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Italian R5B, Sec. 1:

Function, Form, Fiction

The Idea:

Like any good machine, stories are built to perform specific functions: personal, political, economic, or otherwise. In this course, we will explore how stories work by examining their functions across genres, media, and cultures. The principal means of this exploration will be in-class discussion, short writing exercises, and several research papers. The goal for the course is for students to develop writing and research skills that will allow them to make eloquent, informed arguments in support of a given idea.

The Texts:

Literature:

Cavalleria Rusticana, Giovanni Verga
A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway
The Talented Mr. Ripley, Patricia Highsmith
The Day of the Owl, Leonardo Sciascia
Gomorrah, Roberto Saviano

Opera/Film:

Cavalleria Rusticana, Franco Zeffirelli (Pietro Mascagni/Giovanni Verga)

Television:

The Sopranos, David Chase
Detective Montalbano, Andrea Camilleri/Alberto Sironi

Film:

The Talented Mr. Ripley, Anthony Minghella [and script]
Gomorrah, Matteo Garrone

The Assignments:

Attendance & Participation: 15%

Diagnostic Essay: 5%
    Assigned: January 19
    Due: January 24

Paper 1: 10%
    Assigned: January 31
    First Draft Due: February 7
    Final Draft Due: February 21

Paper 2: 30%
    Assigned: February 28
    First Draft Due: March 8
    Final Draft Due: March 22

Paper 3: 40%
    Assigned: April 3
    Draft 1 Due: April 10
    Draft 2 Due: April 19
    Final Draft Due: May 4

The Calendar:

NOTE I: YOU ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE READ THE ASSIGNED READINGS BEFFORE WE DISCUSS THEM IN CLASS. IN THE CASE OF VISUAL MEDIA, WE WILL VIEW THESE TOGETHER IN CLASS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

NOTE II: I will provide you with electronic or paper copies of secondary readings before we discuss them in class.

DATE   TEXTS

1/17   ----------   ----------

1/19   *Cavalleria rusticana*, Verga

1/24   C*avlleria rusticana*, Zeffirelli (in class); Laughey, "What is Media Theory?"

            Frow, "Introduction" and "Approaching Genre"

1/26   *A Farewell to Arms*, pp. 1-40

1/31   *A Farewell to Arms*, pp. 41-160

2/2   Laughey, "Structuralism and Semiotics"; Frow, "Implication and Relevance"

2/7   *A Farewell to Arms*, pp. 161-280

2/9   *A Farewell to Arms*, pp. 281-320

2/14   *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, pp. 1-60; Laughey, "Feminisms and Gender" and "Political
             Economy and Postcolonial Theory"

2/16   *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, pp. 61-100

2/21   *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, pp. 101-220

2/23   *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, pp. 221-273

2/28   *The Talented Mr. Ripley (film) (in class);* Thompson, "The Dispersal of Narrative:
             Adaptations, Sequels, Serials, Spin-offs, and Sagas"

3/1   *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (film) (in class)

3/6   *The Day of the Owl*, pp. 1-80; Frow, "Genre and Interpretation"

3/8   *The Day of the Owl, pp. 81-136*

3/13   *Gomorrah*, pp. 1-80; Frow, "System and History"

3/15   *Gomorrah*, pp. 81-200

3/22   *Gomorrah*, pp. 200-240

4/3   *Gomorrah*, pp. 240-320

4/5   *Gomorrah* (film) (in class)

4/10   *Gomorrah* (film) (in class)

4/12   *The Sopranos*, episode TBD; Thompson, "What Do They Think They're Doing?
             Theory and Practice in Screenwriting"

4/17   *The Sopranos*, episode TBD

4/19   *Detective Montalbano,* episode TBD

4/24   *Detective Montalbano,* episode TBD

4/26   TBD

May 4:   Final Paper Due

The Details:

Course Requirements:

The writing component of the course will focus on the drafting and revision of several essays of varying length, culminating in a final research paper of 10-12 pages. Other coursework will include short reading comprehension exercises and brief writing assignments designed to guide students through the processes of conducting research and incorporating secondary material into a research paper. Peer-response groups will play a central role in the course, as students will read and critique each other's writing as part of the revision process. Regular attendance and active participation are required.

Prerequisites:

Successful completion of the "A" portion of the Reading & Composition requirement or its equivalent.

Disability-Related Accommodations:

If you need disability-related accommodations, please inform me immediately. You can see me privately after class or during office hours. In order to appropriately assist you in this course, I require documentation from the Disabled Students' Program.

Attendance & Participation:

You are allowed two free unexcused absences; each unexcused absence thereafter will result in a one-third grade deduction (e.g. from B+ to B) from your participation grade. If you are repeatedly late to class I will begin to mark you absent. Excused absences must be requested before the missed class begins.

Participation is a vital aspect of this course, and an important part of your grade. In order to get full marks for participation, you must come to class with your assignments prepared and be ready to discuss them. Listening respectfully to the contributions of others is just as important as adding to the discussion yourself.

Cell Phones, Laptops, etc.

You are welcome to bring whatever devices you like to class, but you are expected to respect others, including me, by giving them your attention during class discussions, activities, etc. Failure to do so will result in a lowering of your participation grade and potentially the banning of certain devices from class.

Food and Drink:

Food is not allowed in class. Drinking is acceptable, as long as it does not interfere with your active participation in class, or bother other students.

Assignments:

    Papers:

More details on each paper assignment will be given as the class progresses. Assignments will likely include a series of gradual steps meant to guide you through the research and writing process.

Unless otherwise noted, I will only accept paper copies of assignments. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the specified date. Papers not submitted at or before the beginning of class will be marked down 1/3 letter grade per day (for example, a B+ will be marked down to a B).

Our basic formatting reference for the course will be the Modern Language Association (MLA) Formatting & Style guidelines. While we may explore other formatting and style references, please assume that your papers need to adhere to MLA guidelines, which include (but are not limited to) 1" margins on all sides, 12-point font, double-spacing of all text, page numbers, and a header on the left corner of the first page that includes your name, my name, the course, and date.

    Short Writing Assignments:

These assignments are designed to develop your writing and critical thinking skills. While the exact nature of these exercises will be determined by the flow of the course, in general they will be used in conjunction with assigned texts and your own writing, as well as that of your peers. Assignments may take place in class as well as out of class. bSpace might be used to facilitate the execution of these exercises.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will result in a failing grade for the plagiarized assignment and a report to the Center for Student Conduct. You can find a quick overview of plagiarism and how to avoid it at http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html

Resources

You may find yourself with questions on research or paper writing as the semester progresses. While you are always encouraged to e-mail me or visit my office hours, you may also find the following resources helpful.

Student Learning Center – http://slc.berkeley.edu

Research Advisory Service – http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff/ras.html

Purdue Online Writing Lab – http://owl.english.purdue.edu/