This course will focus on modern and contemporary comic and humoristic theatre masterpieces by Italian writers such as Luigi Pirandello, Natalia Ginzburg, Dario Fo, and Peppino De Filippo, it will explore their plays within the historical context in which they were written, and relate them to the tradition of Italian theatre throughout the ages. Students will also study the history of Italian theatre from the origins to modern times, and investigate the theories of comic, humor, and laughter in Western culture. In addition, students will read theoretical writings, watch video recordings of the plays they will study, and will become familiar with renowned Italian actors. Students will be asked to interpret theatre texts through close reading, verbal expression, and in the writing of essays on the works we will discuss in class.