# Forms of Visual and Literary Expression in the Contemporary World

## Prof. Elena Rondena; Prof. Kevin Mcmanus

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

The course covers methodology and content related to various aspects of the literary and artistic languages developed over the course of the twentieth century, with a focus on interdisciplinary aspects. The type of approach and topics covered will help promote a cultural perspective that is enriched by cross-pollination from other areas and nourishes the dialogue between the languages of literary and visual expression.

By the end of the course, students will be able to appreciate the relevance of the arguments in this area, which will enable them to navigate the themes and figures of contemporary art and literature with critical and methodological awareness and link them to the specific topics studied on the degree course.

## Semester 1: *Prof. Elena Rondena*

***COURSE CONTENT***

*Leaving, traveling, migrating: the story of literature:*

The human being is a *viator*: they are moved by a thirst for knowledge, like Ulysses who dares to go beyond the Pillars of Hercules into the unknown; he sets out on a journey in search of a promised land, like the people of Israel; or he is forced to abandon his possessions and affections to save his life and gain freedom, as it has happened to many peoples throughout history. The twentieth century bears witness to these continuous movements, voluntary or forced, which bring with them an uprooting that generates wounds. The course aims to highlight these dynamics, paying particular attention to the traumas they generate that can be ascribed to the so-called migration literature. A specific study will focus on the Julian-Dalmatian exodus.

***READING LIST***

Pascoli, *Poemi conviviali*

De Amicis, *Dagli Appennini alle Ande* in *Cuore*

Ungaretti, *La terra Promessa*

Pavese, *La luna e i falò*

Mori, *L’anima altrove*

Lecture notes are an integral part of the exam. Details of further reading material will be provided at the beginning of the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures in class with PowerPoint presentations.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

By the end of the semester, students will be examined by means of an oral exam on the texts on the reading list and on the lecture contents. As a rule, the exam will be based on a text commentated in class and is designed to assess knowledge of the texts and the topics covered on the course. Clarity of the presentation and the consistency and soundness of arguments will also contribute to the mark. A particularly important assessment criterion is the ability to establish links and interpret content in a personal way.

N.B.: The examination consists of two separate tests on literature and art respectively. Students may take the exams in any order. The final mark is based on the combination of the two specific assessments.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course requires good knowledge of the history, literature and culture of the twentieth century. Any gaps in students’ knowledge can be filled by consulting a secondary-school textbook on Italian literature, e.g. (recommended) Giuseppe Langella, *La modernità letteraria. Manuale di letteratura italiana moderna e contemporanea*, Pearson, 2021.

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.

## Semester 2: *Prof. Kevin Mcmanus*

***COURSE CONTENT***

Title: *Immagini migranti: iconografia dell’esodo tra XX e XXI secolo*

The course, complementary to the course held by Professor Elena Rondena, will examine the theme of migration in the context of contemporary visual and artistic culture. Through a series of case studies, the phenomenon will be analysed both from an iconographic point of view (the themes and methods of the visual narration of migrations), and from an iconological point of view (the use and importance of images for migrants, as an instrument of communication and cultural identification). It will bear references to the history of art, starting from the relationship between Western cultures and other cultures in the early twentieth century and from photography of the same period, including the reflections of more strictly contemporary artists. The two semesters are therefore closely linked; students will be allowed to take the relevant parts of the exam in the order they prefer.

***READING LIST***

M.G. Messina, *Le muse d’oltremare. Esotismo e Primitivismo dell’arte contemporanea*, Einaudi, Torino, 1993.

M. Gioni-M. Brambilla (edited by), *La terra inquieta*, catalogo della mostra, Electa, Milano 2017.

Additional reading list will be provided during the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures will include the projection and commentary of images and analyse the works and situations considered, all within the indispensable theoretical, critical and documentary framework. Iconographic materials will be uploaded to the Blackboard platform.

There will also be visits to museums and temporary exhibitions.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral examination, which will take place according to the official exam timetable. During the exam, based on images of the works viewed in lectures and the relative content, students will be assessed on their knowledge of specific information on the topics covered, but also their ability to critically approach the material and to reflect on the basic and contextual themes developed.

N.B.: The examination consists of two separate tests on literature and art respectively. Students may take the exams in any order. The final mark is based on the combination of the two specific assessments.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

The course provides knowledge of contemporary art and promotes dialogue between visual language and symbolic communication. Students taking the course will benefit from textbook-level knowledge of the history of art, especially for the period considered. Any gaps in students’ knowledge can be overcome with the use of a secondary-school history of art textbook.

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.

Should the Covid-19 health emergency prevent in-person teaching and/or assessment, ongoing or final, remote alternatives will be put in place via the university Blackboard platform, Microsoft Teams and any other means, details of which will be provided at the beginning of the course, so as to ensure the learning objectives set out in the study plans are met in full whilst safeguarding our students’ health.