese dove non si muore mai, Torino, Einaudi, 2005, pp. 5-12 and 30-41 (D, 221-227); O. V., La mano che non mordi, Torino, Einaudi, 2007, pp. 3-27. (D, 235-246)

3-PAGES RESPONSE PAPER on Helena Janezек due within 2.30pm (lencilau@bu.edu)

XVII Lesson – Nov. 4
Topic - Ornela Vorpsi. Looking as exercise of power (“shirin”) and the concepts of strangeness/foreignness
Comparison between Ornela Vorpsi’s *La mano che non mordi* and Helena Janeczek *Le rondini di Montecassino*.

XVIII Lesson – Nov. 9
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* (*D*, 37-44)

XIX Lesson – Nov. 11
Topics - The conquest of a place and voice in the Italian cultural landscape. The question of citizenship with respect to culture and geographic limitations. Amara Lakhous.
Texts – Excerpt from Amara Lakhous’ *Divorzio all’islamica a viale Marconi* (*D*, 263-273)
Criticims - Interview with Igiaba Scego ([www.scrittoriperunanno.rai.it](http://www.scrittoriperunanno.rai.it)), Suzanne Ruta, *Humor is an Instrument of Combat* (*D*, 274-277)

XX Lesson – Nov. 16
PROPOSAL OF FINAL PAPER TITLE
Topic- Cartography of identity. Remapping the space and the Self through the language.
Texts – Excerpts from Igiaba Scego’s *La mia casa è dove sono*, Torino, Loescher, pp. 20-37 (*D*, 279-287) and Amara Lakhous’ *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio* (*D*, 288-293)
Criticims – reading again Carmine Abate’s tales.

XXI Lesson – Nov. 18
PROPOSAL OF FINAL PAPER TITLE
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 *Storie dell’Ottavo Distretto* (*D*, 297-303) and *L’orologio di Monaco* by Giorgio Pressburger *Le nostre pietre* (*D*, 304-311)

Friday, Nov. 20 – ALL DAY PROGRAM FIELD TRIP TO FERRARA

Nov. 23 – NO CLASS
XXII Lesson – Nov. 25

Topics – Giorgio Pressburger’s poetry

Texts – Excerpts from L’orologio di Monaco by Giorgio Pressburger L’anima (D, 312-317)

Criticism – Eugenio Montale’s poem Dora Markus, in Le occasioni.

XXIII Lesson – Nov. 30

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

Texts - Articles from the most important reviews: “Manifesto” in www.elghibli.org

FINAL PAPER DRAFT DUE WHITHIN 2.30pm (lencilau@bu.edu)

h. 5.00-6.00 pm  GUEST SPEAKER – Prof.ssa Giovanna Faleschini Lerner, FandM College. Seminar on Cinema of and on Migration

XXIV Lesson – Dec. 2

Final reflections on the language: testimonials, questions and observations by Christiana de Caldas Brito, Tahar Lamri, Cristina Ubax Ali Farah. Conclusions. (PRESENTATION 2)

Texts: essays on the language written by migrant writers.

XXV Lesson – Dec. 9

REVIEW BEFORE FINAL.

XXVIII Lesson – Dec. 15th

ORAL EXAM AND FINAL PAPER DUE.