



## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *Introduction To Romance Cultures - 45158*

*Last update 30-10-2024*

*HU Credits:* 2

*Degree/Cycle:* 1st degree (Bachelor)

*Responsible Department:* Romance Studies

*Academic year:* 0

*Semester:* 1st Semester

*Teaching Languages:* Hebrew

*Campus:* Mt. Scopus

*Course/Module Coordinator:* Dr. Chiara Caradonna

*Coordinator Email:* [chiara.caradonna@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:chiara.caradonna@mail.huji.ac.il)

*Coordinator Office Hours:* Upon request

*Teaching Staff:*

---

Dr. chiara Caradonna

Course/Module description:

We constantly use the word “culture”, but do we really know what we mean by it? What is culture, and what does it become when we add adjectives indicating nationality, such as “Italian Culture” and “French Culture”? In this course, we will explore the many meanings of the term “culture” while discovering some key aspects of the cultures of France and Italy. We will speak about hegemonic culture and how it is subverted, and we will discuss the difference between high, middle and low culture. Guided by some of the most prominent Italian and French theoreticians of popular and mass culture – Antonio Gramsci, Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes – we will investigate how cultural phenomena such as architecture, visual art, cinema, television, comics and music shape our image and understanding of the complex and multifaceted national entities that are called France and Italy.

Course/Module aims:

The course aims to provide students with the main analytical tools of cultural studies in the French and Italian traditions of thought, by reading some of the main contributions to the field by Antonio Gramsci, Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes. Through their approaches we will analyze a variety of cultural phenomena as diverse as architecture, cinema, comics and pop music, in order to both showcase the richness of the French and Italian cultural landscapes and critically engage with its various modern manifestations.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Students will become acquainted with and be able to apply key analytical tools of cultural studies. Moreover, they will be familiar with a variety of different cultural phenomena that have shaped and keep shaping modern French and Italian culture.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:* The classes will consist in a combination of frontal lectures and open discussions. Students will be asked to prepare readings at home (through the interactive reading platform Perusall) and/or to engage with visual and audio material uploaded before the class. Students will also be encouraged to document and bring in diverse material (images of buildings, street art, commercials etc.) from their immediate surroundings, in order to compare and analyze them together with the course’s subject matter.

---

Course/Module Content:

1) 4/11/24

*Introduction: What is Culture, and how does it shape us? Are there such things as Italian and French Culture?*

*Assignment 1 (due 11/11)*

2) 11/11/24

*How can we analyze (mass) culture? Approaches from Italy and France: Antonio Gramsci, Umberto Eco & Roland Barthes*

3) 18/11/24

*The Cities we live in. Italy's Architectural Landscape - From Ancient to Modern Ruins*

4) 25/11/24

*The Cities we live in. France's Architectural Landscape - Center, Periphery and the Representation of Power*

5) 2/12/24

*The Things we see. Visual Art in Italy, from Roman Freskos to Street Art*

6) 9/12/24

*The Things we see. Visual Art in France - Artistic movements, Avantgarde and Street Art*

*Assignment 2 (due 16/12)*

7) 16/12/24

*The Things we see: French Cinema - From the invention of the moving image to the Nouvelle Vague and Beyond*

*Assignment 3 (due 23/12)*

8) 23/12/24

*The Things we see: Italian Cinema - Cult Movies, Great Names and the Representation of Italian Identity*

*Assignment 4 (due 30/12)*

9) 30/12/24

*The Things we see. Popular Culture in the French speaking World - Comics*

*Assignment 5 (due 6/1)*

---

10) 6/1/25

*The Things we see. Popular Culture in Italy – Television, Commercials, Comics*

11) 13/1/25

*The Things we hear: The French Chanson*

12) 20/1/25

*The Things we hear. Italy's high, middle and low musical Landscape, from Opera to Ghali*

13) 27/1/25

*Is there a counter- or subculture? And what is multiculturalism? Are Italy and France multi-cultural?*

Required Reading:

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957) [Excerpts]

(תל אביב 1998) רולאן בארת, מיתולוגיות, תרגום עידו בסוק

Walter Benjamin, "Paris, the Capital of the 20th century", in: *Selected Writings*, vol. 3: 1935-1938, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996, 32-49.

ולטר בנימין, פריס, בירת המאה 20, בתוך: מבחר כתבים, כרך ב, תרגום דוד זינגר, הקיבוץ המאוחד, תל אביב 1996.

Andy Bennett, *Reappraising "Counterculture"*, in: *Countercultures & Popular Music* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014)

Umberto Eco, *Apocalittici e integrati. Comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa* (1977) / *Apocalypse Postponed*, ed. Robert Lumley (Bloomington 1994) [Excerpts]

George Crowder, *Theories of Multiculturalism: An Introduction* (Cambridge, USA, 2013) [Excerpts]

אנטניו גרמשי, על ההגמוניה: מבחר מתוך "מחברות הכלא", תרגום אלון אלטרס (תל אביב 2009)

David Forgacs (ed.), *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935* (New York 2000)

Zygmunt G. Barański, Robert Lumley (ed.), *Culture and conflict in postwar Italy: essays on mass and popular culture* (New York 1990) [Excerpts]

Zygmunt G. Baranski, Rebecca J. West (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge 2001) [Excerpts]

René Goscinny, Albert Uderzo, *Asterix the Gaul*, trans. Anthea Bell, Derek

---

Hockridge, Hachette 2004.

Nicholas Hewitt (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern French Culture* (Cambridge 2003) [Excerpts]

Riad Sattouf, *The Arab of the Future. A Childhood in the Middle East 1978-1984*, 2016

Giovanni Vacca, *Music and Countercultures in Italy: the Neapolitan Scene*, in: *Countercultures & Popular Music* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014) [Excerpts]

גיאן ספר, חתולו של הרב, תרגום שלומי שוורצוולד, כנרת זמורה דביר, 2010

#### *Filmography*

Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* (1960)

Federico Fellini, *La dolce vita* (1960)

Joann Sfar, *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life* (2010)

Zerocalcare, *Tear along the dotted line*, Netflix Series (2021)

#### Additional Reading Material:

#### Grading Scheme:

Written / Oral / Practical Exam 20 %

Active Participation / Team Assignment 20 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 60 %

#### Additional information:

Final Assignment - home exam with quiz / short essays, to be completed until 1 August 2025 (20% of final grade)