

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**  
<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2016-2017** ITAL 205 B2: Topics in Italian Culture  
From Berlusconi to Trump: A brief introduction to the post-political world  
(Winter Term)

Instructor: W. Anselmi	Time: T R 12:30PM - 1:50PM
Office: 239-D Old Arts	Place: HC 2-25
Telephone: N/A Fax: 780-492-9106	Office Hours: Wed.: 13:00 – 14:00; Thu.: 14:00 – 15:00, or by appointment
E-mail: wanselmi@ualberta.ca	Course Website: N/A
Personal Website: N/A	

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**Course Prerequisite:** none

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects approved.

**Community Service Learning** component

Required     Optional     None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

The recent victory of Donald Trump in the USA elections has been presented as a populist revenge against the governing elites. Also, parallels have been drawn between Mr. Trump and Italy's ex-premier Silvio Berlusconi. This course intends to analyze the possible relationship between the two politicians in terms of the role that economic empires (the self-made man), the public figure presented (the spectacle), the relationship with the Other (racism, xenophobia, homophobia, misogyny), play in such a comparison. As such, the course will offer the spectacular history of Silvio Berlusconi since the 1980s as a series of templates

that might inform the Trump model. Also, cultural passages such as the Fall of the Berlin Wall, or the Bush Wars will be explored as one of the many strands that constitute the progressive eclipse of analytical reason in favour of emotional and behavioral responses (television and the viewing subject). A possible answer to what is 'populism' will be framed by the various contexts indicated.

Students, by the end of the course, will have developed critical tools of analysis to better navigate the world of globalization, and the society of the spectacle (G. Debord et al.) Students will also have developed an augmented sense of citizenship and political identity, as well as honed their skills in linking what might at first seem as disparaging realms of knowledge (cognitive capitalism, critical psychology, aesthetics, semiotics, post-modernism and modernity, media operational constructs, etc.). Also, a critical sense of history and contextual analysis will be developed during the course of the terms in reference to post-WWII social and cultural models in the West.

A number of guests have been invited to participate via Skype. The language of the course is English.

**Texts:**

*There are no recommended texts. Suggestions as to possible books on the subject will be given during the early part of the course. However, students are asked to keep abreast of events concerning Berlusconi and Trump, via Internet, television, radio, and newspapers sources.*

**Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):**

- 20% - Final essay (to be handed in second last week of classes). 2000-2500 wds
- 20% - Presentation (individually, or in groups, max 3 students per group)
- 20% - Dossier (2 entries per week, about 150 wds each; one report news items 100 wds +)
- 15% - Participation
- 10% - Dialogue (Meeting with instructor, week after Winter Reading Week, in pairs, 10-15 minutes)
- 15% - Counterfactual history (week before Winter Reading Week; 1000 wds)

*Fall / Winter Exam Planner for the 2016-2017 academic year can be found at the following site: <http://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2016-Winter-2017-Exam-Planner.aspx>*

**Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):**

*N/A*

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

*Final essay: the final essay will be about 2000 to 2500 wds long. It will be a comparison between Trump and Berlusconi on any one topic you wish to pursue in your analysis. Examples of topics: wealth, celebrity status, homophobia, misogyny, anti-politics /post-politics,*

*ignorance/anti-intellectualism, etc. The instructor looks forward to other suggestions you might want to follow in your one-topic essay.*

**Presentation:** *it can be on any subject related to T. and B. from songs to stories, plays to movies. Individually or in groups. Maximum 3 students per group. Length of presentation: max 20 minutes + about 10 minutes discussion.*

**Dossier:** *the dossier or journal consists of two parts. On one side, each week you will enter two pieces of writing, each about 150 wds., reflecting about work done in class that you want to elaborate; the second part, at the back of the dossier, will keep track of media events that have taken place with relations to T. and B. if any during the week. For this second part, you will keep a detailed entry, example: article, newspaper, date, page; news report, television station, date and time.*

**Participation:** *is very much encouraged. The course depends on engagement and dialogue within the class.*

**Dialogue:** *the week after Winter Reading Week, students in groups of two will meet with the instructor in his office, Old Arts 239-D, for about 10-15 minutes. The meeting will consist of a dialogue between the instructor and the students on a topic of their choice. In the dialogue the students are invited to show positive and negative sides about the given topic, a form of rudimentary dialectical process.*

**Counter-factual history:** *the week before Winter Reading Week, students will consign a short text of 1000 wds of a 'what if' report. For example, What if Berlusconi had never founded a political party?; What if Trump had been a devout Christian, and only married once? Students are invited to present a valid case while having fun, and using the power of the imagination.*

### **Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the Evaluation Procedures and Grading System of the University Calendar.”

### **Academic Integrity:**

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx> ) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

### ***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the Office of the Student Ombuds. Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL.

### ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

**Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process.

### ***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

### ***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections Attendance and Examinations of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not

handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course, attendance is obligatory.**

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty.

***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

***Grading:***

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, Evaluation Procedures and Grading System). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	A	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	A-	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	B	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	B-	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	C	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	C-	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	D	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	F	0.0	<b>0-59</b>