

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
Department of Foreign Languages
Spring 2014

COURSE TITLE
ITALIAN 130 Italian Civilization
The Dialogue Form Its Origins and European Context

Fulfills GE Area C 4 requirements
and 3 units toward the Italian Minor

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: The focus is on Italian civilization in a Mediterranean context. The course will allow students to develop a critical understanding of the dialogue in the context of Italian and Western Civilization, from its origins in Ancient Egypt and Greece, to its flowering in the Renaissance and its return during the Enlightenment, to its endurance in modern times. The issues to be emphasized are philosophical and literary movements in their historical contexts. We will study Socratic dialogue and other related genres, the dialogue as a typical Renaissance form with a variety of perspectives (feminine, poetic, satirical, etc.), the Enlightenment thinkers in Italy and France and their modern heritage.

COURSE HOURS: Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 4:30-5:45 PM
COURSE LOCATION: Mariposa 2030
COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Professor Barbara Carle
OFFICE HOURS: Mariposa 2015, Tuesday, Wednesday 3-4
and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS: Some texts will be available from my webpage in PDF format. Three books may be purchased at the bookstore.

-D'ARAGONA, TULLIA, (1510-1556) *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* edited and translated by Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry (e-book)

-Denis DIDEROT (1713-1784) *Dialogues*, trans. Francis Birrell, Capricorn Books, 1969. excerpts (PDF)

-Bernard Le Bouvier de FONTENELLE (1657-1757), *Dialogues*, trans. Ezra Pound (1885-1972) (PDF)

- Giacomo LEOPARDI (1798-1837) from the *Operette morali (Essays and Dialogues)*, translated by Introduction and Notes by Giovanni Cecchetti, University of California Press, 1982. (Bookstore)

- LEVI, Primo (1919-1987), *Se questo è un uomo, Survival in Auschwitz*, A Touchstone Book, Simon & Schuster, 1996 (Library for the Italian the English paperback will be available

at the bookstore or may be ordered)

-LUCIAN, (125-180 circa CE) *Dialogues of the Dead*, trans. Fowler (PDF format)
OR Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead/ Dialogues of the Sea-Gods/ Dialogues of the Gods/ Dialogues of the Courtesans*. Loeb Classical Library, no. 431 (English and Greek Edition) ISBN-10: 0674994752 |Publication Date: January 1, 1961 (Bookstore)

-PLATO, (427 B.C.E.-347 B.C.E.) *Dialogues*, trans. WHD Rouse, 1984, A Mentor Book, Penguin, excerpts (PDF)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS: A Thesaurus (to help you vary your vocabulary), an English Handbook (for grammar, syntax and style) and a good English dictionary and

Naples Declared by Benjamin Taylor, Penguin Books, 2012.

PREREQUISITES: NONE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Identify diverse foreign authors who have been read and discussed in class and a sampling of their works. Identify different genres of literary and philosophical dialogue and therefore demonstrate comprehension of aesthetic/cultural values and historical periods. Answering questionnaires, a midterm, and a final will help to accomplish this objective. Students will learn how to write a literary/philosophical dialogue.

These objectives will allow you to achieve several specific general education goals. Among them: being able to understand a genre-- which is the cornerstone of Western civilization and democracy. This genre is a powerful means of furthering the understanding of cultural, philosophical, ethnic, and religious diversity. While acquiring methods of critical analysis necessary to read and write dialogues you will develop in depth cognizance of Greek and European (non Anglo-Saxon, i.e., French and Italian) intellectual heritage and literary history.

GRADING SYSTEM: The grading system will be based on attendance, completing the readings, participating in class discussions, the midterm, final, and the final dialogue.

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

-In class participation, attendance and questionnaires:	30%
-Midterm (25%) and Final (25%) :	50 %
-Final dialogue	20%

GRADING SCALE:

90-100	A (Excellent to Outstanding)
89-80	B (Very good to Good)
79-70	C (Good to Fair/Acceptable)
69-60	D (Lacking effort, sloppy or poor)
59 and below	(F Fails to meet minimum requirements)

***ATTENDANCE POLICY: Regular attendance is essential to succeed in this class. More than three unexcused absences WILL affect your final grade. **If you are late more than three times this will count as one absence.**

*****REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1) Your grades will be based on your attendance, participation, questionnaires, a midterm, final test and a final dialogue.
- 2) Please be punctual and remain in class during the entire class period. Leaving class before the end of the hour is disruptive. If you are late for than three times this will count as one absence.
- 3) No Cell phones allowed in class. No food or drink, coffee or water is allowed. Please turn off cell phones for entire class period.
- 4) Allow 24 up to 48 hours for replies for e-mail queries. Expect written work to be corrected within one week, or sooner.
- 5) No late work will be accepted after May 20, 2014 unless proper medical documentation is offered.

---→ **Italian** Minors: You will read two works in Italian, *Operette morali* by Giacomo Leopardi and *Se questo è un uomo* by Primo Levi. You need to see Prof.ssa Carle to discuss specific guidelines and work. You will be required to write periodic summaries in Italian on your readings. You will receive questionnaires in italiano to help you with this.

CSUS POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Students are responsible for:

1. Understanding the rules that preserve academic honesty and abiding by them at all times. This includes learning and following particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to a charge of academic dishonesty.
2. Understanding what cheating and plagiarism are and taking steps to avoid them. Students are expected to do this whether working individually or as part of a group.
3. Not taking credit for academic work not their own.
4. Not knowingly encouraging or making possible cheating or plagiarism by others.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the SSWD website (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours.

TYPES OF WRITING: You will engage in several types of writing in this class: MIDTERM TEST, questionnaires on various authors, FINAL TEST AND A FINAL PAPER: A DIALOGUE. For the midterm and final tests you will have the choice of writing a two-page essay on dialogues or writing a three-page dialogue. If you choose to write about dialogues your essays should be related to the text you are reading. You should quote the text, refer to specific passages, and react to the writing itself, not just the ideas you think it expresses. You must read closely, read and reread before reacting. You should never react to any text without quoting it or referring to specific passages. Keep quotations brief. Always pay close attention to grammar, choice of words

(always choose the most appropriate words), clarity of sentences and neatness. NO SLOPPINESS IS ACCEPTABLE.

FINAL PAPER: On the last day of class you will be expected to hand in a 3 to six page dialogue. You may choose to imitate authors studied or to invent your own style. Your dialogues should be organized, coherent, and structured. You should choose a theme, develop it and reach some sort of conclusion, albeit on the lack of being able to agree. These will be graded. No revisions will be possible.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

This syllabus will be updated and modified in its online form if necessary--
depending upon the pace and needs of the class.

Please consult online syllabus periodically even after you have printed this one.

Week 1 January 27-31

- Tuesday: Introduction to the course: the first dialogues
Ancient Egypt and Greece
Three main forms of the dialogue: Eristic, Heuristic and Pedagogical
- Thursday: Socratic Dialogue
Reading: Plato, *Ion or on the Iliad*
The works of Plato translated by Benjamin Jowett

Week 2 February 4-6

- T Socratic dialogue and the Origins of the Dialogue Form
Guest Speaker: Professor Nikolaos Lazaridis, Dept. of History
On the Ancient Origins of the Dialogue Form (Egypt and Mesopotamia)
- R Satire and transgressive views
Reading: Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*, Read I-X
Available also at:
<http://www.theoi.com/Text/LucianDialoguesDead1.html>

Week 3 February 11-13

- Satire and transgressive views
- T Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*, XI-XX.
- R Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*, XXI-XXX
If you need to look up names and characters of Greek mythology and history go to:
<http://www.mythindex.com/greek-mythology/P/Palinurus.html>

Week 4 Feb. 18-20

- The Dialogue as a typical Renaissance form
- The Renaissance in Italy
- T Tullia D'Aragona: *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*
- R Tullia D'Aragona and Women Writers in Renaissance Italy: Le poetesse
See Link from Prof. Carle's webpage Italian Women Writers

Week 5 Feb. 25-27

- Fontenelle/Ezra Pound *Dialogues of the Dead*
- The Dialogue in post Renaissance France

- T Fontenelle, "Dialogues," I-V.
- R Fontenelle, "Dialogues," VI-VIII

Week 6 March 4-6

- T Fontenelle, "Dialogues," IX-XII
- R The Enlightenment's most convincing form
Diderot, "Conversation Between D'Alembert and Diderot"
Read and prepare questionnaires for Diderot-Questionnaire will be available
on web page

Week 7 March 11-13

- T The Heritage of the Enlightenment and the Classics in Romantic Italy
Giacomo LEOPARDI, Read Introduction and "History of the Human Race"
- R Leopardi "Dialogue between Hercules and Atlas"

Week 8 March 18-20

- T "Dialogue Between Fashion and Death" and
"Announcement of Prizes by the Academy of Syllographs"
- R Midterm Test

Week 9 March 24-30 **SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

Week 10 April 1-3

- T Leopardi, "Dialogue Between a Sprite and a Gnome"
- R "Dialogue Between Malambruno and Farfarello"

Week 11 April 8-10

- T Leopardi "Dialogue between Nature and a Soul"
- R "Dialogue Between the Earth and the Moon"

Week 12 April 15-17

Leopardi

- T "Parini's Discourse on Glory"
- R "Dialogue Between Frederic Ruysch and his Mummies"

Week 13 April 22-24

- T "Dialogue Between Christopher Columbus and Pedro Gutierrez"
- R "In Praise of Birds"

Week 14 April 29-May 1

- T "The Copernicus"
- R "Dialogue between Plotinus and Porphyry"

Week 15 May 6-8

- T Progress, Dialogue and its Absence: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
- R Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo* (for Italian minors)

Week 16 May 13-15

- T Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz
- R Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo* (for Italian minors)

-Final exam based on all readings, Date and place to be announced

-Final dialogue-due by May 20, 2014

Possible definitions of dialogues

Three definitions we will use:

1. pedagogic dialogue: there are two speakers or several, but one speaker leads the discussion and brings the other to a particular point of view.
2. eristic dialogue: the two speakers discuss at length each presenting a different point of view, but no conversion occurs, no one's point of view changes as a result of their exchange of ideas. Eristic dialogue is a paradox. It pretends to resemble a form of communication but in fact shows that communication cannot take place.
3. heuristic dialogue: it is not simply transmitting information or teaching by amusing, but a collective production of meaning. In this sense heuristic dialogue is a place where truth is sought but never definitively established. Each speaker carries equal weight. No single speaker necessarily reveals the author's own opinion on a subject--if indeed the author has one. This dialogue is a way of transcending subjectivity through collective reasoning and of attaining a vaster perspective and a more critical view of one's own limitations.

(For more on these definitions please see: *Le Dialogue*, Suzanne Guellouz, Presses Universitaires de France, 1992, pp. 90-93)

Typical elements of Platonic dialogues: questioning, definition, induction, maieutics, and irony.

- maieutics-Socratics through questioning is able to bring out a person's latent ideas into clear consciousness. In Greek this word also means to act as a midwife, that is to give birth to something....

- induction- the process of inferring or verifying a general law or principle from the observation of particular instances, an instance of this, a conclusion thus reached.

Discussion Questions

1. Ion is a rhapsode, or someone who presents the work of such poets as Homer. According to Socrates in the dialogue, what are the advantages of being a rhapsode? What, according to Socrates, are the disadvantages? On what bases does Socrates seem to be making these judgments?
2. Socrates criticizes Ion for being able to speak with seeming knowledge about Homer, but not about any other poets. Find the passages where Socrates alleges this defect in Ion's understanding. What seems to be the basis for Socrates' criticism? Is there something defective about all of Ion's knowledge, including his seeming knowledge about Homer? What is defective about this knowledge?
3. Socrates claims that rhapsodes and poets are "inspired" and "impelled" to perform and create their work. Note the usage of these terms and their variants throughout the relevant paragraphs. What does Socrates seem to mean by "inspiration" in this context? Why does he seem to think such "inspiration" is not admirable? Do you agree with Socrates that "inspiration" is inferior to other human activities?
4. Socrates and Ion seem to agree that rhapsodes, poets, and their audiences are not in their "right minds." What do they seem to mean by this? For Socrates, is this an indication of what's wrong with the arts? Do you agree that the arts are "emotional" or "irrational"? What other language does Socrates use to convey this idea? Do you agree with Socrates that this is a defect of the arts?
5. Throughout the dialogue, Socrates speaks of the "art" (profession/skill/techne) of the pilot, the physician, the carpenter, the fisherman, the charioteer, etc. What does he seem to mean by "art" in this usage? How is it different from the activities of the rhapsode, musician, and the poet?
6. Socrates sketches a hierarchy of knowledge in which the knowledge of the rhapsode or the poet is always inferior to the knowledge of other practitioners. What is the basis for his argument? Do you agree that the knowledge of the artist is always inferior? How would you answer Socrates' argument? Ion (circa 390 B.C.E.)

Second group of Discussion Questions

1. What analogy dominates Socrates' discussion of the relationship between the poet, the rhapsode, and the audience? What conclusion does this analogy illustrate about the true source of poetic inspiration and power? (41, 43 for example, general question)
2. Why does Socrates say that rhapsodes and poets do not speak "by mastery" of any art, as Ion insists? How, on 41, does Socrates characterize poets? (40-41)
3. What must the poet first lose, according to Socrates, that a poem might be composed? (42)
4. Why does Socrates call the poets "interpreters" and the rhapsodes who recite them the "interpreters of interpreters?" (42)
5. Defend Ion the alazon (wanderer or dupe) against the arguments of the eiron (ironic, clever character) Socrates: what argument can you make against the claim that poets and rhapsodes are not masters of any art? What possibilities is Socrates ignoring here? (general question)

5. What type of dialogue is this and why? pedagogic, eristic, or heuristic?
Explain your reasoning.

Third and Final Discussion points and questions:

1. Divide the dialogue into three main parts.

Remember that the opening exchanges constitute a sort of prologue and that the first part begins after this when Socrates changes the subject.

a. Prologue or introduction: the beginning until 530, shortly before where Socrates changes the subject (Many thanks. I'll make leisure to hear it some time, but....)

Point 1. Can you recite other poets as well?

A. From the above quotation until Socrates' first conclusion reached through induction:

[Soc.] Then, my dear friend, can I be mistaken in saying that Ion is equally skilled in Homer and in other poets, since he himself acknowledges that the same person will be a good judge of all those who speak of the same things; and that almost all poets do speak of the same things?

Point 2. You cannot recite other poets nor can you claim to know the profession or skill of poetry, since poets are not *technes*, they are "possessed" and divinely inspired.

B. From Ion's response to this question to his response to Socrates' second conclusion, i.e. rhapsodes are possessed when they recite:

[Ion] That is good, Socrates; and yet I doubt whether you will ever have eloquence enough to persuade me that I praise Homer only when I am mad and possessed; and if you could hear me speak of him I am sure you would never think this to be the case.

Point 3. Ion refuses to accept that he is mad when he recites, so Socrates proceeds to show that neither he nor the poets have any real knowledge, they are merely "transmitters," as in the magnet and ring analogy of part B, of divine Inspiration.

C. Neither the poet nor the rhapsodes have true knowledge, therefore Ion is either A. a fraud and a cheat (since he claims to have knowledge of many things, all those of which Homer speaks) or B. divinely inspired.

[Soc] Then which will be a better judge of the lines which you were reciting from Homer, you or the charioteer?

[Ion] The charioteer. Where in the dialogue does Socrates explain in greater detail the analogy of the rings? At the end of the middle, of part B.

1. Can you find specific passages in which the following occur? questioning, definition, induction, maieutics, irony.

2. Does Ion usually agree or disagree with Socrates?

3. Does Socrates bring out latent ideas of Ion, in other words, does Socrates show Ion that he thinks a certain way, even though Ion does not realize it?

4. How would you define the conclusion?

5. What do you learn about Homer's great works in this dialogue?

6. Does the dialogue make the distinction between poetry, fiction, that is, invention, and reality? Does Ion understand the difference between art (poetry, invention) and reality?

Lucian

Dialogues of the Dead

Some definitions and Guiding Questions

CYNICS. A school of philosophers, so called either because Antisthenes the Athenian, their founder (born 444. B.C.E.) and a pupil of Socrates, taught in the gymnasium called the Cynosarges, or else because their mode of life was regarded as no better than that of a dog (cyn-). Diogenes, Crates, Menippus, and (in his own time) Demonax, are mentioned by Lucian as favourable specimens of the school. Their ideal may be said, to have been plain living and high thinking; virtue is the only good; the essence of virtue is self-control; pleasure is an evil if sought for itself. The Cynics were said to be cosmopolitan, individualist, and outspoken. Some claimed their repulsive personal negligence, and their free use of their philosophic staves as offensive weapons. These supposed traits are often mentioned almost stereotypically.

DIOGENES. 412-323 B.C.E. His father was a banker of Sinope. He went to Athens and became a philosopher of the Cynic school, which see, as a disciple of Antisthenes. He is often portrayed as having lived in a tub.

MENIPPUS. A Cynic philosopher, originally a slave, of Gadara in Coele-Syria. His date is placed about 60 B.C.E. It is probable that Lucian was much indebted to the writings of Menippus, which are now lost, though an imitation of them is still preserved in the Menippean Satires of Varro. Among the titles of his works are *A Visit to the Shades*, *Wills*, and *Letters of the Gods*. He appears frequently as a character in Lucian's dialogues.

Guiding Questions to Lucian's Dialogues

The attitude of Menippus will change throughout the course of the dialogues.

Can you see how? Compare dialogues 2, 4, and 6.

How is Socrates seen in these dialogues?

Who seems to better fit the definition of a cynic? Diogenes or Menippus?

Does Menippus see positive qualities in the underworld?

Do Menippus and Diogenes ever converse together?

Is there anything which Menippus does not mock?

How are the philosophers portrayed in these Dialogues? The famous heroes such as Hercules (Heracles)? The famous historical characters Alexander the Great and his father Phillip?

Guiding Questions for all dialogues

1. Who are the characters and how much do you know about them? Are they shades of men or women? Were they kings, philosophers, etc? Are they gods or fantastical, mythological characters? To what extent do the characters themselves determine or set the tone and outcome of the dialogue?
2. Where is the dialogue set and is this important?
3. What is the tone? serious, playful, ironic, mocking?
4. Is there a dominant theme or subject which emerges? Or does the subject change?
5. How would you describe the imagery?
6. Are there more questions or is there an exchange of ideas?
7. Can you find examples of maieutics, irony, induction?
8. What type of dialogue is this? Is it an example of Menippean satire or does it share elements of Platonic dialogue? Is it serious or tragic?
9. Does the dialogue make a particular point? deconstruct a commonplace idea? make an ironic comic or project a particular point of view?
10. Does it suppose a certain philosophy? If so how would you define it? Does the dialogue seek truth or reflect the author's point of view?
11. Quote an exchange from this dialogue which you found remarkable or unusual or which made you laugh or see the subject from another point of view.
12. How would you define the style of this dialogue? Are there words or images that repeat?

Guiding Questions for Tullia d'Aragona's *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*

1. Who are the characters? Can you comment on their accomplishments and historical contexts?
2. What is the first and main question posed by Tullia at the beginning of the dialogue?
3. Are there any references made to women and their role in philosophy in the opening exchanges?
4. Find specific examples of humor, wit, and irony in these exchanges.
5. Are the terms "love" and "to love" defined? How specifically?
6. Explain the method of reasoning Varchi adopts. What is a syllogism? What is the scholastic method?
7. How does Tullia define love?
8. What is the first conclusion reached?
9. Why does Tullia reject Varchi's first conclusion?
10. What proofs does she have that love comes to an end?
11. Does Tullia then proceed to question Varchi in Socratic style?
12. Does Tullia remind Varchi of the Aristotelian principle regarding infinity?
13. What do logic and the scholastic method prove?
14. What are the two main types of love according to Tullia?
15. Specifically what are the three questions Varchi poses regarding love?
16. What does Tullia imply about Platonic love?
17. Where do we find references to writers we have read? Who are they?
18. What type of dialogue is this in your opinion?

Domande guida per tutti i dialoghi per i **Minor d'italiano**

1. Chi sono i personaggi? Quante informazioni ci sono su ogni personaggio? Sono ombre, fantasmi o donne o uomini? Furono re, filosofi, ecc? Sono degli dei o sono personaggi mitologici cioè fantastici? Fino a che punto i personaggi stessi determinano il tono e lo svolgimento del dialogo?
2. Dove ha luogo il dialogo? Il contesto o il posto fisico è importante?
3. Come definisci il tono? serio, giocoso, ironico? satirico?
4. C'è un tema dominante o un argomento specifico che emerge dalla conversazione? Cambia l'argomento del dialogo?
5. Come caratterizzi o definisci le immagini? Come sono?
6. Ci sono delle vere domande? C'è un vero scambio di idee?
7. Puoi trovare esempi di ironia, maieutica, induzione?
8. Che tipo di dialogo è questo? È un esempio di *satira menippea*? È fatto come un *dialogo platonico*? È serio o tragico?
9. Trasmette un messaggio particolare il dialogo? Decostruisce un'idea banale o stereotipica?
10. Suppone una filosofia precisa il dialogo? Quale? Cerca la verità o riflette il punto di vista dell'autore?
11. Citare uno scambio di battute che ti ha colpito o che ti è sembrato insolito o che ti ha fatto ridere o vedere l'argomento da un altro punto di vista.
12. Infine come definiresti lo stile di questo dialogo? Ci sono parole, frasi o immagini che si ripetono?