Florida State University

From the SelectedWorks of Silvia Valisa

Fall 2010

Masterpieces of Italian Literature in Translation

Silvia Valisa, Florida State University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/silvia_valisa/14/
ITT 3430-01 – Masterpieces of Italian Literature in Translation
Fall Semester 2010

Classroom: Diffenbaugh 114
Meeting Times: Tues./Thurs. 2:00-3:15 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Silvia Valisa
Office: 352 Diffenbaugh
Email: svalisa@fsu.edu (or svalisa@gmail.com)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30-5:00 pm., and by appointment

Introduction
This course will introduce the students to a selection of major works of Italian literature from the Middle Ages to post World War II. Students will read from the poems, short stories, plays, and novels of such writers as Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Niccolò Machiavelli, Veronica Franco, Anna Banti, Sibilla Aleramo, and Primo Levi. Students will write and reflect on the relationships between classics and modernity, and about what it means to read, and write about, a ‘masterpiece.’ Lectures will examine the works within a cultural, social, and historical context. The questions of identity, trauma, and gender will be the guiding themes of the course.

Course Goals & Objectives
This course is designed to:
1. develop your critical and writing skills
2. offer you a better understanding of major figures and works that have impacted significantly Italian literature and culture.
3. draw insightful parallels between different literary expressions and styles
4. appreciate Italy’s literature in the context of key social and political events
5. learn about gender ideology and how gender works in literature.

Required texts to be purchased:
Dante, The Inferno – Durling – Martinez edition
Machiavelli, The Mandragola
Anna Banti, Artemisia (Bison Books, 2003-04, with introduction by S. Sontag)
Sibilla Aleramo, A Woman, UC Press 1983
Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz

Required readings available online (Course Library in Blackboard):
Petrarch, Boccaccio, Veronica Franco
Film
Selections from *Dante's Inferno*
Selections from Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *The Decameron*
On Veronica Franco: *Dangerous Beauty*
On Artemisia Gentileschi: *Artemisia*
John Turturro’s *The Truce* (Primo Levi)

Requirements
1. Attendance and class participation are mandatory. This course meets two days a week; 2 unexcused absences are allowed. For each additional unexcused absence a student’s final average will be reduced by one grade. Short written homework will be counted as part of the participation grade (1% each).
2. Read each assignment before the scheduled lecture and be prepared for discussion. Students are expected to participate actively in the discussion, and it is therefore very important that you come to class having completed the required reading for the class.
3. Midterm. The midterm will examine the readings and discussions from the first part of the course. The exam will consist of three parts: 1) identification of key figures, works, or movements; 2) analysis of significant passages from readings; 3) choice of themes for essay.
4. An essay (1500 words minimum – 6 pages double-spaced) examining the relationship between classics texts and modernity is due October 28. Re-writes due November 18.
5. Final Exam: Take Home exam with a 500 words minimum essay section: Due Wednesday, December 10, by 12:00 p.m.

Grading
The semester grade will be determined as follows:
20% Participation + homework (1000 words minimum)
30% Midterm Exam (in class)
20% Paper (1500 words minimum – 6 pages)
30% Final Exam: Take Home (with a 500 words minimum essay)

Grading Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>0-59</td>
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</tbody>
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Gordon Rule
This is a Gordon-Rule designated course; that is, it requires a minimum of 3,000 words of writing. Because this is a Gordon Rule course, in order to pass you must satisfactorily complete all graded writing assignments. In this context, satisfactory completion refers to a grade of C- or better. In total, written homework assignment,
final exam, and term essay will exceed 3,000 words. All students will receive feedback and suggestions on their written assignments, so as to improve their writing skills and the way their texts are organized and developed.

In order to fulfill FSU’s Gordon Rule “W” Designation (writing) credit, the student must earn a “C-” or better in the course, and in order to receive a “C-” or better in the course, the student must earn at least a “C-” on the required writing assignments for the course. If the student does not earn a “C-” or better on the required writing assignments for the course, the student will not earn an overall grade of “C-” or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

**Disabled Students**

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodation should:

1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC);
2) Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating you need academic accommodations. This should be done within the first week of classes.

**Honor Code:**

The Florida State University General Bulletin contains an honor code. It is repeated verbatim in the Student Handbook. You will be held responsible for knowing and conforming to it.

1) If you take material that is not yours, from any source whatsoever, and copy it into assignments you submit in the class, you must provide a footnote, endnote or parenthetical reference to the source of the material.
2) Material taken verbatim from another source must be enclosed in quotation marks and attributed as in rule # 1.
3) Material not taken verbatim from a text but paraphrased must also be attributed as in rule # 1.

More in detail:

1. **Plagiarism.** Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). Typical examples include: Using another's work from print, web, or other sources without acknowledging the source; quoting from a source without citation; or using facts, figures, graphs, charts or information without acknowledgement of the source.
2. **Cheating.** Improper access to or use of any information or material that is not specifically condoned by the instructor for use in the academic exercise. Typical examples include: Copying from another student's paper or receiving unauthorized assistance during a quiz, test or examination; using books, notes or other devices (e.g., calculators, cell phones, or computers) when these are not authorized; procuring without authorization a copy of or information
about an examination before the scheduled exercise; or unauthorized

collaboration on exams.

3. **Unauthorized Group Work.** Unauthorized collaborating with others. Typical
examples include: Working with another person or persons on any activity
that is intended to be individual work, where such collaboration has not been
specifically authorized by the instructor.

4. **Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation.** Unauthorized altering
or inventing of any information or citation that is used in assessing academic
work. Typical examples include: Inventing or counterfeiting data or
information; falsely citing the source of information; altering the record of or
reporting false information about practicum or clinical experiences; altering
grade reports or other academic records; submitting a false excuse for absence
or tardiness in a scheduled academic exercise; or lying to an instructor to
increase a grade.

5. **Multiple Submissions.** Submitting the same academic work (including oral
presentations) for credit more than once without instructor permission. It is
each instructor's responsibility to make expectations regarding incorporation
of existing academic work into new assignments clear to the student in writing
by the time assignments are given. Typical examples include: Submitting the
same paper for credit in two courses without instructor permission; or making
minor revisions in a credited paper or report (including oral presentations) and
submitting it again as if it were new work.

6. **Abuse of Academic Materials.** Intentionally damaging, destroying, stealing,
or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material. Typical
examples include: Stealing or destroying library or reference materials needed
for common academic purposes; hiding resource materials so others may not
use them; destroying computer programs or files needed in academic work;
stealing, altering, or intentionally damaging another student's notes or
laboratory experiments. This refers only to abuse as related to an academic
issue.

7. **Complicity in Academic Dishonesty.** Intentionally helping another to
commit an act of academic dishonesty. Typical examples include: Knowingly
allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test;
distributing test questions or substantive information about the material to be
tested before a scheduled exercise; deliberately furnishing false information.

8. **Attempting to commit any offense as outlined above.**

Please refer to the General Bulletin for more information on the Honor Code:
http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/acad_regs.htm

**NOTE:**
This syllabus, and the readings timeline, is subject to minor changes with advanced
notice.
The presence of your name on the roster, after the registration cancellation deadline, indicates that:
  • you have read and understood this entire syllabus
  • you have had your questions about it answered
  • you accept and agree to abide by the policies outlined in this syllabus

**Copy of Syllabus is available on the Blackboard Course Site**

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative form upon request.
Schedule of Lectures & Assignments

Week 1
Aug. 24  Introduction to course – Classics and masterpieces
Aug. 26  Dante and His Times:
           Introduction, video excerpts from Dante’s Inferno
           (Reading: Duggan hand-out + Introduction to Dante)

Week 2
Aug. 31  Inferno (Cantos I, II) – Dante’s Web
Sept.  2  Inferno (Cantos III, IV, V)

Week 3
Sept.  7  The Inferno (Cantos VI, X, XIII)
Sept.  9  The Inferno (Cantos XV, XIX, XXXIII, XXXIV)
           Written homework on the relationship between Dante and a
           modern Dante-inspired artifact (2 pages, double-spaced, 500
           words minimum); or analysis of a passage from the Inferno.

Week 4
Sept. 14  Petrarch: Letters: “Epistle to Posterity” and “The Ascent of
           Mount Ventoux” (Course Library: Blackboard)
Sept. 16  Petrarch: Poems from Canzoniere (Songbook): 1, 3, 35, 61, 126, 298, 319 (Course Library)
           Written homework: write a Petrarch-inspired poem (1 page) and
           explain what you keep, and what you leave, of your model (1
           page).

Week 5
Sept. 21  Boccaccio
           The Decameron: “Preface” and “Introduction,” “First Day, First
           Story (Cepparello)” (Course Library)
           Video excerpt from Pasolini’s Decameron.
Sept. 23  The Decameron: “Second Day, Fifth Story (Andreuccio)” “Third
           Day, First Story (Masetto)” “Fourth Day, Second Story (Fra
           Aberto) “Fourth Day, Fifth Story (Lisabetta) (Course Library)

Week 6
Sept. 28  Boccaccio, “Fifth Day, Eighth Story (Nastagio degli Onesti)”
           “Fifth Day, Ninth Story (Federigo degli Alberighi)” + Essay by
           Ray Fleming, “Happy Endings?” + “Tenth Day, Tenth Story
           (Griselda).” For Sept. 30: analysis of one of Boccaccio’s stories
           (500 words minimum, 2 pages).
Sept. 30  The Renaissance: introduction to Machiavelli
           La Mandragola
**Week 7**
October 5  
Machiavelli, *The Mandrake Root*
Oct. 7  
Veronica Franco, poet courtesan: poems

**Week 8**
Oct. 12  
*MIDTERM*
Oct. 14  
Introduction to Modern Italy: Duggan, hand-out

**Week 9**
Oct. 19  
Anna Banti, *Artemisia*
Oct. 21  
Anna Banti, *Artemisia*

**Week 10**
Oct. 26  
Anna Banti, *Artemisia*
Oct. 28  
Anna Banti, *Artemisia*

**Paper Due.**

**Week 11**
Nov. 2  
Sibilla Aleramo, *A Woman*
Nov. 4  
Sibilla Aleramo, *A Woman*

**Week 12**
Nov. 9  
Sibilla Aleramo, *A Woman*

**Graded Papers handed back**

Nov. 11  
Veterans' Day Holiday. No Classes.

**Week 13**
Nov. 16  
The Holocaust: Introduction to Primo Levi
Nov. 18  
Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

**Re-writes of paper due**

**Week 14**
Nov. 23  
Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Nov. 25  
NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

**Week 15**
Nov. 30  
Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Dec. 2  
Final Class: Food Masterpieces and Review

Final Take-home Exam Due on Dec. 8