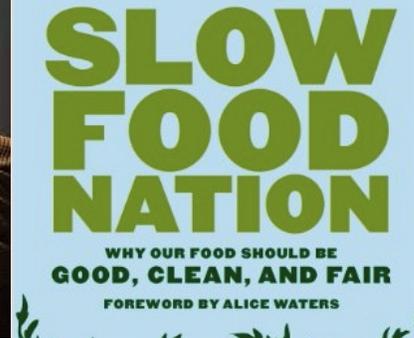
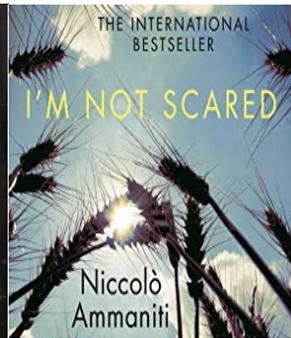
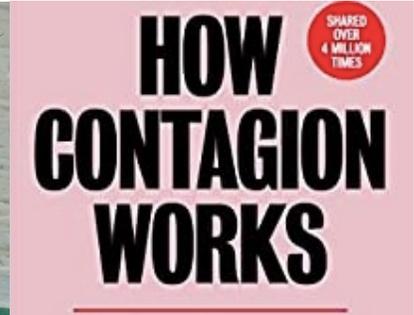
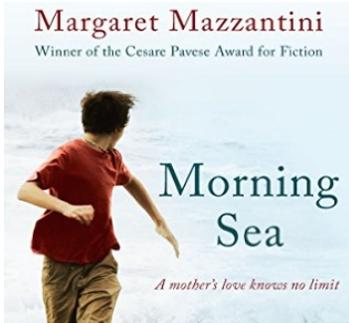


**GESM 120g: Seminar in Humanistic Inquiry  
Transforming Italy: Italian Literature Today  
FALL 2020**

**Professor: James M. Fortney**  
**Course Hours: 3:30-4:50 Mon, Wed**  
**Email: fortney@usc.edu**  
**Office Hours: by appointment**



Today's Italy is very different from the stereotypes of the culture that have traditionally informed our ideas. The land of history, art, food, and culture by all means still exists. Nevertheless, new tendencies have emerged over the last couple of decades that have challenged, provided hope and created new possibilities for this people that trace their roots back to before the ancient Romans. In this course students will read recent narratives and essays that complicate our understanding of this country and shed greater light on what it means to be Italian within the European Union and globalized world of today.

Paolo Giordano's timely essay *How Contagion Works* reveals the cultural values that helped change the Covid-19 debate in Italy. Margaret Mazzantini's *Morning Sea* places recent Mediterranean migration stories in the context of Italy's colonial past as it grapples with the over eight percent of the immigrant population that make up Italy today. *I'm Not Scared* is an international bestselling novel by Niccolò Ammaniti that explores the so-called "Southern Question" in Italy, the importance of family and the mechanisms of organized crime. Carlo Petrini's *Slow Food Nation* argues that food should be good, clean, and fair not only for Italians but for the world over. Finally, Elena Ferrante's *Troubling Love* is a haunting tale that investigates the relationship between a daughter and mother and the boundaries of family, death and solitude. More than ever, the outpour of recent contributions of contemporary Italian literature is saturated with a dazzling array of stories that question core values, culture, society and identity itself.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Reflect on the act of storytelling to acknowledge how fundamental it is to the human experience and how it brings us closer to understanding what it means to be human.
- Factor in the role that culture plays to evaluate ideas of diverse perspectives as we consider some of the most successful storytellers and essayists in Italy today.
- Closely read different literary genres to explore how categorical expectations impact the story a narrative represents.
- Develop arguments in lesson discussions and papers to enhance analytical and critical interpretive skills.
- Enrich, collaborate, and share knowledge about ideas discussed during our lessons.
- Construct a nuanced vocabulary of narrative language and concepts to broaden considerations of events, characters, and authors/narrators.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS: To be purchased online or as ebooks on Amazon Kindle.**

Ammaniti, Niccolò. *I'm Not Scared* (originally published in 2001). Trans. Jonathan Hunt. London: Canongate, 2003.

Ferrante, Elena. *Troubling Love* (originally published in 1999). Trans. Ann Goldstein. New York: Europa Editions, 2006.

Giordano, Paolo. *How Contagion Works: Science, Awareness and Community in Times of Global Crises* (originally published in 2020). Trans. Alex Valente. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020.

Mazzantini, Margaret. *Morning Sea* (originally published in 2011). Trans. Ann Gagliardi. New York: Random House, 2015.

Petrini, Carlo. *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean, and Fair* (originally published in 2005). Trans. Clara Furlan and Jonathan Hunt. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2013.

## **USC TECHNOLOGY RENTAL PROGRAM**

Attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please submit an application. The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

## **USC TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT LINKS**

Zoom information for students: <https://itservices.usc.edu/zoom/>

Blackboard help for students: <https://studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu/>

Software available to USC Campus: <https://software.usc.edu/>

## **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and

Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

## **Course Requirements and Dates:**

### **Assignments:**

<b>First paper (3-4 pages) (Sat., Sept. 19, email by noon to <a href="mailto:fortney@usc.edu">fortney@usc.edu</a>):</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Midterm Exam (Wed., Oct. 7):</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Second paper (4-5 pages)(Sat., Oct. 24, email by noon to <a href="mailto:fortney@usc.edu">fortney@usc.edu</a>):</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final Exam (Mon., Nov. 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m.):</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Presentations (scheduled throughout the semester)</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Participation (in-class discussions, group work, readings, quizzes):</b>	<b>25%</b>

- \* Have during the lesson the text we are discussing.
- \* Keep up with the reading schedule and plan ahead. Think about budgeting your time.
- \* Come to the lesson prepared to discuss the day's text and engage in group activities. Bring notes on articles and additional readings.
- \* Keep up with handouts and other class notes.

## **1. Learning on Zoom and the Use of Electronic Devices**

Use your experiences from traditional face-to-face instruction in a classroom to help you make the most of your learning on Zoom. Sitting at a desk or table in an environment free from background noises, dressing as you would come to class, and refraining from eating foods that are distracting to

you and your peers will help you stay focused. Please make sure to let your friends and family know your online course schedule so they can assist you in prioritizing your lessons. Interactions with your peers and your instructor during the lesson should also be consistent with classroom behavior as this impacts your participation score as indicated under point two. You are encouraged to have your camera on during the entire lesson and to speak with your instructor if this is not possible as accommodations are available for reasonable requests. Consider using virtual backgrounds to eliminate privacy concerns. Securing a good Wi-Fi connection or considering a more reliable Ethernet cable alternative, utilizing headphones, setting your Zoom window to gallery view so you can see your peers, attending your lesson with a laptop rather than a phone and following specific Zoom lesson directions from your instructor such as the use of the "raise hand" feature, the "chat" function and breakout room policy are recommended.

During your lessons, please limit your use of electronic devices for activities related to learning goals (e.g. your electronic copy of the textbook). The use of all kinds of electronic devices for personal reasons is strictly prohibited. Your lessons are engaging and interactive and require your undivided attention and concentration. Therefore, in order to participate fully in the lesson's activities, you must refrain from checking personal messages, texting, engaging on social media platforms, etc. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a 0 (zero) grade in participation for that lesson. In other words, you will be considered absent, because, for the purpose of your learning involvement, you effectively are.

Make sure to contact Blackboard Support at [blackboard@usc.edu](mailto:blackboard@usc.edu) or by phone at (213) 740-5555 for all technology related issues concerning Blackboard and Zoom (see links provided above). All Zoom lesson footage, including the chat conversations, are recorded and transcribed and only available to you and your peers as USC strictly prohibits the sharing of this content in any form and will hold students accountable for violating this policy (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). You are not permitted to create your own class recordings without the instructor's permission.

## **2. Participation (lesson discussions, group work, readings, quizzes)**

Plan to attend every synchronous session for the courses in which you are enrolled irrespective of when the lessons occur in your time zone. Attendance is a key factor in our course. Attending our lessons allows you to 1) interact with the other students and 2) discuss and receive explanations about what you read and studied at home. Please remember that, although attendance is not graded *per se*, unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your participation grade (see point 4 below).

USC official policies allow for some absences to be excused. For instance, if the lesson falls outside of reasonable learning hours defined as 7:00am to 10:00pm in the student's time zone, these absences are excused. For these types of absences, accommodations such as asynchronous learning and alternative ways to complete the learning objectives for the class will be extended by your instructor. Students who can verify that they were prevented from completing assignments and/or taking exams due to a serious illness or the observance of a religious holiday are permitted to make up the work they missed. Students who miss a lesson because of their performance in university-sponsored events, such as athletic competitions, fine-arts performances, ROTC activities, etc. are also allowed to make up the work they missed. Students who are summoned for jury duty are excused as well. Finally, a death in the immediate family would also excuse a student's absence. On the other hand, personal reasons for missing lessons are not excused (personal trips, interviews, weddings, etc.).

In order to make up any work (assignments, exams, etc.) that you missed because of an excused absence that is not time zone related, **you must provide your**

**instructor with a piece of valid, original documentation.** For a serious illness, a medical excuse from a doctor or another appropriate health-care provider is required and is subject to confirmation. Students using the University Park Health Center are allowed two "self-care" days upon presentation of the "Medical absence Excuse Form." For university-sponsored events, an original memo from the appropriate advisor must be provided in advance. Documentation from a newspaper, funeral, memorial service, etc., must be provided in the event of an absence due to a death in the immediate family. The court papers summoning you for jury duty are required in order to be excused.

Unannounced quizzes and in-class exercises will take place regularly. The purpose of the quizzes and exercises is testing for preparedness and comprehension. The quizzes will contribute to the "participation" portion of your grade.

### **3. About the papers and other writing assignments**

- \* Each paper should have the specified length, typed in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, and have one-inch margins.
- \* Include your name and the title of your paper at the top of the first page.
- \* All papers must have titles.
- \* You should number pages.
- \* Spell check and proofread adequately.
- \* Be sure that you cite all secondary material and present bibliographical information according to either the guidelines of either the Modern Language Association or Chicago Manual of Style.
- \* You must list all material cited, even if you are only using the required text.
- \* There will be information distributed in class for the papers.
- \* You will email me your papers. Any papers that do not meet requirements (length, assignment instructions, etc.) will be emailed back to you with further instructions for completion. You will earn one grade lower on the completed draft.

### **4. Presentations**

Students will be assigned one presentation during the semester. Presentation topics will contextualize the texts that we are reading this semester and deal with social, economic and political issues in Italy, the Mediterranean and the European Union. Students will present to their peers their research that they organize in a PowerPoint. Their PowerPoint and handouts will be shared with other students in a public Dropbox file. Although students can use notes and refer to their PowerPoint to assist them in their presentations, their performances should be practiced and be between seven and ten-minutes. A question and answer session will follow the presentation and students' grades will be based on interactions with their peers. Students will be graded not only on their presentations but on how they ask and answer questions, respond to each other, etc.

### **5. Midterm and Final Exams**

The midterm will cover all material in the first half of the semester and the final exam will cover all material for the semester. Students will receive review materials to help them focus their studies before each exam.

### **GRADES**

<b>93-100</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>90-92</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>87-89</b>	<b>B+</b>

<b>83-86</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>80-82</b>	<b>B-</b>
<b>77-79</b>	<b>C+</b>
<b>73-76</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>70-72</b>	<b>C-</b>
<b>67-69</b>	<b>D+</b>
<b>63-66</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>60-62</b>	<b>D-</b>
<b>0-59</b>	<b>F</b>

### **SYLLABUS:**

**READINGS ARE TO BE COMPLETED FOR THE DAY THEY ARE ASSIGNED. YOU MUST HAVE AVAILABLE DURING THE LESSON THE CURRENT READING. Assignments, in bold, are listed under the day for which they are to be completed.**

#### **Week 1**

- Mon., August 17 Introduction to Narratives: Some Considerations, Course/Syllabus Overview
- Wed., August 19 Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

### **PAOLO GIORDANO'S *HOW CONTAGION WORKS* (2020)**

#### **Week 2**

- Mon., August 24 Read for today from "Grounded" through "No Man is an Island" (pages 4-25)
- Wed., August 26 Read for today "Flying" to "Numbering our Days" (pages 26-43)

### **MARGARET MAZZANTINI'S *MORNING SEA* (2011)**

#### **Week 3**

- Mon., August 31 Read for today Chapters "Farid and the Gazelle" (pages 15-45)
- Wed., September 2 Read for today Chapters "The Colour of Silence" (pages 49-69)

#### **Week 4**

- Mon., September 7 **Labor Day, No Lesson**

Wed., September 9 Read for today Chapters "The Colour of Silence" (pages 70-102)

### **Week 5**

Mon., September 14 Read for today Chapters "The Colour of Silence" and "Morning Sea"  
(pages 103-143)

Wed., September 16 Read for today Chapters "Immediately," and "The Nightmare" (pages 100-129)  
from Edoardo Nesi's *Story of My People* (2010) (available on our Blackboard site)

**Sat., September 19 First Paper Due at noon, EMAIL to [fortney@usc.edu](mailto:fortney@usc.edu)**

### **ELENA FERRANTE'S TROUBLING LOVE (1999)**

### **Week 6**

Mon., September 21 Read for today Chapters 1-6 (pages 11-37)

Wed., September 23 Read for today Chapters 7-14 (pages 37-71)

### **Week 7**

Mon., September 28 Read for today Chapters 15-19 (pages 72-105)

Wed., September 30 Read for today Chapters 20-26 (pages 105-139)

### **Week 8**

Mon., October 5 **Midterm Review**

Wed., October 7 **Midterm**

### **CARLO PETRINI'S SLOW FOOD NATION (2005)**

### **Week 9**

Mon., October 12 Read for today "I. A Worrying Picture" and "II. Gastronomy and New  
Gastronomy" (pages 5-90)

Wed., October 14 Read for today "III. Quality as an Object" (pages 90-146)

### **Week 10**

Mon., October 19 Read for today "IV. Three Ideas to Put into Practice" (pages 146-194)

Wed., October 21 Read for today "V. Creating" and "Conclusion" (pages 195-255)

**Sat., October 24 Second Paper Due at noon, EMAIL to [fortney@usc.edu](mailto:fortney@usc.edu)**

### **NICCOLÒ AMMANITI'S *I'M NOT SCARED* (2001)**

### **Week 11**

Mon., October 26 Read for today "Chapter 1" (pages 1-41)

Wed., October 28 Read for today "Chapters 2-5" (pages 43-121)

### **Week 12**

Mon., November 2 Read for today "Chapters 6-7" (pages 123-174)

Wed., November 4 Read for today "Chapters 8-10" (pages 175-225)

### **Week 13**

Mon., November 9 Read for today selections from Roberto Saviano's *My Italians* (2010)  
(available on our Blackboard site)

Wed., November 11 **Final Exam Review**

**Mon., Nov. 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m.**