UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Contemporary Italian Literature - 2

2627-2-G8501R044-G8501R069M-T2

Course title

20th-Century De-formations: Federigo Tozzi and Goffredo Parise

The course will focus on *Con gli occhi chiusi* and *Ricordi di un giovane impiegato* by Federigo Tozzi (1883–1920), and on *Il padrone* by Goffredo Parise (1929–1986). It will offer a thematic and stylistic exploration of these works, as well as their historical and cultural contextualisation, with reference to both the Italian and the broader European contexts. Through the reading and comparison of these texts, the course will explore key issues such as the transformation of family and work relationships in modernity; the complexity of psychological and emotional dynamics; the de-formation (or anti-*Bildung*) of the young protagonists within their societies; the representation of spaces and their interplay with temporality; the significance and ambivalence of animal imagery; and the linguistic and structural experimentation of literary modernism.

Topics and course structure

The course will consist of a theoretical and introductory section, in which a variety of materials and resources (including essays, images, and videos) will be used to explore the aims and role of the teaching of literature within the degree programme, followed by a broader monographic module devoted to the interpretation of the works on the syllabus and centred on the active participation of students.

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.

Attendance at the workshop is compulsory for admission to the oral examination. The workshop offers students an introduction to the teaching of literature through first-hand experience of the methods and practices of reading, analysing, and discussing literary texts.

Objectives

Knowledge and Understanding

The teaching and workshop meetings associated with the course are primarily intended to promote and consolidate the ability to read literary texts. Through the exercise of direct interpretation of the texts, students will learn to grasp the formal and thematic aspects of the works, the characters of the experiences represented, their organisation, and will learn, at the same time, to question themselves on the relative motivations and implications, also in relation to their own personal experience and experience. In addition, they will have the opportunity to delve into questions of great importance, the subject of the literary works tackled from time to time, be they historical events, psychological issues, moral problems, relational and communicative situations.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding - Autonomy of judgement - Communication skills - Learning skills
Through the exercise of text interpretation, students will learn to gauge the depth and complexity of the universe of discourse, and thus appreciate the potential of a conscious use of words. In this way they will be able to corroborate both their communicative skills and their autonomy of judgement. A conscious and trained reading ability enables students to transform aesthetic experience into a practice of expanding their existential experience, improving and refining their understanding of discourse, choices, and the point of view of their peers, inside and outside the professional sphere. Ultimately, literature is proposed as a tool that aims to increase the flexibility and pliability of responses (emotional, intellectual, pragmatic) to new situations and, consequently, to intensify social interaction skills. Through the comparison with the proposed literary texts, the aim is to promote awareness of the usefulness of literary reading as a device for dislocation of the self, as an openness to simulations of realities and experiences other than one's own, with a view to a more articulated pliability in the face of different educational situations.

Methodologies

Prerequisites:

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

Methodologies:

The course (28 lessons, 2 hours each) includes dispensational teaching activities (70%), interactive teaching with moments of lecture participation (30%).

During classroom work ample space will be devoted to dialogue, collective discussion, textual reading and commentary exercises (themes, linguistic and rhetorical aspects, narrative modes, cultural paradigms), individual, or small group exercises to promote the ability to pay attention, observe, read and acquire expressive techniques. Therefore, each lesson includes deliverable and interactive moments: part of the lesson will be frontal didactics, to introduce content on which to then conduct discussions and/or exercises.

The teaching activities will take place in presence, subject to the organizational reasons of the degree course and/or the University especially in relation to the availability of classrooms in the University.

Online and offline teaching materials

Text, images, video materials.

Materials, resources and tools used in class are available on the course e-learning platform.

The professor provides supporting materials to assist non-traditional students in their study and exam preparation. At the end of the course, the professor is available to answer students' questions and address any doubts regarding the course content or examination.

All students are strongly advised to register for the course in order to access supplementary learning materials and receive important announcements and updates relating to the course.

Programme and references

Institutional Part

Mario Barenghi, *Cosa possiamo fare con il fuoco? Letteratura e altri ambienti*, Quodlibet, Macerata 2013; solo i saggi: *Cosa possiamo fare con il fuoco? Un'ipotesi sulle origini della letteratura*, pp. 11-24; *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.

Monographic Part

Primary Texts

Federigo Tozzi, *Con gli occhi chiusi*, Garzanti, Milano 2019 (in autunno dovrebbe però uscire l'edizione nazionale commentata).

Federigo Tozzi, *Ricordi di un giovane impiegato*, Tagete, Pontedera 2023.

Goffredo Parise, *Il padrone*, Adelphi, Milano 2011.

Critical Bibliography

On Tozzi:

Luigi Baldacci, *Con gli occhi chiusi*, in Id., *Tozzi moderno*, Einaudi, Torino 1993, pp. 33-44.

Giacomo Debenedetti, *Il romanzo del Novecento*, La nave di Teseo, Milano 2022, pp. 77-93 (*Ricordi di un impiegato*); 174-205 (*Con gli occhi chiusi*); 213-219 (*Tozzi, Kafka e l'archetipo del padre*).

Romano Luperini,* Federigo Tozzi. Le immagini, le idee, le opere*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1995, pp. 133-153 (*Con gli occhi chiusi*); 192-201 (*Ricordi di un giovane impiegato*).

On Parise:

Giacomo Debenedetti, *Parise? L'unico erede di Kafka* [1965], ora in *Goffredo Parise*, «Riga», numero monografico a cura di Marco Belpoliti e Andrea Cortellessa, Marcos y Marcos, Milano, 2016, pp. 278-279.

Guido Piovene, *Il nuovo romanzo di Parise* [1965], ora in *Goffredo Parise*, «Riga», cit., pp. 272-277.

Andrea Zanzotto, *Introduzione*, in Goffredo Parise, *Opere*, a cura di Bruno Callegher e Mauro Portello, Mondadori, Milano 2006, vol. I, pp. XVI-XXIV (capoversi sul* Padrone*).

Recommended Reading (strongly advised for all students and particularly useful for non-attending students, since these texts cover topics discussed during the course):

Riccardo Castellana, *Con gli occhi chiusi e la mimesi del desiderio*, in Id., *Parole cose persone. Il realismo modernista di Federigo Tozzi*, Serra, Pisa-Roma 2009, pp. 25-36.

Giorgio Pullini, *Il 'bestiario' di Goffredo Parise. Dal «Padrone» all'«Assoluto naturale» (e altrove)*, in *Goffredo Parise*, a cura di Ilaria Crotti, Olschki, Firenze 1997, pp. 181-186 (paragrafo sul Padrone).

Massimiliano Tortora, *«Un siepone pieno di roghi». Il percorso di Tozzi nel modernismo italiano*, Morlacchi, Perugia 2019, pp. 17-33 (paragrafi da *Il romanzo di Federigo Tozzi*); 61-71 (*Oltre il realismo: bestie e animali in «Con gli occhi chiusi»*); 73-86 (*Tozzi e la tradizione del romanzo impiegatizio europeo*).

Stefano Lazzarin, *Tracce del fantastico nel «Padrone» (1965) di Goffredo Parise*, «Critica letteraria», XLIV, n. 173, 2016, pp. 733-762.

Students wishing to take the exam over a two-year period must agree on the bibliography with the professor.
For Erasmus students: a good knowledge of Italian is required, as the texts included in the syllabus must be read in the original language and the oral examination is conducted in Italian.

Assessment methods

Assessment type: oral examination

The interview consists of checking the level of knowledge, understanding and reworking of the topics covered during the lectures, of all the items (volumes and essays) in the bibliography, and of the in-depth materials used in class (for frequent attendees only), as well as the ability to apply the concepts and tools used during the classroom activities and/or learned from the texts in the bibliography.

Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to answer questions in a relevant, clear, correct and argued manner, using critical terminology with ownership. Part of the colloquium consists of a commentary on a passage, theme or aspect of the works in the program, and/or the presentation of exercises or in-depth studies carried out

during the course (for frequent attendees only)

Since understanding the letter of the text is an inescapable condition for literary interpretation, the use of a good vocabulary (including online, of course) is recommended when preparing for the colloquium.

The Dublin descriptors will be used for assessment: the level bands are as follows

Low level (0-17/30): Not sufficient
Knowledge and Understanding: The student shows limited and fragmentary knowledge of the texts and topics covered, with misunderstandings of the texts proposed.
Ability to Apply Knowledge: The student is not able to verify on the texts the general considerations on poetics, style, reading effects of the authors examined; he/she is very partially able to synthesise the contents of the texts presented, he/she is not able to contextualise and compare them.
Autonomy of Judgement: lacks critical capacity and autonomy of judgement; depends exclusively on information provided by the teacher or the critical bibliography.
Communication skills: The student has a stunted, approximate, stereotyped oral expression and a poor command of discipline-specific language.
Learning skills: The student has a limited ability to rework knowledge and link it to her own experience as a reader; a poor awareness of the usefulness of literary reading as a device for dislocating the self, as an opening to simulations of realities and experiences other than one's own, in the perspective of a more articulate ductility in the face of different educational situations.

Average level (18-24/30): Sufficient - Good
Knowledge and comprehension: The student shows a general knowledge of the texts and topics addressed, albeit with some gaps, imprecision on specific but not essential aspects, or some misunderstandings in the analysis of the texts.
Ability to Apply Knowledge: The student is able, albeit with some difficulty, to verify on texts the general considerations on poetics, style, reading effects of the authors examined, at the teachers' prompting; she/he is able to summarise the texts presented in a discrete manner, to interpret, contextualise and compare them correctly. She/he can recognise different expressive registers in literary texts.
Autonomy of judgement: She/he shows partial autonomy in formulating critical evaluations, often limited to the reiteration of others' judgements.
Communication skills: She/he has a clear and sufficiently precise expression, a fair command of the specific language of the discipline. Is aware of the need to use different linguistic registers according to communicative situations.
Learning ability: She/he has a discrete ability to rework knowledge and link it to her own experience as a reader; she/he has a partial awareness of the usefulness of literary reading as a device for dislocating the self, as an openness to simulations of realities and experiences other than her own, in the perspective of a more articulate ductility in the face of different educational situations.

High level (25-30/30): Distinguished – Excellent
Knowledge and Understanding: The student shows thorough and solid knowledge of the texts and topics addressed; understands and analyses the proposed texts without uncertainty.
Ability to Apply Knowledge: The student knows how to find in the texts, with confidence and effective personal observations, the general considerations on poetics, style, reading effects of the authors examined; with argumentative effectiveness they know how to analyse, synthesise, interpret, contextualise and compare the texts presented, also making use of interdisciplinary links. She/he know how to recognise the different expressive registers in literary texts, associating them with the situations that are the subject of the literary representation.
Autonomy of Judgement: She/he demonstrates excellent critical ability, autonomy of judgement, originality in the analysis and interpretation of texts.
Communication skills: The student has clear, rigorous, fluent and appropriate expression. Is fully aware of the need to use different linguistic registers according to communicative situations.
Ability to learn: The student shows excellent independent learning skills, is able to effectively rework knowledge and link it to her own experience as a reader; she/he has full awareness of the usefulness of literary reading as a device for dislocation of the self, as an openness to simulations of realities and experiences other than her own, in

the perspective of a more articulate ductility in the face of different educational situations.

Oral examinations will be conducted in order of registration. On average, and unless otherwise required by the instructor’s other institutional commitments, between 16 and 20 examinations will be held per day. Once registration has closed, a schedule indicating the continuation of the examination sessions over subsequent days will be communicated to enrolled students. In order to ensure an accurate timetable, students who decide not to take the examination are kindly requested to withdraw their registration in good time or, once registration has closed, to notify the instructor of their absence.

Office hours

Student reception: By appointment only. Please contact the professor by email at francesco.diaco@unimib.it to schedule a meeting.
Meetings are held in the professor’s office (Room 4096, 4th floor, Agora Building, U6). If preferred, it is also possible to arrange an online meeting in the professor’s virtual room.

Programme validity

Two years

Course tutors and assistants

dott.ssa Laura Pergola

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | LIFE ON LAND