The Archaeology of Interaction and Exchange in the Ancient Mediterranean
Professor D’Acunto
5 quarter/3.3 semester units

From a general perspective, this course deals with the interactions, exchanges and forms of domination in the ancient Mediterranean. More specifically it focuses on the area the Greeks called Phlegraean Fields (land of fire) and the Romans named Campania Felix (happy countryside) as a fishnet of Mediterranean peoples, cultures and exchanges, in a 2000-year-long period between roughly 1500 BC and 500 AD. Lectures and visits to archaeological sites and museums will be based on a methodology aimed at illustrating how different kinds of sources – ancient authors, inscriptions, archaeology, topography – help us understand in a holistic way the complex picture of the ancient Mediterranean and its transformations. The socio-political aspects underlying the Campanian fishnet will be analyzed in terms of the relationships established among native Italics and the many peoples like the Mycenaeans, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, and the Romans, who settled in the area in different periods, and in terms of cultural exchange and imperialism, mobility and colonization, trade and intermarriage. The course will also hone in on the transmission and hybridization of cultures, languages, scripts and ideologies in order to raise a critical comparison with the contemporary phenomenon of globalization, in particular with reference to Hellenism and the Roman Empire.

The class will alternate lectures and “lab” periods in which groups of students are assigned to explore specific websites, to on-site visits to the main archaeological sites and museums of the area. Students will be expected to make one in-class presentation on an extra-reading assigned and to give brief oral group-reports at the end of every “lab” period. The final exam will be comprehensive and based on a mix of identifications and an essay. The identifications will be drawn from images that the students will have captured on their phones or cameras during the course, and then selected collectively.

The View from the Mediterranean
Professor Fogu
5 quarter/3.3 semester units

Imagine a map of the world in which the continents are colored blue and seas and oceans appear in brown; in which islands and ports are marked as red dots like cities usually are shown on maps; and in which sea routes are traced in black thereby segmenting the maritime continents making them look like extended fishnets. Would you not suddenly see the Mediterranean as a proper continent, without nations states, but peopled by capital cities (islands)? And would you not imagine the people living in the cities on the edge of this continent to be defined by the fishnet of connections that tie them to their island-capitals, more than by the land space lying in front of them? This is precisely the image of the Mediterranean continent that this course aims to deliver in order for students to apprehend the history of the nation state we call Italy from the perspective of its belonging to a fluid history of Mediterranean exchanges and conflicts. Specifically, the course will explore the myriad ways in which the ancient Mediterranean fishnet has affected the history of the Italian peninsula from the breakdown of the Roman Empire (500 AD) to its belated unification in 1860, and then influenced both the geo-cultural division between “northern” and “southern” Italians, and the process of “making Italians” that from the 1861 to our days has responded to this division.