MAYMESTER
ITALIAN 347
Italy Today: Youth, Family and Migration
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Maymester
Four Units
Summer 2018-M, T, W, TH, F
May 14-18 USC Campus in Los Angeles,
May 20-June 10 Piazza della Cancelleria 85, Rome, Italy (with excursions to Milano & Palermo)

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Course Description

Young people, without question, are the future of any country. And yet time and time again countries are failing their young people. What are the causes and consequences of this for these countries and what futures lay in store for their young people? This summer take a literary journey to explore the lives of young Italians, family and migration while living and traveling in Rome, Milan and Palermo. There are no prerequisites for this course and the course is conducted in English.

Despite the center stage Italian youth took in the 1960s and 1970s, for the last couple of decades they have been excluded from the majority of society's institutions and especially the protections of the welfare state. With youth unemployment rates in Italy higher than 40% in 2015, the social implications continue to be vast and wide ranging. As an initial response, the Italian government went into denial over the impending crisis for young people and only recently politicians are addressing the magnitude of this issue. The socio-economic situation facing 25 to 34 year olds in Italy parallels those in many countries throughout Western Europe, Asia and more recently the United States and thus has reached global proportions. Some analysts predict that the current state of affairs for young people throughout the world may very well be the calm before the storm of a major uprising not entirely different from the student movements of the late 1960s and the more recent Arab Spring. As importantly, the lessons learned in this course on site in Italy will bring to our students' attention that their own futures may not be all that different from their Italian peers should they fail to demand from our government the continued fostering of opportunities for young people—our greatest asset.

A novel will frame each week’s inquiry into some of the most pressing issues facing Italians today while students live and travel throughout the Italian peninsula. Edoardo Nesli’s Story of My People captures the downfall of a lifestyle, an industry and the Italian nation. Margaret Mazzantini’s Morning Sea places recent Mediterranean migration stories in the context of Italy's colonial past as it tries to make sense of the over eight percent of the immigrant population residing within Italy today. Me and You is another well-received novel by Niccolò Ammaniti that conveys the inner psyches of young Italians, brought up in nontraditional familial contexts, who struggle with substance abuse and neglect. Andrea Camilleri's The Shape of Water reveals as much about the mechanisms of organized crime and the north/south divide as it does about the mystery at the heart of its story. Italy's chaotic capital Rome, the wealthy industrial city of Milan and the culturally and historically significant Palermo in the south will serve as the backdrop for our readings.
This course will engage students in the lives of young Italians from political, economic, and social dimensions while they study abroad in Rome and learn from some of the young people hit hardest in recent years and professionals and academics who are working to make a difference. Students will consider the gerontocracy that has dominated Italian politics over the last few decades. With recent prime ministers' ages generally in their 70s and presidents being in their mid to late 80s, it is no surprise that the Italian government was singled out as having the highest average age in the Western world. Students will contemplate the precarious futures of young Italians in call centers and other employment with short-term contracts which has convinced much of Italy's brightest and most talented youth to flee the country in what has been come to be known as a literal brain drain. Students will take on the role that the media has played in exacerbating this problem by portraying young people as superficial sex objects or projecting a continued sense of hopelessness. Students will grapple with the last decade of zero productivity growth in Italy that has had numerous social costs with university attendance plummeting (and drop out rates increasing), the postponing of families and birth rates at a historic new low. Additionally students will compare and contrast the situation in Italy with that in other European countries such as Greece, Spain, France and Germany. Contrary to the negative outlook of the situation described, students will acknowledge how Italy can utilize its strengths and resources as one of the most vibrant, socially multicultural nations in the world where youth are beginning to find alternative ways to express themselves politically and socially.

This Maymester course in English will define the political, economic and social dimensions of Italian youth. It will feature a number of guest speakers from the Roman such as university students, political exiles and a film director who will discuss with our students their own stories. It will require students to interact and have conversations with Italians in Rome that include their homestay families, young Italians at our school, our interns from the university in Rome and their friends and families, people in the bars and shops in and around Rome, refugees and many more to enable them to better understand the complex reality for young people. It will encourage students to reflect on the vital and significant role that they themselves will play as they emerge in the global economy.

Integral to our readings will be two three-day excursions to Milan and Palermo. First, students will travel to the wealthy northern city of Milan to juxtapose its structure, architecture, organization and opportunities that are more consistent with Northern European cities to the realities facing Romans and much of the rest of Italy. Then students will head to the southern city of Palermo whose strategic location in the Mediterranean has subjected it to the influence and control of any number of external powers. These travels will serve to add greater depth to our conversations and analysis as we consider regional differences shaping young people, family, and migration in Italy today.

Onsite visits in Rome to the university in Rome La Sapienza to speak to young people, to RAI public broadcasting studios to watch a filming of the news program Ballarò, to Centro Astalli to speak with political exile and refugees along with visits to the Colosseum, Roman Forum, the Vatican Museums, and the Villa Borghese will be included.

The course will be conducted in English and will feature lessons in conversational Italian.

Students will live in homestay families in Rome.

There are no prerequisites for this course.
Learning Objectives

- Define culture and question the role it plays in evaluating the ideas and perspectives of some of the most successful narratives in Italy today.

- Describe and discuss how political, economic, and social issues impact the lives of young Italians while students study abroad in Rome.

- Apply classroom findings to conversations with Italian university students, political exiles, a film director, homestay families, interns from the university in Rome, and people in the bars and shops in and around

- Combine our readings of narratives of different literary genres such as fiction, memoir, mystery to assess how categorical expectations impact the story a narrative represents.

- Formulate arguments in classroom discussions and papers to enhance analytical and critical interpretive skills.

- Compare the situation in Italy with that in other European countries such as Greece, Spain, France and Germany.

- Judge and defend the influence of regional differences, campanilismo or attachment to your local area and the Italian north and south divide while exploring Milan, Palermo and Rome.

REQUIRED TEXTS: To be purchased online or at the USC bookstore in the editions indicated below before departure. Make sure that you acquire the correct edition, as these texts may exist in other translations and editions.


Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

**Week 1 - Youth, Mammismo and Familial Transformations**

**Guest Speaker:** Luca Ragazzi, Director of *Italy: Love It or Leave It?*

**Novel:** Niccolò Ammaniti's *Me and You* (2010)

**Additional Readings** (links available online):


**Week 2 - The Changing Face of Italy: Political Exiles, Second Generation Immigrants and Ius soli**

**Guest Speaker:** Political Exiles from the Centro Astalli (http://centroastalli.it)

**Novel:** Margaret Mazzantini’s *Morning Sea* (2011)

**Additional Readings** (links available online):


"[En]Immigration Policies in Italy." Struggles in Italy. Web 23 Nov. 2015.


**Week 3 - Economy in Italy Today: Call Centers, Short-Term Contracts and the Brain Drain**

**Guest Speakers:** TBA

**Novel:** Edoardo Nesi’s *Story of My People* (2010)

**Additional Readings** (links available online):


**Week 4: La Questione Meridionale/The Southern Question and Italy’s Future**

**Guest Speaker:** TBA

**Novel:** Andrea Camilleri’s *The Shape of Water* (1994)

**Additional Readings** (links available online):

Description and Assessment of Assignments:

1. Daily Attendance and Participation (10%)
   Attendance in the course is mandatory. The class meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for two hours. Crash course lessons in Italian and onsite visits will follow. Students will read novels and online articles and watch clips on YouTube to prepare for discussions regarding the topic addressed each week. There will be guest speakers. Students' interactions and participation with the guest speakers will be evaluated. Students will share with each other their research that they posted on Facebook. Each week students must post a summary of their conversations with Italians and these conversations will also form part of our discussions and be evaluated.

2. Posts on Private Facebook Group (20%)
   After discussions students will research issues related to our readings, locate relevant images and write a submission of 300-500 of their own words summarizing their research. They will also be expected to provide 3-5 links where they gathered their research on our readings. These submissions will be the basis of the presentations that students share with each other and will be used during the presentations themselves. In addition, the private Facebook group will become a valuable reference tool for students to consult throughout the Maymester as they prepare their final research end project. Students will be graded on the quality of their postings and the critical reasoning evident in their summaries. At different points throughout the course students will be asked to comment on their peers' contributions.

3. Presentations (20%)
   Students will present to their peers their research on our readings from their Facebook post submission during seven-minute presentations in class. Although students can use notes and refer to their Facebook posts to assist them in their presentations, their performances should be practiced and not fall short or exceed the amount of time established. A three-minute question and answer session will follow the presentation and students' grades will be based on interactions with their peers. Students will be graded not only on their presentations but on how they ask and answer questions, respond to each other, etc.

4. Conversations and Summaries (20%)
   Students will be required to have conversations with Italians from the community such as homestay family members, young Italians at our school, our interns from the university in Rome and their friends and families, people in the bars and shops in and around Rome, and refugees concerning the issues explored through our readings that week and the topic of their end project. The conversation may be done in a mixture of both English and Italian depending on the student's language proficiency (students should challenge themselves and practice their Italian). For each conversation, students will need to submit a post on Facebook that includes a) main conversation questions, b) summary of the conversation in at least 300 words, c) reflections about the conversation and the direction he or she would like to take the future conversations and d) a quick comment on what will be done that week regarding the End Project. Information for the post will be made available on the private Facebook Group. Students will receive from 1 to 10 points for the quality and thoroughness of their posts. USC's Institutional Review Board determined that these conversations are part of
this class and are not considered human subject research. Students should be respectful of the people they speak to and keep in mind that the information discussed during conversations are opinions and anonymous.

5. Final End Project Research Paper Report and Power Point Presentation (30%)
Students will complete an end project based on the discussions of our readings and informed by their individual interests and specializations. Students will write an 6-8 page research paper that summarizes their findings and investigates the topic in conjunction with the various issues that were addressed in this course. Students will incorporate what they learned from our novels regarding Italians in their conversations with Italians and to engage in additional conversations about the topic they have selected for this paper. Students will then present their findings with an accompanying PowerPoint/Prezi presentation during our final class. Presentations should be no longer than ten minutes. All Research Papers are due during the final week of the summer program. Research Papers and presentations should be submitted via Dropbox.

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Grading Scale

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STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: http://sarc.usc.edu/

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. https://equity.usc.edu/

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/

Diversity at USC – https://diversity.usc.edu/
Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students