

Italian Courses Available to Visiting Students

In addition to language classes, the following courses are available.

Paper IV: Linguistic Studies i. History of the Italian Language from the Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century

Italy is distinguished among western European nations by a profusion of widely divergent dialectal varieties which it conserves to this day, and by its lack, until very recent times, of a common language spoken and understood by the populace at large. This paper offers the opportunity to understand the nature and origins of Italy's linguistic fragmentation, and to chart, with special reference to textual evidence, the complex processes by which one of the dialectal variants (Tuscan, and more specifically Florentine) rose to pre-eminence as a literary, scientific and administrative language, and subsequently to establish itself as the common language of the Italian people. The detailed study of the evolution of the lexicon, grammar and sound system of Italian will in turn illuminate many aspects of the grammar of the modern language, and an understanding of the structure of other dialects will throw light on much of the variation found in the modern language. Students will be expected to develop and display skills in formal linguistic analysis, and to apply the insights thus gained to the study of the historical interaction between the language and Italian culture and society.

Paper V: Linguistic Studies II. Modern Italian

About a third of the population of Italy does not habitually speak Italian. A small but significant proportion cannot speak it. Very many Italians speak varieties strikingly different from 'standard' Italian. Just over a century ago perhaps as few as 2.5% of Italians used any Italian at all. Against this background, reading for this paper should provide answers to the following questions: What is Italian?; What is its internal (grammatical and phonological) structure?; What are the varieties of Italian?; What are the Italian dialects?

The study of the 'internal' structure of Italian (to which one section of the exam paper is principally dedicated) illuminates such topics as: the sound-system of Italian; the appropriate use of various verb forms, such as the subjunctive or the *passato remoto*; stylistic and other principles governing word order; the structure of the pronoun system. Such a study has both a practical side, in that it will help develop your knowledge of Italian grammar, idiom and pronunciation, and a theoretical side, in that it will introduce you to the techniques and problems involved in the structural description of a language.

The study of the 'external' structure (social, regional and contextual varieties of Italian) deals with such things as written vs spoken Italian, formal vs informal styles, standard language vs dialect and popular and regional vs literary Italian, specialist uses of Italian, for example in advertising or journalism, etc. Once again you will have the opportunity to expand your knowledge of the modern language, while at the same time gaining an initial understanding of the methods of sociolinguistic and stylistic analysis.

Paper VI: Medieval Italian Literature 1220–1430

Early Italian literature is linguistically approachable and includes some of the greatest works ever to have been written in Italian. The country was politically disunited but your work will explore the emergence of what would prove to be a national tradition. You will read lyric poetry

up to and including Petrarch, the stories of Boccaccio and some work by other prose writers, but you will also get to know a variety of works by other figures, including works by Dante, other than his *La divina commedia* (for which see Paper IX).

You will start by studying Dante, *Vita nuova*; Cecco Angiolieri (selection in Contini, *Poeti del duecento*); Petrarca, *Canzoniere*; Boccaccio, *Decamerone*. You will then read further, choosing from a large range of authors, including: the Sicilian school; Guittone d'Arezzo; Guido Guinizzelli; Guido Cavalcanti; Cino da Pistoia; Rustico Filippi; Folgore da San Gemignano; religious poetry by Jacopone da Todi and Bonvesin de la Riva; stories from the Novellino and Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle* and selections from the chronicles of Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani; Dante's *Rime*, *De vulgari eloquentia* (in translation). You may also study the early phases of humanism through selections from Latin works by Petrarch and Boccaccio (in translation).

Paper VII: Renaissance Italian Literature 1430–1635

This paper allows you to study the literature and culture of one of the most exciting periods in Italian history. Apart from famous poets who were to prove so influential in other European literatures (Poliziano, Ariosto, Tasso), the period also boasts writers who are crucial for the study of politics and history (Machiavelli, Guicciardini), the court (Lorenzo de' Medici, Castiglione) and the creative arts (Alberti, Michelangelo, Cellini). There is a great variety of material to be studied, including historical questions about the origins and extent of the Renaissance as well as a plethora of different literary genres: from prose dialogues and *novelle*, to comedy, lyric poetry, epic, and pastoral.

You will start by studying: Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, *La mandragola*; Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*; Castiglione, *Il cortegiano*; Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*.

You will also read further, choosing from a large range of topics, genres and authors, including:

- **History:** Origins of the Renaissance, Humanism, the *questione della lingua*, court culture.
- **Politics:** humanist treatises of Alberti (*Della famiglia*) and Palmieri (*Della vita civile*); Machiavelli (*Discorsi*) and Guicciardini (*I ricordi*, *Storia d'Italia*).
- **The Novella:** Bandello, *Le novelle*.
- **Court Literature:** Pulci, Poliziano, Lorenzo de' Medici.
- **The Arts:** Alberti (*Della pittura*), Michelangelo (*Rime*), Cellini (*La mia vita*), Vasari (*Le vite*).
- **Comedy:** Ariosto (*Il negromante*, *La lena*), Machiavelli (*Clizia*), Bibbiena (*La Calandra*), Aretino (*Il marescalco*).
- **Lyric:** Poliziano, Lorenzo, Bembo, Michelangelo, women poets (Gaspara Stampa, Vittoria Colonna, Tullia d'Aragona).
- **The Epic:** Boiardo (*Orlando innamorato*).
- **Pastoral:** Poliziano (*Orfeo*), Tasso (*Aminta*), Guarini (*Il pastor fido*).

Paper VIII: Modern Italian Literature (1750 to the Present Day) and Cinema

This paper provides an opportunity for you to study a wide range of literary texts and films set against the background of Italy's emergence as a modern nation state and its development during the 20th century. It moves from the Enlightenment period to the Risorgimento and the liberal state, to Fascism and finally the modern Republic. You will get to know some canonical

literary works by Manzoni, Leopardi, Verga and Pirandello, and choose among a variety of other literary and film works from throughout the period. The latter will include the possibility of studying writers and film directors living and working today.

You will start by studying a selection of canonical literary works: Manzoni, *I promessi sposi*; Leopardi, *I canti*; Verga, *I Malavoglia*, *Vita de' campi*; Pirandello, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, *Enrico IV*, *Così è (se vi pare)*.

You will then read further, choosing from a large range of literary works, including:

- Foscolo, *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, *Dei sepolcri*
- d'Annunzio, *Il piacere*, *Trionfo della morte*, *Alcyone*
- Svevo, *La coscienza di Zeno*, *Senilità*
- Montale, *Ossi di seppia*, *Le occasioni*, *La bufera e altro*
- Quasimodo, *Tutte le poesie*
- Gadda, *La cognizione del dolore*
- Bassani, *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contin*, *Gli occhiali d'oro*
- Morante, *Menzogna e sortilegio*, *La storia*
- Calvino, *Il cavaliere inesistente*, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*
- Eco, *Il nome della rosa*, *Il pendolo di Foucault*

Those deciding to study Italian cinema can choose from a range of films including:

- Blasetti, *Vecchia guardia*
- Gallone, *Scipione l'africano*
- Visconti, *Ossessione*
- Rossellini, *Roma città aperta*, *Paisà*
- De Sica, *Ladri di biciclette*, *Miracolo a Milano*
- Fellini, *La dolce vita*; *8 e ½*
- Taviani, *Kaos*
- Moretti, *Aprile*, *Il caimano*
- Giordana, *I cento passi*

You will also be able to approach a range of topics, including 18th-century theatre, Romanticism, *Verismo*, Modernism and the Avant-garde (Futurism), neorealist literature and cinema, modern poetry, women writing, post-modern narrative.

Paper IX: Dante's *Commedia*

This paper consists in the close and intensive study of the greatest work of literature to come out of medieval Europe. Through a study of the *Commedia*, in particular two of its three 'cantiche', as well as a range of Dante's other works, you will be introduced to the history, politics, philosophy and theology of 13th- and 14th-century Florence, the Italian peninsula and Europe beyond, as well as to the rich literary qualities of the text itself. Studying Dante also opens up fascinating insights into every other area of Italian literature, and significant moments in modern European literature also, from Gogol to Eliot to Beckett. The sheer breadth of the material makes this paper one of the most challenging on the course, but also one of the most rewarding.

The *Commedia* should be read in its entirety using an annotated edition, such as those edited by Sapegno, or Bosco and Reggio. Parallel text editions, such as that by Sinclair, may be useful in the early stages. Of Dante's other works, perhaps the most important are *Vita nuova* and

Convivio, but *De vulgari eloquentia*, *Monarchia*, and the *Rime* are also significant works in themselves.

Paper X: Early Prescribed Authors

This course is designed to complement the broader sweep of the period course, by providing an opportunity to concentrate on and study in depth the work of TWO (out of a prescribed list of five) of the most important writers between the 14th and 16th centuries. You will read widely within the oeuvre of each author, set them in their intellectual and historical contexts and study closely a smaller number of central works with a view to detailed textual analysis.

The authors to choose between are:

Petrarch, with a special study of the *Canzoniere*, Nos. 1-12; 16-24; 30; 34-7; 50-4; 60-2; 70; 72; 77; 80-1; 90-2; 102; 119; 125-6; 128-9; 132-4; 136; 142; 145; 148; 159-60; 164; 197; 211; 219; 263-4; 268; 272; 279-80; 287-92; 302-4; 310-11; 315; 327; 353; 359-60; 346-6. Students will further be expected to have studied a representative selection of Petrarch's other Italian poems and of works originally written in Latin.

Boccaccio, with a special study of the *Decameron*. I. 1-3; II, 2, 5, 10; III, 2; IV, 1, 2, 5, 7, 9; VI, 1, 9, 10; VII, 4, 9; VIII, 3, 8; IX, 1, 2; X, 2, 9, 10. Students will further be expected to have studied a representative selection of other parts of the *Decameron* and of other works by Boccaccio.

Machiavelli, with a special study of *Il Principe*. Students will further be expected to have studied a representative selection of Machiavelli's other works, including *I discorsi* and *La mandragola*.

Ariosto, with a special study of *Orlando furioso*, cantos I-XIII.45; XVIII.146-XXIV; XXVIII-XXX; XXXIV; XLV-XLVI. Students will further be expected to have studied other parts of the *Orlando furioso* and a selection of the Satire.

Tasso, with a special study of *Gerusalemme liberata*, cantos I-VII, XI-XVI; XIX-XX, and *Aminta*. Students will further be expected to have studied other parts of the *Gerusalemme liberata*.

You will be expected to read as widely as possible within the authors' oeuvre, and in any case well beyond the texts prescribed.

Petrarch (1304–74)

You will concentrate on Petrarch's lyric poetry, but you will also read other works by him originally written in Latin. For whilst Petrarch is best known now as one of the greatest European lyric poets, he was also the author of treatises, dialogues, biographies, polemical tracts, an epic and a vast number of letters. He was enormously influential in both Italian and Latin and you will have the opportunity to gauge what made him so important.

The prime text is the *Canzoniere* (also known as *Rime sparse*, *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*). You will also read the *Secretum*, *Invective contra medicum III* and selections from Petrarch's letters, as well as his other volume of Italian poetry, *I trionfi*.

Boccaccio (1313–75)

You will concentrate on Boccaccio's *Decameron* but will also have the opportunity to read other works by him. As well as the collection of a hundred stories that make up the *Decameron*, Boccaccio wrote other narrative works in prose and verse which proved immensely influential,

such as the *Filostrato* which forms the substantial basis for Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, and the *Teseida* which was re-cast as Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. He also wrote a celebratory biography of Dante, and in Latin, an account of mythology, *Genealogia Deorum*, which includes an important discussion of the nature of poetry.

Apart from the *Decameron*, you will also read selections from: *Filostrato*, *Fiammetta*, *Teseida*, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, *Genealogia Deorum* Books XIV-XV (in translation).

Machiavelli (1469–1527)

One of Italy's most controversial writers, Machiavelli was not just the author of the book that shocked his own and later generations, *Il principe*. He was also a political thinker and historian of considerable originality (his *Discorsi* are for many more controversial than *Il principe*), as well as the author of probably the best Italian Renaissance comedy, *La mandragola*. You will have an opportunity to read both his famous and less well known works in order to come to your own conclusions about his true worth.

You should read the whole of *Il principe*, as well as selections from the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, and the two comedies, *La mandragola* and *Clizia*.

Ariosto (1474–1533)

You will concentrate on the *Orlando furioso*, but will also look at some of the *Satire* and comedies. Ariosto's epic poem, with its unique blend of ironic humour and seriousness, has remained a bestseller since his own day, and was a strong influence on writers as diverse as Spenser in Elizabethan England, and Calvino in contemporary Italy.

Apart from the *Orlando furioso*, you will also read selections from Ariosto's *Satire*, and his comedies, *La lena*, and *Il negromante*.

Tasso (1493–1569)

You will concentrate on the *Gerusalemme liberata* but will also read some of Tasso's minor works. Tasso's epic poem represents the high-point, in terms of seriousness and sublimity, of the chivalric poems popularised by Boiardo and Ariosto. It is worth reading in its own right as well for the light it sheds on Counter-Reformation culture and the profound influence it exercised on the English poets Spenser and Milton.

You will read the whole poem, examining in detail some of the 20 canti (specified above) for special study and commentary. You will also read selections from Tasso's lyric poetry as well as his pastoral drama, *Aminta*.

Paper XI: Modern Prescribed Authors

This course is designed to complement the broader sweep of the period paper, by providing an opportunity to concentrate on and study in depth the work of TWO (out of a prescribed list of seven) of the most important writers of the 19th and 20th centuries. You will read widely within the oeuvre of each author, set them in their intellectual and historical contexts and study closely a smaller number of central works with a view to detailed textual analysis.

The authors to choose between are:

Manzoni, with a special study of *I promessi sposi*. Students will further be expected to have studied Manzoni's tragedies and a selection of his other works.

Leopardi, with a special study of *I Canti*. Students will further be expected to have studied the *Operette morali* and a selection of Leopardi's other writings.

D'Annunzio, with a special study of *Alcyone*. Students will further be expected to have studied a selection of D'Annunzio's other works in verse and prose.

Verga, with a special study of *I Malavoglia* and *Mastro-don Gesualdo*. Students will further be expected to have studied a selection of Verga's other fiction.

Pirandello, with a special study of *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* and *I giganti della montagna*. Students will further be expected to have studied a representative selection of Pirandello's drama and prose work.

Montale, with a special study of 'Ossi di seppia' in *Ossi di seppia*, Section IV of *Le occasioni*, 'Finisterre' in *La bufera e altro* and 'Xenia I' in *Satura*. Students will further be expected to have studied a representative selection of Montale's other poems.

Calvino, with a special study of *Il cavaliere inesistente* and *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Students will further be expected to have studied other works representative of Calvino's development as a writer.

You will be expected to read as widely as possible within the authors' oeuvre, and in any case well beyond the texts prescribed.

Manzoni (1785–1873)

Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* is the most important novel to have been written in Italian, and his influence on the development of modern Italian literature and language in the period leading up to Unification and beyond has been immense. He also relates in unusual and interesting ways to trends in the European culture of his time, such as Romanticism or the Historical Novel.

You will concentrate primarily on *I promessi sposi*, but will also look at some of his verse tragedies (*Il conte di Carmagnola* and *Adelchi*), his poetry (eg. *Inni sacri*, *Il cinque maggio*) and his essays on history, language and literature (eg., *Storia della colonna infame*, *Sul Romanticismo*, *Del romanzo storico*).

Leopardi (1798–1837)

Considered by many critics second only to Dante in his importance as a poet, Leopardi represents the high point of nineteenth-century lyric poetry and also a leap towards the idiom and rhythms of modern poetry. His *Canti* combine Romantic and Classicizing elements to express his bleak vision of the human condition, also outlined in his philosophical dialogues, the *Operette morali*. His views and his works were fed by notes and essays, including some of social critique, which make him philosophically and politically an interesting figure also.

You will study the *Canti* and the *Operette morali* and make use also of his extensive personal notebook, the *Zibaldone*, and essays such as *Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degli italiani*, and *Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica*.

D'Annunzio (1863–1938)

The most flamboyant and charismatic figure of his day, D'Annunzio was a poet, novelist and dramatist as well a notorious soldier, airman, womanizer, invader of Fiume, and self-promoter. His shaping of his decadent life to fit his decadentist work, the influence of Nietzsche and Wagner, and his undoubted flair for sensual, symbolic, often erotic and often absurd writing make him the most vibrant representative of turn-of-the-century literature. Everyone after him felt his influence, even if only in rejecting him.

You will begin by studying his most accomplished work of poetry, *Alcyone*, as well as some of his prose work (*Il piacere*, *L'innocente*, *Trionfo della morte*) and plays (*La figlia di Iorio*).

Verga (1840–1922)

Verga was the major novelist in the late nineteenth century in Italy, and the leading exponent of the Italian school of realism, known as 'verismo'. After a series of early works reflecting his immersion in the bourgeois, cultural elites of Florence and Milan, he returned to Sicily and to novels and stories of poverty and struggle, fashioning a new literary language and style for this new subject matter. He was a powerful influence on twentieth-century narrative, particularly Sicilian (Pirandello, Vittorini, Sciascia etc.).

You will concentrate on his two 'veristic' novels *I Malavoglia* and *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, but will also look at examples of his earlier work (*Eva*, *Tigre reale*) and of his short stories (*Vita dei campi*, *Novelle rusticane*).

Montale (1896–1981)

Montale is perhaps the most important Italian poet of the twentieth century. His work, almost entirely lyrical in nature, spans the main phases of modern Italian history, from the Fascist period to the industrialised society of the 1970s. He is a continuously evolving poet, and yet has his own particular consistency. In his earlier writings he creates a rich network of images: in his later work he is surprisingly, and entertainingly, prosaic.

You will concentrate on Montale's poetry up to and including his 1971 collection, *Satura*. You will also read selections from his later poetry and some of his prose-texts in *Farfalla di Dinard*, as well as some of the important discussions of poetry and literature in *Sulla poesia* and *Auto da fè*.

Pirandello (1867–1936)

Pirandello is one of the key figures in modern European drama. His semi-philosophical plays repeatedly challenge and attempt to dismantle received notions of identity and coherence in the individual, by setting up his characters for an existential fall. He does this in a wide variety of settings, from the theatre itself, to middle- and lower-middle class society, to the mythical landscapes of his latter works. He also explored these fundamental issues in important novels and short stories.

You will concentrate on Pirandello's first mature novel *Il fu Mattia Pascal*, and two plays which deal in different ways with the nature of theatre, *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* and *I giganti della montagna*. You will also work on any number of his other plays (start with *Enrico IV*, *Ciascuno a suo modo*, *Così è (se vi pare)*, *Vestire gli ignudi*), novels (*Uno, nessuno e centomila*) and a selection of short stories (*Novelle per un anno*).

Calvino (1923–85)

Commonly regarded as Italy's most successful twentieth-century novelist, Italo Calvino's writings are characterized by originality, variety, and close affinity with the most interesting names in contemporary fiction (Borges, Perec, Vargas Llosa, etc.). You will concentrate on Calvino's *Il cavaliere inesistente* and *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, two works which expand the traditional notion of the novel. You will also be expected to read other works representative of Calvino's development as a writer.

You should read the whole of *Il cavaliere inesistente* and *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, as well as some of these other major works: *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, *I nostri antenati*, *Le cosmicomiche*, *Le città invisibili*, *Palomar*.