

ITT3930, sec. 0792: Special Topics in Italian Literature and Culture (Spring 2017)

T | Period 7 (1:55 PM – 2:45 PM)

R | Period 7–8 (1:55 PM – 3:50 PM)

A THOUSAND YEARS OF SCIENCE IN ITALY

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| <i>Instructor</i> | Sara Agnelli |
| <i>Office</i> | DAU 361 (third floor) |
| <i>Office Hours</i> | <i>tbd</i> |
| <i>Email</i> | saraclassics@ufl.edu |

Course Overview

No other field of human activity has known such a radical transformation as natural sciences and technology had during the last thousand years. It seems then appropriate to propose a reflection on this exceptional journey and the contributions made by Italian institutions and researchers, as well as on the present state and the prospects of scientific research and its cultural, social and economic implications.

In this course, we will explore the history of science and technology in the Italian peninsula from the eleventh century up to the present day. We will consider the fundamental aspects of Italian science in its social, political and cultural contexts. Emphasis will be on the physical and life sciences, with some comparative consideration of the social sciences. Therefore, we will investigate a broad range of authors and texts including, but not limited to: Fibonacci, Leonardo, Galileo, Galvani, Volta, Golgi, Marconi, Schiaparelli, Fermi, Levi-Montalcini, and many others. By the end of the course, we will be able to address the question: what can these authors still teach us about scientific thoughts and methods?

Course Outline

The course will follow a roughly chronological order – starting with the Renaissance of the 12th century, and ending with the recent past – and methods of analysis will be predominantly historical in nature.

1. Introduction
2. The Struggle between Theory and Practice (1202–1435)
3. Visual Science in Renaissance Italy (1435–1575)

4. Instrumental Science and the Scientific Method (1575–1670)
5. The Turning Point in Europe: The Age of Enlightenment
6. The Shifts at the Scientific Centre: Italian Science becomes Peripheral (1670–1890)
7. *Risorgimento* and Italian Unification (1839–1890)
8. From Success to Disaster (1890–1945)
9. Reconstruction and Crisis (1945–1973)
10. Some Consideration of the Recent Past

Texts and Resources

There are no textbooks required for this course; all the materials will be placed in canvas; in addition, there are some readings which I will distribute to all students in class during the semester.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance, Class Participation & Homework Preparation (15%)

Attendance & Class Participation: Attendance *and informed participation at all class meetings is required*. This means that you show up to class on a regular basis and complete your assignments on time. The entire success of the course is that you *get involved, get interested and get motivated* to the history of a world which in many ways produced our own.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

1. Class begins promptly. A student is counted as being tardy if he/she comes in after class has started.
2. A student is counted as being absent if he/she fails to attend the class.
3. The student's final grade will be deducted by 1% from his/her final grade for each unexcused absence after the second unexcused absence of the semester.

Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class. Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse, there will be no make-up option for missed exams/assignments. Where possible, makes-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on their return to classes.

Homework Preparation: you should complete the reading or viewing by the assigned class period and be ready to discuss it.

The use of cell phones is prohibited. Phones must be silenced and kept in your backpack. Computers may be used exclusively for E text access. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in a greatly reduced participation grade.

2. In-class Tests (45%)

There will be 3 non-cumulative tests during the semester. These will consist of multiple choice and/or short paragraph answers and are scheduled for February 9, March 16 and April 13. Further details will be provided in class closer to the exam dates.

3. Final Project: A Critical Book Review (40%)

For this class, you are required to write a book review of a non-fictional book dealing with the history of Italian Science. Fictional books may be selected in consultation with me. Your book should have at least 200 pages. I would like you to choose a book that you are very interested in or that will help you answer the question: how many famous Italian scientists can you name, whose discoveries changed the world in the last thousand years?

Here some ideas:

Ray, M. K., Sarrocchi, M., & Galilei, G. (2016). *Margherita Sarrocchi's letters to Galileo: Astronomy, astrology, and poetics in seventeenth-century Italy*.

Cooper, D., & Fermi, E. (1999). *Enrico Fermi: And the revolutions in modern physics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rowland, I. D. (2009). *Giordano Bruno: Philosopher/heretic*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ray, M. K. (2015). *Daughters of alchemy: Women and scientific culture in early modern Italy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Siraisi, N. G. (2001). *Medicine and the Italian universities, 1250-1600*. Leiden: Brill.

Your book review should be 3–4 typed pages long (double-spaced, one-inch margins). It will not due until April 26 (11:59pm, to be emailed to saraclassics@ufl.edu), but I highly recommend that you do your book review by the last day of class (April 18). A book review does not only tell you what a book is about, but also whether it achieves what is trying to do. Therefore, a book review is more than a summary of the content (even though this is an important component), but a critical analysis of the book and your reactions to it. We will discuss techniques further in class.

Work on this final project will be divided into 3 parts: selection of the book (due January 26, 7%), preliminary outline & bibliography (due March 21, 13%), and the book review (due April 26, 20%). Your work must be submitted on the due date unless you have asked for and received permission to

extend the deadline or unless you have a valid excuse. Book reviews will be graded with regard not only to content and organization, but also to presentation, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Your research should be documented accurately. Secondary sources, whether textual or internet based, must be acknowledged. Unattributed use of sources will earn you an E for the course. Papers must be emailed to saraclassics@ufl.edu by 11:59pm on Wednesday, April 26.

Break-down of final grade

Attendance, Class Participation & Homework Preparation 15%

3 in-class Exams 45%

Critical Book Review 40%

Grading Scale

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|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. 100–93 (4.0) | C. 76–73 (2.0) |
| A- 92–90 (3.67) | C- 72–70 (1.67) |
| B+ 89–87 (3.33) | D+ 69–67 (1.33) |
| B. 86–83 (3.0) | D. 66–63 (1.0) |
| B- 82–80 (2.67) | D- 62–60 (0.67) |
| C+ 79–77 (2.33) | E 59– (0) |

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further

information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

<https://student.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Classroom Accommodation

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must first register with the Disability Resource Center by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter to present to the instructor. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

dso.ufl.edu/drc (352) 392 8565

Evaluate your Instructor

Students should provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at evaluations.ufl.edu. The University will announce specific times at the end of the semester for evaluation. Students may view summary results of these assessments at:

evaluations.ufl.edu/results

Honor Code

Familiarize yourself with the University of Florida Student Honor Code and obey it always. You can find the Student Honor Code online at:

dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code

Counseling and Wellness

Students who face difficulties completing the course or need counseling or urgent help should call the Counseling and Wellness Center. Do not wait until the end of the semester for help.

counseling.ufl.edu

Important Dates

January 26, Book Selection

February 9, (in class) Test 1

March 16, (in class) Test 2

March 21, Preliminary Outline & Bibliography

April 13, (in class) Test 3

April 26, 11:59pm Final Project (to be emailed to saraclassics@ufl.edu)

No classes

March, 4–11, Spring Break

April 6 (readings at home *tba*)