

Discovering Italy: A Journey through Its History, Society, and Culture

Credits: 2

Prerequisites: None (open to students from all disciplines)

Language: English

Lecturer: Professor Cristina M. Bettin

Schedule: Monday 14-16

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday from 11 to 12 – Building 72, 6 floor, Office 636.

I suggest contacting me before any meeting at: bettin@bgu.ac.il in order to set a meeting in person or through Zoom.

Course Description:

This interdisciplinary course offers an in-depth exploration of Italian culture and society, welcoming students from all academic backgrounds and disciplines. Through multiple lenses, students will examine the diversity and richness of Italian society, including the history of Italian Jewry. The course will cover key themes such as Italy's art, literature, regional diversity, tourism, economy, family, and women's role throughout the years in Italian society, political structures, food, music, and cinema, offering a comprehensive view of its evolving cultural identity. Students will engage with readings, discussions, films, and guest lectures to explore how Italy's diverse regional traditions—ranging from its culinary heritage to its artistic contributions—have shaped the nation's identity.

Course Goals:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the evolution of Italian culture and society through key historical events and their impact on modern Italy.
2. Explore the complexities of Italian regionalism and identity, examining the cultural significance of regional differences and the economic importance of tourism. Some

tourist spot destinations and their historical significance like Rome, Venice, Milan, Turin, Florence, and Sicily.

3. Investigate the history and contributions of Italian Jews throughout the centuries.
4. Examine Italy's cultural heritage by exploring its literature, art, music, cinema, and cuisine from an interdisciplinary perspective.
5. Analyze the contemporary social, cultural, and political challenges facing Italy today.

Grading:

A multiple-choice final exam at the end of the course, which is worth 100%.

Requirements:

1. **Regular attendance and participation are expected:** Students are allowed up to three absences during the semester, except in cases of serious issues such as health problems or military service.
2. **Class preparation:** You are expected to come to class prepared, having completed the assigned reading for that day. If you miss a class, you are responsible for independently reviewing any material covered during your absence.

Required and Suggested Texts:

- "A Brief History of Italy: Tracing the Renaissance" by Dominic Haynes
- "The Italians" by John Hooper (some chapters)
- "The Pursuit of Italy: A History of a Land, and Its Regions" by David Gilmour (some chapters)
- **Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History (Arts and Traditions)** by Alberto Capatti (some chapters)
- **Selected Readings** (articles and excerpts from primary sources on the main topics of the course available on the MOODLE website with links to the library online sources).