

ITA 4957 • Venice and its Reflections

VENICE, SUMMER 2010

As the Twentieth century draws to a close, no one knows quite what to expect, if anything, of the future. There is a strong need for magic, for a place that is outside of time, for a postponement of reality. For Venice. (Gore Vidal)

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Course Description

This course offers a large overview of Venetian culture to make students aware of the particular Venetian environment through time and in space. The course includes a survey of Venetian literature (in translation), a selection of films that choose Venice as their physical and emotional set, and a presentation of visual art and crafts that distinguish Venice. It also incorporates several visits to the city's historical sites that relate to the course content.

Course Objectives

- 1- This course is purposefully designed for the Florida Atlantic University Study Abroad Program in Venice, Italy, and it aims to give students a deep understanding of the town they will inhabit for six weeks of their life. They will acquire a useful knowledge of the city's past, the city's cultural production, and its contemporary "consumption".
- 2- The course will enhance student's skills in reading, not only words on paper but also visual material, and concrete signs of the city.
- 3- It will also give students an opportunity to create their own journal of their unique experience of living in Venice, by stimulating their writing skills and creativity.

Assignments

Journal: students are required to keep a journal of their course. The journal should contain notes from class lectures, personal responses to the readings and the movies, creative production deriving from observation, and homework assignments. It should be your own comment on what you see, and read, in Venice. Write at least half a page on each theme (reading, class information, in-site observation). Update it every one-two days; don't let the time pass. The purpose of this work is to distill "My Venice" (as *Francesco's Venice*) – the Venice that you have lived in the summer 2010 and that is different from anyone else's Venice.

Final project: written and photographic essay, "My Venice." Document Venice as it was in these 6 weeks, not touristy, but individual and unrepeatable at a different time. Describe Venice through a peculiar point of view, making it a metaphor of your own. Choose a theme that strikes you as peculiar from the very first days. Ex. *Time* in Venice: the same window at different times of day. *Work* in Venice: follow the way of a *facchino* (the man who carries merchandise). *Animals* in Venice: as seen from the eye of the pigeons or through its stone lions. *Reflections* in Venice: glass, water, windows... This project will result in a photographic essay (PP presentation) and in a 5-page paper in which you need to incorporate as many quotations from literary Venetian works as you can, relating to your theme.

Grading Criteria:

- 20% Course journal
- 20% Midterm exam (questions)
- 20% Final presentation
- 20% Final paper
- 20% Class (active) participation

Required Readings:

- Da Mosto, Francesco. *Francesco's Venice: The Dramatic History of the World's Most Beautiful City* (London: BBC Books, 2007).
- Course package (available in Venice).

WEEKLY CALENDAR

1st week

May 17-20

Origin of Venice: Travelers, Merchants and Madonnas

Screening: *Miraculous Canals of Venice* (2006)

Marco Polo's travels, *Il Milione*

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

Ruzante (Angelo Beolco), *The Weasel*

"The Virgin on the Street Corner"

Visit Saint Mark square: God, the Doge and Minerva (Basilica and Museo Correr)

Homework: Read *Francesco's Venice*: pp. 12-70

Exercise: in search of the Venetian "Capitelli"

Exercise: Advanced students: In Italiano: <http://venicexplorer.net/tradizione/topos/> (nissioeti)
toponimi veneziani di Tassini

Start your final project

PROBABLE VISIT TO THE LAGOON AND SANT'ANDREA (FRIDAY 21ST)

2nd week

May 24-27

Venice as a Woman

La Venexiana (Anonymous, 1500)

Veronica Franco

Moderata Fonte

Gaspara Stampa

Suggested viewing: *Dangerous Beauty* (Marshall Herskovitz, 1998)

Visit the Doge's palace

Homework: Read *Francesco's Venice*: pp. 102-162

3rd week

May 31-June 3

Venetian Humor: Carlo Goldoni

Memoires

The Boors

Visit to Carlo Goldoni's house and museum (closed W.)

Foreigners in Venice:

The Greeks
The Armenians
The Jews: Shakespeare's Shylock

Walk in Jewish Venice and San Lazzaro degli Armeni

The Ladini: legends and Myths of the Dolomites

Homework: Read *Francesco's Venice*: pp. 165-196

PROBABLE VISIT: DOLOMITES

4th week

June 7-10

"The" Venetian Lover

Giacomo Casanova: *History of My Life*

Suggested viewing: *Fellini's Casanova* or *The Garden of Earthly Delights*

Visit Piombi (Casanova's prison)

Visit Ca' Rezzonico: Venice in the XVIII Century

MIDTERM EXAM

5th week

June 14-17

Venice as set for Death and Passion

Gabriele D'Annunzio, *The Flame*

Giuseppe Berto, *Venetian Anonymous*

Screening: *Death in Venice* (Luchino Visconti, 1971)

Suggested: *Anonimo Veneziano* (E.M. Salerno, 1971)

Visit to Palazzo Fortuny, Venetian decadence

Homework: Read *Francesco's Venice*: pp. 199-231

2-PARAGRAPH INTRODUCTION TO FINAL PROJECT DUE

PROBABLE: BOAT TOUR OF PALLADIAN VILLAS (PISANI, WIDMAN, MALCONTENTA)

6th week

May 21-24

Venice Observed

The poets: Lord Byron, Reiner Maria Rilke, Ezra Pound

Futurist manifesto (NYTimes)

Diego Valeri's *Sentimental Guide*

"Venice in Film" (*Don't Look Now*; *Indiana Jones*; *Casino*

Royale; *Italian Job*; *Comfort of Strangers*)

Suggested viewing: *Bread and Tulips* (Silvio Soldini, 2000)

Everyone Says I Love You (Woody Allen, 1996)

The Italian Job (Gary Gray, 2003)

JOURNALS DUE

—PRESENTATION OF *MY VENICES* IN CLASS