

Revised November 2009 for 2010

FACULTY OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES

SUB-FACULTY OF ITALIAN

FHS EXAMINING CONVENTIONS

The examiners will be working to the following examining conventions in the FHS of Modern Languages:

Oral

All students reading Italian will take the Oral Examination, consisting of a Listening and an Oral Exercise.

- 1) Listening Comprehension (1/3 of the marks): the candidates will be required to listen to 5 minutes of recorded video material, after which they will be given questions in Italian relating to the material. They will have 5 minutes for studying the questions, then they will be shown the video again. Then they will have 30 minutes in which to answer the questions (in Italian).
- 2) Oral exercises (2/3 of the marks): to last 15 minutes. The oral exam will consist of two parts:
 - a) (about 10 minutes) reading comprehension and discussion. The candidates will be given an Italian newspaper article of suitable length to read 30 minutes before the beginning of the exam. During the exam, they will be required to provide a summary of the article, answer questions and engage in a discussion with the examiners on issues raised by the article (all in Italian). They may also be required to read out from the passage
 - b) (about 5 minutes) conversation (in Italian) on ONE of FOUR preselected topics to be chosen by the examiners.

Paper I - Essay in Italian

An essay of 1,000 to 1,500 words to be written in Italian, from a range of questions on social, literary, linguistic and general cultural topics as well as on current affairs.

Equal importance is attached to

- a) content and structure and
- b) linguistic proficiency.

PAPER II - Translation and Prose

This Paper consists of Translation from and into Italian (Prose)

- IIA Translation from Italian: one passage of post-1900 creative Italian prose to be translated into English. The length of the passage is maximum of around 300 words.
- IIB Translation into Italian: one passage of post-1900 creative English prose to be translated into Italian. The length of the passage is maximum of around 250 words.

Paper III - Translation from pre-Modern Italian

Paper III consists of translation from pre-Modern Italian. Candidates will be required to translate two passages from the period from 1300 to 1900. Each passage will consist of around 300 words.

Conventionally one passage of verse and one prose passage will be set.

Paper IV - Italian Linguistic Studies:

Paper IV will be divided into three Sections (A, B, C) and candidates will be required to answer THREE questions from at least TWO sections. ONE question, but no more than one, MUST be answered from Section A.

Section A: Set texts [list to be provided]. The formulation of the questions in this Section is envisaged as follows: “Translate and write a commentary on ONE of the following: [...]”.

Section B: Structural development of the Italian language; historical phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon.

Section C: External history of the Italian language; the ‘questione della lingua’, the diffusion of standard Italian; Italian dialects, sociolinguistics.

Paper V - Italian Linguistic Studies:

Paper V will be divided into TWO sections (A, B), and candidates will be asked to answer THREE questions, no more than TWO from the same Section.

Section A: The phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon of Italian.

Section B: Sociolinguistics, regional variations, style, gender and language (etc.).

Papers VI, VII and VIII - Periods of Literature

Candidates must answer three questions.

These papers are not sectionalised.

Paper VIII Period of Literature (iii) Modern Italian Literature (1750 to the present) and Cinema

Rubric

This paper will be divided into four sections:

Section a): 18th and 19th Century Italian Literature

Section b): 20th Century Italian Literature

Section c): Italian Cinema

Section d): Thematic and comparative topics

Candidates must answer THREE questions in total, of which at least two must be from sections a) and/or b).

Candidates must NOT make ANY ONE work the principal subject of MORE THAN ONE answer.

Candidates must NOT answer questions with reference wholly or chiefly to writers whom they are offering as Prescribed Authors, or with reference wholly or chiefly to texts which form the principal topic of their Special Subject or Extended Essay.

Section a): 18th- and 19th-Century Italian Literature

- Goldoni

- Foscolo
- Leopardi (2 questions)
- Manzoni (2 questions)
- Pascoli
- Verga (questions)
- D'Annunzio

Section b): 20th-Century Italian Literature

- Pirandello (questions)
- Svevo
- Montale
- Morante
- Gadda
- Calvino
- Eco

Section c): Italian Cinema

- From the origins to the Second World War (3 questions)
- From Neorealism to Contemporary Cinema (3 questions)

Section d): Thematic and Comparative Topics

- Literary periods (Romanticism vs Classicism, Futurism, Neorealism, Postmodernism, etc.) (3 questions)
- Regional literature
- Women writers
- History and literature
- Autobiography
- Contemporary writers and poets
- Literature and Cinema
- Thematic topics (2 questions)

Paper IX - Early Texts Prescribed for Study as Examples of Literature [Dante]

Candidates must answer THREE questions. They must answer ONE question from Section A (commentaries) and TWO question from Section B (essays). Candidates must show knowledge of at least TWO of the three *cantiche* of the *Divina Commedia*.

Section A will consist of six 30-line (approximately) passages for commentary, TWO from each of the three *cantiche*. Each passage will have marked in the margin 12 lines (approximately) that must be translated into English.

Section B will consist of at least 15 essay questions, three on each *cantica*, three general questions relating to the *Comedy* as a whole, and three relating either to Dante's *oeuvre* as a whole, or to the 'minor' works, with or without reference to the *Comedy*.

Papers X and XI - Modern Prescribed Authors (i) and (ii)

In each paper candidates will be required to provide a commentary (without translation) from one of the passages for special study, as set out in the *Decrees*.

Conventionally four essay questions are set on each author. Candidates must write one essay on each author offered.

Paper XII

- **Italian Lyric Poetry of the Thirteenth Century**

This paper explores the birth and the evolution of Italian poetry from the *Scuola Siciliana* to the Tuscan poets, Dante and the Stilnovisti as well as the *poeti giocosi*. Particular attention is given to the specificity and the complexity of the poetic language through which this literary tradition constantly renews itself. Topics include the relationship between courtly and religious versions of love and desire, poetry and philosophy, politics and exile.

- [From 2007] **Dante's minor works**

This paper explores Dante's intellectual and literary journey in his works other than the *Divine Comedy*. Topics include Dante's meditation on desire and courtly love, his linguistic, poetic and political theories, as well as the relationship between poetry and philosophy, literature and exile. Students can choose among *Fiore*, *Rime*, *Vita nova*, *Convivio*, *De vulgari eloquentia*, *Epistles*, and *Monarchia*.

- **'Questione della lingua'**

Candidates will be expected to have read: Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*; Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua*; Manzoni, *Scritti sulla lingua*.

- **Women writers of the Italian Renaissance**

A change in the cultural climate at the end of the fifteenth century combined with the rise of the printing industry, which required an ever increasing number of readers, meant that women's education was no longer viewed with scorn but, for the first time in Europe, actively encouraged. This is the reason why the Italian Renaissance saw an unprecedented flourishing of women writers. Veronica Gambara, Vittoria Colonna, Tullia d'Aragona, Chiara Matraini, Gaspara Stampa, Isabella di Morra, Veronica Franco and Moderata Fonte are just a few of the better known writers and poets active during the period 1500-1600, but there are many others still awaiting to be rediscovered. All can be studied individually, comparatively, or thematically, including the *questione della donna* which, in trying to define women's role in society, gave rise to a much debated and often fiercely controversial topic in Renaissance Italy.

- [From 2006] **Italian Culture during the Fascist period**

To what extent was Italian culture shaped by Mussolini's dictatorship during the inter-war years? In order to address this issue, you can choose to deepen your knowledge of one particular field or attempt an analysis of a range of cultural media (literary, cinematic, journalistic, etc.). You can study specific movements - such as Futurism, the *novecentisti*, the *strapesani*, etc. - or specific themes such as censorship, propaganda, state-sponsored initiatives and, last but certainly not the least, anti-Fascist culture.

- **The works of Carlo Emilio Gadda**

Gadda is one of the most fascinating and complex Italian writers of the 20th century, whose oeuvre spans a wide variety of styles (from the macaronic to the lyrical) and genres (from the novel to the *elzeviro*, including poems, private diaries, technical articles, philosophical reflections, radiophonic pieces, fables,

critical essays and psycho-political pamphlets). This course will aim at providing the conceptual basis for the critical interpretation of Gadda's literary production, and in particular of his two major novels (*La cognizione del dolore* and *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana*); some of his other works will also be studied.

- [From 2007] **Narratives of national identity in postwar Italy**
This option allows you to study the interaction between fictional production (mainly literary and/or cinematic) and the construction of models of national identity. This was a particularly sensitive issue in the early postwar years when Italians had to rebuild a sense of nationhood after the collapse of Fascism and the humiliation of the Second World War. Moreover, themes such as the regional fragmentation of the peninsula - cultural as well as economic - have accompanied the work of Italian artists throughout the postwar years and are much alive today.
- **Sicilian Literature 1945 to the present day**
This paper allows you to study the extraordinary contribution to Italian fiction made by Sicilian writers from the Second World War to the present day. The novels range widely in content and style: from two comic works written in the 1940s and 1950s (V. Brancati, *Il bell'Antonio* (1949) and *Paolo il caldo* (1955)), to the important best-seller Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Il gattopardo* (1958), key works about society by Sciascia (*Il giorno della civetta* (1961), *A ciascuno il suo* (1966) and *L'affaire Moro* (1978)), and more recent fictions by Bufalino (*Diceria dell'untore* (1981), and *Le menzogne della notte* (1988)).
- **Italian Women Writers 1945 to the present day**
Writing by women is studied against the historical context of the changing role of women in the political sphere, in society and within literary genres. Students are asked to consider issues connected with gender and creativity, developments in perceptions and expectations of writing by women, as well as the merits of the texts themselves as literature. Any writers of suitable merit can be studied and independent contemporary choices are encouraged, but a core selection would include Anna Banti, Natalia Ginzburg, Elsa Morante, Francesca Sanvitale, Paola Capriolo and Francesca Duranti.
- **Italian Poetry from 1956 to the present day**
Montale's collection *La bufera e altro* (1956) is universally considered as a crucial watershed for Italian poetry of the Novecento. In this book, the sense of an ending – of the poetry that the generation of Montale and Ungaretti wrote, its language, its formal innovations, as well as its concerns, and its sense of its role within Italian cultural and political history – combines with a strong impetus towards the future, addressing the historical present, and the role of the poet within it, in a profoundly renewed and problematic fashion. *La Bufera* paves the way for the work of all the major protagonists of the second half of the century, from Andrea Zanzotto to Vittorio Sereni, Giorgio Caproni and Amelia Rosselli. The option will give students the opportunity to read (as well as *La bufera* itself) some of the major collections that have shaped the poetic imaginary of the *secondo novecento*: Zanzotto's *La beltà*, Sereni's *Strumenti umani*, Caproni's *Il seme del piangere*, and Rosselli's *Variazioni belliche*.

All Italian topics will be assessed by method B(3):

“A portfolio of three essays, aggregating to about 6,000 words and not exceeding 8,000 words, to be delivered by noon on the Friday of the ninth week of Hilary Term next before the examination”.

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FHS 2009.sub-faculty conventions

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