# Modern Italian Literature

## Prof. Paola Ponti

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

*General course aims:* reflect on the specific characteristics of literary words and their educational implications; provide practical examples of textual analysis to promote the students’ attitudes towards reading works of their choice; highlight the educational usefulness of the classics also outside the school or university environment.

*Specific course aims*: develop the ability to read a classic in relation to its cultural and historical context; develop a good command of the techniques of reading and interpreting literary texts; enhance a conscious approach to complexity and polysemy, by distinguishing the specificities of literary narration, films or television; provide an in-depth reflection on the relationship between literature and human sciences, in order to apply the reading skills acquired also to the professional field.

*Intended learning outcomes*

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

contextualise the authors studied in their historical setting (life, works, poetics); illustrate the key differences that characterise nineteenth-century fiction (form, content, methods of dissemination and reception); analyse and comment on the main thematic and stylistic characteristics of a piece, also highlighting its intertextual references to other authors and works; enhance the interdisciplinary links and the formative value of literary texts, making comparisons with film or television transpositions; consciously reflect on the relationship between speech and pedagogical needs, enhancing the educational potential of the classics.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*Percorsi di formazione? La narrativa dell’Ottocento tra testo letterario e versione cinematografica (Manzoni, C. Boito, Collodi).*

The course analyses three great classics of nineteenth-century fiction, whose success with the public and critics is still very remarkable today, as evidenced by the recent volume editions and the numerous film and television versions. The lessons will focus on different types of novel or short story: some chapters of *The Betrothed* (historical novel), two short stories by Camillo Boito (generally referring to the Scapigliatura) and various passages from the *Adventures of Pinocchio* (coming-of-age novel). Through very different approaches and strategies, these texts tell not only compelling stories of injustices, revenge and transgressions, but also urge the reader to wonder about the training itineraries of the protagonists and their controversial outcomes. The aim is to highlight the structural, thematic, and rhetorical specificities of three representative works of the Italian nineteenth century and, more generally, to enhance some current aspects, which also have interesting implications from a pedagogical and educational point of view. The analysis also intends to make comparisons with some scenes taken from authoritative film and television versions faithful to the original text, in particular, *I Promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed* 1967) by Sandro Bolchi, *Senso* (1954) by Luchino Visconti, and *Pinocchio* (2002) by Roberto Benigni.

***READING LIST***

For a general overview (life and works) of Alessandro Manzoni, Camillo Boito, Carlo Collodi, refer to a good high school manual;

*Texts - Commented editions*

A. Manzoni, *I promessi sposi*, any good commented edition. We recommend the version edited by R. Luperini and D. Brogi, Turin, Einaudi Scuola (available at the Biblioteca di Ateneo. \* We will discuss chaps. II, III, VIII, XI; XIV-XVII (included), XXXV, XXXVIII and related commentary notes.

C. Boito, *Senso. Nuove storielle vane*, 1883 (it is suggested the edition edited by Clotilde Bertoni, Lecce, Manni, 2015, or see the link on Blackboard); only two short stories will be studied: *Vade retro, Satana* and *Senso*.

C. Collodi, *Le avventure di Pinocchio*. *Storia di un burattino*, any complete edition, (entire book). We recommend the one edited by Roberto Randaccio, Florence, Giunti, 2012.

*Essays:*

**A. Manzoni:**

P. Frare, *Leggere i promessi sposi*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2016, chs. II and III.\* (available at the Biblioteca di Ateneo).

E. Raimondi, *Il romanzo senza idillio. Saggio sui Promessi Sposi,* 1974 (or subsequent editions),Turino, Einaudi, pp. 173-189.\* (available at the Biblioteca di Ateneo).

P. Ponti, *Tra fame e paese di cuccagna. Note in margine a Manzoni e Collodi*, «Esperienze letterarie», 2, 2019, pp. 61-81 (the essay will be uploaded in Word version on Blackboard).

C. Leri, *Il capitolo XVI dei «Promessi sposi»,* «Rivista di studi manzoniani», 3, 2019 (available online through the University Opac; see Blackboard);

Sergio Di Benedetto, *'Stava l'infelice, immoto'. Sulla morte di don Rodrigo*, «Lettere italiane», 1, 2017, pp. 137-147 (available at the Biblioteca di Ateneo).

**C. Boito:**

P. Ponti, *«La perfetta virtù mi sarebbe parsa scipita». Figure maschili e fenomenologie d’amore in* Senso *di Camillo Boito*, article in press (the essay will be uploaded in Word version on Blackboard).

Aurélie Gendrat-Claudel, *La coscienza di Livia. Per una rilettura dell’incipit di* Senso*,* «Sigma», 2, 2018, pp. 419-438 (link on Blackboard)

**C. Collodi:**

P. Ponti, *«Il tempo è moneta». Il denaro in «Pinocchio»*, in *«Senza giudizio e senza cuore».* Proceedings of the Conference of Studies on *Pinocchio* (Milan, 18-19 May 2017),«Rivista di letteratura italiana», 2, 2018, pp. 77-91 (essay in Word version on Blackboard).

P. Ponti, *«È una vita che la farei volentieri anch’io!». Pinocchio e il Paese dei balocchi*, «Esperienze letterarie», 4, 2015, pp. 99-113 (essay in Word version on Blackboard).

P. Ponti*, «Dobbiamo ritentare la fuga»: l’inizio e i finali delle* Avventure di Pinocchio*,* «ALL», 2014, pp. 157-166 (essay in Word version on Blackboard).

P. Ponti, *«Una fame da tagliarsi col coltello». Pinocchio e le tre pere,* «Rivista di letteratura italiana», 3, 2014, pp. 59-82 (essay in Word version on Blackboard).

P. Ponti, *«Guai quei ragazzi che si ribellano ai loro genitori». La parola nelle «Avventure di Pinocchio»*, «Rsei», 13, 2019, pp. 97-106 (essay in Word version on Blackboard).

P. Ponti, *La Volpe «zoppa» e il Gatto «cieco». Le insidie della disabilità nelle «Avventure di Pinocchio»,* in *Oltre il limite. Letteratura e disabilità*, Napoli, Loffredo, 2022, pp. 95-110 (available at the Biblioteca di Ateneo).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lectures with interactive teaching, in which students will be encouraged to participate in the analysis and commentary of the texts. The course may include the intervention of external experts.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is oral and focuses in particular on the analysis of the texts covered in class. Students will have to demonstrate: ability to contextualise the authors and the works in the programme from the historical-literary point of view; ability to analyse a text chosen by the lecturer, contextualising it within the work as a whole and highlighting its contents, formal characteristics and any links or references to other works; to be able to make parallels and comparisons between the various author's texts covered, underlining their similarities and differences.

The lecturer’s assessment will be based on the students’ ability to contextualise the author and the work; their knowledge of the author's texts and the ability to investigate them with the help of the critical essays in the programme; the practice in textual analysis (commentary on passages and their interpretation) and, finally, the ability to presentate and compare the different authors.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no content-related prerequisites for the exam.

N.B. At the exam interview, the student must bring with him the texts of the author in the program.

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.