UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Letteratura Italiana Contemporanea - M-Z

2122-1-E1901R014-MZ

Course title

Family stories, families in history

The course aims to observe how literature can represent the interaction between family microcosm and social macrocosm: in the background, the most important historical events of twentieth-century Italy. Through *Lessico famigliare* and *Italia*, the student will retrace and connect the human and emotional connections between the characters of the narration - autobiographical and fictional - and the great historical-social changes of their eras.

The lessons will focus on the literary representation of family life and the social context of the decades between the 1920s and 1980s: relational dynamics, social, cultural and ideological stratifications, psychological reactions, new and old identities in the face of the challenges of time and of history. Supported by a general part, of a methodological nature, students will be able to decipher, through an analysis of the texts that highlights the different expressive strategies used by writers, the representation of social and family relationships in contemporary literature.

Topics and course structure

The object of the course is an approach to texts that highlights the educational dimension of literature. This takes pace through three main ways.

1) On the thematic level, the significance given to the literary representation of educational processes, for example the traditions of the Bildungsroman, stories of formation, images of childhood, adolescence, school, the family, disability and educational contexts in general.

2) On the aesthetic level, the development of the idea of literature as simulation and artistic projection of experiences, and therefore as an exceptionally rich and varied repertoire of human models, or of psychological

constellations, paradigms of behaviour, social and cultural contexts.

3) On the linguistic level, attention to the ways in which the subjects (narrators, characters, poetic voices) speak of themselves and of others, of interior and exterior events, of private and public issues, of facts and ideas; the recognition of the different communicative contexts represented, of the adequacy and effectiveness of the expressive choices made, of the existential and social meaning of the various verbal interactions.

The course approaches subjects of a theoretical-methodological and historic-cultural nature, necessary for monographic in-depth study, chosen each year and dedicated to reading and the interpretation of works by one or more authors, including foreign.

Objectives

With this course, with a constant and participated attendance of the lectures, the intention is to promote the following, in terms of:

Knowledge and comprehension

The objective of the course is in the first place to promote and consolidate the ability to read texts. Through the exercise of interpretation, the student will learn to understand the formal and thematic aspects of the works, the characters of the experiences represented, their organization; and also to question themselves on the relative motivations and implications, including in relation to their personal experience. In addition, the student will have an opportunity to study in depth questions of great significance, the object of the literary works approached each time: historical events, psychological problems, moral problems, relation and communicative situations.

Ability to apply learning and comprehension

Through the exercise of interpreting the texts, students will learn to measure the depth and the complexity of the universe of the discourse and therefore to appreciate the potential of a conscious use of the word. This way they can corroborate both their communication skills and their autonomy of judgement. A conscious and trained reading skill allows transforming the aesthetic experience into a way of extending one’s own existential experience, improving and refining the comprehension of speech, of choices, of the point of view of those similar to oneself. In the final analysis, literature is an instrument which aims at increasing of responses (emotional, intellectual pragmatic) to new situations and, consequently, to intensity the skills of social interaction.

Methodologies

Prerequisites:
A good high-school level in humanities. Italian and European history of the 20th century. Good expressive ability.

Methodologies:
Lectures, video projections, readings exercises, discussion,textual commentary: linguistic, stylistic and rethorical features, narrative modes, cultural patterns.

Online and offline teaching materials

Texts, visual materials.

Programme and references for attending students

Institutional part:

Reading and literature

Mario Barenghi, *Che cosa possiamo fare con il fuoco? Letteratura e altri ambienti*, Quodlibet, Macerata 2013 (only the units *Che cosa possiamo fare con il fuoco? Un'ipotesi sulle origini della letteratura*, pp. 11-24; *Come una rete da pesca. Preliminari su letteratura e comunicazione*, pp. 26-34; *Perché si legge. Pretesto calviniano sulla funzione educativa della letteratura*, pp. 35-44; *Silenzi in aula. Breve riflessione sul mestiere dell'insegnante*, pp. 53-58).

Mario Barenghi, Perché insegnare letteratura (e non solo agli studenti di lettere), «Doppiozero», 13 marzo 2018, http://www.doppiozero.com/materiali/perche-insegnare-letteratura-e-non-solo-agli-studenti-di-lettere.

Vittorio Spinazzola, *La fatica di leggere*, in *L'esperienza della lettura*, Unicopli, Milano, 2010, pp. 99-136, specifically pp. 99-125.

Monographic part:

Italian families in literature

Novels:

Natalia Ginzburg, *Lessico famigliare*, Torino, Einaudi, 1963. A pocket edition is available.

Marco Lodoli, *Italia*, Torino, Einaudi, 2010. You can also find *Italia* in Marco Lodoli, *Le promesse. Sorella, Italia, Vapore*, Torino, Einaudi, 2015.

Critical bibliography:

About *Lessico famigliare*

Elisa Gambaro, *L'io nascosto di Lessico famigliare. Ritratto dell'élite antifascista,* in Elisa Gambaro, *Diventare autrice. Aleramo Morante de Céspedes Ginzburg Zangrandi Sereni*, Milano, Unicopli, 2018, pp. 115-192.

Domenico Scarpa, *Per un ritratto di Natalia Ginzburg*, https://griseldaonline.unibo.it/article/view/10479/10481.

About *Italia*

Anna Nelli, *Marco Lodoli*, Cadmo, Fiesole 2000, pp. 7-37; 127-141.

Loredana Lipperini, *La virtù domestica di osservare il mondo*, “la Repubblica”, 23 novembre 2010.

Any supplementary materials, to complement the critical bibliography, will be indicated during the lessons.

The hard-to-find critical bibliography will be made available online.

Programme and references for non-attending students

In addition to the programme and the bibliography for the students attending the course, the not attendig students must read:

IAbout *Lessico famigliare*:

Giacomo Magrini, *Lessico famigliare*, in Aa. Vv., *Letteratura Italiana. Le Opere*. Volume IV. *Il Novecento*. Il *La ricerca letteraria*, a cura di Alberto Asor Rosa, Einaudi, Torino, 1996, pp. 771-810;

About *Italia*:

Not attending students have to read another Lodoli's novel, choosing among Marco Lodoli, *Le promesse. Sorella, Italia, Vapore*, Torino, Einaudi, 2015.

NB: The Contemporary Italian literature course (M-Z) will have its online extension of the Moodle didactic platform (elearning. unimib. it). To access the service, students must be enrolled on the course.

Assessment methods

Type of examination:
oral

Criteria of assessment:
The oral consists of checking knowledge of the subjects dealt with during the lectures and all the items (books, articles, document) present in the bibliography. Students must show that they can answer questions in a pertinent, clear, correct and reasoned way, with an appropriate use of critical terminology. One part of the oral consists of commenting an extract of the works in the programme. As comprehension of reading the text represents a fundamental condition for literary interpretation, the use of a good dictionary (naturally including online) is recommended during preparation for the examination.

NB: The oral examinations will follow the order of enrolment. On average in one day, there will be about 15 orals. The Lecturer does not interfere in the order of enrolment. In the event of requirements of time or calendar for problems of work please notify this in good time by email to the professor.

Office hours

Friday, after the lesson.

Programme validity

Two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants