## **Theory and History of Literary Modernity**

## Prof. Giuseppe Lupo

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to analyse 20th-century Italian literature in all its forms, both through the texts themselves and by observing the major ideological and cultural issues within which the works and authors are contextualised. In this dialogue between historical time and cultural events, novels, essays, poems and magazines represent places of debate, serve as witnesses of their age, fulfil a civil function and constitute the landscape in which to locate our fundamental questions about the meaning of modernity.

By the end of the course, students will be able to use knowledge acquired to navigate, with a critical perspective and methodological awareness, between the themes of contemporary literature, connecting them to subject areas explored on the degree course.

The course is divided into two semesters.

### **Semester 1**

***COURSE CONTENT***

*The issues related to the concept of modernity*

The transition from the 19th to the 20th century raised a number of complex issues showing the existence of a discontinuous relationship between the culture and the traditions of these two historical periods. In the majority of cases, these issues were based on the conflicts caused by the generations who animated the 20th century in terms of literature and ideologies. During semester 1, the course will analyse the crucial steps of this transition from the point of view of industrial modernity, the need to face historical facts, and the presence of intellectuals in the transformation of the society.

***READING LIST***

1. C. De Michelis, *Moderno Antimoderno. Studi novecenteschi*, Marsilio, Venice, 2020.

A book to choose from:

* 1. F. Camon, *Un altare per la madre*, any unabridged edition.
	2. P. Levi, *Il sistema periodico*, any unabridged edition.
	3. O. Ottieri, *La linea gotica*, any unabridged edition.
	4. E. Vittorini, *Le città del mondo*, any unabridged edition.
	5. E. Rea, *La dismissione*, any unabridged edition.
	6. P. Volponi, *Memoriale*, any unabridged edition.

Details of further reading material will be confirmed in lectures and published on the lecturer's noticeboard.

### **Semester 2**

***COURSE CONTENT***

*The misinterpretation of modernity*

Either stigmatised or sanctified, blamed or acquitted, the 20th century has imparted a massive change to economy and politics, and affected the cultural and social fabric of our country, destroying centuries-old balances and the continuity line between the past and the future. Until the decisive leap: the decline of farming and the advent of industrialisation. During semester 2, through the analysis of the turning points and phenomena of the Italian history, the course will give voice to the most representative figures of the 20th century – from Vittorini to Testori, from Fortini to Mastronardi, from Calvino to Pasolini – shedding light on the controversial relationship between humanism and science in the industrial narrative and the house organs of the period following World War II.

***READING LIST***

Lupo, *La modernità malintesa. Una controstoria dell’industria italiana*, Marislio, Venice 2023. [*Buy from VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/franco-cassano/il-pensiero-meridiano-9788858145241-695471.html)

Two of the following readings:

1. I. Calvino, *Lezioni americane. Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio*, any unabridged edition.
2. U. Eco, *Apocalittici e integrati. Comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa*, any unabridged edition.
3. F. Fortini, *Verifica dei poteri. Scritti di critica e di istituzioni letterarie*, any unabridged edition.
4. P.P. Pasolini, *Scritti corsari*, any unabridged edition.

Details of further reading material will be confirmed in lectures and published on the lecturer's noticeboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

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Lectures with PowerPoint slides, texts and images selected in advance, and visiting experts.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

*Semester 1*

At the end of the semester of lectures, students will be examined by means of an oral exam. They will have to answer questions on the texts on the reading list and on the teaching materials commented in lectures and made available to students on Blackboard. There are no scheduled early exams (*preappelli*).

Non-attending students are invited to contact the lecturer before the exam, in order to receive further information on the reading list.

*Semester 2*

At the end of the semester of lectures, students will be examined by means of an oral exam. They will have to answer questions on the texts on the reading list and on the teaching materials commented in lectures and made available to students on Blackboard. There are no scheduled early exams (*preappelli*).

Non-attending students are invited to contact the lecturer before the exam, in order to receive further information on the reading list.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course requires good knowledge of the history, literature and culture of the 20th century. Any gaps in students’ knowledge can be filled by consulting a secondary-school textbook on Italian literature.

Students who have not already taken the Modern and Contemporary Italian Literature exam during their three-year degree must add the following text to the reading list for Semester 1: G. Langella, *La modernità letteraria. Manuale di letteratura italiana moderna e contemporanea*, Pearson, Milan-Turin 2021. For the Semester 1 examination, the study of the text replaces *Moderno Antimoderno* by Cesare De Michelis. The study of a book of each student's choice and of the teaching materials read and commented on during lectures remains unchanged. The examination reading list for Semester 2 is unchanged

Any changes to the syllabus or details of staff office hours will be communicated on a weekly basis by means of the noticeboard in the virtual classroom. Students will also find documents, information and instructions for the course here and on Blackboard. Students who, for valid reasons, will not be able to attend lectures regularly are requested to contact the lecturer.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.