

GESM 120g: Seminar in Humanistic Inquiry
Transforming Italy: Italian Literature Today
Spring 2016

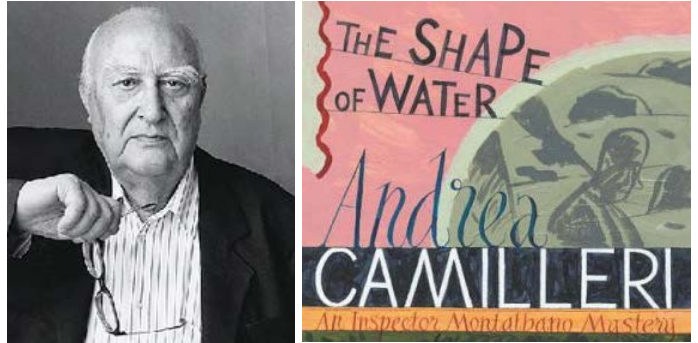
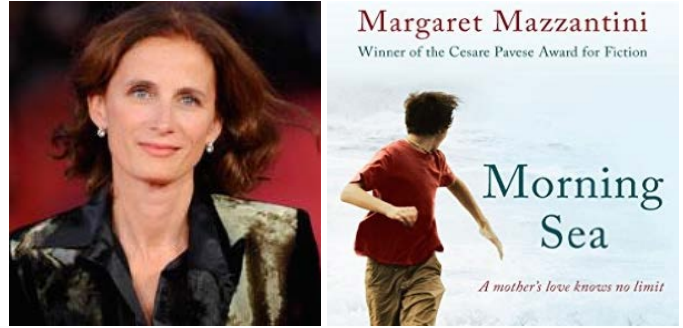
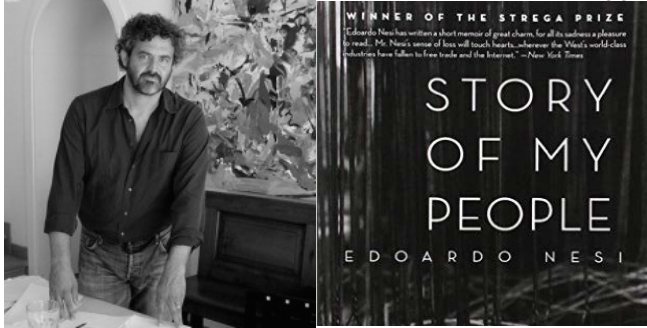
Professor: James M. Fortney

Course Hours: 2:00-3:20 T/TH

Meeting Room: VKC 254

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Office Hours: 11:00-1:00 T/TH THH 155



Today's Italy is very different from the stereotypes of the culture that have traditionally informed our ideas. The land of history, art, food, and culture by all means still exists. Nevertheless, new tendencies have emerged over the last couple of decades that have challenged, provided hope and created new possibilities for this people that trace their roots back to before the ancient Romans. In this course students will read recent award winning and bestselling narratives that complicate our understanding of this country and shed greater light on what it means to be Italian within the European Union and globalized world of today.

Edoardo Nesi's *Story of My People* utilizes memoir to capture 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. Finally, Susanna Tamaro's *Follow Your Heart* epistolary novel describes an intergenerational relationship between a child and her grandmother that instantly became a national bestseller and changed the trajectory of Italian fiction over the last couple of decades. More than ever, the outpour of recent contributions of contemporary Italian literature is saturated with a dazzling array of stories that question core values, culture, society and identity itself.

Learning Objectives

- Reflect on the act of storytelling to acknowledge how fundamental it is to the human experience and how it brings us closer to understanding what it means to be human.
- Factor in the role that culture plays to evaluate ideas of diverse perspectives as we consider some of the most successful narratives in Italy today.
- Closely read narratives of different literary genres such as fiction, memoir, fictionalized memoir and nonfiction to explore how categorical expectations impact the story a narrative represents.
- Develop arguments in classroom discussions and papers to enhance analytical and critical interpretive skills.
- Enrich, collaborate, and share knowledge about narratives and ideas discussed in class.
- Construct a nuanced vocabulary of narrative language and concepts to broaden considerations of events, characters, authors/narrators and genres in narratives.
- Compare and contrast written and filmic texts to explore how cinematic language alters representation.

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

Ammaniti, Niccolò. *Me and You* (originally published in 2010). Trans Kylee Doust. New York: Black Cat, 2012.

Camilleri, Andrea. *The Shape of Water* (originally published in 1994). Trans Stephen Sartarelli. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.

Mazzantini, Margaret. *Morning Sea* (originally published in 2011). Trans Ann Gagliardi. New York: Random House, 2015.

Nesi, Edoardo. *Story of My People* (originally published in 2010). Trans Anthony Shugaar. New York: Other Press, 2013.

Tamaro, Susanna. *Follow Your Heart* (originally published in 1994). Trans Avril Bardoni. New York: Delta, 1996.

ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION BASED ON DISABILITY

Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability will need to make arrangements with the office of Disability Services and Programs (DSP) at the beginning of the semester. Please visit their website for further information:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html.

A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. The DSP office is located in the Student Union, Room 301. Their telephone number is (213) 740-0776; you can also email them at ability@usc.edu.

STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in the Section on University Governance, part B. "University Student Conduct Code", Sections 10.00–17.00 (scampus.usc.edu). Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty.

Course Requirements and Dates:

Assignments:

First (3-4 page) paper (Feb. 4):	10%
Second (4-5 page) paper (Mar. 10):	15%
Third (5-6 page) paper (Apr. 7):	20%
Mid-term Exam (Feb 25):	15%
Final Exam (May 5 2:00-4:00):	15%
Participation including in-class discussions, group work, readings, article presentations, and quizzes:	25%

About the papers and other writing assignments:

- * Each paper should have the specified length, typed in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, and have one-inch margins.
- * Include your name and the title of your paper at the top of the first page.
- * All papers must have titles.
- * You should number pages.
- * Spell check and proofread adequately.
- * Be sure that you cite all secondary material and present bibliographical information according to either the guidelines of either the Modern Language Association or Chicago Manual of Style.
- * You must list all material cited, even if you are only using the required text.
- * There will be information distributed in class for the three papers.
- * You will email me your papers. Any papers that do not meet requirements (length, assignment instructions, etc.) will be emailed back to you with further instructions for completion. You will earn one grade lower on the completed draft.
- * Unannounced quizzes and in-class exercises will take place regularly. The purpose of the quizzes and exercises is testing for preparedness and comprehension. The quizzes will contribute to the "participation" portion of your grade.

Some basics:

- * No laptop use is allowed in lecture or discussion. Take notes in a notebook and in your copies of the novels. Similarly: no cell phones, video games, ipods, etc.
- * Keep up with the reading schedule and plan ahead. Think about budgeting your time.
- * Come to class prepared to discuss the day's text and engage in group activities. Bring notes on articles and additional readings.
- * Bring to class the text we're discussing.
- * Keep up with handouts and other class notes.

1. **Attendance**

Be sure not to miss any classes. Daily attendance is a key factor in our course. Coming allows you to 1) interact with the other students and 2) discuss and receive explanations about what you read and studied at home. Please remember that, although attendance is not graded *per se*, unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your participation grade (see point 4 below).

USC official policies allow for some absences to be excused. Thus, the following circumstances would not be considered unexcused.

Students who can verify that they were prevented from completing assignments and/or taking exams due to illness or religious holidays are permitted to make up the work they missed. Students who miss class because of their performance in university-

sponsored events, such as athletic competitions, fine-arts performances, ROTC activities, etc. are also

allowed to make up the work they missed. Students who are summoned for jury duty are excused as well. Finally, a death in the immediate family would also excuse a student's absence.

On the other hand, personal reasons for missing class are not excused. These include personal trips to attend university-sponsored events as a spectator, to visit family, to attend weddings (and similar events), to attend court (except for jury duty), even when plane tickets have already been purchased.

In order to make up any work (assignments, quizzes, exams, etc.) that you miss, you must bring valid, original documentation. For illness, a medical excuse from a doctor or other appropriate health-care provider is required and is subject to confirmation. Students using the University Park Health Center should have a valid release on file at the UPHC with my name on it. For university-sponsored events, an original memo from the appropriate advisor must be provided in advance. Documentation from a newspaper, funeral, memorial service, etc., must be provided in the event of absence due to a death in the immediate family. The court papers summoning you for jury duty are required in order to be excused.

2. Tardiness; Leaving Early

It is essential to be on time to class. Late arrivals are disruptive for the other students. Also, they negatively affect your ability to participate fully in the lesson. In addition, please do not ask to leave early. The schedule of classes has a 10-minute break between lessons and that is supposed to give you enough time to reach your following destination.

SYLLABUS:

READINGS ARE TO BE COMPLETED FOR THE DAY THEY ARE ASSIGNED. YOU MUST BRING TO CLASS THE CURRENT READING. Assignments, in bold, are listed under the day for which they are to be completed.

Week 1

Tuesday, January 12	Introduction to Narratives: Some Considerations, Course/Syllabus Overview
Thursday, January 14	Watch for class <i>Italy: Love It Or Leave It</i> (2011; 79 min) by Gustav Hofer and Luca Ragazzi (available on streaming through Amazon, Netflix, etc.)

NICCOLÒ AMMANITI'S ME AND YOU (2010)

Week 2

Tuesday, January 19	Read for today pages 1-47
Thursday, January 21	Read for today pages 49-87

Week 3

Tuesday, January 26	Read for today pages 89-128 *Discuss as a class when to schedule a screening of the filmic adaptation
Thursday, January 28	Read for today pages 129-153

Week 4

Tuesday, February 2 Watch for today Bernardo Bertolucci's filmic adaptation *Me and You*(2012)
Thursday, February 4 **First Paper Due: 3-4 page filmic adaptation paper**

MARGARET MAZZANTINI'S MORNING SEA (2011)

Week 5

Tuesday, February 9 Read for today pages 15-45
Thursday, February 11 Read for today pages 49-69

Week 6

Tuesday, February 16 Read for today pages 70-102
Thursday, February 18 Read for today pages 103-143

Week 7

Tuesday, February 23 **Review for the Midterm**
Thursday, February 25 **Midterm Exam**

EDOARDO NESI'S STORY OF MY PEOPLE (2010)

Week 8

Tuesday, March 1 Read for today pages 1-54
Thursday, March 3 Read for today pages 55-99

Week 9

Tuesday, March 8 Read for today pages 100-163
Thursday, March 10 **Second Paper Due: 4-5 page compare and contrast paper**

SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 15

Thursday, March 17

SUSANNA TAMARO'S FOLLOW YOUR HEART (1994)

Week 10

Tuesday, March 22 Read for today pages 11-50

Thursday, March 24 Read for today pages 51-94

Week 11

Tuesday, March 29 Read for today pages 95-137

Thursday, March 31 Read for today pages 138-164

Week 12

Tuesday, April 5 Read for today pages 165-204

Thursday, April 7 **Third Paper Due: 5-6 page secondary source critique**

ANDREA CAMILLERI'S THE SHAPE OF WATER (1994)

Week 13

Tuesday, April 12 Read for today pages 1-35

Thursday, April 14 Read for today pages 36-76

Week 14

Tuesday, April 19 Read for today pages 77-121

Thursday, April 21 Read for today pages 122-163

Week 15

Tuesday, April 26 Read for today pages 164-219

Thursday, April 28 **Review for the Final Exam**

Thursday, May 5 Final Exam