



DIPARTIMENTO DI CIVILTÀ E FORME DEL SAPERE



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

Italian Literature I

Martina Mengoni

Content

The course aims to provide an introduction and a broad overview of the Italian literature and culture, specifically focusing on authors – ranging from the Middle Ages to the XVIII century – who had a defining influence on Western literature, e.g. Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Ariosto, Galileo, Goldoni. An essential selection of texts will be analyzed (in translation) using key concepts of literary analysis.

At the same time, the course will also trace the origins and development of Italian language, from its Latin roots throughout its social and literary evolution in poetry, novels, political and scientific essays, travel reports.

Along this journey through literature, a geographic perspective will be useful: moving from XIII century Venice with Marco Polo, we will pass through XIV-XV centuries Florence (with Dante, Boccaccio, Machiavelli), then we will cross XVI century Ferrara (with Ariosto and Tasso), getting to XVII-XIX centuries Pisa, Galileo's hometown; finally, we will come back to Venice, with Goldoni's new theatre. (Other key cities will be explored in Italian Literature II)

By this combination of chronology, historiography and geography, students coming from different backgrounds will be encouraged to experience the fascinating paradox of Italian literature: that is, an apparently national literature which developed in a fragmentary, regional, not-yet-national environment.

Methodology

Historical-cultural background lessons will alternate with special focuses on main authors and text analysis.

Lessons program

- General introduction : from Latin to Italian (2 lessons)
- Palermo : Sicilian School (1 lesson)

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- Venice : Marco Polo's *Il Milione* (1 lesson)
- Florence : *dolce stil novo* and introduction to Dante (1 lesson)
- Florence : Dante (2 lessons)
- Florence : Boccaccio (2 lessons)
- A new European intellectual and his influence : Petrarca (1 lesson)
- Back to Florence : Machiavelli (2 lessons)
- Renaissance Ferrara : Ariosto (1 lesson)
- Renaissance Ferrara : from Ariosto to Tasso (1 lesson)
- Pisa : Galileo (2 lessons)
- Back to Venice : Goldoni's theatre (1 lesson)

Texts

Peter Brand, Lino Pertile, *The Cambridge History of the Italian Literature*, Cambridge, CUP, 1999 [Revised edition].

Students will be provided with a selection of literary texts (in English, with the parallel Italian text), and with other further materials such as critical readings and maps. All these materials will be available on MOODLE.

Tours

«Literary Pisa» tour: Ugolino's Tower Museum, Domus Galileana, Leopardi's Pisa.

Schedule

Monday: 5.30-7pm

Tuesday: 8.30-10am

Assessment

Final paper (5000 words with footnotes, exclusive of bibliography).