

# QUADERNO CULTURALE

Queens College Italian Program Newsletter | Numero 6 | Department of European Languages and Literatures | Spring 2015

## Guida alla lettura:

# An introduction to Numero sei

Il sesto numero di *Quaderno Culturale* contiene informazioni sui corsi di italiano offerti dal Queens College, interviste a una studentessa e al capo del dipartimento, un articolo di didattica, e le schede delle raccolte di saggi coedite da tre dei nostri professori di Italiano. Inoltre, a Invito alla lettura, si aggiunge da questo numero una nuova rubrica: Andiamo al cinema! Entrambe tengono aggiornati i lettori sui piú recenti fenomeni culturali italiani. Il numero è completato dal resoconto di una conversazione con i proprietari del ristorante Gino's, per la sezione Italicity. Dell'offerta didattica della primavera 2015 viene presentato il programma dei nostri Master: l'Italian Graduate Program offre un Master of Arts e, in collaborazione con la School of Education, anche un Master of Sciences in Education in Italian. In Career Quest, la laureanda Veronica Monte racconta a *Quaderno Culturale* la sua passione per la lingua italiana e il suo desiderio di diventarne un'insegnante, mentre David A. Jones riferisce della sua esperienza a capo del dipartimento di lingue, della sua formazione e dei suoi interessi di ricerca. Tiberio Snaidero presenta alcune tecniche didattiche per sviluppare l'abilità di espressione orale, Luisanna Sardu fa conoscere ai lettori di *Quaderno Culturale* il romanzo di Roberto Saviano Gomorra, Luca Zamparini recensisce invece il film di Paolo Virzì Il capitale umano. Vengono infine evidenziati i numeri special di *Forum Italicum* e di *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, rispettivamente curati da Hermann Haller (con Lori Repetti) e da Eugenia Paulicelli, e il libro *Teaching Medieval and Early Modern Encounters*, editato da Karina F. Attar (con Lynn Shutters). Buona lettura!

This sixth issue of *Quaderno Culturale* provides information about Italian classes offered by Queens College, interviews of a student and a department chair, plus editorial notes about publications edited by three of our Italian professors. Besides our books review column *Invito alla lettura*, we have now a movie section as well: *Andiamo al cinema!* These bring our readers up-to-date news on recent Italian novels and films. This issue also contains in the section *Italicity* an interview with the owners of a restaurant everybody at Queens College knows: Gino's. We also highlight our Master Programs: The Italian Graduate Program offers the Master of Arts degree in Italian and, in cooperation with the Division of Education, the Master of Science in Education in Italian. In *Career Quest*, Italian major Veronica Monte tells *Quaderno Culturale* how her love for the Italian language influenced her career choice: She wants to be an Italian teacher! David A. Jones explains what it means to be the chair of the Department of European Languages and Literatures, and also gives us some insight into his studies and research. Tiberio Snaidero explores some possible tasks an Italian teacher could use to develop the oral skills of students; Luisanna Sardu entertains us with a review of Roberto Saviano's book *Gomorra*, and Luca Zamparini reviews Paolo Virzì's movie *Il capitale umano*. Finally, information about Hermann Haller's edited special issue of *Forum Italicum*, Eugenia Paulicelli's edited special issue of *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, and Karina F. Attar's coedited book *Teaching Medieval and Early Modern Encounters* is provided. Buona lettura!

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# The Queens College Italian Program

Morena Corradi  
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**This semester the Italian Program at Queens College offers 17 undergraduate courses at all levels, from elementary to advanced, in different subjects (literature, civilization, cinema, fashion), taught both in Italian and in English. There are 269 students enrolled in the undergraduate courses.**

To maximize their language experience, Queens College students can major or minor in Italian. Required and elective 200- and 300-level courses give students the opportunity to expand their knowledge. Advanced grammar, translation, business, literature, and culture across periods and genres are just a few of the topics covered in our courses.

## In this issue we introduce you to our Master's Programs!

The Italian Graduate Program offers the **Master of Arts degree in Italian** and, in cooperation with the Division of Education, the **Master of Science in Education in Italian**.

These degrees can lead to teaching careers in secondary education and college, to admission to doctoral programs in Italian or comparative literature as well as to jobs in Italian companies represented in the US.

## MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM

Graduate Adviser: Eugenia Paulicelli, 718-997-5659, eugenia.paulicelli@qc.cuny.edu.

*Requirements for Matriculation:* A strong undergraduate concentration in Italian, consisting normally of a minimum of 20 undergraduate elective credits.

*Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree:* Thirty credits are required for the Master of Arts degree, and a minimum of 24 credits must be taken in the Italian language. The remaining credits may be taken with permission in a discipline other than English related to Italian

studies. The MA Program in Italian presents graduate-level courses for students who want to specialize in Italian. Every semester, students can register for two graduate courses (700-level).

Courses cover numerous aspects of literature from the medieval through the contemporary periods, viewed through various methods of literary criticism and through cultural studies. Courses are also given in the history of the language, language and society in contemporary Italy, syntax, advanced translation, civilization, cinema, and Italian American Studies. Seminars are set aside for methodology, selected authors or literary topics, and special problems.

The MA Program also offers an MA-level track in Italian American Studies as part of the MALS (Master of Arts in Liberal Studies) program. The course titles are Problematics in Italian/American Culture; Italian Americans and Ethnic Relations: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Interculturalism; Italian American Literature; Italian/American Cinema: Production and Representation.

Advisor: Dean Anthony J. Tamburri, anthony.tamburri@qc.cuny.edu  
See <http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/calandra/education/courses/italian-american-studies-courses>.

## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Graduate Advisor in Italian: Hermann Haller, hermann.haller@qc.cuny.edu  
Graduate Advisors in SEYS: Jacqueline Davis, 718-997-5176, jacqueline.davis@qc.cuny.edu; Jennifer Eddy, 718-997-5659, jennifer.eddy@qc.cuny.edu

The Master of Science in Education Program responds to the needs of teachers and prospective teachers of foreign languages. It combines six



courses in Italian, language/linguistics, literature, and culture with five courses in foreign language and professional education. The courses in language/linguistics, literature, and culture are offered by the Department of European Languages and Literatures; those in foreign language education are offered by the Division of Education. For admission requirements to Secondary Education & Youth Services programs, visit <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Degrees/Education/SEYS/Programs/Pages/ForeignLanguageEducation.aspx>.

*Requirements for Matriculation:* In addition to the general admission requirements stated on page 18 of the Graduate Bulletin, applicants should consult the advisors in both the ELL and SEYS Departments regarding the prerequisite courses required for certification.

*Requirements for the Master of Science Degree:* The 30 credits required for the degree are to be distributed among Italian and SEYS (Secondary Education & Youth Services) courses. Students should meet with the graduate advisers as soon as possible in order to plan their program of study and submit it for approval.

## Some Past Highlights of the Italian Program

Several faculty members currently teaching at American universities received their MA degrees from Queens College, among them:

Fiorenza Weinapple (PhD, NYU), who taught at NYU, Yale, and now teaches at Princeton; Florence Russo (PhD, NYU) and Annalisa Sacca (PhD, NYU), both teaching at St. John's University; Damiana Testa, Italian teacher and coordinator of IACE Language NYC.

Other students who completed their MA degrees at Queens College went on to other careers, such as Josephine Belli, who heads the Columbus Club, and Vincenza Kelly, a Marketing and Promotion Officer at the Italian Trade Commission, NYC. A recent graduate of the program, Giuseppe Bruno-Chomin, was admitted to the PhD Program in Italian at the University of Pennsylvania (issue #5 of *Quaderno Culturale* featured an interview with Giuseppe). Marina Colajanni-Guthenberg is teaching at St. John's University, Manhattan College,

and John Jay College, while Alessandra Galassi is teaching at Pace University and Bronx Community College.

Most important, numerous students have gone on to teach Italian at high schools in the New York metropolitan area and beyond (as far as Alaska), some serving as department chairs of their institution. Among recent QC graduates there are Angelica Brunetti, who is teaching Italian at H. Frank Carey High School, and Leonardo Rivera, who is teaching Italian and Spanish at Baldwin Senior High School.

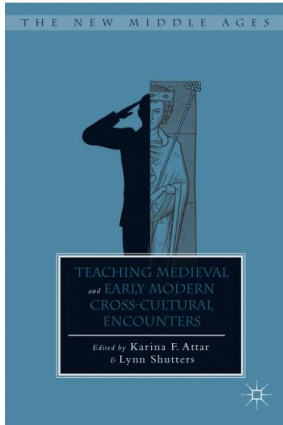
In past years, several visiting professors have taught in the Italian Graduate Program, among them the late Prof. Giuseppe Di Scipio (Hunter College), Prof. Anne Paolucci (former chairwoman of the CUNY Board of Trustees), Prof. Wayne Storey (Fordham University, now professor at Indiana University), Prof. Franco Fido (who was at Brown at the time, later taught at Harvard). Many of them, mostly Dante scholars, taught at QC for one semester, usually to replace an Italian faculty member on leave. In addition, numerous notable

writers and prestigious scholars have lectured at Queens College over the years, among them Giorgio Bassani, Pier Paolo Pasolini (during one of his visits to NY), Pap Khouma (who pioneered Italophone migrant literature), Prof. Carlo Ossola, Prof. Guido Guglielmi, Prof. Tullio De Mauro, Prof. Raffaele Simone, Prof. Pietro Trifone, Prof. Lorenzo Coveri, Prof. Alfredo Stussi, Prof. Giovanni Nencioni, Prof. Luisa Passerini, Prof. Lina Bolzoni, and, more recently, Prof. Roberto Dolci and Prof. Margherita Ganeri, all from Italian universities. Prof. Francesca Billiani from the University of Manchester also lectured at Queens College, as have many professors from the US: Prof. John Welle, Prof. Anthony Oldcorn, Prof. Zygmunt Baranski, Prof. David Ward, Prof. Giancarlo Lombardi, and Prof. Patrizia La Trecchia among them.

## More to come on the MA Program's future incentives and plans in the next issue!

\*We thank Professor Hermann Haller and Professor Eugenia Paulicelli for their contribution to this section.





## Teaching Medieval and Early Modern Cross-Cultural Encounters

Edited by Karina F. Attar, Lynn Shutters

Hardcover 9781137481337 £55.00 / \$90.00

This volume of essays explores the challenges and rewards of teaching medieval and early modern cross-cultural encounters in undergraduate and graduate classrooms. Medievalists and early modernists have increasingly focused their research on cross-cultural encounters, profoundly transforming stale, inaccurate portrayals of these eras as culturally homogeneous and European. These twelve essays bring this research to bear on our pedagogical practices. Contributors describe their selection and use of historical, literary, and artistic content in teaching cross-cultural encounters, and provide strategies for overcoming the practical and conceptual challenges this material presents. Collectively traversing disciplinary, periodic, geographic, and linguistic boundaries, essays address topics ranging from the intersections of race, religion, gender, and nation in cross-cultural encounters to the use of popular culture and new media as pedagogical tools. Crucially, contributors reflect on how medieval and early modern cross-cultural encounters travel through time, accrue new meanings, and continue to shape our actions and thoughts today.

Karina F. Attar is Assistant Professor of Italian at Queens College, CUNY, USA. Lynn Shutters is Special Assistant Professor of English at Colorado State University, USA.

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## From Sicilian dialect to academic Italian: An interview with Veronica Monte, an Italian major in her senior year at Queens College



**QC:** You have an Italian last name. Are your parents both of Italian origin?

**VM:** Yes, my parents both come from Sicily, from a small town in the province of Agrigento called Caltabellotta. It's up on the mountains and is absolutely gorgeous. My parents met and got married over there.

**QC:** What has been the relevance of Italian in your growing up? Is there a particularly significant or even funny incident linked to your speaking Italian as a child?

**VM:** Growing up, my father barely spoke English. He was 18 years old when he came to America with my mother, and in the house my brother and I were speaking Italian to my father and English with my mother. My parents came to the United States in 1986 and spoke Sicilian, an Italian dialect. As I grew up, I always thought I spoke Italian, and boy, was I wrong. Italian people would speak to me and I would look at them wondering, man, what kind of Italian are they speaking? My parents would

tell me that they didn't speak correctly, meanwhile it was me the whole time.

**QC:** When did you decide to major in Italian and why?

**VM:** My first year in college, 2007, I knew I wanted to take Italian. I wanted to learn how to read, write, and learn the history of basically everything that had to do with Italy. When I first enrolled in Italian III, I started saying words in Sicilian, which I thought was Italian, and the professor would look at me like I had two heads. Seventeen years of my life, I always thought I spoke and knew Italian. Since Italian III, I knew I wanted to learn not only the proper way of speaking Italian, but to learn about the Italian culture as well.

**QC:** Can you tell us something about your experience as a student of Italian at QC?

**VM:** Taking Italian here at QC has been one of the best experiences I have encountered. The staff has been nothing but wonderful and helpful, and was always there to help out the students. When I took Italian 204, I was scared because we were introduced to a novel. I was scared because I didn't know how to read a book in another language and I knew it was going to be a challenge. I went up to the professor and told her my concern, and she stood by me every step of the way. She would email us vocabulary words and send us questions both in English and Italian so we could get used to seeing the words. The faculty were there for us for anything, and I think that made my experience taking Italian even better.

**QC:** Is there anything you would recommend to a student who is thinking about studying Italian in college?

**VM:** Take Italian as a minor or major. It's a great experience and you won't be disappointed. The entire Italian staff is there for you from beginning to end and will provide any feedback necessary. They break up the work for you to get a better understanding. If there are students falling behind, the professors will help them step by step. Throughout my years here at QC, I loved going to my Italian professors because I knew I could count on them for help.

**QC:** You are currently doing your student teaching. How is it going? Also, is there anything in particular that you learned at QC that is proving useful now? Conversely, is there anything you wish you had known/been taught before starting student teaching?

**VM:** I love student teaching. Everything I learned in QC has been helpful because the children learn everything. Being able to help them out with all of the subjects is a great feeling. These students would sometimes look at me when I give them extra help like, "How did you know that?" I can't wait to get into my own classroom and start teaching. It's a great feeling.

**QC:** What relevance does Italian culture have in your life today?

**VM:** When I used to come home from class, I would talk with my parents. It was great. I was able to appreciate the culture more and look at the background with more knowledge. I travel to Italy almost every year to visit my family in Sicily. Since I have only been to Sicily, with my knowledge of Italian now I feel comfortable traveling and visiting northern Italy, to get the experience of seeing all—well, maybe not all—but most of Italy. I would also like to visit other countries in Europe. I want to learn and see more.

**QC: You are about to graduate this spring. What's next?**

**VM:** I want to continue my education and will probably go for my master's right away. I am hoping to get a job in an elementary school and hopefully get into an after-school program to teach Italian to children. Teaching children a language is amazing because they are interested in learning something new. Last year in one of the classrooms, the teacher told me to teach them a word every day, and they loved it. Seeing them enjoy it made me love doing what I do even more.

**QC: Thank you very much, Veronica. We hope to have you as a student in our MA program next year! Good luck with your future and your teaching!**

# QUADERNO CULTURALE

Numero 6 Spring 2015

A project of the Queens College Italian Program  
(Department of European Languages and Literatures)

**Project coordinator:**  
Tiberio Snaidero

**Editors:**  
Karina F. Attar • Morena Corradi • Luisanna Sardu  
Tiberio Snaidero • Luca Zamparini

## Andiamo al cinema!

*Il capitale umano* di Pietro Virzi

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Dopo il trionfo de *La Grande Bellezza*, l'ANICA (Associazione Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche Audiovisive) ha quest'anno proposto come candidato italiano all'oscar per il miglior film straniero *Il capitale umano* di Pietro Virzi. Il film è stato poi escluso dalla cinquina finale, a conferma di come Virzi, regista consacrato e molto apprezzato in patria, faccia fatica a imporsi fuori dai confini nazionali. Ciò è attribuibile al carattere prettamente nazionale del suo cinema, in cui le dinamiche umane e sociali rappresentate non riescono a ergersi su di un piano universale capace di trascendere l'ambiente in cui vengono raccontate.

*Il capitale umano* vuole essere un tentativo di ampliare l'orizzonte narrativo, utilizzando come punto di partenza l'omonimo romanzo dello scrittore statunitense Stephen Amidon. Nonostante Virzi abbia trasposto gli eventi nel grigiore della provincia brianzola (regione a nord di Milano), quella che vediamo è una terra

trasfigurata e resa ostile, lontana da qualsiasi regionalismo e trasformata in qualcosa di più ampio e trascendentale. Scelta ravvisabile anche nell'abbandono dei soliti toni agro-dolci in favore di un'atmosfera più noir, che vede come motore narrativo un omicidio che agisce da collante tra i diversi personaggi. Tra questi troviamo Dino Ossola (Fabrizio Bentivoglio), avido agente immobiliare che riesce a entrare nel *trust* di Giovanni Bernaschi (Fabrizio Gifuni), squalo senza scrupoli dell'alta finanza, la cui famiglia è composta dall'insoddisfatta moglie Carla (Valeria Bruni Tedeschi) e dal figlio Massimiliano, che ha una relazione proprio con la figlia di Dino Ossola.

Il risultato è un film che si allontana dai territori che Virzi ha prediletto sin dal suo esordio nel 1994, e che per questo si sviluppa con un passo un po' incerto, soprattutto nella costruzione dei personaggi, che risultano, infatti, poco definiti e tendenti alla caratterizzazione stereotipata e, nonostante alcune prove



attoriali eccellenti, sono nel complesso poco convincenti.

A prescindere da queste considerazioni, il film può essere considerato il primo passo di Virzi verso nuove forme espressive e narrative, e sicuramente lascia presagire buoni auspici sulla sua produzione futura.

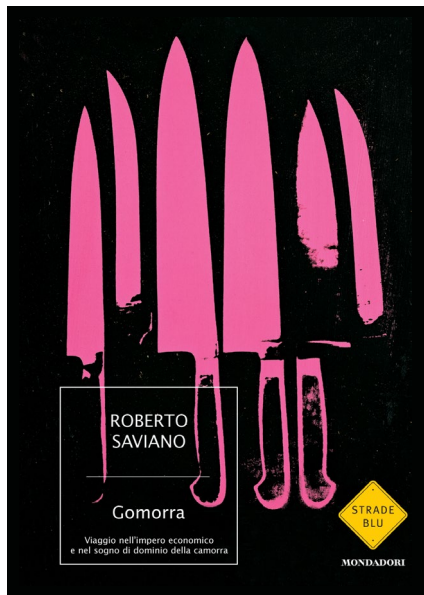
Nel frattempo vale la pena recuperare la sua filmografia—quasi completamente reperibile nel mercato statunitense—una testimonianza davvero unica sull'Italia degli ultimi vent'anni.

# Invito Alla Lettura

## Using Words to Denounce Crime: Roberto Saviano's Endeavor against the Italian Mafia

Luisanna Sardu

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Robert Saviano's *Gomorra* is certainly not the first book to shine a spotlight on the Italian Mafia, government corruption, assassination, and illegal drug and human trafficking in Italy. Leonardo Sciascia (1921–1989), Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975), Andrea Camilleri (1925–present), and many others have spoken and written extensively on the topic. But Saviano's work stirred the interest of the international literary and political world. Indeed, his global best-selling book was turned into an award-winning film, which premiered in the United States in 2008.

According to the author himself, the success of *Gomorra* derives not only from the appalling portrayal of the Camorra's wide networking of business connections, but also from the micro-history of men and women sewn into the intricate web of the Mafia. It is quite difficult to summarize the plethora of interlocking stories that weave together to form a complex and comprehensive

image for the viewer. As an investigative reporter, Saviano provides detailed descriptions of real-life experiences that break through the wall of fiction. Indeed, his work prompts the reader to ponder the line between reality and fantasy. While the Italian audience, particularly those from the south of Italy, will recognize certain motifs—such as the drug wars between rival clans in Naples, the wasted landscape of garbage and cement, and the murdered bodies in their streets—readers on the other side of the ocean are forced to reimagine organized crime in Italy. Saviano's *Gomorra* is not Mario Puzo's glamorized *Godfather*, or the alluring biography of John Gotti. It is part of what Wu Ming, Carlo Lucarelli, and Valerio Evangelisti define as “the New Italian Epic,” placing Saviano's work into a body of literature by emerging and established authors who, beginning in the 1990s, fundamentally shifted the dialogue surrounding the Italian Mafia. Their writing styles are not uniform, and subvert the register of traditional prose. As Wu Ming confirms, *Gomorra* does not fall neatly into any previous literary genre. It is neither reportage nor a novel; it is neither chronicle nor fiction. Perhaps it is instead the result of the author's experimental writing. Saviano's narrative eye sees and connects different perspectives of a dark reality. But ultimately, *Gomorra* is best described as the product of his anger.

The author confesses in an interview with Frontline/World Report's Carola Mamberto to having “a desire for vendetta, in the true sense of the term, against an extremely ferocious world that involves everybody. We are all part of this mechanism just by keeping quiet.”<sup>1</sup> Having crafted a work

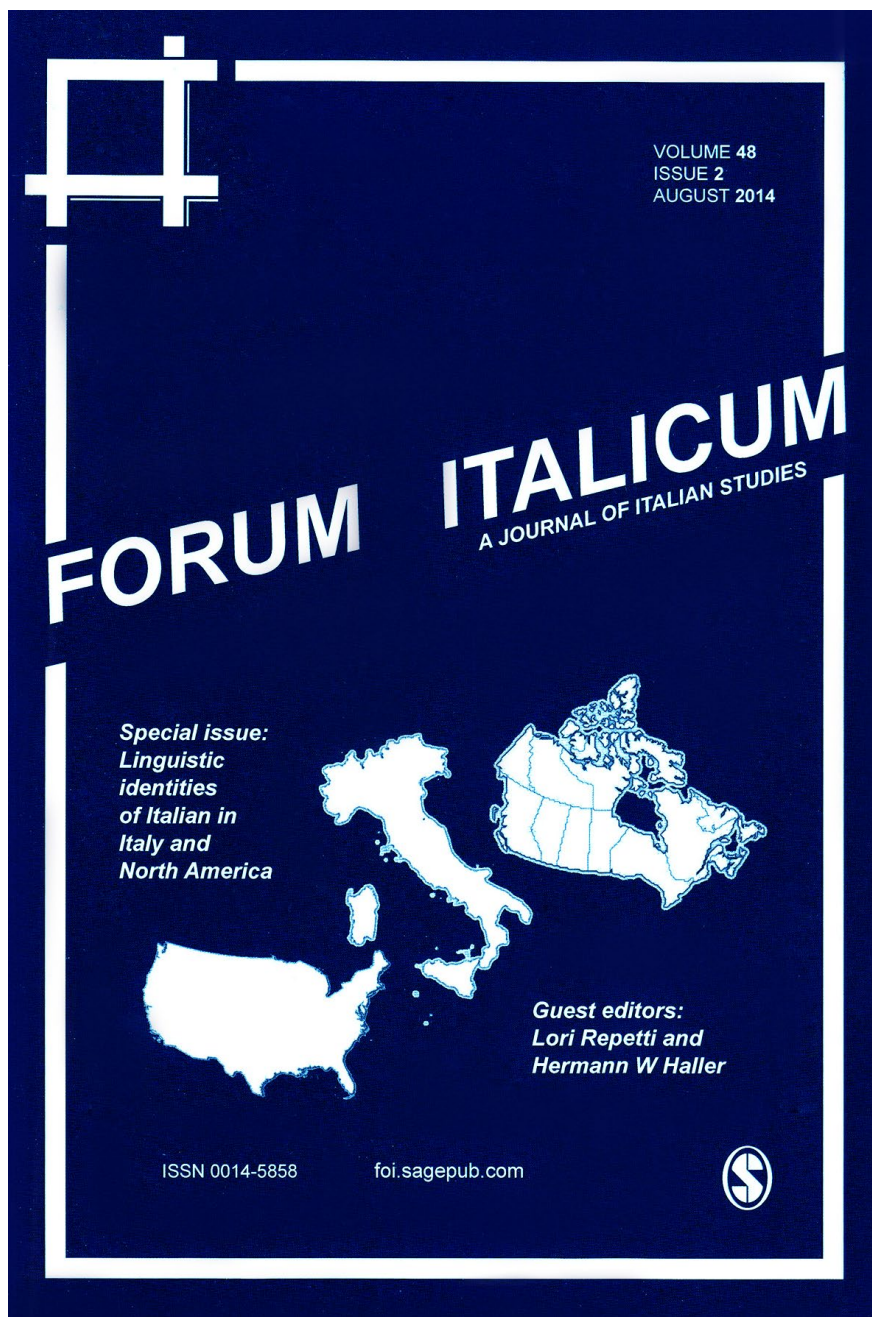
motivated by ethical and political principles, the author never imagined such a success, nor did he expect that he would ultimately have to live under 24/7 protection. The exposé of the Camorra in Campania was not a concern for organized crime until Saviano's book sold more than 100,000 copies. Soon, the word spread and the attention of the media turned to the Camorra.

The resonating power of Saviano's words is not limited to his award-winning book, as evidenced by the fact that it was turned into a highly praised, if slightly reimagined, film. Though Saviano participated in the writing of the film, *Gomorra* the movie remains largely detached from the book's content. The director's camera lens is instead focused on leaving the viewer with a clear image of the daily monstrosities in Naples. In order to obtain a more striking effect, the director casted actors from the streets, some of them experienced criminals, and asked his actors to recite in Neapolitan dialect. Saviano's best-selling investigative book was also turned into a TV series, *Gomorrah*, which was launched in May 2014.

Before throwing your attention to visual secondary sources, I invite you to read the original primary source. Roberto Saviano's *Gomorra* carries the weight of an uncomfortable reality, yet one that is simply too big to avert your eyes from. You can purchase the Italian edition or the English translation at [www.mondadoristore.it](http://www.mondadoristore.it).

*Buona Lettura!*

<sup>1</sup> For a complete reading of Roberto Saviano's interview see link below: <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/italy801/interview/saviano.html>



**A Special Issue of the journal *Forum Italicum* on “Linguistic Identities in Italy and North America,” edited by Hermann Haller (Queens College & Graduate Center, CUNY) and Lori Repetti (SUNY Stony Brook)**

Today, Italian is used across all social strata of the Italian peninsula as never before. At the same time, despite their declining presence, Italy’s dialects and regional traditions are still alive, often as the languages of family and friends, and used in a diglossic relationship

with Italian and with widely disparate sociolinguistic patterns. Thus, one observes different and dynamically evolving linguistic identities in Italian society. Linguistic identities also vary in the Diasporas, notably in North America, due to Italian immigration over the past century and beyond. Dialects of various forms and in contact with English have survived up to our days, despite pervasive language shift and attrition. In addition, the new immigration from Italy to North America, and immigrants from many parts of the globe to Italy, as well as commercial

exchange, travel, the Internet and the media all contribute to gradually changing linguistic landscapes in these areas.

The special issue explores the theme of linguistic identities with contributions by eight North American Italian linguists. Of these, four focus on aspects of Italian in Italy and four on Italian in North America. Mario Saltarelli (USC) discusses linguistic unity and disunity with reference to Italy’s *Questione della lingua*, while Marcel Danesi (U. Toronto) writes about new forms of identity constructed in the context of computer-mediated communication. Lori Repetti discusses the changing forms and roles of dialects and dialect varieties, and Thomas Cravens (U. Wisconsin) describes the ambiguities of the designation of regional and minority languages in the European Charter. For the North American contexts, Hermann Haller discusses evolving linguistic identities among second-generation Italian American youths through linguistic autobiographies, while Anna De Fina (Georgetown U.) shows how Italian words and expressions are used in Italian American communities as symbols for identity construction. Christina Tortora (College of Staten Island & Graduate Center, CUNY) discusses the disparate use of the terms “Italian” and “dialect” by both linguists and speakers in the Italian American community, arguing for the integration of the discourse on dialects in Italian Studies. And Luciana Fellin (Duke U.) documents strong Italian language and cultural loyalty in a group of young professionals who immigrated recently to America. Three book reviews conclude the volume, among them one by Daniela D’Eugenio (Graduate Center, CUNY) on Silvia Morgana’s *Storia linguistica di Milano*, another by Emily Romanello (U. Pennsylvania) on Massimo Vedovelli’s *Storia linguistica dell’emigrazione italiana nel mondo*. The issue—*Forum Italicum* 48/2, August 2014—is available in CUNY libraries and can also be purchased at [foi.sagepub.com](http://foi.sagepub.com).



# Italicity

## Gino's of Kissena Pizzeria and Restaurant

Karina F. Attar

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*Gino's, conveniently located just across the street from Queens College, is by far the most popular dining spot among students, faculty, and staff. The restaurant has been co-owned and managed by cousins Anthony and Alfredo Molinari since 2000. We had the pleasure of speaking with Anthony and Alfredo about the history of their family and of Gino's.*



**QC:** Can you tell us a little bit about your family and how you came to open Gino's?

**Alfredo Molinari:** My father Alfredo moved from Salerno (in the province of Naples) to New York in 1965, when he was 15 years old. Three years later, at age 18, he owned and ran his first restaurant, Gaby's Pizzeria and Restaurant on Hillside Avenue in Queens Village, with his friends Stefano, John, and Guido LoGiudice. In around 1980, my father opened the first Gino's Pizzeria—Gino's of Great Neck. He later opened two more locations: Gino's of Manhasset and Gino's of Port Washington.

**Anthony Molinari:** Back in Salerno, we were a farming family, so my uncle Alfredo and father Antonio's generation had a lot of experience working with natural, organic ingredients. My father Antonio joined his brother Alfredo in New York in the late 1960s. He came

over by ship, and he often tells us the story of his 14-day journey, the crazy storms they experienced, and how he really thought he wouldn't survive the trip. In NYC, my dad first worked as a mechanic, a butcher, and a construction worker.

**QC:** So there were several Gino's restaurants before this location on 65-01 Kissena Boulevard. How did you both decide to open this space?

**Anthony:** I have worked in my family's restaurants all my life. As a kid, I only wanted to play soccer in my spare time, but my uncle Alfredo brought me in as a busboy and I fell in love with the restaurant business. I told Uncle Alfredo, "Throw me in the kitchen, I want to learn how to make pizza!" When I finished high school, I enrolled at Nassau Community College. In the meantime, I was working my way up in the family business. By the end of my first year in college, I was working

45 hours a week in the restaurants and I knew I wanted to dedicate myself to that full time. One day, I sat my parents down and told them, "I'm quitting college, I want to work in the restaurants full time, and I will pay you back for all the tuition costs so far!" My dad Antonio spoke to his brother Alfredo about this and asked him to help me find a location. I signed the lease when I was 19, and a year later we opened Gino's of Kissena. Since then, my cousin Alfredo and I have also opened Gino's of Whitestone and other locations. The family also owns several Alfredo Pizzerias across NYC.

**Alfredo:** I have been working in the family restaurants since I was seven years old. I worked on weekends at first. By the time I was ten, I knew how to make a pizza. I attended Holy Cross for high school and then Nassau Community College, where I majored in business administration. Then I went to the New York Restaurant School of Manhattan, where I learned so much about food and cuisine beyond pizza. After Anthony and I opened Gino's of Kissena, we opened more branches, like Gino's of Flushing on Parsons Blvd. Our family also owns several Amalfi Ristorante businesses, for instance, in Glen Cove and Port Washington.

**QC:** Where do you get your produce and other ingredients? Do you import any food from Italy?

**Anthony:** At home we have a full garden and only eat our own vegetables. I love working with fresh, organic ingredients. We also enjoy spending time in upstate New York, where we sometimes hunt for wild animals as our family enjoys eating natural meats.

Most of the produce for the restaurants is either imported from Italy or locally sourced in New York. Our tomatoes are grown in Salerno, and canned and imported by Brancianelli. In the summer we bring huge bags of fresh basil from our garden into the restaurants.

**Alfredo:** We use the best mozzarella brands: Grande and Polly-O. Our olive oil is imported from Italy. All the ingredients that go into our salads, pastas, pizzas, and other dishes are fresh, organic, local—the best we can find!

**QC: You have a lot of regular, long-time employees. How many people work in Gino's at any one time?**

**Anthony:** We have about 15 employees—cooks, waiters, busboys and delivery boys—working during our busiest periods, such as during the school semester.

**QC: When I eat lunch at Gino's, it's always busy! And it sounds like you have been really successful—several restaurant locations, some that have been around for decades and are still going strong. Is it easy to make a profit, and what are your future plans for the family business?**

**Anthony:** We are both really ambitious and we really love this work. Honestly, yes—we have been successful, but the cost of running your own restaurant business is sometimes unpredictable. The price of certain items, like lettuce and meat, can sometimes go up and down just like the stock market. Produce from our regular distributor recently went up by 150% in a week! If it rains, if the harvest is bad, that affects the cost, and then the prices on our menus also go up of course. Last year we completely renovated the restaurant and expanded our menu. I guess in the future I'd like us to open more locations, but for now we are quite busy already between work and family!

**QC: Tell us a little about your regular clients.**

**Anthony:** We have a lot of regular patrons. Many, of course, are from the Queens College community—students,

faculty, and staff. Faculty and staff tend to order in more—they work while they eat. Students usually come in to the restaurant. Even the previous and current Queens College presidents have eaten lunch here on several occasions. But we also serve the local Queens community. And we know locals come here for the food and excellent service. There's not much else around here, no laundromats or grocery stores, for example. People don't come here to eat a slice while they wait for their laundry. They come here specifically for Gino's. Delivery orders are also very popular.

**QC: What are Gino's best-selling dishes?**

**Anthony:** The most popular items on our pizza menu are Bacon Chicken Ranch and Buffalo. The regular cheese pizza and our Sicilian pizza are also staple favorites. Our famous Gino's salads and our chicken soup are also very popular. The most popular pasta dish by far is Penne alla Vodka.



**Alfredo:** Don't forget Chicken San Remo, one of our signature chicken dishes, and our homemade meatballs and lasagna—those are also always in demand!

**QC: You both have your own families now. Do your children like to help in the restaurant? How would you react if they wanted to follow in your footsteps?**

**Anthony:** My wife runs a high-end woodworking business. They've had some really high-profile clients, including Robert de Niro! When we renovated Gino's of Kissena this year—we redid the ceiling, the floors in porcelain imported from Italy—my wife's company did all the new woodwork. We have two daughters, seven and five years old. They do like to help in the kitchen. Honestly, I don't know what I'd say if they wanted to work in the family business someday. I'd like them to focus on their education first, but if it's really what they want, I will support them no matter what.

**Alfredo:** My wife and I have three kids—two girls, 12 and 10 years old, and a five-year-old boy named Alfredo. Our girls just love to come in to help out in the restaurants. They help to clean tables and take phone and online orders. They also love going to school, and we really emphasize the importance of getting a good education to them. I guess if our kids wanted to go into the family business someday, I would support that. But part of me hopes they develop career interests in other fields, only because I know that running a restaurant means working very long hours. Either way, I'd like for all my kids to focus on their education and go to college before they make any career decisions.

**QC: Thank you for speaking with *Quaderno Culturale*, Anthony and Alfredo!**

<http://ginosofkissena.com>



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Anche in pratica non mancano gli studenti che al termine delle rispettive classi, elementari o intermedie che siano, raggiungano i *learning outcomes* previsti al termine di ogni corso, e sappiano dunque comunicare per iscritto ed oralmente al livello atteso. Sono gli studenti che prendono sul serio le raccomandazioni presenti sul sillabo: frequentano con regolarità le lezioni, eseguono i compiti assegnati per casa, lavorano attivamente in classe sia nelle attività individuali che in quelle a coppie o in piccoli gruppi, si sforzano di usare l'italiano che vengono mano a mano imparando...

Se la motivazione e la diligenza dello studente sono dunque condizioni necessarie per il suo successo nel corso, queste non risultano però sufficienti. Il docente deve infatti fare la sua parte utilizzando tecniche didattiche efficaci, soprattutto se tra gli obiettivi figura anche l'abilità di espressione orale.

Quest'ultima è un'abilità particolarmente difficile da sviluppare. Un numero rispettabile di studenti riesce, già dopo qualche settimana, a scrivere brevi testi che contengono il lessico e le strutture grammaticali studiate. Non è nemmeno infrequente che l'insegnante, magari alternando l'inglese all'italiano, riesca a farsi comprendere anche nella lingua *target* dopo poche lezioni, grazie all'uso di *cognates*, di supporti visuali, e alla ripetizione sistematica di *chunks* linguistici che riproducono determinate funzioni e sono legati ad un contesto noto.

Parlare però è un'altra cosa, soprattutto perché il rischio di fare quella che viene percepita come una "brutta figura" è elevato, e a nessuno piace "perdere la faccia". Si alza insomma quello che Krashen chiama "filtro affettivo", e compito dell'istruttore è organizzare il lavoro in classe in modo da creare le condizioni che mettano a proprio agio gli apprendenti. In quest'ottica risulta decisivo proporre attività a coppie e in piccoli gruppi, variando la loro composizione e mettendo in chiaro con gli studenti che, quando l'obiettivo dichiarato della sessione è quello di esercitare l'espressione orale, l'*accuracy* passa in secondo piano rispetto alla *fluency*.

I libri di testo che circolano nei corsi *undergraduate* di solito propongono anche esercizi di conversazione. Succede tuttavia che tali esercizi non tengano conto dei fattori emotivi che possono negativamente influenzare la prestazione degli studenti. I principali sono la paura di sbagliare, il timore di parlare in pubblico, la sensazione di inadeguatezza. È dunque consigliabile procedere in modo graduale, non solo nell'ambito del corso, ma pure all'interno della singola attività. Una semplice ma efficace pratica didattica per esercitare oralmente l'italiano in un corso elementare (I11 e I12) può svilupparsi nel modo seguente: 1) Invitare gli studenti a rispondere individualmente e per iscritto a una serie di domande che si riferiscono al tema del capitolo, ad esempio: "Sentirsi bene" (*Cosa mangi di solito? Cosa fai per stare in buona salute?, ...*); 2) formare quindi delle coppie, ed assegnare il compito di rivolgersi vicendevolmente le domande a cui hanno appena risposto, aiutandosi con i quaderni su cui hanno svolto l'esercizio; 3) costituire piccoli gruppi di tre o quattro studenti, che in questa fase avranno a disposizione solo le domande del primo *step* dell'attività, ma non potranno consultare le risposte da loro precedentemente date per iscritto. Durante la conversazione, il docente si aggirerà per l'aula con aria distratta, aggregandosi a questo o a quel gruppo per pochi secondi per partecipare *nonchalant* alle piccole conversazioni in corso. Fornirà anche supporto linguistico, se richiesto, o correggerà col sorriso sulle labbra gli strafalcioni più sensazionali.

Nei corsi di livello intermedio (203 e 204) l'asticella degli obiettivi attesi si alza, e, se agli studenti in classe si insegna meno grammatica, è perché si organizzano regolarmente attività per fare usare la lingua in comunicazioni scritte e orali. Si utilizzano testi (anche letterari) più complessi, spezzoni di film o materiali scaricati da Internet. A questo livello risultano particolarmente efficaci le attività di drammatizzazione. Partendo dalla lettura e dall'analisi di un testo, ad esempio un racconto—*Curry di pollo* di Laila Wadia trovo vada benissimo,

anche per gli spunti di riflessione (inter)culturale che fornisce—si sviluppano compiti di riscrittura, di discussione e, appunto, di drammatizzazione. Bisogna innanzitutto assicurare la comprensione di quanto viene letto, approntando/ facendo approntare repertori lessicali e servendosi, nell'ottica di un insegnamento differenziato ed individualizzato, anche della traduzione in inglese del testo originale italiano. Quando siamo certi che tutti gli studenti abbiano pienamente compreso la dinamica della storia—nel caso di *Curry di pollo* si tratta di un'adolescente indiana (Anandita) immigrata in Italia che invita a cena un'amica e il ragazzo italiani, ma si vergogna della propria famiglia—e dopo che la classe è stata abituata a lavorare secondo i principi del *cooperative learning*, possiamo assegnare il compito seguente, che trovo adatto ad un corso 204:

- a) *Lavora in gruppo con quattro compagni per scrivere una scena della cena. Cercate di trovare dialoghi o azioni che permettano di mostrare prospettive diverse su determinati temi. Tenete presente, come modello, il racconto "Curry di pollo", di Laila Wadia, che abbiamo letto in classe.*

*Ogni gruppo può continuare il racconto di Laila Wadia "Curry di pollo", ambientando dunque la scena a casa di Anandita; o immaginare un incontro a casa dei genitori di Marco; oppure, ancora, creare una scena con personaggi completamente nuovi, ambientata in un luogo scelto dal gruppo.*

- b) *Dopo aver provato insieme ai compagni, leggete o recitate la scena di fronte alla classe.*

Compiti simili possono venir proposti con regolarità anche in un corso esplicitamente votato alla conversazione (223 *Italian advanced conversation*). In alternativa ai racconti, si può incentrare il seminario su una rassegna di film italiani che per il loro contenuto e stile narrativo abbiano buone probabilità di venire apprezzati dagli studenti e che, allo stesso tempo, favoriscano un approccio didattico creativo.

Personalmente mi sono trovato bene con i seguenti film, che ho mostrato integralmente ma “a puntate”, e sempre con i sottotitoli in italiano: *L'ultimo bacio*, *Baciami ancora* e *Ricordati di me*, di Gabriele Muccino; *La giusta distanza*, di Carlo Mazzacurati; *Mine vaganti*, di Ferzan Özpetek.

A conclusione di questo articolo riporto due compiti che ho assegnato dopo la visione di *Ricordati di me*. Il primo è stato svolto in classe, supportato da un glossario anche bilingue (es.: rinunciare a/to give up), ed è, come nel caso del task legato a *Curry di pollo*, un'attività di

drammatizzazione. Il secondo è stato invece assegnato come compito per casa, ma ha trovato la sua esecuzione in classe, nella lezione successiva.

### I. Pranzo di famiglia (*in classe*):

In gruppo, preparate la sceneggiatura (*screenplay*) di una scena di un pranzo di famiglia con i genitori (Carlo e Giulia) e i figli (Paolo e Valentina). Ognuno parla dei propri impegni (scolastici, professionali, personali, ...), ma i famigliari non sono molto comprensivi (*supportive*), anzi sono piuttosto polemici ... Poi, ognuno impersona uno dei personaggi, e ... si recita insieme la scenetta!

### II. Seduta dallo psicanalista (*per casa*)

Immedesimati nel personaggio che hai già interpretato nel “pranzo di famiglia” in classe, immagina di essere sul lettino dello psicanalista (*psychiatrist's couch*) e di raccontare tutto quello che non ti soddisfa della tua vita ...

## Professori Dal Vivo

### An interview with David A. Jones



Chair of the Department of European Languages and Literatures and Associate Professor of French, David A. Jones joined the faculty at Queens College in 2002 after earning his PhD in French at the University of Wisconsin. His research interests include queer theory, feminism, 19- and 20th-century French theatre,

and 20th- and 21st-century French novels. Among his publications are the book *Blurring Categories of Identity in Contemporary French Literature: Jean Genet's Subversive Discourse* (preface by Lawrence R. Schehr. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), the articles “Jean Genet et l'homosexualité dans la presse étatsunienne, 1959–1974,” *Etudes Françaises*, Spring 2015 (in press); “La Liberté dans l'évasion de l'identité homosexuelle: Une Lecture de Querelle de Brest,” *Aimez-vous le queer?* (CRIN 44), Ed. Lawrence R. Schehr. (Amsterdam/New York: CRIN, 2005), 63–73; “Between Collaboration and Resistance: Jean Cocteau and the Occupation Press.” *Contemporary French Civilization*, 21(2), Summer/Fall 2007: 139-160; “Jean Genet,” in *The Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, Ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas (Macmillan, 2007), 632-634; “Jean Cocteau,” in *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: Twentieth-Century French Dramatists*, Ed. Mary Anne O'Neil (Columbia, SC: Brucoli, Clark, Layman, 2006), 120–137.

**QC: You have been Chair of the ELL Department for five years. What have you enjoyed the most about this role, and does it present any new challenges?**

**DJ:** The most interesting thing about being chair of a department such as ours is that we teach five different languages, as well as literature and culture courses. I like interacting with the students of the various language programs and with the other professors in the department. It provides for a more varied experience than one might find in a French or Italian department.

**QC: You joined the Queens College faculty in 2002. How have the college and the ELL Department changed in your time here?**

**DJ:** Following the recommendations of a self-study report in 2000 headed by Hermann Haller, four new hires were approved for the department, expanding the department tenure-track

faculty by a third. This helped bolster programs in French, Modern Greek, and Russian. A new hire was made in Italian soon after that, and we were able to make subsequent hires in Italian and French. Departmental enrollment has grown steadily over the last few years, and we are offering more courses than when I arrived.

**QC: Is there a course you enjoy teaching in particular, and why?**

**DJ:** My favorite course to teach is FR 228, Advanced Literary Analysis. This is the course in which French majors are introduced to literary theory, which is one of my areas of expertise. We have studied feminism, deconstruction, queer theory, francophone theory, existentialism—the major intellectual movements of the 20th century in France.

**QC: What originally drew you to study French?**

**DJ:** My maternal grandmother was a Francophile, and inspired me. She was also an elementary school principal, and my mother was a middle-school teacher, so teaching is in the genes, in a way. My paternal grandmother taught for a while in a one-room schoolhouse in rural Illinois—a long way from Paris.

**QC: Can you tell us something about your academic development during and since your undergraduate college days?**

**DJ:** My junior year abroad in France was key. It helped me perfect my language skills and gave me a much deeper understanding of a foreign culture and different ways of thinking about culture and politics and life. After that year, I was hooked! That confirmed my desire to continue studying French at the graduate level. For my PhD I went to Wisconsin, a great public university with a strong tradition of language learning.

**QC: How do you see the fields of queer theory and feminism developing in the future?**

**DJ:** First of all, there are philosophical as well as political aspects to both queerness and feminism. Both areas have come under attack in recent years. In the academy, there has been an increasing mistrust of literary theory, especially theory coming out of France, and a turn toward historicism and materialist approaches. In the political world, the feminist and gay-rights movements have always advocated for equality in diversity—a noble goal that is often viewed with suspicion. In both theoretical and practical queer and feminist movements, there is a desire to move our understanding toward a less monolithic, more complicated (and less stable) notion of identities and existence. This challenges the accepted order. I see these movements continuing to challenge accepted notions of how the world should be understood, and therefore will remain vital avenues for inquiry for the foreseeable future.

**QC: What are you working on right now?**

**DJ:** My current project involves going back to the pre-Stonewall era to investigate the reception of queer French writers in America. The French literary tradition was among the first to produce a cadre of groundbreaking writers who wrote openly about queer subjectivity. One could name Proust, Gide, Colette, Marguerite Yourcenar, and, of course, Jean Genet—all of who were active in the early-to-mid 20th century, well before the wider gay rights movement gained traction in America. I am interested in how these writers' views of homosexuality influenced the perception of gay and lesbian identity in the US.

**QC: Our newsletter is mainly addressed to students and teachers of Italian and to Italian cultural organizations in the tri-state area. How do you view the relationship between the study of French/Italian/Romance languages, literatures, and cultures on the one hand, and college students' personal and professional development on the other?**

**DJ:** In an increasingly international context, it is essential to study foreign languages and cultures. In doing so in college, you gain an advantage over students who have not experienced a foreign culture or have not been exposed to a different way of thinking. The marketplace will demand more and more people with language and analytical skills in the future.

**QC: Prof. Jones, thank you very much for sharing your time with us. We look forward to reading your works!**

# Earn a Graduate Degree in Italian Studies



Queens College's Department of European Languages & Literatures offers three different programs of study in Italian and Italian-American Studies. Students may enroll for a **Master of Arts in Italian (MA)**, or they may choose the **Master of Science in Education** with a specialization in Italian (MSEd). Queens College also offers a four-course sequence in **Italian-American Studies** as part of **Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS)**. Students enrolled in the MA program in Italian can also include Italian-American Studies as part of their program, and Italian and/or Italian-American Studies courses can also be part of the student's MALS program. After

consultation with graduate advisors, students may also enroll in graduate-level courses offered by other departments, such as Art History, History, and Philosophy.

Few colleges and universities in North America offer such intellectual diversity in academic programming for Italian Studies. Faculty in Italian include Karina Attar, Morena Corradi, Hermann Haller, Eugenia Paulicelli, and Anthony Julian Tamburri. Faculty teaching courses in other departments related to Italian Studies include Francesca Bregoli, Antonio Donato, Fred Gardaphé, James Jordan, James Saslow, and Peter Vellon.

## Need more information?

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