

European Transformations Course Descriptions

Courses offered in Rome:

Gender and Politics in Modern Italy

This course examines intersections between challenges to the political order and challenges to the gender order in Italy. Across a chronological trajectory course reading, lectures, and class discussions offer a comparative perspective on the transformation of a deeply traditional Mediterranean culture, the progressive independence and political activism of Italian women, the changing relationships between sexes, and the modification of gender roles. Students consider the impact of modernization, fascism and war on gender before moving on to look at the social and political impact of women's suffrage, feminism and the gay liberation movement. Each section of the course concludes with a look at some of the current gender-related issues as debated in Italian society and politics.

Globalization and Crisis

Only recently considered among the most dynamic economies in Europe, Italy's economic health and social well-being are now being challenged by the fiscal and political crisis spreading throughout Europe. This course examines the changes accelerated by entry into the European Union as well as the factors that brought about the crisis. Topics include changes in the labor markets, the impact of a rapidly aging population, the effects of increasing globalization and EU integration, social tensions resulting from the austerity measures, and the impact on political systems.

Art, Crime, and Cultural Heritage

The course focuses on the looting, destruction, and reselling of antiquities, with an emphasis on Italy, from classical antiquity to today. Students consider issues such as what constitutes an art/cultural heritage crime, how ideas of value (both real and symbolic) have emerged historically and how have they changed over time, what constitutes "ownership" in the eyes of different entities, and how this has changed over the past 50 years, resulting in the current difficult and controversial issue of the repatriation of cultural artifacts, which have crossed international borders. Themes considered include the history of collecting, illegal excavation, and the illicit trade in antiquities, the role of auction houses, the Church, museums and galleries, fakes and forgeries and artifact authentication, ownership and patrimony issues, international laws and agreements (in particular the Hague Convention of 1954, the 1970 UNESCO Convention, and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention), recovery and repatriation, and ongoing problems with the protection and conservation of antiquities. Students debate topics including the benefits of repatriation vs. object care and viewership, and the issue of ownership in cases in which all parties involved had, at some time, "legal" rights to the artifact(s) in question. The course includes a review of cultural heritage laws and the current international situation, as well as a discussion identifying challenges and providing suggestions for regulating the market of antiquities in the future. Students visit relevant sites and museums in and around Rome, and closely investigate actual case studies throughout the course.

Sports and Society in Modern Italy

This course examines the role of sports (with an emphasis on soccer) in Italian society from historical and contemporary perspectives. The course considers the relationship between sports and such issues as gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, nationalism, nation-building, the Italian economy, and the role of the media in order to determine how developments in sports have influenced, and have been influenced by, Italian politics and society.

The Changing Faces of a Capital

Contemporary Rome—capital of a modern republic—is the complex result of a centuries-long history. In ancient times capital of an empire and then the center of Christianity, Rome has been continuously re-planned, following its different functions, and enriched with monuments and works of art. First ancient Roman emperors, later popes and cardinals have built monuments and commissioned works of art that have shaped the Eternal City. The contemporary city daily confronts its momentous past.

The course will survey the changing faces of Rome from antiquity to contemporary times, with on-site examination of Roman masterpieces of painting, sculpture, architecture, and urbanism and careful attention to their specific historical contexts and interrelated meanings. The evolving urbanism of the city and the development of an architectural vocabulary, of codes of representation and self-representation, of visual narrative strategies, and the survival of the

classical tradition will be the focus of the course. It will especially investigate how this long architectural and artistic tradition reflects on contemporary art and architecture, and, more generally, on the life of the city.

Representing the “Other” In Contemporary Italian Literature

This course aims to provide a general introduction of “alterity” and how it is represented in contemporary Italian literature. Although Peter Hainsworth and David Robey claim that, in comparison to other national literatures “the Italian case seems unusually straightforward,” (Italian Literature: A Very Short Introduction: 1), establishing what constitutes Italian literature and what does not – what is included in the canon and what is not – is not such an easy task. In this course, we will examine the writings by authors who have traditionally been excluded from Italian literature and who represent “marginal” subjects in Italian culture and society. At the beginning of the course, we will have an introductory unit in which we will briefly recapitulate what the elements in a literary text are so that we will acquire the necessary tools to be able to do a critical reading of the texts in our syllabus. We will then briefly introduce Italian culture and literature. In the first unit, we will examine the literature written by women, with particular attention to Sibilla Aleramo and her memoir *A Woman*. In the second unit, we will introduce the Southern Question (the subaltern position of Southern Italy vis-à-vis the North) and how it is represented in literature, with particular attention to Carlo Levi’s *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. The last unit will introduce students to postcolonial Italian literature and examine three short stories by three Somali-Italian and Indian-Italian writers, Uxax Cristina Ali Farah, Igiaba Scego, and Laila Wadia. Through these readings, we will analyze how the cultural production of second generations in contemporary Italy is “challenging national homogeneity,” while at the same time changing Italian notions of national literature and culture.

History and Politics of Modern Italy

This course provides a core of knowledge of Italy’s post-Unification history, grounding students in the political, economic and social development of the country. Commencing with the nation-state’s formation, the analysis of issues surrounding Italy’s early identity, society and political structures reveals many of the problems that subsequent regimes have sought to address. Within a detailed examination of the politics of Fascist Italy, the First Republic and post-Tangentopoli periods that follow, significant attention is also given to mass culture and what it reveals about each period. This series of classes is based around lectures and structured in-class discussion based upon assigned readings, the country’s political development is also established through the analysis of documents such as the 1929 Lateran Accords, the 1947 Constitution and, most recently, the Five Star Movement’s manifesto. Classes also include the use of video material and site visits within Rome.

Courses offered in Madrid:

Contemporary Spanish History through Film

Spanish cinema provides an excellent route for understanding social and political change throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. As the most important artistic medium of modernity, cinema allows one to construct and deconstruct many myths and realities of contemporary Spain. Thus, this course analyzes the most relevant Spanish film productions both as artistic works (form) and as socio-historical documents (content). Topics include the Republic and Civil War (Fernán Gómez and Buñuel), the 60s comic criticism of dictatorship (García Berlanga) and censorship (Lazaga), the transition to democracy (García and Almodóvar), and the new 90s cinema (Amenábar, de la Iglesia, Médem, Coixet and Bollaín). Analysis of these films is contextualized within a thorough grounding in contemporary Spanish history.

From Dictatorship to Democracy: Social Revolutions in Modern Spain

Spain has experienced crucial transformations over recent decades with regard to women’s rights, family, gender roles, education, freedom of expression, religion, and migration. This course provide a theoretical overview of social revolutions as well as a detailed examination of the influence of Franco’s dictatorship and the transition to democracy on contemporary Spanish conceptions of society, politics, culture, gender, and sexuality. Study visits to representative monuments and institutions are integrated into the course providing students with opportunities to engage first-hand with Spanish culture and people, and guest speakers, round tables, and film screenings help students gain insight into feelings and beliefs about contemporary issues.

The Changing Face of the Mediterranean: Migration in Spain

This course adopts an interdisciplinary approach to examine the phenomenon of migration in the Mediterranean and beyond. Students look at immigration and multiculturalism at the nation-state level in Spain and also consider the country's transformation from being an emigrant to an immigrant society. The course looks at citizenship law and immigration policy examining the ways that immigration is influencing definitions of nationality and "European-ness" as well as explore how the Spanish colonial past can help us understand some of the distinctions in the way immigrants are viewed and treated nowadays. The course explores immigrants' diverse experiences and social and cultural negotiations from their own perspectives, as they interact with Europeans and their institutions such as the Catholic Church. Finally they consider the ambiguous role of the Catholic Church that both advocates for the rights of immigrants while monitoring the growing fear in Europe of its embattled identity.

Political Development in Democratic Spain

This course seeks to identify the main historical, political, and economic factors that have shaped the current two-party political system in Spain. The course is divided into four parts. The first part, defines the concept of "political development" in order to introduce students to the discipline's main contending theories about how this concept ought to be defined. The second part examines the influence of the legacy of the Francoist regime on the creation of the democratic state established in Spain after Franco's death. The third part, examines the difficult "transition to democracy" period lasting from 1975 to 1982 and the various democratic governments that have ruled the country since the consolidation of the democratic regime in 1982. Finally, the fourth part discusses the main elements of the contemporary Spanish political system and evaluates some of the main issues that the system is confronting today and will have to confront in the future.

The City as Text: Urban Development and Art in Madrid

One of the most dynamic cosmopolitan cities in Europe, and credited for its socio-cultural diversity as well as for being a business center, the capital of Spain has become a city that has attracted people from other parts of Spain, and recently, from other countries. Today's Madrid is an open city where most people feel at home in a very short period of time. Thus taking Madrid both as a natural extension of history and as a canvas or text, this course will analyze main art manifestations in the city and will provide students with an understanding of the reality of the capital's artistic life from different perspectives. Tracing its history back to the Middle Ages with its Islamic foundation, in 1561 it became the capital of the most important Empire in the world at that time, the Habsburg one. Madrid downtown area still maintains the taste of that glorious period and it received a new urban push when the Bourbon dynasty started ruling Spain in the 18th century. As the court and capital, it has always held most National Museums as well as the Art Academy. However, the city will be regarded as a palimpsest of interwoven strata and voices. To this end, the course will not only approach official discourses but also more spontaneous, popular or marginal manifestations through the exploration of street art or alternative utilizations of public space - "secondary" layers of the city yet key in the mapping of today's Madrid.

Old Religion and New Beliefs in Modern Spain

Understanding the role of religion in Spain is key to understanding the contemporary Spanish social and cultural landscape. Despite the diminishing intensive process of disenchantment and secularization that began in the 19th century and continued during the second half of the 20th century, more than two thirds of the current Spanish population would still identify themselves as Catholic. Although the vast majority is non-practicing, certain aspects of the religious picture have become tradition and as such continue to exercise a considerable influence on the mentality and lifestyle of both its supporters and its critics. Thus, this course will provide an overview of the religious beliefs that have shaped the Spanish society since the Middle Ages until the present day highlighting the initial enriching coexistence of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the subsequent imposition of Catholicism, the multiple attempts to reach religious freedom during the nineteenth century, the declaration of Spain as a non-confessional country in the 1978 Constitution, and the new spiritual beliefs and practices that are being introduced by younger generations and immigrants. Students will also be exposed to real religious experiences through testimonials, literary pieces, documentaries, films, and pertinent study visits.

Spanish Mass Media and Society

This course is designed as a trip into the media world in Spain and aims at offering the student a broad overview of the field of mass media and its impact on Spanish public opinion. The idiosyncrasies of Spanish society and how they are

reflected on the Spanish mass media map is one of the primary focuses of this course. Moreover, students will have the opportunity to take part in study visits to leading Spanish media companies and meet with media professionals. These visits will provide the student with first hand information about how Spanish media companies are run, and how Spanish audiences behave. At the same time the student will have the opportunity to analyze and trace the evolution of Spanish society since the turn of the century, and discussion will also provide a space to explore similarities and differences between American and Spanish societies.