

ITW 3460: LITERARY BEGINNINGS

Course Syllabus

Spring 2021



Instructor	Deborah Amberson
Meetings	T period 5-6 (11:45-12:35, 12:50-1:40); R period 6 (12:50-1:40)
Room	#30918 Zoom links on Canvas ; #25825 TUR2322
Office	Dauer 355
Office Hours	T 2:00-3:00; R 11:30-12:40: Zoom link available on Canvas
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores a selection of Italian novels, focusing attention on the texts' opening chapters or sections. Our itinerary will be, for the most part, chronological, as we examine changing authorial practices regarding the novelistic form as reflected in the opening pages of the works. We will consider reader expectations and experience as we address experimentation and playful self-referentiality. Questions such as entertainment, suspense, autobiography, canon, setting, history, and community will also feature in our discussions. Our work will also consider the various texts in the light of the broader evolution of Italian literary history. Students will be expected to contribute actively to in-class discussions. This course will, to a lesser extent, address students' language skills through in-class discussion, guided reading, presentations, creative assignments, and papers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the conclusion of the course, it is expected that students will:

- be equipped with an understanding of some tendencies within the modern Italian novel
- be able to engage critically with a variety of Italian approaches to the novel form
- demonstrate an ability to critically assess the formal questions of literary openings

REQUIRED MATERIALS: READINGS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ON CANVAS

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Final Grade at a Glance:

1. Class Participation, 10%.
 2. Journal Entries x 7, 10%
 3. Article Discussion (Jan. 21), 3%
 4. Novel Selection & Presentation (Jan. 28), 5%
 5. *Come andrà a finire* Presentation, 10%
 6. Short Paper, 13%
 7. Literary Review, 10%
 8. Creative Assignment, 12%
 9. Final Discussion, 5%
 10. Text Rationale, 2%
 11. Final Paper, 20%
- **PLEASE NOTE: Rubrics for written assignments, oral presentations, and participation are available in the Rubrics folder on Canvas.**

Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	63-66	62-60	59-
(4.0)	(3.67)	(3.33)	(3.0)	(2.67)	(2.33)	(2.0)	(1.67)	(1.33)	(1.0)	(0.67)	(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://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

CLAS POLICY: Participation in our class is fundamental since improving oral conversation skills is a key objective of the course. Thus, students are required to have their cameras on from start to finish during our classes on Zoom. A default setting for our sessions in Zoom is that participants will be muted when they enter, so you will unmute yourself when you comment orally during our whole-group conversations and when you are in small groups. Your instructor may also ask students to reply in the chat box for specific activities. Oral comments on camera and written comments in the chat box are considered activities for participation. If you have technical issues, please immediately consult UF IT Help to resolve them and then contact your instructor. Zoom sessions will not be recorded by the instructor and may not be recorded by students. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded material is prohibited.

ZOOM STATEMENT:

Even though you chose the online section of this course, I am certain that we are all looking forward to the fall and the prospect of returning to some degree of pedagogical normality. For now, however, synchronous Zoom classes are the best way for us to recreate the face-to-face class experience for humanities and discussion-based classes. I hope that, in our regularly scheduled online meetings, we will maintain a high level of discussion and interaction in Italian. While we all became used to Zooming *in italiano* last semester, I still welcome, at any point in the semester, suggestions regarding our use of Zoom. I understand that discussing literary texts in Italian can feel awkward under the best of circumstances. And I know that this strangeness might be heightened by the fact that we are doing this in an online format. Please let me know if there are any practices that I can adopt that will make discussion easier for you. In order to recreate the classroom experience as fully as possible, I ask that you make sure your webcams work throughout the semester and that you keep them turned on during our Zoom classes. Although there will be **NO RECORDING** of our classes, I understand that you might still have some concerns regarding privacy. So, I would remind you that neither I nor your classmates need to see your background – we just need to see your face. You can use the “change virtual background” option on Zoom or you can set yourself up against a blank section of wall wherever you find yourself.

ASSIGNMENT NOTES

- In the case of presentations, **you must upload all notes and visual supports through Canvas**. If I do NOT receive notes, you will NOT receive a grade for the assignment.
- All written assignments should be submitted in Microsoft word format (**NO ADOBE/PDF**). They should be **double-spaced and written in 12 pt. font** (Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, or similarly conventional script) with **1-inch margins** on all sides.
- Unless otherwise indicated, all written assignments should be submitted through **Canvas**.

1. Class Participation (10%): Students are expected to contribute to discussion. So, you should be ready to speak both in our larger Zoom discussions and in the smaller breakout rooms. However, it should be noted that participation is not about having all the right answers ready to deliver in perfect Italian. Instead, it is a question of preparing your homework to the best of your abilities and being alert in class. It is about expressing questions and uncertainties as much as it is about sharing opinions. It is also a question of listening to your classmates' opinions and responding when and where you can. Your participation grade will reflect your overall attitude and willingness to engage. It will also reflect the degree to which you have prepared your readings and the quality of your interventions in class. ***See rubric folder for participation rubric.***

2. Journal (10%): You will be expected to submit a journal entry for the bulk of our assigned readings, beginning with Manzoni and ending with Wadia. Your submission should be written in Italian and should be approximately one Microsoft word page in length. In each journal entry, you should focus your attention on how the reading functions as an opening, addressing its efficacy as beginning of a story and the ways in which it tries to hook the reader. Depending on the specifics of the individual reading, you can also address issues such as characters presented, setting or environment, tone, style, narrative voice (1st person or other), etc. You might see the journal as a space to express your first impressions of our readings as well as a forum for developing any ideas you think might be worth sharing in class. In grading this work, I will focus on the intellectual effort you expend rather than whether your reflections are "correct." Although I will not be correcting your grammar, you should aim to be as accurate as possible because repeated avoidable errors will have a negative impact on your grade, especially if they impact readability. Unless otherwise indicated, you should submit your journal entry **via Canvas** before our Tuesday classes. You will lose more than 1% every time you fail to submit your journal. **There will be 7 journal entries in total.**

3. Article Discussion (3%): on January 21, we will spend our class discussing the Richardson article assigned for Tuesday. Our Thursday discussion will not simply revolve around the content of Richardson's essay as we will do this work on Tuesday. Rather, on Thursday, we will work to assess the essay in terms of its argument, organization, and efficacy. We will also address the difficulties of broaching such a broad and varied topic as literary openings, asking whether it is even possible to identify patterns or draw conclusions based on the start of texts. In addition, you will be expected to share the details of another academic text dealing with literary openings. In advance of our discussion, you should provide - through Canvas - a correctly formatted (MLA or Chicago Style) reference to your chosen text. While you are not expected to have read in a detailed manner the work you are referencing, you should be able to provide a sense of the text drawn perhaps from an abstract or summary that you found. The goal of this discussion is to get a sense of how scholars have been writing about literary beginnings and what their fields are so that we can begin putting together some academic sources on the question of openings. You will also demonstrate your ability to carry out academic research through use of the scholarly databases made available through UF.

4. Novel Selection & Presentation (5%): After our discussion of Carlo Collodi, you will be expected to work with a classmate on the selection and presentation of a particularly engaging non-Italian novelistic beginning. You will select this opening and briefly present your choice to the class. Your presentation should be in Italian and should last approximately 8 minutes. You will not be expected to prepare PPT or similar documents -- we need only see your chosen text. If your novel is in a language other than English, please provide a translation of the relevant part. Although this will be an informal presentation based on your subjective preferences, you should still upload your notes to Canvas. **The presentation will take place on January 28.**

5. Come andrà a finire Presentation (10%): Together with a classmate you will take responsibility for delivering a presentation on one of our readings. Together you will read the opening very closely and imagine how the text will develop and conclude. You will present your work to the class with a Power Point Presentation or similar visual aid. Your colleagues will ask questions and share comments on your imagined text. Your presentation should last no more than 15 minutes. **Presentations will be scheduled during the second or third week of class.**

6. Short Paper (13%): You will be expected to write a short paper of 2-3 pages in length. This paper should be written in Italian on a topic to be established in class. You should reference -- and cite correctly - on at least one instance our introductory reading by Brian Richardson. You should also include at least 2 footnotes. **The assignment is due on February 26.**

7. Literary Review (10%): At the mid-semester point, the **entire class** will create and present a *rivista letteraria* featuring articles, reviews, interviews, and/or advertisements for the texts and authors studied up to that point. You are free to add anything else you would like -- articles, poems, images, advertisements. This is a **class project** and should reflect the work of each member of the class. Everyone should be part of the preparation and part of the presentation. **The literary review presentation is scheduled for March 9.**

8. Creative Assignment (12%): For this assignment, you will be expected to write in Italian the opening of an imaginary novel. You may draw inspiration from the texts on the syllabus, but your assignment can also be written in a manner and style entirely of your choosing. This novelistic opening should be 2-3 pages in length. **The assignment is due on March 26.**

9. Final Discussion (5%): We will close the semester with a broad discussion in Italian of the literary openings we studied throughout the semester. All students will be expected to contribute to this discussion -- each student should contribute at least 4 times to the discussion. Your grade will reflect the quality of your content, the accuracy of your Italian, and the frequency with which you intervene. **The final discussion will take place during class time on April 20.**

10. Text Selection Rationale (2%): For the final paper you will work with one of the texts studied over the course of the semester. You will be expected to read the entire work, so choose wisely! Your analysis of the novel will involve a more profound consideration of the text in light of your completed reading. Your rationale should identify your text and its author as well as providing a clear indication of why you chose this particular text and what makes it so pertinent to a critical supported consideration of literary openings. **The rationale is due on April 8.**

11. Final Paper (20%): You will be expected to write a paper of 4-5 pages in length in Italian. This paper should consider the opening of your chosen novel in light of the rest of the text, focusing, where relevant, on issues of tone, narrative voice, foreshadowing, circularity, character development, or any other questions you deem pertinent or significant. You will support your

analysis with reference to one critical text, which can – but doesn't have to! – be chosen from among the articles discussed at the beginning of the semester.

Papers must be submitted on the due date unless you have received written permission to extend the deadline or unless you have a signed medical excuse explaining your delay. Papers will be graded with regard not only to content and organization, but also to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Secondary sources, textual or web based, **must** be acknowledged. **UNATTRIBUTED USE OF SOURCES WILL EARN YOU AN E FOR THE COURSE.**

Papers should be uploaded to Canvas as Microsoft word document - and emailed directly to dambers@ufl.edu - by midnight on Monday April 26.

CLASS POLICIES:

Attendance & makeup policy: Attendance is MANDATORY and will be assessed by roll call. Students will lose 1% from their final grade for each unexcused absence. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable excuses include illness, religious holidays, & military obligation: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to the material covered. 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, make-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on return to classes.

Academic Honesty: Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of assignment and/or course. For UF's honor code, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with Dean of Students Office. Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must provide this documentation to instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact Disability Resources Center for information about available resources: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Online Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>



COURSE CALENDAR ITW3460 LITERARY BEGINNINGS

(Schedule subject to change over the course of the semester)

As per UF policy, first week of class will be delivered through Zoom whether you signed up for f2f or online

	READINGS:	Tuesday 5-6	Thursday 6
1	(T) Best First Sentences (R) “Il romanzo”	1/12 Introduction	1/14 “romanzo”
2	(T) Richardson, “Narrative Beginnings”	1/19	1/21 Article discussion
3	(T) Collodi, <i>Le avventure di Pinocchio</i> (1883)	1/26	1/28 Presentation
4	(T) Manzoni, <i>I promessi sposi</i> (1840) • Journal Entry 1 due by Tuesday’s class	2/2	2/4
5	(T) Tarchetti, <i>Fosca</i> (1869) • Journal Entry 2 due by Tuesday’s class	2/9	2/11
6	(T) Verga, <i>I Malavoglia</i> (1881) • Journal Entry 3 due by Tuesday’s class	2/16	2/18
7	(T) Palazzeschi, <i>Il codice di Perelà</i> (1911) Da guardare: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015038642453&view=1up&seq=6618,q1=sppazzatura • Short paper due by midnight on Friday NO JOURNAL ENTRY DUE	2/23	2/25 “recharge day”/ no class
8	(T) Slataper, <i>Il mio Carso</i> (1912) Da guardare: https://www.viesusseux.it/coppermine/displayimage.php?album=118&pid=250&top_display_media • Journal Entry 4 due by Tuesday’s class	3/2	3/4
9	(T) <i>Rivista letteraria</i> Presentation NO READING & NO JOURNAL ENTRY	3/9	3/11
10	(T) Primo Levi, <i>Se questo è un uomo</i> (1947) • Journal Entry 5 due by Tuesday’s class	3/16	3/18
11	(T) Lampedusa, <i>Il gattopardo</i> (1958) • Creative Assignment due by Friday NO JOURNAL ENTRY DUE	3/23	3/25
12	(T) Calvino, <i>Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore</i> (1979) • Journal Entry 6 due by Tuesday’s class	3/30	4/1
13	(T) Wadia, <i>Amiche per la pelle</i> (2007) • Journal Entry 7 due by Tuesday’s class • Rationale due by midnight on Thursday	4/6	4/8 Rationale
14	(T) Ferrante, <i>L’amica geniale</i> (2012) NO JOURNAL ENTRY DUE	4/13	4/15 Housekeeping
15	NO READING: Final Discussion	4/20 Discussion	

Reminder: Final papers should be uploaded to Canvas as Microsoft word document - and emailed directly to dambers@ufl.edu - by midnight on Monday April 26.