

Italian

The major and minor in Italian are administered by the Department of Classics and Italian. Advisors in Italian: Associate Professor Frau, Visiting Assistant Professor Naitana; Visiting Lecturers Garbin, Svaldi.

Contact Person

Susan LaBarre, *senior administrative assistant*
Ombretta Frau, *chair*

The Italian major seeks to foster linguistic fluency and appreciation of the multifaceted culture of the Italian people. In addition to acquiring advanced oral and written proficiency in the Italian language, majors will have the opportunity to access Italy's rich literary and cultural heritage through cinema, literature, music, art, the Web. Besides selecting courses offered at Mount Holyoke and in the more extended Five College community, students are encouraged to investigate the many study abroad options available to them in such culturally diverse cities as Bologna, Siena, Florence and Padova. A major in Italian language and culture can lead to a variety of national and international careers, from foreign service to fashion marketing, from international banking and trade to film, from a career in non-profit to teaching.

Mount Holyoke's system of foreign fellows in residence offers students the opportunity to live and study with Italian women who work with the department to provide a living link to Italy and its culture. The weekly Italian table provides a comfortable environment for spontaneous expression and cultural exchange, and the ongoing extracurricular activities of the Italian club, lectures, and films round out the multifaceted learning experience at MHC.

Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 32 credits
- At least 16 credits at the 300 level

Courses

- Italian 209, Conversation and Composition
- Italian 221, Introduction to Italian Literature
- Four 300-level courses in Italian literature and culture. At least two modern and two pre-nineteenth century courses.
- At least one 300-level course must be taken in the senior year.

Other

- Courses lower than 209, Conversation and Composition, cannot be counted toward the major.
- Independent Study (Italian 395) may not be used as part of the minimum major requirements.
- Courses in translation cannot be counted toward the major.

Students thinking about a major in Italian or studying abroad should contact Associate Professor Frau.

See the chapter on Romance Languages and Literatures for information on majoring in those subjects.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- A minimum of 16 credits at the 200 and 300 levels

Courses

- Italian 209, Conversation and Composition
- Italian 221, Introduction to Italian Literature
- At least one course at the 300 level

Other

- Courses lower than 209, Conversation and Composition, cannot be counted toward the minor.

- Independent Study (Italian 395) may not be used as part of the minimum minor requirements.
- Courses in translation cannot be counted toward the minor.

Teacher Licensure

Students interested in pursuing licensure in the field of Italian can combine their course work in Italian with a minor in education. In some instances course work in the major coincides with course work required for licensure; in other cases, it does not. For specific course requirements for licensure within the major of Italian, please consult your advisor or the chair of the Department of Classics and Italian. For information about the requirements for the minor in education, please consult “Teacher Licensure” in the Other Degree and Certificate Programs chapter and Professor Lawrence in the psychology and education department. Licensure also requires a formal application as well as passing scores on the Massachusetts Test of Educator Licensure (MTEL) in both the literacy component and the subject matter component. Copies of the test objectives for the MTEL are available in the Spanish and Italian department and in the Department of Psychology and Education. Licensure application information and materials are available in the Department of Psychology and Education.

Guidelines for New Students

All courses satisfy distribution requirements unless otherwise indicated.

Courses are conducted in Italian. Courses offered in translation are listed at the end of the Italian course descriptions.

Students with no previous training in Italian should elect 101–102, Elementary Italian. Those who have a superior aptitude for language may elect 103, Intensive Elementary Italian, in the spring semester.

Students with two years of high school study should elect 201f, Intermediate Italian. Students whose proficiency in the Italian language is superior and who wish to study literature should elect 221, Introduction to

Italian Literature, in the fall semester. Students who are unsure about their level should contact Professor Frau for a proficiency test.

Students contemplating a junior year in Italy should elect an Italian course in the first semester of their first year, because all junior-year programs in Italy require two years of Italian.

Course Offerings

101f Elementary Italian I

This course emphasizes understanding, speaking, and writing in a contemporary context. It also promotes creativity with presentations and original group projects. It includes Web activities, films, short stories, and frequent conversation sessions with language assistants who are native speakers.

Meets language requirement; does not meet a distribution requirement

M. Svaldi, B. Garbin, F. Naitana, O. Frau
Successful completion of both Italian 101f and 102s are necessary to fulfill the College language requirement; 4 credits

102s Elementary Italian II

This course emphasizes understanding, speaking, and writing in a contemporary context. It also promotes creativity with presentations and original group projects. It includes Web activities, films, short stories, and frequent conversation sessions with language assistants who are native speakers.

Does not meet a distribution requirement

M. Svaldi, B. Garbin, F. Naitana, O. Frau
Successful completion of both Italian 101f and 102s are necessary to fulfill the College language requirement; 4 credits

103s Intensive Elementary Italian

This course completes the work of Italian 101–102 in one semester through intensive practice in speaking, reading, and writing Italian. It is ideal for students who already know another Romance language. Short readings, films, and Web activities are an important part of the course, and creative group projects and informal conversation sessions with language assistants who are native speakers supplement class work.

Meets language requirement; does not meet a distribution requirement

B. Garbin

8 credits

201f InterMedia: Intermediate Italian through Film

A review of Italian through film. Cultural and linguistic aspects of five to six films and related readings will be the focus of this course and the starting point for class activities, conversation, written exercises, and grammar review. This interdisciplinary approach offers students an opportunity to explore Italian culture deeply, while at the same time improving their reading, writing, and speaking skills. The course also features regular conversation sessions with language assistants who are native speakers.

Meets language requirement; does not meet a distribution requirement

M. Svaldi, B. Garbin

Prereq. Italian 102 or 103 or permission of instructor; 4 credits

209s Conversation and Composition

Offers practice of colloquial and idiomatic speech patterns in Italian to emphasize correct pronunciation and intonation. Includes oral presentations as well as frequent compositions, from short reports to full-length essays. Uses newspapers, magazines, and literary texts to discuss issues and lifestyles concerning Italian society.

Meets language requirement; does not meet a distribution requirement

O. Frau

Prereq. Italian 201 or permission of instructor; 2 meetings (75 minutes) and 1 hour unarranged; 4 credits

221f Introduction to Italian Literature

This course is a transition from language courses to more advanced literature courses. It surveys the evolution of Italian literature from its origins to modern times. Representative medieval, Renaissance, and modern works will be studied in their cultural and historical contexts. Class discussions, written work, and movie screenings are aimed at developing skills in oral expression and expository writing in Italian. Our “heroes of the page” will include Dante, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Goldoni, Leopardi, Pirandello, D’Annunzio, and Calvino.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

F. Naitana

4 credits

295fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

1-4 credits

301s Eros, Beauty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

This course will focus on a characteristic element of the Western literary tradition: its inexhaustible fascination with Eros. Students will examine the most complex and enduring ideas about love and sexuality, as well as how they interweave with various conceptions of beauty and theories of happiness. Readings include works of poetry and fiction from Classical antiquity to the Italian Renaissance.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

F. Naitana

Conducted in Italian; 4 credits

311f Sorelle di penna/Sisters in Writing: the Development of Italian Women’s Writing

(Same as Gender Studies 333) In the nineteenth century, Italian women were finally able to conquer a place in the realm of letters and society. Their Renaissance sisters having been nearly forgotten, women writers in the new Italian kingdom had no models to follow. This course will explore the birth and development of women’s writing in nineteenth and twentieth century Italy with emphasis on autobiography, autofiction, issues of gender, sexuality and identity. We will read and discuss works by Sibilla Aleramo, Jolanda, Matilde Serao, Benedetta, Amelia Rosselli, Natalia Ginzburg, Elsa Morante. Special attention will be paid to the early twentieth century, to futurist women, and to the condition of women in Fascist Italy.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

O. Frau

Prereq. Italian 221 or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***312 Eia Eia Alalà: Italian Authors and Fascism**

This course explores some aspects of twentieth-century Italian culture in relation to Mussolini’s dictatorship. From futurism to the end of World War II, we will follow the development of fascism with some of the authors who lived through it and who narrated

their experience. From Pavese to Ginzburg, from Morante to Primo Levi, from Bassani to Carlo Levi, we will discuss literary trends, architecture, and visual arts of the “Ventennio.”

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

O. Frau

4 credits

361s Seminar in Romance Languages and Literatures: Topic: Sweet Cruelty: Anti-Humanism and Gay Writing

This interdisciplinary seminar will focus on a comparative study of Romance languages or literatures. Topics will vary from semester to semester. Seminar discussions will be conducted in English, but students are expected to read works in at least one original language. Papers will be written in the Romance language of the student’s choice.

(Taught in English; Same as Romance Languages 375, Spanish 330, French 321, Gender Studies 333) Much of twentieth-century gay writing in Latin America is characterized by an estheticist celebration of anti-humanism, which has often clashed with left-wing progressive politics in these countries. But how does a “gay style” come about? What is its genealogy? How does it identify itself, and what does such an identity mean politically and historically? In this seminar, we will study a number of writers from Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Perú, and Uruguay, and examine their roots in French and Italian anti-humanist authors from Baudelaire, Lautréamont, and Rimbaud to Genet and Pasolini. We will also read a few key texts in queer theory.

Meets either language requirement or Humanities I-A requirement

C. Gundermann

Papers will be written in English or the Romance language of the student’s choice. Students wishing to obtain 300-level credit in French, Italian, or Spanish must read texts and write papers in the Romance language for which they wish to receive advanced credit.; 4 credits

395fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

1-8 credits