Traders, Travelers and Others: Italy and the World

(with particular attention to Florence)

Professor DINA COPELMAN

Email: dcopelma@gmu.edu

Spring 2025

***IMPORTANT NOTE :*** *This is a draft. The final version will take into account the number of students in the program, the resources and structure provided by EdOdyssey, local conditions in Florence and other relevant factors.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines Italy’s interactions with other parts of the world, paying particular attention to Florence. Going from the Renaissance to the present, we will focus on four distinct topics: Economics, politics and culture in Renaissance Florence; 18th and 19th century travel—especially the British Grand Tour—and the development of mass tourism; the ways Italian intellectuals and Italian travelers accommodated (and even propagated) imperialism and fascism in the 1920s and 30s; and, in recent decades, reactions to and the experiences of migrants, immigrants and refugees in Italy. Through these topics we will learn about Italian history and culture; get an understanding of how Italy—as both a real and imagined place—was part of the cultural imagination of the West; and raise questions about the ways “foreigners” and “others” feature in the development of national identities.

Our perspective will be interdisciplinary. We will be considering art and architecture; literary and media productions—travel guides, travel writing, novels and films; economic history and works on political ideologies and the exercise of power—from Machiavelli to Mussolini; and to understand Italy’s current political landscape and the role of migrants and refugees we will turn to sociological and economic analyses as well as current media accounts.

Throughout the course Florence will be one of our major sources. Reading about the city will be accompanied by experiencing it first-hand. Florence’s artistic treasures will inform us, and we will also visit relevant historical sites and current institutions—from the places significant to Machiavelli’s life to the presence of fascism in Florence and more. Specific plans for these visits have yet to be arranged; you will be provided with a list once the course begins.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN**

**NOTE: All written assignments will be based on class readings and work done in class.**

Class participation 20% of grade

* Attendance, preparation, in-class writing and class presentation

Take-home midterm 20%

* Responding to a choice of essay questions

Four Short essays 40%

* 2-3 page essays responding to questions about readings and/or site visits. Two will be due before the midterm and two after the midterm. Late submissions will not be accepted, but you will have at least three opportunities to turn in essays before and after the midterm.

Take-home Final 20%

* Responding to a choice of essay questions
* Emphasis will be—primarily but not exclusively—on work since midterm

**READINGS**

 Unless otherwise notified, all course readings will be available online.

**WEEKS**

1 Introductions, Perspectives

 Edward Said, *Orientalism,* selections

 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* selections

James S. Buzard, “What Isn’t Travel?” in Hagen Schultz-Forberg, ed.,

*Unravelling Civilisation*

2 Florence in Italy; Florence in the World

 Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence,* selections

3 Politics and Power in Renaissance Florence

 Jean Boutier and Yves Sintomer, “The Republic of Florence (From the

Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries)” in *Revue française de science*

*politique* Volume 64, Issue 6, 2014

Nicholas Scott Baker, “For Reasons of State: Political Executions,

Republicanism, and the Medici in Florence, 1480–1560” in *Renaissance Quarterly* Volume 62, 2009

 Machiavelli, *The Prince,* selections

4 Florence’s David; the World’s David

Thomas J. Sienkewicz, “Transformations of Herculean Fortitude in

Florence” in Arlene L. Allan et al eds, *Herakles Inside and Outside the Church*

[John T. Paoletti](file:////core/search%3Ffilters%255BauthorTerms%255D%3DJohn%20T.%20Paoletti%26eventCode%3DSE-AU), *Michelangelo's David,* selections

5 European Travelers

Nathalie Hester “Geographies of Belonging: Italian Travel Writing and

Italian Identity the Age of Early European Travel” *Annali d'italianistica* 21 (2003)

6 Midterm due

7 The Grand Tour

Diana and Tony Webb, *The Anglo Florentines: The British in Tuscany*

*1814-1860,* selections

Caroline B. Brettell, “Nineteenth Century Travelers' Accounts of the

Mediterranean Peasant” *Ethnohistory*, Spring, 1986, Vol. 33, No. 2

8 The Modern Tourist

 Ian Forster, *Room with a View* or Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*

Marcella Pellegrino Sutcliffe, “The Toynbee Travellers’ Club and the

Transnational Education of Citizens, 1888–90” in *History Workshop*

*Journal* 76

*Baedeker Guide to Italy*, selections

9 Italian Intellectuals and Travelers in the 1930s

Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism,*

selections

Charles Burdett, *Journeys through Fascism:* *Italian Travel Writing* *between*

*the Wars,* selections

10 They are Not Tourists

Tim Dixon, et al *Attitudes towards National Identity, Immigration and*

*Refugees in Italy* More in CommonJuly 2018

William Chiaromonte and Veronica Federico, “The Labour Market Needs

Them, But We Don’t Want Them to Stay for Good: The Conundrum of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers’ Integration in Italy” in Veronica Federico and Simone Baglioni Eds, *Migrants, Refugees and* *Asylum Seekers’ Integration* *in European Labour Markets*

11 Florence, Tourists, Students, Others

 Reflections—students assign recent articles they have found useful

12 Final due