

IT5. Italian Identities: Place, Language, and Culture



Italian Identities...

Can we speak of an *Italian* culture and society (and language) if Italy *de facto* did not exist before 1861 as a political entity? Can we speak of a single *Italian identity* in Italy's history or should we rather consider several ***Italian identities?***

From the Middle Ages to the end of the nineteenth century Italy was a politically and linguistically fragmented country. To more adequately understand Italy's tradition and culture through the centuries, one must then consider **the variety of political and cultural centres** that developed **across the peninsula**: from the 'comuni' and the 'signorie', to the republics, the Renaissance courts, the papal state, the dukedoms and the kingdoms, to the creation of a unified state in 1861, following the Risorgimento process.



Aims and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to acknowledge the richness and variety of Italy's local traditions, which often remain undifferentiated under a general umbrella of 'Italian' culture: it will offer students the possibility to gain a more detailed understanding of the country's history, language and culture by focusing on its local *identities* and texts of various literary genres that chronologically range from the Middle Ages to the present times.

Also...

This paper will give you the possibility to study **some of the greatest authors of the Italian literary tradition**, always with an eye to **the socio-historical context** in which they lived and composed their works.



Which topics are in the syllabus?

Topics vary from years to year, according to the interests and expertise of the lecturers on the course.

Among the topics covered in recent years, there are...



Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (14th-century Florence)



DEL DECAMERONE DI M. GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO GIORNATA SECONDA.



LA per tutto hauet il sole seato cõ la sua lucer il nuovo giorno: & gli uelci fu per gli ver uoli veni se disimo a gheorechi settimana: za, qdo passate tre me fe dene & i tre giochi leuisti ne, giardini se ne entrono, & le nudi giadie herbe cõ lito paffo scalpitido d'una parte in altra, belle ghirlande fandosi, per lungo spacio diposito s'andaron: & il core di traspasato giorno hauetano fano, cosi il pente per lo freto defeziono: & hauet mangiat dopo siem bullo s'andaron a riposo: & da qdo appreso li nona leuisti, come alla loro Reina piaca, nel fresco pratello venuti alei distomo si posero a sedere. Ella la quale formosa & di piacevoli aspecto era molto, & del la sua gherilda dello alcuno coronar alio flato, & una la sua compagnia riguardata nel viro, a Neipole coman- do, che alle fature noelle cõ vna delle principio jadie finca alcuna sceta fare cõ le bate incomincio a parler. Martellino infingidoli di effere attrato forza famo Amigo pollo fa vilta di guaire: & conofatto il suo inganno è battuto, & poi preso in pericolo di morre ne scampa.

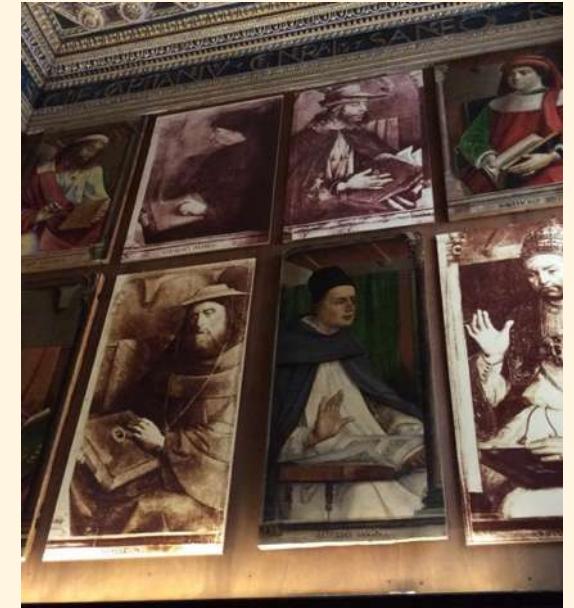
Nonella. I.
Se pelle Caniflume Dolce astiene, che clia ultim
e è ingegnato di beffare, & maltrattare dile cas
se, che sono da riserire, se cõ le beffe & calunia col

danno hau folo sironato, liche, accio che io si colman
damento della Reina visibilis, & principio dia cõ vna
mità noella alla populi: intendo di rasciarsi qdo, che
prima fatteratamente, & poi fuso di tutto il suo priero
affa felicemente ad uno nostro cradino aduniamo.

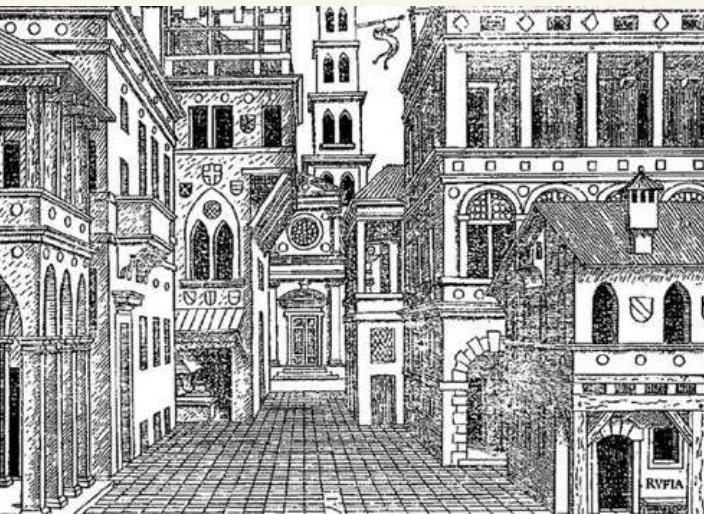


E a Treugli chiamato Amigo, ilquale posero hu-
mo effende, di portare pelli a prezzo feruisa, chi
il riceveva, & cõ qbo leuomo di limitissima & buo-
na età temuto da tutti per qual cosa, o vero o no vero
che si fusse, morendo egli insieme, secondo che è Tre-
ugliani affermavano, che nell'hoce della sua morte le
campane della maggior chiede Treugli nase fusa
effere da alcuno trame cominciarono a fousare, liche in
luogo di miraculo laureando questo Amigo effere fan-
to dicessano tonici cesserlo tutto il popolo della ci-
ta a cui, nellaquale il suo corpo giacea, quello a ges-
ta di un coço fatto nella chiesa maggiore se portaro
no, mienando quasi zoppi attiri & credi, & altri di
qualunque infermita o difetto spediti, quelli tutti dor-

Baldassar Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* and Italy's Renaissance courts



Comic Theatre in Renaissance Italy



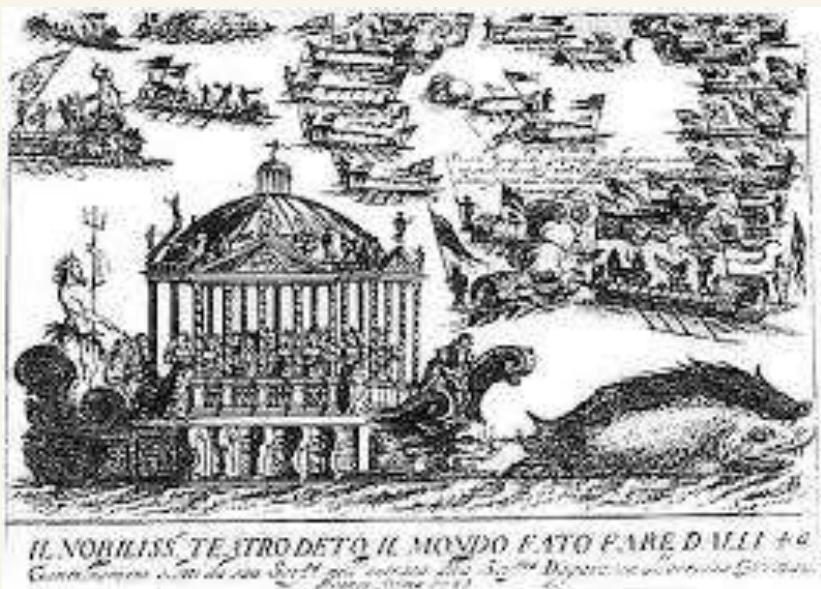
Comedia elegantissima

cosa nuouamente coposta p Mess Bernardo da Bibiena
intitolata CALANDRIA.

CINTERLOCUTORI.
rologo: Argumēto: Fissenio seruo: i olynico preceptor
ydia adulesi: cētulo: Calādio: Semya serua: R usso negre
nāte: Santylla: Fannio seruo: Fulvia moglie di Calādro
Meretrice : Facchino : Sbirri di doghana .



Carlo Goldoni's theatre in eighteenth-century Venice



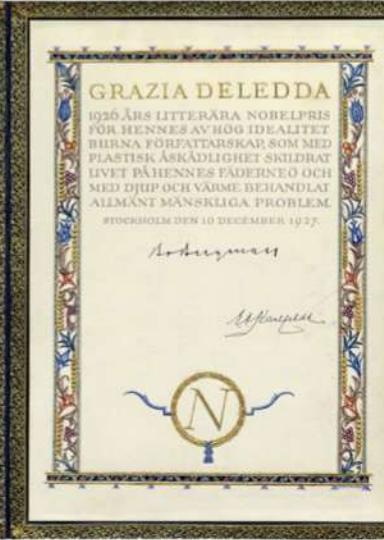
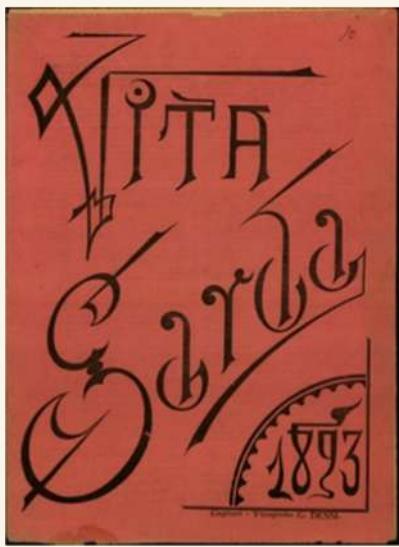
Gioachino Belli's sonnets in nineteenth- century Rome

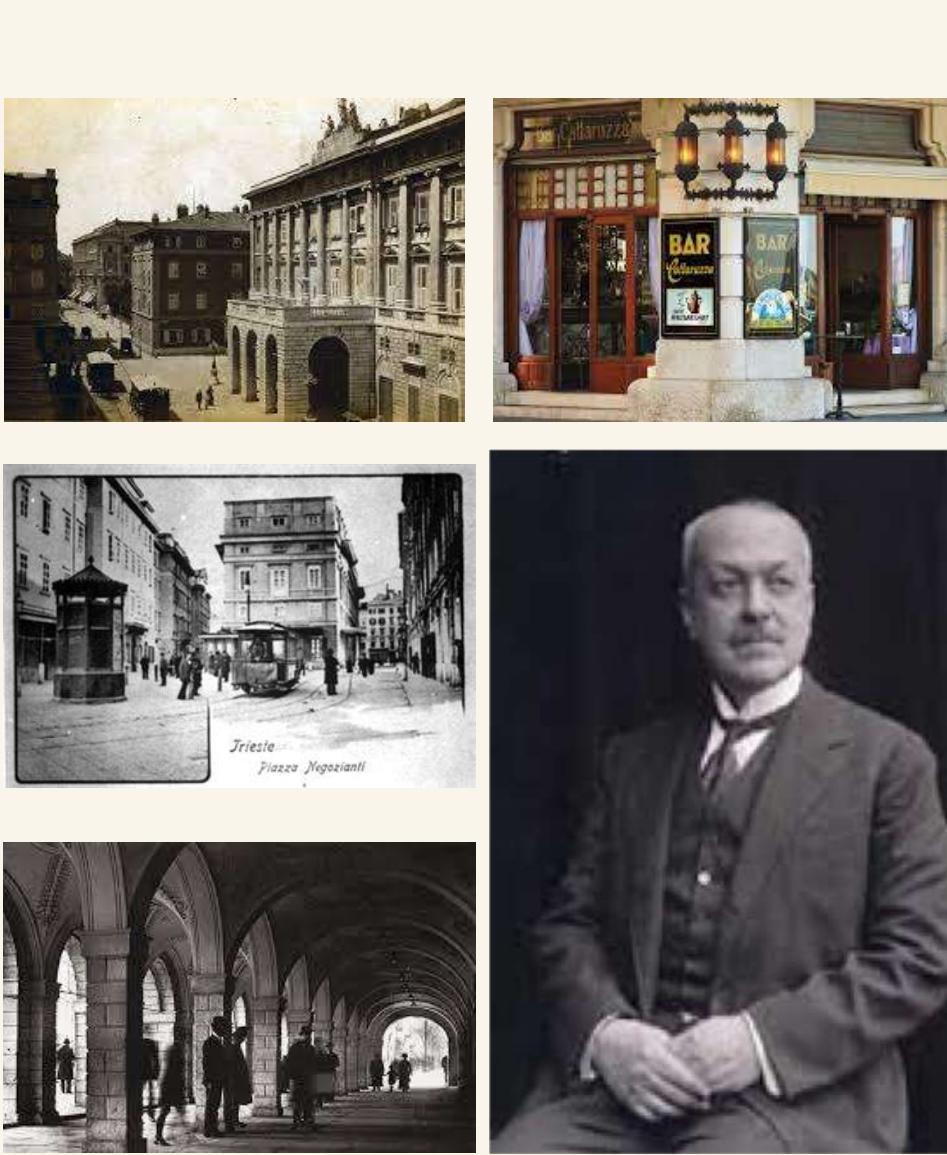


Sicily and Giovanni Verga's novels and short stories in post- Unification Italy



The novels and short stories of the Nobel Prize winner Grazia Deledda in Sardinia





Italo Svevo's *Coscienza di Zeno*, in post-World War I Trieste

How is the course structured?

- The course opens with **two introductory seminars** which helps you gain a **broad historical contextualisation** of the topics you study over the course of the academic year. They also offers an excellent background to the different papers taught at Part II.
- It is then followed by **four topics**, each one with **3 lectures** and **1 seminar**.

What are the seminars about?

- The format of the seminars varies and can include **discussions of set readings, or analyses of cinematic transposition of literary works.**
- Students have also prepared **presentations on topics of their choosing** in relation to the themes and subjects studied.
- In some years, we have also held our **seminars in the Rare Books of the University Library**, examining rare sixteenth-century editions of texts.

Seminars in the University Library Rare Books room



How many supervisions will I have?

- There are **two hours of supervisions per topic**. As usual, you will be asked to **write essays** which you will discuss during your supervisions.
- There are also **two hours of revision supervisions in Easter term**, in preparation for the exams.

What about the exam?

- For the exam, you have to **answer three questions** (and there are **3 questions per topic**).
- You will find **past exam papers** on the **IT5 Moodle page**, here:
<https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/mod/folder/view.php?id=11607922>
- There is no long-essay option for Paper IT5.

Have students enjoyed Paper IT5?

Yes, very much so! Feedback from students taking IT5 over the years has been consistently very positive.

In the following slides, you will find some comments from students in recent years...

Students' feedback (1)

IT5 was my favourite paper so far in Cambridge, and since finishing the course I have been persuading family members and friends to read the novels of Grazia Deledda.

This course really gives you a well-grounded understanding of Italy's history and of its regions.

The different topics harmonised very well and they were all very interesting. All very passionate and competent lecturers and supervisors.

I loved the range of topics from female to male writers, different time periods, short stories to novels. I feel like I now have a much better understanding of many different aspects/genres and time periods of Italian literature.

Students' feedback (2)

I enjoyed the variation of lecturers and their enthusiasm for their chosen texts. The concept that each text represented both a distinct time period and a distinct region of Italy was both clever and interesting, and allowed students to form a wider understanding of Italy and its development.

I enjoyed being taught by a variety of lecturers and supervisors, and this meant that they were all very enthusiastic about their topics. All of the teachers were very friendly which leads to students feeling willing to discuss their ideas.

Very interesting content, very good/engaging lecturers and supervisors.

The session we had at the Rare Books room in the UL was extraordinary.

Students' feedback (3)

Very good lecturers, very engaging, very supportive. All lecturers really prepared themselves to work with us and this was much appreciated.

Deledda was my favourite topic and I loved studying and learning more about her.

I have really enjoyed this topic and found both the texts and our discussions to be very engaging!