Italian Studies

Objectives

Italian studies provides an interdisciplinary major and a minor for those who wish to extend their study of Italian beyond language and culture to areas of Italian literature, history, film, art history, and music. The study of Italian within a variety of cultural contexts enables students to deepen their understanding of a national heritage beyond the boundaries of a single time frame, region, gender, genre, or academic discipline. Students are encouraged to study abroad in their junior year and to take advantage of resources within the Boston Area Consortium (Boston College, Boston University, Tufts University, and Wellesley College).

How to Become a Major or Minor

Students in the major and the minor work closely with an advisor to develop an individualized plan of study that balances the exploration of a broad range of topics and sectors with a focus on a single discipline or cultural period.

Committee

Richard Lansing, Chair and Undergraduate Advising Head
(Romance and Comparative Literature)
William Kapelle
(History)
Alice Kelikian
(History)

Faculty

James Mandrell
(Romance and Comparative Literature)
Charles McClendon
(Fine Arts)
Jessie Ann Owens
(Music)
Benjamin Ravid
(Near Eastern and Judaic Studies)
Paola Servino
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

How to Fulfill the Language Requirement

The foreign language requirement is met by successful completion of a third semester course (numbered in the 30s) in the language program.

How to Choose a Course at Your Level

To choose the appropriate course, you need to take a placement exam. It is a self-graded exam that you can access online at www.brandeis.edu/registrar/italtest.html. After finishing the exam, choose the course that seems to best fit your needs and then complete a questionnaire online. A faculty member will contact you to discuss the courses that you have chosen.

Requirements for the Major

The major in Italian studies consists of a minimum of nine semester courses, including the completion of one advanced language course, three literature courses, four courses from the related disciplines, and completion of the senior option. Students seeking honors will take a minimum of ten courses, configured as follows.

A. At least one advanced language course: ITAL 105a or ITAL 106a

B. Three literature courses: ITAL 110a, ITAL 120b, IECS 135a, IECS 140a, IECS 150a, COML 103b

C. Any four of the following courses relating to Italian culture, or other courses approved by the student’s advisor:

FA 45a St. Peter’s and the Vatican
FA 51a Art of the Early Renaissance in Italy
FA 58b High and Late Renaissance in Italy
FA 60a Baroque in Italy and Spain
FA 197b Methods and Approaches in the History of Art: Leonardo da Vinci

HIST 123a The Renaissance
HIST 129b Science and Religion: The Trial of Galileo
HIST 138b Industrialization and Social Change: 1900 to the Present
HIST 139a Women, Work, and Family
HIST 139b Fascism East and West
HIST 170a Italian Films, Italian Histories
HIST 176b Modern Italy 1848-1990
MUS 52a Opera
NEJS 151b Merchants, Moneylenders, and Ghetto of Venice

D. Concentrators must complete either ITAL 97 (senior essay) or ITAL 99 (senior thesis) in their senior year, or an equivalent course or courses in a cognate department which results in the writing of a senior essay or senior thesis on a subject relating to Italy.

E. Students are strongly encouraged to study abroad during their junior year, for either one or two semesters. Equivalent or appropriate courses taken abroad may count towards the concentration. Students who are unable to engage in study abroad are encouraged to avail themselves of relevant courses offered by Consortium institutions in the Boston area (principally Wellesley College, Boston College, Boston University, Tufts University).
Requirements for the Minor

A minor in Italian studies consists of the five semester courses:

A. An advanced language course: ITAL 105a or ITAL 106a

B. A literature course: ITAL 110a, ITAL 120b, IECS 135a, or IECS 140a

C. Any two of the Italian-related culture courses listed in A, B, or C.

D. Any elective course from the listings in A, B, or C.

Special Notes Relating to Undergraduates

Students may take two 30-level Italian courses for credit with permission of the director of language programs.

Courses of Instruction

[1-99] Primarily for Undergraduate Students

ITAL 10a Beginning Italian
Students who have previously studied Italian must obtain permission of the instructor before enrolling.

For students who have had no previous study of Italian. A systematic presentation of the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language within the context of Italian culture, with focus on all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Usually offered every year.

ITAL 20b Continuing Italian
Prerequisite: ITAL 10a or the equivalent.

For students with some previous study of Italian. Continuing presentation of the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language within the context of Italian culture and practice of the four language skills. Special attention to reading and writing skills, as well as guided conversation. Usually offered every year.

ITAL 30a Intermediate Italian
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 20b or the equivalent.

Readings in contemporary Italian short stories, newspaper and journal articles, and short essays of cultural interest will be supplemented by video presentations (opera, film, “filmati,” and “telegiornale” from RAI) designed to enhance oral comprehension. Typical themes include social conflicts (Fascism, the problem of the “Mezzogiorno”) and cultural phenomena (feminism, art, geography). Review of grammar includes written exercises and short compositions. Usually offered every fall.

ITAL 97a Senior Essay
Students should consult the undergraduate advising head before enrolling. May not be taken for credit by students who have satisfactorily completed ITAL 97a.

Offers students an opportunity to produce a senior essay under the direction of an individual instructor. Usually offered every year.

ITAL 98a Independent Study
May be taken only with the written permission of the advising head and the chair of the department.

Reading and reports under faculty supervision. Usually offered every year.

ITAL 98b Independent Study
May be taken only with the written permission of the advising head and the chair of the department.

Reading and reports under faculty supervision. Usually offered every year.

ITAL 99d Senior Thesis
Students should consult the undergraduate advising head before enrolling.

Usually offered every year.

[100-199] For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

ITAL 105a Italian Conversation and Composition
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 30a or the equivalent.

Provides students with an opportunity to develop their oral and written proficiency in Italian, while familiarizing themselves with different facets of contemporary Italian culture and society. Readings will be supplemented by films and recordings. Usually offered every second year.

Ms. Servino

ITAL 106a Advanced Readings in Italian
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 30a or the equivalent.

Close study and analysis of representative works of Italian literature (prose, poetry, drama) and culture (art, history, music, cinema, politics) designed to enhance the student’s reading skills. Usually offered every year.

Mr. Lansing

ITAL 110a Introduction to Italian Literature
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 30a or the equivalent.

Surveys the masterpieces of Italian literature from Dante to the present. It is designed to introduce the student to the major authors and literary periods, styles, and genres and present an overview of the history of the literature. Conducted in Italian. Usually offered every second year.

Mr. Lansing

ITAL 120b Modern Italian Literature
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 30a or the equivalent.

Analysis of major works by Svevo, Pirandello, Moravia, Silone, Lampedusa, Pavese, Primo Levi, Montale, and Vittorini with respect to the political, economic, and social problems of post-Risorgimento Italy. Conducted in Italian. Usually offered every second year.

Mr. Lansing

IECS 135a Shifting Grounds: Social Change in Italian Fiction and Film
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 30a or the equivalent.

Charts various aspects of social change in Italian society and culture through close readings and discussions of literary and cinematic texts by Manzoni, Verga, Pirandello, Silone, Morante, Calvino, Rossellini, de Sica, Fellini, Pasolini, and Bertolucci, among others. Usually offered every second year.

Mr. Mandrell

IECS 140a Dante's Divine Comedy
Fl
Prerequisite: ITAL 30a or the equivalent.

A close study of the entire poem—Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso—as a symbolic vision of reality reflecting the culture and thought—political, philosophical, theological—of the Middle Ages. Readings will include two minor works, the Vita Nuova and World Government. Usually offered every second year.

Mr. Lansing
### Electives

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<tr>
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