

LITR 202: The European Novel

John Felice Rome Center

Fall 2024

Wednesday | 2:30-5pm

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Office Hours: By Appointment, Wed./Th.

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Literature is what unites the world through common experience and this unity is what makes us human.”

— From a student feedback on Primo Levi's literary use of Dante Alighieri

Course Description

This course explores how modern European authors have used literature to respond to and make sense of, a complex contemporary world confronting them with dramatic historical events and social issues: the Holocaust and World War II; women's struggles for legal rights and gender equality; racial, gender and social class inequality in various other forms, such as in the North-South divide and in the Sicilian Mafia.

Over the course of the semester, we will read novels and short stories written by 20th-century Italian authors (Primo Levi, Leonardo Sciascia, Beppe Fenoglio, Carlo Levi, and Sibilla Aleramo). Discussion of films will enhance our understanding of the novels and topics.

Besides reading literary works, we will learn about the historical and cultural contexts that inform the texts. The course becomes thus the occasion to also learn about Italian culture and history through the lens of literature. Finally, by discussing different narrative strategies (such as autobiography, fiction and non-fiction writing, direct and indirect narration), we will also learn to identify different literary genres and techniques, and we will discuss the role of literature and the arts today. Some of the questions we will address are: what is the role of literature in the relationship with society? What does literature teach us about the past? And how can literature help us to connect with each other in the present?

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Know major literary works and key authors of Italian literature.
- Understand the relation of those literary works to Italian society and culture.
- Know core themes and ideas in history and culture.
- Understand and describe literary works as modes of social inquiry representing specific historical and cultural contexts.
- Develop skills in reading, thinking, and writing critically through the composition of an academic essay and other written assignments.
- Develop analytical skills and argue interpretations through class discussions.
- Identify different issues, authors, and works of art from a comparative perspective.

Required Texts

Assigned readings and films posted in Sakai/Panopto.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation, and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one absence.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one absence will be permitted. **Absences beyond this will result in a 1% lowering of the final course grade. Consistent tardiness or long breaks out of class will also affect negatively your participation grade.**

The collective health of the JFRC is everyone's responsibility. Do not attend class if you are ill.

Required Work

The course will fulfill its learning outcomes if you comply with the following requirements:

Participation and Reader Responses (10%): This course relies largely on class discussion. To enhance both your reading and class discussion, for each class you will find a handout in Sakai with a list of topics/questions that we will discuss. Choose one or two questions that interest you and address them through some written notes, including a quotation or two as evidence in support of your claims. These meditations are a chance for you to consider the readings *before* coming to class. As the semester progresses, your responses should become more analytical and offer connections between the works, the authors, and the literary theories. **Please, note that I will ask you to discuss your Responses in class and that I might collect them. I will evaluate your Reader Responses in your final Participation grade. To receive a high participation grade, you should participate in class discussion at least once every class. Failure to complete the Reader Responses accurately will impact negatively your final Participation grade. Please, see me if you struggle with speaking publicly in class.**

Quizzes (40%): There will be two in-class quizzes (multiple-choice questions) on all material covered (readings, lectures, discussions). **To succeed in the quizzes, completing the assigned readings and taking accurate notes in class are essential. The professor's PowerPoint slides can be used for a quick review of the main points and are not meant to replace your own note-taking and readings of the material.**

Team Presentation (10%): Each team will prepare one 25-30 minute presentation (about 5 minutes for each student), presenting a literary work on one of the five social themes discussed in the course. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the presentations.

Paper Proposal (10%): About one week before the final essay is due, we will meet individually to discuss the topic, summary, and bibliography of your final paper. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the paper proposal. **See me during office hours if you would like to discuss your paper proposal earlier in the semester, or more at length than the official meeting schedule allows.**

Final Paper (20%): The final paper (5-6 pages, double-spaced) will be the analysis of a literary text of your choice. The paper will show your ability to choose a focused question and thesis to guide your discussion and to follow the conventions for writing about literature. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the final paper.

Attendance (10%). See the requirements for this course in the specific section on the previous page.

Sakai: This course will be using Sakai. You are required to check the course site regularly for announcements, messages, readings, and assignments posted there.

General advice: The kind of reading we will practice requires marking up a text and reading passages during all class discussions. **If it is a PDF file posted to Sakai, you can download it and save it on your device, highlight the important quotes in yellow, and/or take notes of the page numbers and your comments.**

Assessment Components

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|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Participation/Reader Responses | 10% |
| • Quizzes (2) | 40% (or each quiz 20%) |
| • Team Presentation | 10% |
| • Paper Proposal | 10% |
| • Final Paper | 20% |
| • Attendance | 10% |

Grading

94-100: A	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+
90-93: A-	84-86: B	74-76: C	60-66: D
	80-83: B-	70-73: C-	59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

I expect that all work you produce for this course will be your own and that you will not submit work you have already completed for other courses. **Submitting the same Reader Responses of another student will be considered plagiarism. Paraphrasing or otherwise copying the work of another person without citing the source of the words and ideas will be considered plagiarism. Using AI for writing the final paper or for any of the assignments will result in an F in the assignment or even an F in the course and might jeopardize the rest of your studies at Loyola.**

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. *As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.*

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.



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And finally... Welcome to this class! I find the study of literature both intellectually and emotionally fascinating (as well as a lot of fun), and I look forward to exploring it together. Please do not hesitate to converse with me about the course or the readings throughout the semester. As far as possible, I want to make sure the class meets your own academic goals as well as those I have outlined in this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Friday Class Day: September 20

Date	Topic
Week 1 W 9/4	Introduction. The Suffragette movement and the birth of Feminism and Women's Studies.
Week 2 W 9/11	Sibilla Aleramo, <i>A Woman</i> .
Week 3 W 9/18	Papal audience: no class on Wednesday
F 9/20	Make-up Class Sibilla Aleramo, <i>A Woman</i> .
Week 4 W 9/25	World War II and the Holocaust. Primo Levi, <i>If This Is a Man</i> . Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> .
Week 5 W 10/2	Primo Levi, <i>If This Is a Man</i> . Dante Alighieri, Canto XXVI of <i>Inferno</i> .
Week 6 W 10/9	Quiz 1. The Southern Question. Carlo Levi, <i>Christ Stopped at Eboli</i> .
Week 7	Fall Break (October 11-20): no class on Wednesday, October 16
Week 8 W 10/23	Carlo Levi, <i>Christ Stopped at Eboli</i> .
Week 9 W 10/30	The Aftermath of WWII and the Italian Neorealism. Neorealism in literature: Italo Calvino, Beppe Fenoglio. De Sica, <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> .
Week 10 W 11/6	<u>Topic for team presentation due.</u> Discussion of presentation topics. The Sicilian Mafia. Leonardo Sciascia, <i>The Day of the Owl</i> .



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Week 11

W 11/13

Leonardo Sciascia, *The Day of the Owl*.

Week 12

W 11/20

Team Presentations.

Week 13

W 11/27

Meetings for Paper Proposals.

Week 14

W 12/4

Quiz 2. Conclusions.

F 12/6

The final paper is due.

Week 15

12/9-12

Final exam week.