ITALIAN

In the Department of French and Italian

Chair, Professor Bénédicte Mauguière (French)
Assistant Professors Gianluca Rizzo and Serena Ferrando; Language Assistant Silvia Rizzo

All courses are conducted in Italian unless otherwise noted.

Achievement Test: Students seeking entrance credit in Italian and wishing to pursue Italian at Colby must either have taken the College Board SAT Subject test in Italian or taken a placement test during orientation.

Requirements for the Minor in Italian Studies

The minor in Italian studies seeks to acquaint students with the breadth of Italian language and civilization and to introduce them to the life and culture of Italy, from the Middle Ages to the modern and contemporary unified Italian state. Minors are strongly encouraged to spend at least one semester studying in Italy. The minor requires six courses: a minimum of four in the Italian program, on campus, beginning with Italian 126, and two additional courses in Italian literature or culture that may be taken outside the department and may be taught in English. All courses taken outside of the department must be approved by the department chair. Students should plan on taking 127 and 128 consecutively, preferably before going abroad. Students planning to take fifth-semester Italian while abroad should see Professor Rizzo or the department chair.

Course Offerings

IT125f  Italian I  Basic comprehensive course for students with little or no previous knowledge of Italian. Focus is on developing the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills needed to gain fluency in Italian and on familiarizing students with basic aspects of Italian culture and geography. Learning in the classroom takes place entirely in Italian and is task based, involving group activities, interviews with fellow students, and role-playing exercises.  Four credit hours.  FERRANDO

IT125Jj  Italian I in Siena  Basic comprehensive course for students with little or no previous knowledge of Italian. Focus is on developing the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills needed to gain fluency in Italian and on familiarizing students with basic aspects of Italian culture and geography. Learning in the classroom takes place entirely in Italian and is task based, involving group activities, interviews with fellow students, and role-playing exercises. Conducted in Siena, Italy. Estimated cost: $3,550.  Three credit hours.  RIZZO

IT126s  Italian II  Continued basic comprehensive course for students with elementary knowledge (Italian 125 or equivalent) of Italian. Focus is on continuing development of the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills gained in Italian I and on increasing students' familiarity with aspects of Italian culture and geography. Learning in the classroom takes place entirely in Italian and is task-based, involving group activities, interviews with fellow students, and role-playing exercises. Prerequisite: Italian 125.  Four credit hours.  RIZZO

IT127f  Italian III  Continued practice in listening and speaking skills; grammar review, with greater emphasis on writing. Reading and conversation topics taken from contemporary Italian literature; course materials convey a sense and understanding of contemporary Italian society. Prerequisite: Italian 126 or equivalent.  Four credit hours.  RIZZO

IT128s  Italian through Film and Visual Culture  Through an in-depth study of film and visual media, students will improve their understanding of Italian language and culture as well as master increasingly complex grammatical structures. Study of different aspects of Italian society and history as depicted in film, television, and the visual arts. Oral and written work will allow students to improve linguistic skills and expand cultural knowledge creatively. Prerequisite: Italian 127 or equivalent.  Four credit hours.  RIZZO

IT131  Italian Conversation and Composition  Study of contemporary Italian novel, short stories, articles, and films to increase vocabulary, consolidate knowledge of advanced grammatical structures, learn to express and support opinions, and improve analytical skills and intercultural awareness. Prepares students to engage in topics of current interest such as Italian politics, the environment, immigration, fictional representation of women, and the south. Students will produce short samples of their own critical and creative writings. Oral presentations provide the opportunity to situate literary texts and films within a broader historical, cultural, and literary context. Prerequisite: Italian 128 or equivalent.  Four credit hours.  FERRANDO

IT141  Existential Italy  In this discussion-intensive course, we will explore the most enduring topics of Italian culture: the nature of love, the role of the artist in society, and the experience of time and death. Students will learn about different artistic genres (lyric poetry, short story, novel, film, contemporary song) and hone analytical skills and writing techniques (rhetorical figures, form-content, stylistics). Students will become familiar with key periods of Italian culture and famous authors (Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Leopardi, Montale, Moravia,
Marini, Deledda, Calvino). In Italian. Prerequisite: Italian 128 or equivalent. Four credit hours. L.

IT153j  Modern and Contemporary Italian Fiction in Translation in Verona Held in Verona, Italy, a close study of five authors whose work spans the 20th century. Readings include Silvia Bonucci's Voices from a Time, Lia Levi's The Jewish Husband, Giuseppe Di Lampedusa's The Leopard, Antonio Tabucchi's Pereira Declares: A Testimony, and Andrea Camilleri's The Terra Cotta Dog. Includes field trips to Venice and Italian cultural centers around Verona. Written work required: three analytical essays. Cost: $3,300. Prerequisite: For more information, contact Patrick Brancaccio (pbranca@colby.edu). Three credit hours. L. BRANCACCIO

IT235fs Italian Conversation An informal, weekly, small-group meeting for conversation practice, led by the Italian language assistant. Topics will vary, to include everyday life experience, contemporary culture and media, and literature. Conducted in Italian. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: Italian 127 (may be taken concurrently) or prior study-abroad experience in Italy. One credit hour. RIZZO

[IT254]  Dante's Divine Comedy (in English) Introduces Dante's Divine Comedy as an enduring work of poetry, a stunning portrait of medieval Europe, a foundational text of Western culture. Through close analysis we follow Dante's journey through the realms of the Christian afterlife, in which he voices the tension between God's perfect grace and man's free will but never gives up searching for truth and earthly justice. A committed citizen facing exile from his city of Florence, a man of faith criticizing contemporary church-state relations, a poet seeking fame, Dante chants the glories of his time but also exposes the dark side of his civilization, confronting issues still relevant. Conducted in English; no knowledge of Italian required. Four credit hours. L.

IT255s  Modern Classics, Italian Style An overview of some of the most relevant and interesting texts (visual, cinematic, literary, and musical) of the 20th century, while strengthening the linguistic skills acquired so far. We will begin with Futurismo, the first of the historical avant-gardes, an artistic movement that originated in Italy and set out to change everything: music, theater, literature, painting, sculpture, and food. Every week students will engage a different text, from pop music to cinema and literature, learning how to appreciate its history and to enjoy its beauty. Prerequisite: Italian 128. Four credit hours. L. FERRANDO

[IT257]  Renaissance Heroes: Knights, Giants, and Gypsies (in English) Beginning with the Chanson de Roland, late medieval and Renaissance epic poetry has told the stories of mighty knights, their loves, their deeds, and their arms. An introduction to this remarkable corpus of literature, tracing its evolution across different centuries and different languages, with a particular focus on its comic components. Reading assignments will include passages from Boiardo, Ariosto, Pulci, Folengo, and Rabelais. Taught in English. Four credit hours. L.

[IT262]  Outsiders, Losers, Rejects: Topics in Italian Cultural Studies Italy's history is characterized by tensions: north/south, periphery/center, church/state, native/foreigner. In a nation often viewed as divided, questions about identity, tradition, and the "other" are hotly debated. We will address these issues through topics in cultural studies such as politics, law, gender, immigration, and religion. Study of short stories and film will hone skills in textual and film analysis and develop critical thinking. Authors/directors: Verga, Pirandello, Moravia, Primo Levi, Deledda, Rossellini, Ginzburg, Calvino, Maraini, Pasolini, Benni, Amelio. In Italian. Prerequisite: Italian 128 or equivalent. Four credit hours. L, L.

IT356f  Introduction to Dante's Divine Comedy (in English) An introduction to Dante, his times, and his cultural milieu through a critical reading of The Divine Comedy and other selected works. We will investigate Dante's relationship with authority, tradition, and faith, and explore his particular understanding of love as a path to knowledge and of literature as a way to salvation. Students will be challenged to find Dante's lasting influence on contemporary culture in the works of modern authors, both in the Italian-speaking and English-speaking worlds. All lectures and class materials will be in English. One additional weekly hour of discussion in Italian will be open to Italian minors and all who are interested. Four credit hours. L. RIZZO

[IT372]  Boccaccio and Petrarch: Birth of Modernity Boccaccio and Petrarch lived at a revolutionary moment in Italian history, at the dawn of modernity (e.g., vast cultural explosion, increasing globalization and democracy, crisis of political-religious authority). We will examine how these two colleagues responded to and helped create a new world that often resembles our own, as well as how they considered the major debates of the day: the relationship between secular and religious, past and present, elite and popular, and the self and God. Texts to be studied include the Decameron, Canzoniere, Corbaccio, Secretum, and letters. In Italian. Prerequisite: Italian 131 or equivalent. Four credit hours. L.

[IT375]  Comedy, Italian Style: The Golden Age of Italian Film Comedy Traces the evolution of the film comedy across three decades of Italian cinematic life through the lens of the commedia all'italiana (Italian-style comedy, 1950s-1970s). Beyond their ability to entertain, these popular comedies also served as a crucial means for exploring via humor the social and political upheaval unfolding throughout Italy during this historical period. Skills of critical analysis will be honed through readings on the history and theory of cinema and screenings of films by such celebrated directors as Fellini, De Sica, Monicelli, Germi, Wertmüller, and others. Prerequisite: Italian 237. Four credit hours. A.
IT491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual projects in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work.  Prerequisite:  Permission of the instructor.  Two to four credit hours.  FACULTY