

## **Syllabus – ISSSC course - ITAL 236 Modern Italy**

Fall 2009 • MWF 11:00-11:50 • Room TBA

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Office hours: MWF 9-9:30 and 1-2 and by appointment.

### **Course description:**

An interdisciplinary introduction to modern Italy, from the movement for national unification (mid-1800s) to the present. Topics include regional contrasts, church and state, religion and secular culture, migration, fascism, mafia, demographic change, and Italy's present identity crisis.

The readings in history are complemented by classic literary texts that are historically evocative. The syllabus also highlights some innovative social-science research about Italy. Students may view and integrate a variety of fine films about Italian history.

The course is designed to develop broadly useful skills in expository writing and public speaking.

Note: For students in the Italian Studies minor, this course serves as the integrating exercise. Students in the minor are encouraged to write papers that integrate - where pertinent - what they have learned in other courses about things Italian.

### **Course requirements (ten graded assignments):**

- Writing:
  - (1-5) Five papers (one for each Part of the syllabus, plus a position paper on a debate topic).  
Each paper is approx. 1,250 words plus endnotes and bibliography.
  - (6) A set of a few short reaction papers (400 words each) about supplementary public lectures.
  - (7) A set of roughly weekly comments (posts) at blogs pertinent to the course.
- Seminar participation:
  - (8) A debate.
  - (9) A report on assigned materials.
  - (10) Regular attendance and discussion.

### **Grade policy:**

- The cumulative score is on a scale of 100 points and may be graded on a curve.
- Each graded assignment is worth ten percent of the course grade.
- Papers, debates, and reports alike are graded on five criteria: (1) focus, (2) integration of assigned materials, (3) argument (or analysis), (4) evidence, and (5) prose (or presentation).
- A seminar is a joint enterprise in which we learn from one another and count on one another. Therefore penalties apply to chronic tardiness or truancy (chronic = more than three classes) and to *any* unexcused absences from guest lectures and public lectures.

### **Purchase list:**

- Giuseppe Tomasi Di Lampedusa, *The Leopard* (Pantheon, 1991)
- Spencer M. DiScala, *Italy: From Revolution to Republic*, 4th edition (Westview, 2009)
- Borden W. Painter, Jr., *Mussolini's Rome* (Palgrave, 2005)
- Peter Robb, *Midnight in Sicily* (Vintage Departures, 1999)

## SYLLABUS

An asterisk denotes assignments available as digital files (.pdf) at BlackBoard. (Some notes and outlines by the instructor are available at Blackboard site.) A double-asterisk denotes materials available on the open internet.

### Part One: Creation of a Nation-State (The *Risorgimento*)

#### I. History of the Risorgimento

9/9 Models & coalitions  
9/11 Protagonists & events Alcorn (2009a)

#### II. The Leopard (The Risorgimento in Sicily)

9/14 Social Classes Lampedusa 1-2 Report:  
9/16 The Southern Question Lampedusa 3-4 Report:  
9/18 Church & State Lampedusa 5-8, Kertzer (2000)\* Report:

#### III. The Risorgimento - Success or Failure?

9/21 Textbook DiScala 5-8  
9/23 Primary sources Historical Docs (1)\* Report:  
9/25 Debate: Success or Failure? Debate:

**1st paper due: Tuesday, September 29th**

### Part Two: Liberal Italy

#### IV. Constitutional democracy

9/28 *Trasformismo* DiScala 9-10 Report:  
9/30 Protectionism & colonialism Historical Docs (2)\* Report:  
10/2 Debate: Liberty or equality? DeGrand (2001)\* Debate:

#### V. Globalization

10/5 The Great Emigration Alcorn (2009b)\* Report:  
10/7 The Great War DiScala 11-12, Futurist manifesto\* Report:  
10/9 Debate: To be a great power? DiScala 13-14 Debate:

#### VI. Cinematic representations

10/12 No class - Trinity Days  
10/14 Life on the land *Tree of the Wooden Clogs* Report:  
10/16 Migration *Kaos (part one)* Report:

**2nd paper due: Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>**

### Part three: Fascism

#### VII. Advent of fascism

10/19 Origins & movement DiScala 15, Whittam Docs\* Report:  
10/21 Consolidation of dictatorship DiScala 16, Paxton (1998)\* Report:

10/23 Regime DiScala 17, Halperin\_Documents\*

VIII. Fascism in power

10/26 Political religion Gentile (1990)\*, Linz (2000)\* Report:  
10/28 Totalitarianism or consensus? Morgan (1999)\*, Painter (1997)\* Debate:  
10/30 Empire, racism, war Harrison (1998)\* Report:

IX. Mussolini's Rome

11/2 Vision Painter (2005) Intro & 1-3 Guest lecture:  
Prof. Painter  
11/4 Implementation Painter (2005) 4-6 Report:  
11/6 Art or propaganda? Painter (2005) 7-9 Debate:

X. Holocaust & rescue

11/9 Trinity debate 2001 JMIS Symposium (2002)\* Report:  
11/11 Social-science perspectives Varese & Yaish (2000)\*  
Breton & Wintrobe (1986)\* Report:  
11/13 Did Pius XII do all he should? Debate:

**3rd paper due: Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Part four: The Republic**

XI. A Cold-War regime

11/16 History of the Republic DiScala 18-21, Hine (1992)\* Report:  
11/18 Corruption DiScala 22 Report:  
11/20 Punish the Cold-War regime? Alcorn (2009c)\*, Sabetti (2000)\* Debate:

XII. The Southern Question

11/23 The regional welfare state Alesina et al. (1999)\* Report:  
11/19-21 No class - Thanksgiving holidays

XIII. The Southern Question (cont.)

11/30 Civic community Putnam (1993) 3-5\*\* Report:  
12/2 Mafia & anti-mafia Film: *I cento passi* Report:  
12/4 Medieval heritage or bad policy? Robb (1999) Debate:

XIV. Italy's identity crisis

12/7 Demography Istat (2008)\*, Sansonetti (2009)\* Report:  
12/9 Political economy Alcorn (2009d)\*, Gambetta & Warner (1996)\* Report:  
12/11 Culture Ercolesi (2009)\*, Kosmin (2009)\* Report:

XV. 12/14 To become a federation? Debate:

**4th paper due: Exam date (TBA)**

### Bibliography of readings, other than purchase list

**Alcorn (2009a).** John Alcorn, "Explaining the *Risorgimento*" (MS).

**Alcorn (2009b).** John Alcorn, "Crime & Punishment in Bribe City" (MS)

**Alcorn (2009c).** John Alcorn, "Forces and Mechanisms in the Great Migration from Italy to America" (English translation of Italian article in *Neos* 2 (2009).

**Alcorn (2009d).** John Alcorn, "Italy's Identity Crisis" (MS for ISSSC faculty seminar)

**Alesina, Danninger, & Rostagno (1999).** Alberto Alesina, Stephan Danninger, and Massimo V. Rostagno, "Redistribution through Public Employment: The Case of Italy", NBER Working Paper No. 7387 (October 1999).

**DeGrand (2001).** Alexander DeGrand, "Giolitti", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* (2001).

**Ercolesi (2009).** Giulio Ercolesi, "Italy: The Contemporary Condition of Italian *Laicità*," in Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, eds., *Secularism, Women, and the State: The Mediterranean World in the 21st Century* (ISSSC, 2009) 9-27.

**Gambetta & Warner (1996).** Diego Gambetta & Steven Warner, "The Rhetoric of Reform Revisited", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*.

**Gentile (1990).** Emilio Gentile, "Fascism as Political Religion", *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (1990) 229-51.

**Halperin\_Documents.** Appendix of historical documents in S. William Halperin, *Mussolini and Italian Fascism* (Van Nostrand, 1964), Part II: Documents, pp. 91-182.

**Harrison (1998).** Mark Harrison, "The Economics of World War II: An Overview", in Mark Harrison, ed., *The Economics of World War II* (Cambridge U. Press, 1998) 1-42.

**Hine (1992).** David Hine, *Governing Italy* (Oxford U. Press, 1992), chapter on Italy's constitution.

**Istat (2008).** Istat, *Italy in Figures 2008*, <http://www.istat.it/english/italy2.pdf>

**JMIS Symposium.** John Alcorn, ed., "Symposium on Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 7:2 (Summer 2002) 215-68.

**Kertzer (2000).** David I. Kertzer, "Religion and Society, 1789-1892," in John A. Davis, ed., *Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford U. Press, 2000) 181-205.

**Kosmin (2009).** Barry A. Kosmin, "France, Italy, and Spain: Political Secularism and Public Opinion," in Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, eds., *Secularism, Women, and the State: The Mediterranean World in the 21st Century* (ISSSC, 2009) 29-39.

**Linz (2000).** Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Lynne Rienner, 2000), ch. 2, "Totalitarian Systems", pp. 65-142.

**Morgan (1999).** Philip Morgan, "The Years of Consent? Popular Attitudes and Forms of Resistance to Fascism in Italy, 1925-1940", in Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligott, eds., *Opposing Fascism* (Cambridge U. Press, 1998) 163-179.

**Painter (1997).** Borden W. Painter, jr., "Renzo De Felice and the Historian's Task" (MS, 1997)

**Paxton (1998).** Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism", *Journal of Modern History* 70:1 (March 1998) 1-23.

**Sabetti (2000).** Filippo Sabetti, *The Search for Good Government* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2000) 129-87.

**Sansonetti (2009).** Silvia Sansonetti, "Social Indicators of Secularization in Italy," in Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, eds., *Secularism, Women, and the State: The Mediterranean World in the 21st Century* (ISSSC, 2009) ??-??.

**Varese & Yaish (2000).** Federico Varese and Meir Yaish, "The Importance of Being Asked: the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Europe", *Rationality and Society* 12:3 (2000) 307-334

**Whittam (1995).** John Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester U. Press, 1995). (Appendix of historical documents.)

**Reference works** (available in the Reference section of the Library)

- Frank J. Coppa, *Dictionary of Modern Italian History*
- Philip V. Cannistraro, *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy*
  - Peter Bondanella, *Historical Dictionary of Italian Literature*
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**Recommended films (equivalent to historical novels, some based on historical novels), Raether library**

- *The Leopard* (Directed by Luchino Visconti): National unification in Sicily.
- *Senso* (Directed by Luchino Visconti): National unification in Venice in 1866.
- *Kaos (Part One)* (Directed by the Taviani brothers): Emigration from Sicily.
- *1900* (Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci): WWI, class struggle, and advent of Fascism.
- *Tree of the Wooden Clogs* (Conservative reply to Bertolucci's *1900*)
- *The Conformist* (Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci): Persecution of political oppositionists in exile during Fascism.
- *Amarcord* (Directed by Federico Fellini): Life under Fascism in a provincial town.
- *A Special Day* (Directed by Ettore Scola): Life under Fascism in Rome.
- *Garden of the Finzi Contini* (Directed by Vittorio De Sica): Persecution of Jews under Fascism in Ferrara.
- *Bicycle Thief* (Directed by Vittorio De Sica): Working-class life in post-war Rome.
- *La Dolce Vita* (Directed by Federico Fellini): The leisure classes in Rome.
- *Investigation of a Citizen above Suspicion* (Directed by Elio Petri): Authoritarian police chief and student protest movement in late sixties.
- *One Hundred Steps (I Cento Passi)*: Life and Death of Giuseppe Impastato, a founder of anti-mafia movement in Sicily

ISSSC Curriculum Development Seminar 2008-9  
"The Global Impact of Secular Values"

LACS 236 Modern Italy  
**STATEMENT OF PEDAGOGICAL RATIONALE**

The course is an overhaul of the core course in the Italian Studies minor. It is redesigned to deepen acquaintance with two aspects of modern Italian history: (1) secularism and toleration and (2) national identity and culture.

### **I. Secularism & toleration**

The ISSSC seminar highlighted the historical complexity of toleration and secularism. Several recent ISSSC publications develop conceptual analysis of toleration and secularism. Drawing on the ISSSC seminar and ISSSC publications, I will focus on a set of distinctions that students might find helpful:

- Secularism may be (a) institutional (separation of church and state), (b) cultural (social norms), or (c) individual (a philosophical stance or psychological attitude that explains life and the world without reference to God).
- Toleration, too, may be institutional, cultural, or individual.
- These several types of secularism and of toleration (and their opposites) may emerge and interact in a variety of combinatorial possibilities.

Here a bare-bones sketch of a contrast between Liberal Italy and fascism may clarify how this taxonomy fits Italian history. Italy—unlike England, the United States, and France—did not experience major constitution-making episodes involving institutional secularism until the Napoleonic wars and the Risorgimento. Separation of church and state in Liberal Italy (1861-192?) then coexisted with a broadly Catholic culture that was grudgingly tolerant of other religions and of atheism. In the next period, fascism (itself a "political religion" according to Emilio Gentile) formed an institutional coalition with the Catholic church and then an alliance with nazism and finally persecuted, enslaved, and murdered Italian Jews—but met resistance (partly cultural, partly individual) to aggressive intolerance.

### **II. National identity & culture**

Students take for granted the existence of an Italian nation. Yet the creation of an Italian state was an improbable project whose territorial scope and constitutional form were greatly contested and highly uncertain. Any Italian nation was an "imagined community." Three rival models were a federation of extant powers under the presidency of the Pope, a republic (people's revolution), and annexation by the strongest of the extant powers (the kingdom of Piedmont- Sardinia). My course will trace the transition from models to movements, coalition formation, the creation of a nation-state, and the tortuous history of nation-building and imagined community: the Risorgimento, Liberal Italy, fascism, the Republic, and Italy's present identity crisis.

National identity has been a question mark for Italy since the Risorgimento. Today Italy faces new interlocking challenges that amount to an identity crisis. A people traditionally known for family has now one of the lowest birth rates in the world. After a century of massive emigration, Italy has one of the highest immigration rates in the world. Italian culture now finds itself struggling to come to grips with the stimuli and strains of racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity wrought by immigration. The nation-state faces the twin political challenges of separatism within and European integration without. The geography of organized crime exacerbates longstanding regional contrasts. Social democracy is threatened by a fiscal time bomb of growing entitlement obligations in

pensions and health care, as the population ages. What are the prospects for national identity?

### III. Some resources that connect issues of secularism and national identity

I have overhauled the syllabus to include resources that connect the issues of secularism and national identity outlined above. I have compiled a representative set of historical documents in translation that illustrate these issues.

Here I list examples of other kinds of sources that I will use to analyze secularism and national identity in historical perspective.

Liberal Italy. An historical novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*, brilliantly illustrates distinctions among institutions, culture, and individual psychology. The setting is the Risorgimento in Sicily (Garibaldi's expedition that harnessed people's revolution to amplify Piedmontese annexation). The main protagonist, a prince, must decide whether to support or to oppose the movement.

The interests and attitudes of all the main social groups are brought to life by structuring the narrative around dialogues between characters who represent social groups. For example, when the priest (figuration of the Catholic church's interests and attitudes) challenges the Prince (figuration of the aristocracy in decline) about the latter's support for the Risorgimento (destruction of the temporal power of the Catholic church, separation of church and state), the Prince articulates individual secular psychology and pragmatic acknowledgment that the Catholic church will suffer temporary defeat, only to persist more resilient than his doomed aristocracy in the long run.

Fascism. Emilio Gentile's essay about fascism as a political religion and Borden Painter's monograph about Mussolini's transformation of Rome are excellent materials for a focus on the nature, scope, and limits of totalitarianism. Three special problems are (a) the coexistence of totalitarianism and the concordat with the Catholic church (Lateran Accords), (b) the deleterious impact of empire (the Ethiopian war) on Italy's culture of toleration, (c) the high survival rate of Jews in Italy during the Holocaust, when central and northern Italy were under Nazi occupation (September 1943-April 1945), despite fascism's erosion of toleration. An article by Varese and Yaish employs careful statistical analysis to establish that the single most important determinant of survival for Jews throughout Europe was making a face-to-face request for help. Thus Italian culture was more conducive to (illegal) help-seeking behavior in civil society by the most vulnerable. Innovative economic analysis by Mark Harrison reveals that the fascist regime never managed to mobilize more than a fifth of GDP for the war effort in WWII—whereas Nazi Germany and totalitarian Japan mobilized more than half of GDP. The major shortfall in war mobilization and the high survival rate of Jews are different expressions of the gap between the rhetoric of totalitarianism and the reality of substantial residual live-and-let-live recalcitrance in civil society.

The Republic. Robert Putnam's influential book, *Making Democracy Work*, is a quantitative study of regional differences in the quality of politics in Italy. He compares and weighs two causes: economic factors ("socio-economic modernization") and culture ("civic community," which correlates with secular culture). He finds the north overall has better government than the south - and that economic factors largely explain the north-south contrast. However, he also finds major regional differences in political quality within the north and within the south - and that civic community largely explains these differences. He traces these consequential regional differences in civic community all the way back to the late medieval period, when communes and city states flourishes in some regions and feudalism became entrenched in others. My own research finds that regional differences in rates of migration in the 20th century fit Putnam's regional differences in political quality more closely than does the medieval geography of institutions. It seems that reliance on

“exit” (migration) tends to undermine civic community, whereas reliance on “voice” tends to strengthen it.

Peter Robb’s innovative narrative, *Midnight in Sicily*, juxtaposes loosely secular forms of culture (Renato Guttuso’s art, Letizia Battaglia’s photography, Sicilian cuisine) and the history of the mafia and its opponents. A superb, historically accurate film, *I cento passi* (One Hundred Steps), depicts the emergence of a grassroots anti-mafia movement in the hinterland outside Palermo during the counterculture of the 70s. The film’s biographical focus on Giuseppe Impastato brings to life the individual dimension of secular psychology and its political implications in that historical context. The mafia and the Catholic church were bound by a “devil’s pact” in the Cold-War regime (1948-1991) because (a) it was impossible to form a majority without the Communist Party unless the majority was based on Christian Democracy party and (b) the Christian Democracy party had to rely very disproportionately on votes from Sicily and the south. The process entrenched corrupt forms of political exchange, as the mafia delivered blocks of votes in exchange for control of government patronage and immunity from judicial punishment. Thus the opposition culture that emerged was largely secular.

Essays in a forthcoming volume of the ISSSC, by Barry Kosmin, Giulio Ercolesi, and Silvia Sansonetti, analyze and illustrate institutional, cultural, and individual aspects of secularism and toleration (and their opposites) in the context of Italy’s present identity crisis.