-. Contemporary Italian Literature

Prof. Paola Ponti

COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

General objectives of the course: to reflect on the specific characteristics of the literary word and its educational implications; to provide practical examples of textual analysis in order to promote students' attitudes towards reading chosen works; and to highlight the educational usefulness of the classics in also non-school or university settings.

Specific course objectives: to promote a good command of the techniques for reading and interpreting literary texts; allow a conscious approach to its complexity and polysemy; and deepen the relationship between literature and human sciences, in order to define the reading skills acquired also in the professional field.

Intended learning outcomes

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

illustrate the content and formal specificities of each text (structure, themes, style, methods of dissemination and reception); analyse and comment on the main thematic and stylistic characteristics of a piece, also highlighting the intertextual references to other authors and works; establish comparisons of similarity and difference between the various texts examined, in relation to the course topics; enhance interdisciplinary links and the formative value of literary texts; and consciously reflect on the relationship between speech and pedagogical needs, with an ability to grasp the educational potential of the classics.

COURSE CONTENT

Facts and fictions. The crime genre, the historical novel, autobiographical and testimonial writing from the 1960s up to the months of the pandemic

The course aims to highlight some examples of the relationship between narrative fiction and historical reality, from the 1960s to the present day. The intent is to reflect on the particular mode of commitment assumed by literature, on the different content-formal declinations of the link between history and invention, and on its specific educational responsibility. To this end, various types of works will be considered: the crime novel (Leonardo Sciascia's *Il giorno della civetta*), the historical novel (Elsa Morante's *La storia* ) and the autobiographical or testimonial story related to the recent pandemic (*Come il mare in un bicchiere* by Chiara Gamberale, *Reality* by Giuseppe Genna). During the course, it is planned to project scenes taken from the cinematographic transpositions of the analysed classics, in particular: *Il giorno della civetta* by Damiano Damiani (1968), *La storia* by Luigi Comencini (1986). Pieces taken from recent narrative works, born from the pandemic experience, will be the subject of a group reading and interactive analysis.

NB The course is divided into two parts, each of which corresponds to 30 hours of lectures in each semester.

READING LIST

Part A

Texts

Leonardo Sciascia, *Il giorno della civetta*, Einaudi, Turin, 1961 (we recommend the Adelphi edition, in print; link to the online text on Blackboard; full reading).

Leonardo Sciascia, *Appunti sul giallo,* 1954, pp. 19-40 (text on Blackboard).

Chiara Gamberale, *Come il mare in un bicchiere,* Feltrinelli, 2020 (full reading).

Giuseppe Genna, Cosa è successo, *Reality,* Rizzoli, 2020 (selected pages).

READING LIST

For the life and works of Sciascia, Ginzburg and Morante, students can use a good high school textbook.

P. Squillacioti, *Il giorno della civetta*, in *Letteratura italiana*, directed by Alberto Asor Rosa, vol. 16. *Il secondo Novecento*. *Le opere 1938-1961*, Einaudi, Turin, 2007, pp. 655-89 ("La Biblioteca di Repubblica - L'Espresso") (link to the text online on Blackboard).

Massimo Onofri, *Sciascia*, Einaudi, Turin, 2002, pp. 46-57 (available for consultation in the University library).

Stefano Salis, *La mafia in letteratura. Leonardo Sciascia e il giorno della civetta,* in *Nero su giallo. Leonardo Sciascia eretico del genere poliziesco*, edited by Marcello D'Alessandra and Stefano Salis, "Quaderni Leonardo Sciascia" - La Vita felice, 2006, pp. 79-94 (available for consultation in the University library).

Paola Ponti, *Letteratura italiana e pandemia*, text in press (on Blackboard).

Part B

Texts

Elsa Morante, *La storia*, Einaudi, Turin, 1974 (any edition).

Elsa Morante, *Sul romanzo,* 1959 (text on Blackboard).

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READING LIST

Giovanna Rosa, *Elsa Morante,* Il Mulino, Bologna, chap. 5 (available for consultation in the University library).

Mario Barenghi, *I nomi di Useppe. Saggio sui personaggi della* Storia *by Elsa Morante,* «Studi novecenteschi», 62, 2001, pp. 363-389 (link to the essay on Blackboard).

Monica Zanardo, *Strategie narrative e comunicative* *nella* Storia *by Elsa Morante*, "Studium", November-December 2018, pp. 858-876 (link to the essay on Blackboard).

Gabriella Contini, *Useppe,* "Studi novecenteschi", 47-48, 1994, pp. 185-213 (link to the essay on Blackboard).

TEACHING METHOD

Frontal lectures. Opportunities for participatory teaching are envisaged, in which students will be encouraged to intervene in the analysis and commentary on the texts. Possible interventions by external experts, with an in-depth study of the relationship between cinema and literature, should be noted.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

The exam is in oral form and focuses in particular on the analysis of the texts addressed in class.

Students will have to demonstrate an ability to: frame the authors and works covered in the course from a historical-literary perspective; analyse a piece chosen by the lecturer, placing it within the work as a whole and highlighting its contents, formal characteristics and any links, debts or references to other works; and establish parallels and comparisons between the various works addressed, underlining their similarities and differences.

For the purpose of the assessment, the lecturer will note the student's ability to frame the author and the work; his knowledge of the texts and ability to study in-depth with the help of the critical essays covered; his practical textual analysis (commentary on passages and their interpretation, ability to compare against other texts, attention to relevant headwords, expressions, idiomatic phrases) and, finally, his presentation skill and ability to draw comparisons between several authors.

The final oral exam may be preceded by a written/oral test (the format, type and schedule will be announced on the lecturer's web page or on Blackboard).

If students intend to limit the interview to part A only, they must notify the lecturer by e-mail ([paola.ponti@unicatt.it](mailto:paola.ponti@unicatt.it)) at least three days before the official exam date.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for undertaking the exam. Students must bring with them, to the exam interview, the works indicated in the course programme. It is recommended checking for any materials uploaded to Blackboard.

**Should the current Covid-19 health emergency not allow face-to-face teaching, remote teaching will be guaranteed using methods that will be communicated in good time to students**.

Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal page at http://docenti.unicatt.it/.