



DIPARTIMENTO DI CIVILTÀ E FORME DEL SAPERE



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

Modern Italian History

Dr. Matteo Caponi

Class meetings on:

Tuesdays, 17:30–19:00
Wednesdays, 17:30–19:00
Thursdays, 17:30–19:00

Room: PAO A2 (ex CAR A), Via P. Paoli, 15, second floor

Learning outcomes

The pivotal aim of this course is to familiarise students with the key concepts and turning points in the history of modern Italy from Napoleon to the Constitution of 1948. Lessons will also develop some basic skills for reading primary sources.

Course description

This course offers an overview of the making of modern Italy, from the arrival of Napoleon to the abolishment of the Savoy monarchy and the establishment of a democratic Republican system. Along with the examination of major events and figures, special attention will be paid to the cultural and political dynamics which characterised the Italian modernisation in the era of nationalism and national states, such as the Risorgimento, the quest for unification, the clash between the liberal state and the Catholic church, the dream of a ‘Greater Italy’ which went thorough WWI and eventually led to Mussolini’s dictatorship, and finally the post-WWII recovery under the banner of the anti-fascist Resistance. The Italian nation building will be set into the wider European and international context, marked by the emergence of liberalism, capitalism, socialism, secularisation and mass politics, but also by authoritarian pressures, gender discrimination, imperial rivalries, World Wars unprecedented violence and 20th-century totalitarianisms. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between Catholicism, national identity and political religions over time.

Teaching methods

Textbook accounts will be accompanied by the analysis of documentary and visual sources, as well as by references to the historiographical debate.



Texts

Reference textbook (mandatory):

- Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 2nd edition), chapters 4–9

Further readings (mandatory):

- Alberto M. Banti, 'Deep Images in Nineteenth-Century Nationalist Narrative', *Historien*, 8, 2009, pp. 54-62
- David I. Kertzer, 'Religion and society, 1789-1892', in John A. Davis (ed.), *Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 181-205
- Antonio Gibelli, 'Italy', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Chichester and Oxford: WileyBlackwell, 2010), pp. 464–478
- Emilio Gentile, 'Fascism in power: the totalitarian experiment', in Adrian Lyttelton (ed.), *Liberal and Fascist Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 139–174

Additional materials (e.g. primary sources) could be provided during the lectures.

Syllabus

- 1) **24 April.** The impact of the French Revolution: political modernity in the 'long 19th century'
- 2) **26 April.** 'Was it true fame?': Napoleon and his legacy
- 3) **2 May.** 'One in arms, language, and faith/ in memories, blood and heart': nationalism and the Italian Risorgimento
- 4) **3 May.** The spirit of 1848
- 5) **8 May.** 'The Parliamentary road is longer, but surer': Cavour's Piedmont
- 6) **9 May.** The unification of Italy
- 7) **10 May.** The new liberal state
- 8) **14 May.** Catholicism and secularisation
- 9) **15 May.** 'With Italy made, we must now make the Italians'. About Pinocchio, Francesco Crispi and nation building
- 10) **16 May.** The Fin de Siècle crisis and Giolitti's era
- 11) **21 May.** Against the *Italiotta*: imperial desires, from Dogali (1887) to Tripoli (1911–12)
- 12) **22 May.** The Great War of the Italians
- 13) **23 May.** The post-war crisis and the rise of fascism
- 14) **24 May.** The totalitarian project
- 15) **28 May.** Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany
- 16) **29 May.** The Second World War



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- 17) **30 May.** A Civil War (1943–45): anti-fascist Resistance and post-fascist transition
- 18) **31 May.** (Christian) Democracy, the Republic, and the Constitution of 1948

Course assignments

- Final written exam.