

THE FIELD

The major in Italian studies provides opportunities to study the field of Italian culture from several interdisciplinary perspectives. Students gain knowledge of Italian language and culture together with aspects of Italy's visual and graphic art, cinema, architecture and design, economy, geography, history, institutions, politics, and thought. Italian American studies are also a component. The program offers both scholarly and career orientations.

THE MAJOR AND THE MINOR

In completing their major, students may pursue a broad curriculum in Italian studies, or choose a particular emphasis on a specific subfield or topic in consultation with the undergraduate advisor. Courses treating aspects of Italian culture and society offered in other disciplines may be credited toward the major only with the approval of the undergraduate advisor.

The major in Italian requires 36 credits at the intermediate level (ITAL 230 and 240, or ITAL 246) or above. The following courses are required: Advanced Grammar and Composition (ITAL 371), one introductory course in Italian literature (ITAL 324, comprising the period from the origins to the Renaissance, or ITAL 325, focusing on modern literature). Also, primary majors in Italian are required to take Junior Year Writing (ITAL 303), which constitutes an elective for secondary majors. Of all credits counted toward the major, only six (ordinarily, two classes) can come from courses conducted in English (unless with the undergraduate advisor's permission).

The program also offers a minor in Italian studies, which requires 21 credits. The courses in advanced grammar and composition (ITAL 371) and introduction to literature (ITAL 324 or 325) are equally required, but not the Junior Year Writing (ITAL 303), which can nonetheless be taken as an elective. Of all credits counted toward the minor, only three (ordinarily, one class) can come from courses conducted in English.

FIVE COLLEGES

Students can also take courses pertinent to Italian studies at the Five Colleges. Such courses may be counted toward the major, after consultation with the undergraduate advisor.

HONORS

Please contact the departmental honors coordinator or the undergraduate advisor for information on how to pursue honors opportunities within the major.

STUDY ABROAD

Students are encouraged to attend the study abroad programs in Italy directly affiliated with UMass Amherst. The program in Siena, for instance, administered during the spring semester, offers courses in Italian language (nine credits are usually counted toward the major or the minor) and in other disciplines (art history, but also social and economic history) and puts them in direct contact with the Italian society. The exchange program with the University of Bologna in Forlì gives the more advanced students an opportunity to study directly at an Italian university, alongside their Italian peers.

For those who are interested in teaching or in a professional experience abroad, we also offer post-graduate teaching assistantships in English in the school districts of the region of Lombardy (Milan), Italy. This opportunity provides recent graduates with a different way to live in Italy and get acquainted with the dynamics of institutions and the teaching profession. There are three positions available annually, and preference is given to Italian majors and minors.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A major in Italian studies is a practical and valuable asset for students with a wide range of interests and specializations. Those who pursue careers in the visual arts, music, and architecture will engage with some of the most important artistic movements of the past and of current times, as well as the artists themselves (Renzo Piano, to cite one). Opportunities for employment are also found in art administration, museums, restoration and conservation, interior design, fashion, and the food and hospitality industry.

The closest to Latin of all romance languages, Italian is helpful to students of classics as well, both in understanding texts and in traveling to archaeological sites in Italy. Publishing companies, especially those that market their books abroad or deal in foreign language texts, often seek editors, editorial assistants, and managers with training in Italian. Given Italy's economic and political relevance, students in international relations and the Foreign Service will benefit from Italian proficiency. Also, the opportunities for well-trained bilingual professionals in the tourism and hospitality management industry are plentiful, and many Italian companies doing business in the United States are in need of bilingual employees. Finally, Italian remains one of the most popular languages of study, at both the secondary and university levels, and there is always a need for effective and engaging language educators. The master of arts in teaching (MAT) at UMass Amherst is a post-graduate opportunity that prepares future teachers for success in the classroom after the undergraduate degree.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

The humanities focus on human creativity, endeavor, and culture. The imaginative and creative arts—literary and performing—derive from life and teach about human behavior and constructs of social reality. The history of social, political, and economic systems illuminates and shapes the present and the future. Students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts are expected to broaden their perspectives on individual and cultural expression within their own and other societies, to understand the development and evolution of the discipline of study in relation to the culture from which it emanates, and to learn the methods by which knowledge in the discipline is gained.

Office: 314 Herter
Phone: 413-545-2314
Website: umass.edu/italian