Modern Italian Drama: Innovation and Tradition

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Italian theaters and dramatic literature of the late 19th and 20th century were fresh, innovative and very influential for international dramatic developments. This course will present Italian dramatic texts (in translation) in their historical and cultural contexts, and address their novelty and their relationship with Italian cultural traditions. Readings will include plays by Giovanni Verga, Luigi Pirandello, the Futurists, Dario Fo and others, with a particular focus on Nobel Prize winner Pirandello. Students will engage in close readings of the texts and in analyses of their critical reception in order to develop textual analytical skill, examine the impact of Italian drama on modern western theater, reflect on the relationship between innovation and tradition and learn about Italian culture.

Course aims and objectives
The aims of this course are
- to introduce students to Italian dramatic literature and theatrical traditions
- to trace the developments in Italian drama from the end of the 19th through the 20th centuries
- to explore the contributions of Italian dramatic authors and actors to the history of theater

By the end of this course students should be able to
- make informed readings of some Italian dramatic texts
- identify characteristics of dramatic texts and relate them to movements and authors
- assess the relevance of Italian cultural and theatrical traditions on the international dramatic production of the 20th and 21st century
- discuss critically the dramatic history and literature of the period by making connections among the various texts read during the course and other texts/performances/ideas/art beyond the course scope
**Course Format**
Class will meet twice a week and will have a seminar format.

Each meeting will consist mostly of discussions of the readings. With such format, the success of the course depends on your contributions to the discussion.

**Required Readings**

You MUST purchase this book. Get this edition! No other editions, online readings or library copies.


- All the other readings (plays and essays) will be available on Canvas or handed out in class.
- List of plays we will read during the semester:
  - Giovanni Verga, *Rustic Chivalry*, 1 act, 1884
  - Gabriele D’Annunzio, *A Spring Morning Dream*, 5 scenes, 1897
  - F.T. Marinetti and Others, various futurists sketches, 1910s
  - Luigi Pirandello, *So It Is (If You Think So)*, 2 acts, 1917
  - Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, 2 acts, 1921/25
  - Luigi Pirandello, *Henry IV*, 3 acts, 1922
  - Dario Fo and Franca Rame, *Mistero Buffo*, selections, various dates

- You MUST bring each reading to class either in electronic or hard copy.
- If you chose electronic: only laptops allowed. NO READING FROM PHONE!!!!
- Either way, all assigned readings MUST be read, studied, marked, annotated before class.

**Course Requirements**
In order to obtain a satisfactory grade in this class, students must:
1. Actively participate in class (see assessment section for grading)
2. Comply with the attendance policy (see below)
3. Come to class prepared (read and consider carefully the material assigned for each class before the class)
4. Complete and turn in each assignment (see assessment section) on time (percentages notwithstanding you need to complete all the assignments in order to pass the class).

**Time Commitment**
As per SACS regulations, students are expected to spend roughly 3 hours working outside of class for every hour in class.
Assessment and Evaluation

Participation/Discussion: You are expected to
- Bring to class the reading assigned for that day
- Read it before class and show that you read it through questions, comments, quotes etc.
- Be able to refer to the text and its specific parts during discussion, therefore you should mark, underline, annotate the texts when you are reading them
- Actively participate through questions and comments during class time.
- Actively listen to your classmates’ comments and questions and be ready to respond
- Be ready to answer questions about the text when called on
- Post on Facebook and comment to other posts

*Unexcused absence beyond 2 will get you a 0 in participation for that day.
*If you fail to bring the assigned text to class you will be counted ½ absent.
*You are allowed to come to class underprepared with no penalty once in the semester due to participation in productions. You have to let me know in advance. Use this possibility wisely!

Leadership and Teamwork: This portion of the assessment is composed of 3 parts.
1) Discussion Leading: Students in groups of two or three will lead one discussion per semester. This consist in: A) Doing the readings accurately and early enough in order to be able to B) post two questions on FB by 5pm the day before the reading is due and C) be prepared to motivate such questions in class and D) be particularly proactive to stimulate class discussion during the seminar.
2) Group Presentation: Students in groups of three or four will give one presentation that A) draws conclusion about the Unit just completed B) presents a short in depth analysis or further related material C) presents an “exam question” (details will be provided in class and in Canvas)
3) Final Group Mini Project: The same groups as for #2 will create an imaginary Italian Drama Festival in W-S through brief brainstorming on Canvas groups and present their ideas on the last day as well as a very short piece of writing to ‘advertise’ the festival.

Four Short Papers + 2 comments: papers 1 to 2 pages double spaced (see specific length requirements), Times New Roman pt. 12, based on prompts. Some papers will be uploaded to the class blog. Comments: read and comment on any two of your classmates papers that will be posted on the blog.

Final Exam (take home): The exam will test your knowledge of the readings and of the concepts we have discussed in class. It will also test your ability to explain, discuss, and argue ideas in writing. The exam will cover all the material, including the group presentation and the students’ ‘exam questions’

Grading rubrics with a breakdown of grades and expectations will be provided.

Grading:
- Participation/Discussion: 30%
- Leadership and Teamwork: 20%
- Short Papers and Comments: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%

Grading Scale:
Each assignment will be graded on a 100 point scale. A=100-93; A-=92-90; B+=89-87; B=86-83; B-=82-80; C+=79-77; C=76-73; C-=72-70; D+=69-67; D=66-63; D-=62-60; F=<60.

Class Policies
- Cell Phones: cell phone use is prohibited during class time and cell phones are not allowed on the desk.
Penalty for violation: -10 points from Participation grade each time I see you using the phone.
Laptops and Tablets: are allowed ONLY and EXCLUSIVELY to access the readings and our FB group or the blog. Internet surfing, emails etc. strictly prohibited. Penalty for violation: -15 points from Participation grade.

Unexcused absences beyond two will negatively affect your grade. For each unexcused absence beyond two you will forfeit one letter grade. Absences will be considered “Excused” only with proper documentation within week of the absence.

each time you are not on a class page.

Attendance: You are expected to come to each class. It’s a seminar and hearing each other’s ideas is a fundamental aspect of this course.

*After two unexcused absences I will contact your advisor.
*If you don’t have any unexcused absence, you will receive 15 extra points toward your participation grade.
*If you accumulate more than 6 unexcused absences, you will receive an F.
*If you accumulate 3 or more unexcused absences before the withdrawal deadline (October 7) you will be encouraged to withdraw.

Late Arrivals: You are expected to arrive to class on time. Class is not the same without you! Arrive on time also to show respect toward your classmates who show up on time.
*Each two late arrivals will be counted as an unexcused absence (see above).
*If you arrive after I close the door, it will be considered a late arrival.

Written Assignments: The short papers must be uploaded to Canvas and the Comments must be uploaded to the Blog by the date and time indicated on Canvas Syllabus. Your grade for the assignment will drop by 1 point each 60 minutes of delay. Papers that are more than 3 days late will not be accepted and will receive 0 points.

Facebook Posts: some are due by specific dates but I encourage you to post anything you consider relevant for the class (also outside of but related to the course material) or your reactions to the readings at any time. There is no limit to how much one should post! I will moderate the group and I will take down any post or comment that is inappropriate or offensive.

Readings (Un)Preparation: You should always to all the readings and accurately but I know that there are days in which one simply cannot do it all so you are allowed to come to class unprepared once in the semester (not applicable when you have to lead discussion or present, obviously!). This policy is to encourage you guys to come to class even though you didn’t do the readings and participate in the discussion by asking questions to your classmates. You must email me in advance to explain why you couldn’t prepare the readings. If you miss a reading, you are responsible for catching up as they will definitely come up again and your knowledge of the readings will be tested in at least one of the assignments!

Add/Drop and Course Withdrawal:

Students may add or drop courses during the first week of classes without penalty (check Academic Calendar for specific dates). Changes during this week do not appear on the student’s permanent record. Students who have cleared all holds and wish to add or drop courses during this period must do so through online registration.

Beginning with the second week of classes to the conclusion of the withdrawal period (check Academic Calendar for specific dates), students must officially "withdraw" from a course. Students are permitted to withdraw from a maximum of 16 credit hours over the course of their degree or degrees. Once the student has reached that maximum number, no additional withdrawal requests will be granted, with the exception of Withdrawals with Extenuating Circumstances. See the Bulletin for the complete withdrawal policy.
Early Departure/Early Exam:
While Early Departure before the end of the term is discouraged, UNCSA recognizes that, from time to time, extenuating circumstances will necessitate approval of such Early Departure. Students seeking permission to leave school early should meet with the Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts and with their Arts Dean to obtain a permission form and to discuss Early Departure. (NOTE: Travel or vacation plans are NOT acceptable reasons for Early Departure. Students should carefully consult the academic calendar and plan accordingly.) For approval of Early Departure from undergraduate academic and arts classes, an Early Departure Form must be signed by the appropriate academic and arts instructor(s) and returned to the Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts and the Arts Dean no less than three weeks prior to the end of the term. Students who leave campus before the end of the term without having been granted the appropriate permission will be considered to have unexcused absences.

Academic Integrity Policy:
UNCSA is committed to fostering an intellectual, artistic, and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity as a critical part of educating artists and citizens. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s mission, and violations of academic integrity constitute offenses against the entire UNCSA community.
Students who violate University rules on academic integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such academic integrity violations harm the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. For further information please visit the College Handbook Website: http://www.uncsa.edu/studentlife/forms/Handbooks/CollegeHandbook-current.pdf

Resources:
I’m here for you! Come see me if you need clarifications, information, reading materials, help and academic and moral support. So come talk to me after class or in my office or email me. I’m always happy to answer questions, discuss ideas or listen to concerns and comments.
The Writing Center at UNCSA:
The Writing Center at UNCSA: The Writing Center is a free support service for UNCSA students. The goal of the Writing Center is to assist students with all kinds of writing, including academic papers, thesis work, and projects for arts classes. Scheduled term hours are posted on the UNCSA website on the “For Students” page. Students may drop by the Writing Center for help during open hours. No appointment is necessary. The Writing Center is located in the new Library, room 2308. For further information contact Elizabeth Klaimon, Director of the Writing Center. Email: klaimone@uncsa.edu Phone: (336) 631.1515.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:
In compliance with the UNCSA policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and anticipate the need for an accommodation in order to participate in this course, you must submit supporting documentation to Disability Resources. Their office is located in the Teaching & Learning Center – Library Annex, phone is 336-726-6963, and email is waybrantj@uncsa.edu. Once you have been approved for accommodations and provided with an accommodation letter through Disability Resources, please meet with Jorja Waybrant to request your eligible accommodations and she will discuss how each accommodation will be implemented in the classroom.

Inclement Weather: In the case of overnight weather situations, such decisions normally will be made before 6 a.m. and will be posted on the UNCSA home page (www.uncsa.edu), on the recorded greeting at the main phone line (336-770-3399) and sent to UNCSA Alert subscribers. You may also find notices of school closings,
cancellations or delays posted via local media outlets. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to subscribe to UNCSA Alert by visiting: [https://uncsa.bbcportal.com/](https://uncsa.bbcportal.com/).

**Provisional Course Outline and Calendar**

This calendar is provisional and for general reference only. For more accurate daily readings and assignments refer to Canvas.

**Unit 1 – Setting the Stage**

**Tuesday, Aug. 23 – Introduction**

**Thursday, Aug. 25 – Discussion: Italian Traditions**
- Carlson, “Introduction” pp. v-viii
- Lorch, “Setting the Scene” pp. 125-130
- Fisher, “The finger in the Eye: Commedia in Italy” pp. 18-20

**Tuesday, Aug. 30 – Discussion: Italian Traditions and Modernity**
- Taviani, “The Romantic Theater” pp. 207-217 (group 1)
- Puppa, “The theater of united Italy” 223-225, 229-233 (group 2)
- Lorch, “Setting the Scene” pp. 130-140 (group 3)
- Farrell, “Actors, Authors and Directors” 269-274 (group 4)
- Worksheet

**Thursday, Sept. 1 – Discussion: “Realism” [Discussion Leaders: ________________________________]**
- Timeline of Italian Drama
- Reflection on Realism, reality etc.
- Essay TBD

**Tuesday, Sept. 6 – Discussion: “Realism” [Discussion Leaders: ________________________________]**
- Verga, Cavalleria Rusticana (Rustic Chivalry) 1884. Entire play

**Additional Optional Readings for Unit 1**
- Attisani, House, “Introduction” pp. 1-15 (overview of Italian theater from 1900)
- Somigli, “The Historical Framework” pp. 13-25 (overview of Italian history and culture from unification to fascism)

**Unit 2 – Dealing with Tradition: D’Annunzio**

**Thursday, Sept. 8 – Discussion: “Modern Tragedy” [Discussion Leaders: ________________________________]**
- D’Annunzio, Sogno d’un mattino di primavera (A Spring Morning Dream) 1897.

**Tuesday, Sept. 13 – Discussion: “Modern Tragedy” [Discussion Leaders: ________________________________]**
- Introduction (pp. 16-19)
- Lorch, “Setting the Stage” pp. 138-140 (BB)
- Re, “D’Annunzio, Duse…Author and Actress between Decadence and Modernity” pp. 86-95
- Re, “D’Annunzio, Duse…Author and Actress between Decadence and Modernity” pp. 100-118
Thursday, Sept. 15 – Discussion: “Modern Tragedy”
   - Group Presentation (groups 1 and 2)

Sunday, Sept. 18 – Short Paper I due at 5pm

Unit 3 – Breaking with Tradition: Futurism
Tuesday, Sept. 20 – Discussion: Futurism [Discussion Leader: ____________________________]
   - Marinetti, “Futurism Manifesto”
   - Berghaus, “Birth of a Futurist Theater” pp. 149-150
   - Marinetti, “Futurism’s First Battles” pp. 151-157

Thursday, Sept. 22 – Discussion: Futurism [Discussion Leader: ____________________________]
   - Marinetti, “Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights” pp. 181-184
   - Marinetti and Others, various short plays

Sunday, Sept. 25 – Comments on Short Paper I due at 5pm

Tuesday, Sept. 27 – Discussion: Futurism
   - Group Presentations (Groups 3 and 4)

Wednesday, Sept. 28 – Short Paper II due at 5pm

Unit 3 – Pirandello’s Modernity

Thursday, Sept. 29 Discussion: Pirandello Philosopher? [Discussion Leader: ____________________________]
   - Pirandello, Così è se vi pare (So it is if you think so) 1917. Act I (book, pp. 137-167)
   - Mariani, “Chapter 3”

Monday, Oct. 3 – Comments to paper II due by 5pm

Tuesday, Oct. 4 – Discussion: Pirandello Philosopher? [Discussion Leader: ____________________________]
   - Pirandello, Così è se vi pare (So it is if you think so) 1917. Act II (book, pp. 168-206)

Thursday, Oct. 6 - Discussion: Pirandello Philosopher? [Discussion Leader: ____________________________]
   - Pirandello, Così è se vi pare (So it is if you think so) 1917. Act III (book, pp. 168-206)
   - Dombroski, “Laudisi’s Laughter…”

Friday, Oct. 6 - NOTE: Withdrawal Deadline

Tuesday, Oct. 11 – Fall Break, No Class

Thursday, Oct. 13 – Discussion: Characters and Authors [Discussion Leader: ____________________________]
Tuesday, Oct. 18 – Discussion: Characters and Authors [Discussion Leader: ________________]

Thursday, Oct. 20 – Discussion: Metatheater [Discussion Leader: ________________________]
- Pirandello, “Introduction to 1925 edition”

Tuesday, Oct. 25 – Discussion: Pirandello’s Folly [Discussion Leader: ________________________]

Thursday, Oct. 27 – Discussion: Pirandello’s Folly [Discussion Leader: ________________________]
- “The tragic Humorist” pp. 234-235 and 237-243
- “On Henry IV” pp. 223-224 and 226-229

Sunday, Oct. 30 – **Short Paper III** due at 5pm

Tuesday, Nov. 1 – Discussion: Pirandello’s Innov&Tradit [Discussion Leader: ________________________]
- Pirandello’s articles on playwriting, film and acting
- Group Presentation (group 5)

Thursday, Nov. 3 – Discussion: Pirandello and Modernism
- Reading and Topic depending on Students’ Interests (P and Cinema; Performances of P; Modernity in other arts and countries….
- Group Presentation (group 6)

Sunday, Nov. 6 – **Comments on Short Paper III** due at 5pm

Tuesday, Nov. 8 – Discussion: Pirandello
- Buffer day for guest speaker Laura Brasa

**Unit 4 – Actors/Authors**

Thursday, Nov. 10 – Discussion: Acting and Literature [Discussion Leader: ________________________]
- Mitchell, “Mistero Buffo and The Giullarate” pp.3-10 (BB)
- Jenkins, parts from the introduction (book, pp. ix-xii, xxv-xxvii, xxx-xxx)

Tuesday, Nov. 15 – Discussion: Acting and Literature [Discussion Leader: ________________________]
- Mitchell, “Mistero Buffo and The Giullarate” pp. 10-16 (BB)
- Jenkins, parts from intro (book, pp. xii-xiv)
- Jenkins, parts from intro (book, pp. xxi-xxv)

Thursday, Nov. 17 – Discussion: Acting and Literature [Discussion Leader: ________________________]
- Jenkins, parts from intro (book, pp. xxvii-xxx)
- Group Presentation (group 7)

**Sunday, Nov. 20** – **Short Paper IV** due at 5pm

**Tuesday, Nov. 22** – Conclusions
- Group work with an Italian treat!