

The Rutgers Libretto

Spring 2020



Dear Members and Friends of the Italian Department,

Last Fall semester was an eventful one. We welcomed Dr. Isabella Magni, our Postdoctoral Associate in Digital Humanities, who immediately proved to be a great addition to our Department. In early October, we hosted renowned writer Jhumpa Lahiri, who discussed the *Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories* that she edited (see inside). Then, in November our doctoral students held their interdisciplinary Conference on *Voices*: an exciting and successful event, which drew young scholars from various areas of expertise and sparked lively discussions. We also had two engaging *Food for Thought* meetings, with presentations by Laura Sanguineti White and Federica Soddu.

—Andrea Baldi, Italian Department Chair

Letter from Acting Chair (spring 2020) and Graduate Program Director, Alessandro Vettori

Because for the past semester I have been serving as Acting Chair, while continuing to serve as Graduate Program Director, I will write a combined account of activities that concern the graduate program as well as the department in general.

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California Dreamin'

After eight truly wonderful years in the Department of Italian and the Program in Cinema Studies at Rutgers, I'll be joining the faculty of Italian Studies at UC Berkeley this fall. I will miss the warmth and generosity of the Rutgers community, and the Italian Department in particular. Sending the most sincere thanks to my students and colleagues who have made Rutgers such an enjoyable and productive second home over the course of the past several years. Grazie di cuore a tutti!

- Rhiannon Welch



Rhiannon with husband Nate and daughters June and Frances.

(continued from cover)

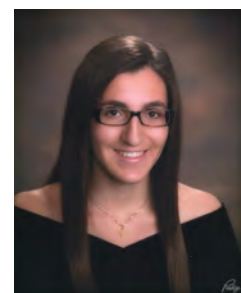
It's been quite a semester to serve on two crucial officer positions for the department! Little did I know that spring 2020 would be one of the most challenging semesters on record for Rutgers when I accepted the dean's request to do both jobs. I don't need to stress how the crisis caused by COVID-19 has been unprecedented for all of us—and our department hasn't been spared. Moving all courses online mid-semester was just one of the many challenges—and not even the most difficult one. We were very fortunate (or maybe far-sighted and innovative), because we started teaching online classes almost 10 years ago and developed the whole sequence from elementary language to advanced, with all classes already approved by the Curriculum Committee. When the time came (the second week of March) to start preparing to teach remotely after spring break, a good number of our classes and many of our instructors were ready. Our Language Director, Carmela Scala, was heroic and, with her usual generosity and selflessness, gave her time and expertise, instructed those of us who needed training with online teaching, offered help with redesigning syllabi and using technological tools we could hardly even pronounce the name of. By the end of spring break 10 days later we were ready to go. I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their compliance and support. Not only did we all give up our spring break, we worked much harder during that week and continued to put in extra hours, with all the inevitable loose ends such a radical change required for the whole second half of the semester. We made it—and I believe we are stronger for it, both individually but also as a department and as a group. Working together in such a moment of crisis brought us closer together and we have developed much more of a sense of community. Strangely enough, we have ended up communicating more frequently and more efficiently now that we work remotely than when we would see each other at the office. I am not saying we should keep this modality, but just seeing each other regularly once a week on WebEx, all of us, faculty, post-doc, graduate students, instructors, staff, and the occasional guest, we have gotten to know each other better. And that will have a long-term impact, we can only hope. The great piece of news is that Carmela Scala, Sheri La Macchia, and Chris Scherer (Director of New Program Initiatives and Digital Learning at the School of Arts and Sciences) were awarded the Ernest E. McMahon Class of 1930 Award for designing a new dual registration program with high schools around New Jersey; the program allows high schoolers to take Rutgers Italian classes and earn college level credits. This university-wide prize rewards their vision, original initiative, and hard work. The bittersweet news is that Rhiannon Welch will leave Rutgers at the end of June for a job at Berkeley. We are very happy for her, because this is a great advancement for her career and she will also be close to family in the bay area, but it's a terrible loss for our department and for our community. We wish Rhiannon all the best in her new position and we hope she will come back to visit us and give a lecture on her new research. We had to cancel a number of events that were scheduled for the spring (see calendar of events for a list of them), and we hope to reschedule them in the future—the alumni lecture and reunion among them. I wish everyone continued health for themselves and for their families and a great summer!



Undergraduate News from the Undergraduate Director, Professor Rhiannon Welch

Professor Rhiannon Welch enjoyed another year as Undergraduate Director. The big news of the undergraduate program is that we modified our curriculum in order to stay apace with the changing interests and expectations of our students, most of whom choose to double Major. Students will be able to begin their Major requirements in introductory language classes, and will take more interdisciplinary Italian culture courses in English. The changes are already having an impact, as the Major and Minor are becoming more popular with students who find the new requirements more workable with their tightly packed schedules!

Italian Club, Italian for Musicians class
field trip, 2020 Grads: Kayla, Sal and
Mary and Italians' Got Talent Winners



From the Italian Language Director, Dr. Carmela Scala

During this academic year we have worked on improving our language classes by implementing new teaching approaches that better motivate and engage the students. We have also launched several new modules and courses for the Language Engagement Project (LEP) such as Italian For Travel, Italian for Musicians, Introducing Rome, and Italian Food Culture, all of which bridge language learning with other content courses and demonstrate the practical advantages of knowing a second language, in the specific Italian.





After another successful Summer in 2019 filled with lots of learning and unforgettable experiences, this year we were ready to make more unforgettable memories for our stu-

dents while fostering their love for learning! Unfortunately, the pandemic forced us to cancel our Summer program in Rome even though we had 18 students committed and ready to fly to the Bel Paese! We are already working on organizing RU in Rome Summer 2021 with lots of interesting cultural excursions, internships opportunities and language/ cultural classes and we invite everybody to apply.

Learn more here: <https://global.rutgers.edu/program-search/details/summer-rutgers-ru-rome>

Tavola Italiana

Was very successful this year. During each meeting, the AB5050 became a crowded Italian piazza populated by old and new faces. Students had the chance to meet new people, fellow colleagues, and graduate students, chat and play different games, from classics like *Sharde* and *Pictionary* to very loud games with cards, to the popular *Cards against humanity* (Italian version). They divided into teams and challenged themselves while learning the meaning of *Italian gestures* and *scioglilingua* (tongue-twisters) contests. All the while, a lot of pizza was served to keep the smiles large and the bellies full!



TAVOLA ITALIANA



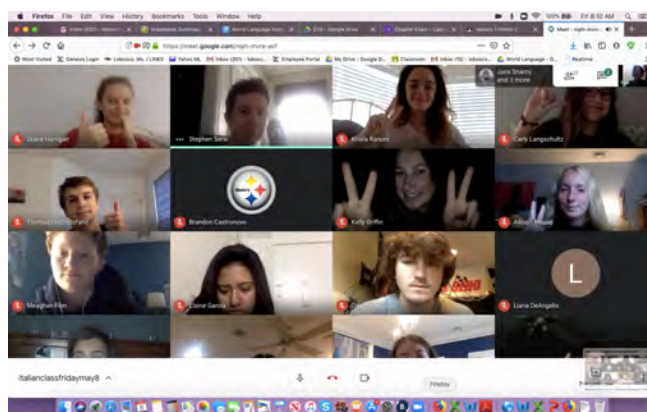
Rutgers University Humanities Plus Pedagogical Innovation Grant (2020-2021)

was awarded to Professor Alessandro Vettori. This grant is to revamp his Dante and Medieval Culture course.



Ernest E. McMahon Class of 1930 Award for bringing Italian instruction to New Jersey high schools

Carmela Scala, Chris Scherer, and Sheri La Macchia created the dual enrollment program between Rutgers and New Jersey schools that allows students to enroll in Italian language courses at Rutgers University and gain college-level credits while still attending high school. Carmela came up with the idea, trained the teachers, and reviews the programs; Chris negotiated the Memorandum of Understanding and took care of the financial side of the project; Sheri had the difficult task of figuring out all administrative issues and keeps managing the exchange.



Point Pleasant Beach High School students with their instructor, alumna Marena Lobosco. Students study Italian in this dual enrollment program for Rutgers credit.

Student Projects

Click photos for links to videos and content



"La Quarantena"

Erica Cordero

Italian 132

Spring 2020

Maria Candela's class

<https://youtu.be/q6YC-a95UpY>



Department video produced by Ph.D. students

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=271521857337899>



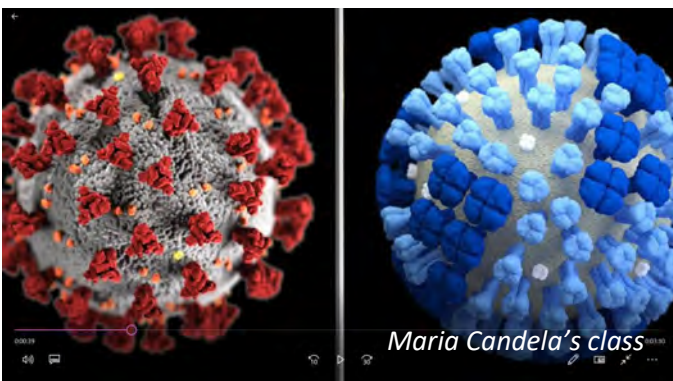
Maria Teresa De Luca's class



Happiness in time of Covid

Joe Mezza's COVID-19 project

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oQNUwmLxFtQPY3szBCSHvSOxAbWLrt7b/view>



Maria Candela's class



A letter from Kathryn Barbetta, Rutgers '15

Events



On October 3, 2019 we hosted a memorable event: Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri presented *The Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories* that she edited—and for which she translated some pieces. Her talk was sponsored by the SAS Humanities Dean, the Department of Italian, the Comparative Literature Program, the English Department, and the Creative Writing Program. In her initial conversation with Prof. Baldi, Lahiri explained how she developed her passion for Italian language, culture, and literature and why she decided to embark on this innovative and demanding project. Lahiri believes translation is an essential, inspiring practice for writers. She highlighted the hybridity of the authors she selected, stressing how the majority of them were also translators, “living, reading, and writing” across two or more languages. She discussed how their creative endeavors were shaped by experimentation and acknowledged a special familiarity with some of them. Within the Italian cultural tradition, one of the most distinctive features of her anthology is the significant presence of women writers, some of whom, such as Cristina Campo and Fabrizia Ramondino, do not ‘belong’ to the literary canon. Especially sensitive to gender and marginality issues, Lahiri shared her feelings of kinship with these authors. To her, they hold an intrinsic sense of wonder and desire for untrodden

paths. By writing in Italian, Lahiri placed herself in a position of vulnerability and confronted a formidable challenge. As readers and Italianists, we are extremely grateful for her intellectual courage and generosity. After this discussion, Lahiri addressed questions from the audience regarding her fiction.

This was a very exciting event, which drew more than 110 attendees from Rutgers and the community. Prior to the talk, a few graduate students in Italian and Comparative Literature had the privilege to participate in an informal meeting in Italian with the writer.

Andrea Baldi





Isabella Magni (above) shares her work of building the Albizzi Memorial Book. The WebEx event on June 10th was attended by more than 100 people world wide. Twice a semester the department hosts Food for Thought. It's an opportunity for faculty and students to share their research. This year, Laura S. White, Federica Soddu, and Paolo Scartoni presented at Food for Thought. Details below.



Fall 2019 Calendar of Events	
September 3 12-3pm September 5 10am-2pm	Academic Advising Walk in Hours. Meet with Undergraduate Director, Rhuanen Welch, Room 5113
Tues. September 10 12:30pm - 2:00pm	Welcome Back Luncheon. Italian Dept. faculty, graduate students, and staff reconnect to live start the school year in AB-5050.
Tuesday, Sept. 24th 4:30-6:00pm AB 4052	A talk with Lorenzo Fabbrì , Assistant Professor in Italian and Moving Image Studies, University of Minnesota. Room-rooms against Fascism: De Sica before Neorealism
Thurs. Sept. 26th 1:30 - 2:30 in AB-5050	RU in Rome Info. Session Undergrads stop by the Italian Dept. to find out about our Summer Study abroad program in Rome, Italy. Language, Culture, Internships. Free Food and Drinks.
Fri. 9-12, 5-8 pm Wed. 10-16, 6-7 pm Fri. 10-25, 5-8 pm Mon. 11-13, 6-7 pm	Parl'italiano? Everyone is welcome at Tavola Italiana! Join the conversation, make friends, play games, eat pizza. Discover what everyone is talking about. Group meets up in Room AB 5050.
Thursday, October 31 4:30pm at Alexander Library 4th Floor	Jhumpa Lahiri , Pulitzer Prize winning author will discuss the collection of Italian Short Stories she has recently published. A limited number of pre-ordered books will be available for purchase after the talk. Limited seating.
Wed. Oct. 9th 6:30 to 8:00pm AB-1180	Center for Latino Arts and Culture is hosting a lecture-demonstration focused on Spanish/Italian dance with Maria Banea Marín, Alexandra Békoni, and members of the Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre at Rutgers.
Saturday, Oct. 12 6:30am - 2:00pm	Primo Incontro . Annual 6-12 Italian teacher's workshop. Speakers will feature Mattide Fogliani. She will share effective practices to engage students in speaking.
Wed. Oct. 23 @ 1pm AB 5050 1:00pm	Food for Thought with Laura S. White. Topic to be announced.
Friday, November 22 Saturday, Nov. 23 All day	Voices , is an interdisciplinary two-day graduate conference which will take place at the Eagleton Institute, Woodlawn Mansion, in New Brunswick, NJ. Organized by: Italian Graduate Society, italian_grad_society@rutgers.edu . Website: https://italian.rutgers.edu/academics/graduate/italian-graduate-society
Wed. Dec. 4 @ 1pm AB 5050 1:00pm	Food for Thought with Federica Soddu. Topic to be announced.
Thursday, Dec. 12th 8:30pm - 5:00pm	Annual Italian Night and Christmas Celebration Time to celebrate the holidays with Italian Dept. faculty, staff and students.

Spring 2020 Calendar of Events	
Thurs. 2/20 5pm-6pm Thurs. 3/5 5pm-6pm Tues. 3/24 6pm-7pm Tues. 4/21 6pm-7pm	Parl'italiano? Everyone is talking about Tavola Italiana! Join the conversation, practice speaking in Italian, make friends, play games, eat pizza. Discover what everyone is talking about. Meet up in the Italian Dept. classroom AB 5050 in Rutgers Academic Building. Coordinator: Federica Soddu
Thursday, Feb. 20 1pm at AB 5050	RU in Rome Info. Session. Find out about the Department of Italian's summer study abroad program.
Tuesday, March 3 12 noon	Food for Thought - Paolo Scartoni Books, Harps, and Rods: A Medieval Duel between Two Ladies
March 14-22	Spring Break
Monday, March 23 4:30-6:00pm - AB 5190	Beyond Digitalization: Creating Digital Scholarship. A talk with Isabella Magni
Tuesday, March 31 12:00 Lunch AB 5050	Food for Thought with Tiziana de Rogatis Topic: Elena Ferrante's <i>Not Words</i>
Tuesday, March 31 11:15pm, MU 213	Talk with Tiziana de Rogatis (Università per Stranieri di Siena), Elena Ferrante, <i>Not Words</i> . <i>Metamorphosis of Time</i>
Monday, April 6 8:30-6:00pm AB 5050	Meet Carlos, Palatinos of the Medici Archive Project.
Tuesday, April 21st 4:30-6:00pm AB 4052	The Making and Knowing Project: Tamaschewicz of Columbia University
Thursday, April 23rd 10am-4pm College Avenue campus - Vooshers Main	Discovering Italy at Rutgers Day What's the first thing that comes to mind when we say "Italia"? Why? Lots of food? But there is so much more to explore, so come play with us and discover regional shapes of arts and movements, the meaning of some Italian gestures, and much, much more! Learn more: rutgersday.rutgers.edu
Thurs. April 30th 6:00pm-8:00pm AB - 6051	ITALIAN NIGHT . Italian Department Senior Celebration and Year End Party.
Friday, May 1st 4:30pm-8:00pm	Annual Alumni Reunion. Roberto Perini, University of Oklahoma Topic TBD. Eagleton Institute - Woodlawn Mansion

Most Spring Events canceled due to Coronavirus Outbreak



Program Donations

Your contributions help our department in many ways. Please show your support today.

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Study Abroad Scholarships for Undergraduate Students

Name Awards for Essays

Department Emergency Fund

Please continue to support our students and the professional development of teachers of Italian.

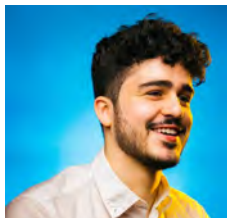
Click the link below to give a one-time donation or monthly contribution

<https://tinyurl.com/RutgersItalian>



Caterina Agostini (second from left) at the Frick Art Reference Library.

We welcome two new Ph.D. students



Steven Jacobs

Steven's past year would best be described as one of widening horizons. In September, he began working on a collaborative research project, "Conversational User Interfaces and Second Language Skills," which he subsequently presented at the INTED Conference in Valencia. In October, Steven travelled to Piedmont as a TA to conduct research and interviews about partisan fighter Ada Gobetti. In December, he presented his Honors Thesis Project, "Language Lens: Language Learning in the 21st Century." Additionally, his Italian thesis was accepted to be presented at the AATI Conference. In the spring, he interned at the Calandra Institute in New York City, and continued working as a TA and language coach. In May, he graduated from Marist College with a BA in Italian and French, and the Joseph Belanger Baccalaureate Award. Steven feels happy and fortunate to have been admitted into the PhD Program starting in fall 2020 and to be a part of the Rutgers family.



Angela Mininni

Angela was born and raised in Bari, Italy, where she graduated *summa cum laude* with a Master's thesis in *Ancient Philology, Literature and History* about Aristophanes' *Plutus*. Soon after graduation, she moved to the States to work as an au pair, during which she acquired life-changing skills, such as intercultural communication and fluent proficiency in English. After her experience as an au pair, she completed a Master of Arts in Teaching at Rutgers University, where she compiled and presented her *teaching portfolio* while being an active resource to the Italian Department. After one year on the field, teaching the culture and language of her country, she decided to use her own experience as an immigrant writer to continue her education and pursue the PhD with the Italian Department, a second home to her. Three words to describe her: enthusiastic, bright, and sweet.

Graduate Prizes and Awards

Thank you to our donors for your ongoing support. Congratulations students!

Paragano Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship for Italian Studies – Jaroslaw Chrzanowski

Joseph E. & Marie E. Laggini Memorial Endowed Graduate Fellowship – Andrew Robbins

Dr. Vito and Mrs. Carolyn DeSimone Endowed Fellowship for Italian Studies – Eilis Kierans

Italian Department Fellowship – Caterina Agostini

Italian Department Fellowship – Raffaella Fusco

Bevier Fellowship – Andrew Robbins

Caterina Agostini – American Philosophical Society Fellowship

Italian Graduate Society

Last fall, the IGS organized a multidisciplinary and very well attended graduate conference titled “Voices”, whose proceedings are forthcoming in *LaFusta!* The two-day conference was a great success, with thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating presentations by graduate students coming from many different universities like Harvard, New York University, UPenn, Columbia, Princeton, University of Michigan, University of Chicago, CUNY, University of Virginia, The New Center for Research & Practice and, of course, Rutgers University. Jenny McPhee, Director of the Center for Applied Liberal Arts and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Translation Master’s Degree Program at NYU, and Diana Garvin, Assistant Professor of Italian in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Oregon, gave two unforgettable keynote addresses, respectively on the practice of translation and on the songs of the ‘mondine’ (paddy field workers). We are very happy with the success of “Voices”, for its high intellectual level and for the warm and convivial atmosphere that we have been able to create all together. We wanted to thank once again all the participants who presented a paper, our keynote speakers Jenny McPhee and Diana Garvin and all the public who contributed with generous attention, engagement, and energy. A big thank you also to all the people who helped us with the organization, both before and during the conference: our wonderful colleagues who kindly accepted to moderate panels, our professors for listening to us and for their advice, and Sheri La Macchia, without whom we would have been lost on many occasions.

Grazie mille,
Chiara, Federica & Paolo



Click on VOICES image to view event program.



News from Current Graduate Students

Caterina Agostini

Caterina Agostini was a moderator for the Italian Graduate Society conference. Caterina taught precepts on Italian literature and gastronomy at Princeton University in the Spring. She presented her research on medical humanities and digital humanities at NeMLA and Renaissance Society of America conferences, and at the Frick Collection. Caterina has continued her dissertation work, with forthcoming publications on early modern scientific writing and digital methods. She consults on digital humanities for PHAROS, the International Consortium of Photo Archives, and for Rutgers Digital Humanities. She also wrote book reviews for journals in Italian studies and food studies. Caterina is the recipient of the Italian Department Scholarship for Summer research, and the Eugene Garfield Fellowship at the American Philosophical Society.

Andrea Bocchi

2019-2020 was a year of great changes for Andrea. It was his first year studying at an American university and his first year living in the United States. It was a year of great challenges but, in the end, he learned many new things, both in the academy and in real life. He taught an Italian language class for the first time, face-to-face the first semester and online the second semester. He is really looking forward to the beginning of a new academic year and he is prepared for the many new challenges and rewards with great passion and commitment.



Nataschia Cappa

I completed my second year at Rutgers. I am extremely happy with the courses that I taught, both 102 in fall and 131 in spring. The opportunity to work with my students represented an invaluable

experience of professional and human growth. The pandemic forced all of us to adapt to new teaching methods, but I could see a collective effort that allowed us, teachers and students, to conclude the semester with great satisfaction. I can say the same for myself, as I was able to learn a great deal. 2020 was also a special year for me, because the scholarly journal of the University of Buenos Aires *Beckettiana* published my article written in Spanish. The title of the article is "Samuel Beckett y Juan Rodolfo Wilcock: entre traducción y literatura menor". Now I am looking forward to teaching in summer and taking my comprehensive exams in the fall. Also, I am very excited about having the chance to be part of the IGS with Maria Teresa De Luca and Giuseppe Grispino. Last but not least, I finally realized my dream to live in New York City. Here is a picture that I recently took in my neighborhood that shows the East River in summer.

Tim Curcio

This year Tim taught several face-to-face, online, and hybrid Italian courses at Rutgers University and Drew University. He attended the American Boccaccio Association 4th Triennial Conference at the University of Wisconsin in the Fall. In addition to transitioning to remote learning in the Spring semester, he completed a draft of his dissertation entitled "The Decalogue in the *Decameron*." He will defend his dissertation with an October 2020 dated degree!

Maria Teresa De Luca

During the past year, Maria Teresa took classes at NYU, Columbia and, of course, Rutgers. In the fall semester, her students of Italian 121 won the Italians Got Talent Winter edition, while for the spring semester, she designed a new syllabus and taught the course 'Italian society through contemporary literature' (ITA 302). The course has provided her with the opportunity to more closely investigate the relationship between social and literary engagement, as well as between literature and new and more pervasive forms of communication. Her paper "Two Intellectuals, One Country: Maria Corti and Italo Calvino in the United States" was accepted at the

annual conference of the Canadian Association for Italian Studies, that was to have been held in Sorrento, Italy, in June.

Chiara Degli Esposti

This was another exciting and busy year for Chiara! During the fall, she taught a course of Elementary French, while working hard toward the preparation of the IGS conference "Voices." In the spring, she enjoyed teaching the class "Italian Conversation through Cinema," as well as being a TA in the Department of Comparative Literature for the course "Past Today." Throughout the year, she also passed her qualifying examination, presented a paper on the film *Paisà* at NeMLA, and proudly published her first article, "Wandering Women: Feminist Urban Experiences in Simone de Beauvoir and Elena Ferrante," in the journal *Annali d'Italianistica* n.37. In addition to serving as the President of the Italian Graduate Society and as editor of *La Fusta*, Chiara also co-organized the year-long Urban Humanities Working Group.



Giuseppe Grispino

The past academic year has been a period of profound change and valuable growth in Giuseppe's personal and academic life. Last fall he moved from upstate New York to New Jersey to start his PhD at Rutgers. During the past year, Giuseppe has taught two elementary Italian courses while completing graduate classes and investigating different research fields. In November, Giuseppe served as Chair of the panel, titled "Bridging Cultures: Translation and Transmediality" during the IGS Conference. This January Giuseppe presented the paper entitled "New-Wave Queer Cinema and Its Look back at Italian Neorealism" at the UCLA Queer Graduate Conference. Giuseppe has recently published a selection of poems in the journal *La Fusta*. He is intending to continue working in the field of translation studies, combining his background in Asian Studies with Italian Studies.

Hiromi Kaneda

Hiromi's academic year 2019-2020 was full of challenges and surprises. She is currently teaching at the University of Virginia and became a Mead Endowment Honored Faculty 2019-2020 to fulfill her Dream Idea. Hiromi went to the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC with the Italian Intermediate class. Students presented in the target language an Italian work of art in front of their peers and tourists. She also became an Ignite Scholar and participated in a series of roundtables to build a teaching support network and community among faculty from other disciplines. Hiromi also presented one paper at the IGS conference *Voices* at Rutgers University and one at NeMLA in Boston: "*Japonisme* in La Diana" and "*La bambolona*. The Unreachable Big Baby Doll."



Current Graduate Students



Eilis Kierans

Eilis's academic year has been rich in sweets and solitude, the ideal dissertation writing duo! She was as an exchange student at the University of Torino, where she met new colleagues, attended engaging events, pastry shop hopped, and trained for the Rome Marathon.

Over the months, she presented papers at NeMLA and the Italian Language and Culture Conference. Additionally, she taught Italian courses remotely, wrote a couple of book reviews on the work of Michela Murgia and Elena Ferrante, and published translations of Ada Negri's poetry. She is presently putting the finishing touches on an article about online teaching practices. The highlight of her year was exploring the rich cultures of Israel and Palestine while relaxing with the ubiquitous cats and relishing the delectable street food.

Andrew Robbins

This year Andrew Robbins is a recipient of the University & Louis Bevier Dissertation Completion Fellowship for the academic year 2020-2021, as well as the Laggini Fellowship from the Department of Italian for summer 2020. Throughout his final year as a PhD candidate, he will use these generous awards to complete his dissertation, which focuses on the way evolutionary theory shapes ideologies of progress in literature, philosophy of science, popular culture, sociology, and translations of scientific texts. Andrew also has an article forthcoming with *Annali d'italianistica* entitled "The Translation of Darwin and the Struggle for Italy".

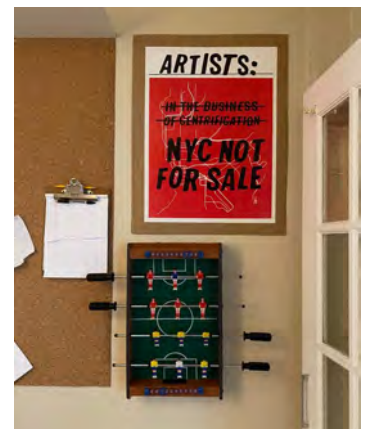
Paolo Scartoni

3rd year. Along with the rest of the IGS, Paolo organized "Voices," a multidisciplinary conference with over 20 presenters from some of the most prestigious universities in the country. In the spring, he taught

"Italian for Musicians" and took his students to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where they gave presentations in Italian on the instruments of the museum's musical collection. He has passed his comprehensive exams, took his qualifying exams, and will work on his dissertation prospectus over the summer. He gave a presentation for the departmental "Food for Thought" series entitled "Harps, Books, and Rods: a Medieval Duel Between Two Ladies." This summer he will attend two online institutes on medieval musical notation.

Federica Soddu

The past academic year was a very rich and busy one, between courses, teaching, the IGS Conference, Tavola Italiana, grading, the comprehensive exams, and online teaching. I learned a great deal from all these different experiences. The commute from Brooklyn to Rutgers seems very distant in time, after working from home for so long. I honestly miss the department, its people, the work one can do there between endless chats. Now, the only real break is Friday's virtual coffee, and this summer I must focus on my qualifying exams. The foosball table is being deserted for the time being, but not forever!



Alumni News

Marino Forlino, Rutgers '16



Marino Forlino (Assistant Professor of Italian, Scripps College) was selected as one of the recipients of the Mary W. Johnson Faculty Achievement Awards in Teaching for the 2018-2019 academic year. These awards are

given to outstanding Scripps faculty with extraordinary achievements in teaching, scholarship, or service for the 2018-2019 academic year who also have demonstrated proficiency in the other two areas.

Ida Marinzoli, Rutgers '16

Since my dissertation on "Unresolved Conflicts: Identity, Guilt and Betrayal," I continue researching and analyzing psychosocial aspects of situational factors, namely historical time and space. I had the privilege to work with Konrad Eisenbichle, Professor Emeritus from the University of Toronto, Canada, and publish an article "Quarnerine Identity: The Hybrid self in Caterina Edwards' *Island of the Nightingale*" in his book *Forgotten Italians*. This groundbreaking collection of articles from an international team of scholars is revising the history of the Julian-Dalmatian Diaspora and examining the literary and artistic works produced by Canadian immigrants. Caterina Edwards' hybridity (autobiographical element) was examined through the prism of women who live on the border between two different worlds and cultures. I also contribute to the quarterly Canadian *Periodico Informativo: El Boletín*.

Michele Monserrati, Rutgers '12

I finally published the book I have been working on since I was a graduate student at Rutgers, *Searching for Japan. Twentieth-century Italy's Fascination with Japanese Culture* (LUP, 2020). I also published an article on *Modern Italy* inspired by the talk I gave at

the alumni reunion last year, "Fascist Samurais: The Japanese Race in the Italian Imaginary during WW2 and Beyond." I took a trip to NYC with my Italian students for an outstanding production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, and I also organized an *Italian Crime Fiction* film series. I enjoyed teaching my favorite Comp. Lit. course, *Detectives without Borders*. At Williams College I participated in a semester-long roundtable discussion on *Islamophobia and Right-Wing Populism*, and I also organized an interdisciplinary writing group on *Colonialism in Africa*.

Eleonora Sartoni, Rutgers '20

It has been a challenging year with memorable accomplishments. In December, I defended my dissertation titled *Spectacular Capital(ist) City: Wanderings through Rome from 1870 to the Economic Miracle*. During the spring, I attended the NeMLA (also a Rutgers reunion!) where I presented two papers: "*Una gran cosa immensa e inutile*. Train, Monuments, and National Unification in *La Conquista di Roma*" and "The Deception of the Utopic City: Rome in Morante's *La Storia*." In the fall, Covid permitting, I will participate in the International Conference on Fellini in Toronto. I am currently working on an article examining late 19th-century texts that show how the bourgeoisification of Rome's society affected social dynamics in parks, museums, and shops and how the authors taken into consideration elaborate forms of resistance through poetry and flânerie.

Sandra Waters, Rutgers '09

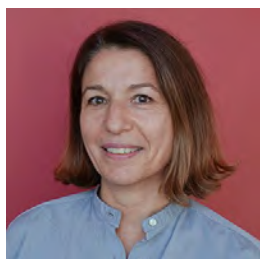
During this last year, I published an article on contemporary auteur Paolo Sorrentino titled "Anxiety (of influence) and (absent) fathers in Sorrentino's English-language narratives" in the *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies* (vol. 7 no. 3, 2019). With fellow Rutgers alumnus Francesco Pascuzzi, I co-edited the volume *The Spaces and Places of Horror* (Vernon Press 2020), in which my contribution "Surveillance, Narrative, and Spectatorship in Recent American Horror Films" appears. In March 2020 I presented a paper on contemporary lesbian cinema at NeMLA's annual conference. I continue to serve as managing editor for *Italian Quarterly*.

News from the Faculty



Andrea Baldi
Professor, Department Chair

Andrea Baldi has a forthcoming article in an issue of *Italianistica* devoted to Anna Maria Ortese. Last October, he engaged in a Conversation with Jhumpa Lahiri, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, on *The Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories* that she edited. He gave a lecture at Princeton University, and presented a paper and chaired a session at the NeMLA Convention. Last November he received the *Cavalier Coccia, Jr. Heritage, Language and Culture Award*, by UNICO National. In his address to its members, he discussed the current state of Italian Studies. He was also nominated Chair of the *Blue Ribbon Panel*, which selects the recipient of the Coccia-Insera Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian.



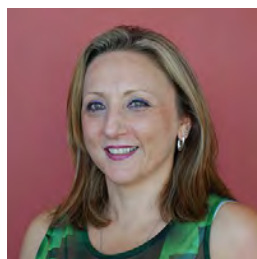
Paola Gambarota
Associate Professor

This year I am very happy to celebrate the graduation of two of my graduate students, Matteo Benassi and Brian Tholl, currently teaching at the University of Kentucky and at Duke. I gave a talk at the NEMLA in Boston on Giacomo Gentilomo's *O' sole mio* (1945), an unknown gem of Italian cinema on the Neapolitan insurrection against the German occupiers (September 1943). I enjoyed very much teaching the lecture courses on 'Classics of Italian Cinema' and on 'Exploring Naples,' despite the move online in mid semester.



David Marsh
Professor

In the past year, Prof. Marsh published the biography *Giannozzo Manetti: The Life of a Florentine Humanist* (Harvard 2019). He also published the following articles: "Bruni's Republicanism Reconsidered." In *Republicanism. A Theoretical and Historical Perspective* (Rome 2020); "Luciano e Gustave Flaubert" in *Luciano di Samosata nell'Europa del Quattro e del Cinquecento*. (Pisa-Rome 2019); "Cosimo de' Medici: The Exile as Hero" in *Exil und Heimatferne in der Literatur des Humanismus* (Tübingen 2019); and "Francesco Filelfo as a Writer of Invective" in *Francesco Filelfo, Man of Letters* (Leiden-Boston 2019). He also revised the online entries "Dialogue," and "Leon Battista Alberti" in *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Renaissance and Reformation*.



Carmela Scala
Director of the Italian Language Program

I would say that the highlight of this academic year was the winning (together with Sheri La Macchia and Chris Scherer) of the Ernest E. McMahon Class of 1930 Award! It was a great honor and a pleasant surprise. I presented papers on second language acquisition and students' engagement at the NEMLA annual conference and at the Rutgers On Line conference respectively. I continued my work as editor of the Language Teaching and Technology journal and I oversaw the publication of our second issue. I also worked on the creation of two new courses: Italian 250 Online and Laboratorio di Cucina (Hybrid). I was invited to conduct workshop on online teaching and class design at Hunter College and The Graduate Center of New York.



Alessandro Vettori
Professor

This last year has been very eventful. My book *Dante's Prayerful Pilgrimage* (Brill 2019) came out in September, and I was able to present it at Columbia and

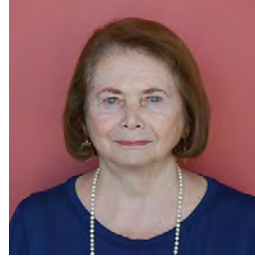
at the Colloquium in the Humanities at NYU; a presentation scheduled in Florence for March had to be canceled. I also completed two articles, one on Dante and Brunetto Latini, one on Dante as model for Giuseppe Berto, plus an encyclopedia entry on Iacopone da Todi for Oxford UP. All three items should be out before the end of the year. I am very happy to have received the Rutgers University Humanities Plus Pedagogical Innovation Grant (2020-2021) to revamp the Dante and Medieval Culture course.



Rhiannon Welch
Associate Professor

It's difficult to recall how this academic year began, given how the events of the past several months seem to have turned the world upside down. Last fall, I

gave two guest lectures—one on representations of Rome in Italian cinema to students in the course "Cinematic Cities" at Cornell University, and another on teaching Mediterranean migration for high school teachers in New Jersey. In February, I presented a portion of my latest research on Giacomo Leopardi's poetic approach to philology as part of my ongoing book project "Crisis and the Aesthetics of Deceleration" in the Department of Italian Studies UC Berkeley. After eight truly wonderful years in the Department of Italian and the Program in Cinema Studies at Rutgers, I'll be joining the faculty of Italian Studies at UC Berkeley this fall. I will miss the warmth and generosity of the Rutgers community, and the Italian Department in particular. Sending the most sincere thanks to my students and colleagues who have made Rutgers such an enjoyable and productive second home over the course of the past several years. Grazie di cuore a tutti!



Laura S. White
Professor

Lectures: "Destination Venice" in the series "Food for Thought," Rutgers University, October 2019. "In viaggio con il giovane Marin Sanudo" invited paper at the

International Conference "Visioni d'Istria, Fiume, Dalmazia nella Letteratura Italiana, Trieste, 7-9 November 2019. Professional Activities: Continued to serve as Commissioner and as Academic Advisor of the Italian Heritage Commission, as Vice-President of IACE (Italian American Committee on Education) at the Italian Consulate in New York and as Member of the Advisory Council for the Department of French and Italian of Princeton University.

Publications: "In viaggio con il giovane Marin Sanudo" in print, Editore Serra, Pisa-Roma, Spring 2020. Spring 2020: on sabbatical.



Isabella Magni

*Postdoctoral Associate
in Italian and
Digital Humanities*

My first year at Rutgers has been very stimulating. I gave a talk at University of Massachusetts-Amherst on my newly launched Italian Paleography project and a talk at the College of the Holy Cross on the state of digital humanities research. I also edited a special issue of the Early Modern Digital Review journal focused on *Digital Paleography* (out in Fall 2020), and I completed a number of articles among which *From Codex to <Code>: New Perspectives in the Study of Medieval Texts* (also out in Fall 2020). I also was honored to receive the *Cappon Fellowship in Documentary Editing* to spend two months in the archives to work on my newest project: a digital edition of the Albizi Memorial Book.

Department Snapshots



Newsletter Graphic Design - Sheri La Macchia

Death Announcements:

Richard Feinberg – husband of Carol Feinberg, longtime administrator of the department

Don Wright – husband of Simona Wright, alumna of the department

Nicholas Patruno – department alumnus and Professor Emeritus of Bryn Mawr College



Italian Quarterly

During this academic year, *Italian Quarterly* published three volumes, led by managing editor Sandra Waters and editor Alessandro Vettori. Barbara Alfano (Bennington College) and Anna Celenza (Georgetown University), guest editors of volume 54, compiled articles from across academic fields regarding the Cold War in Italy and in Italian-American relations. Roberto Risso (Clemson University) and Rutgers alumnus Alberto Iozzia (University of Pittsburgh) guest-edited volume 55 on the subject of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narrative. Volume 56 covers Italian narrative and art from Dante to Ferrante, and also includes the first iteration of a new section on review essays, edited by Eilis Kierans (Rutgers). We are inviting specialists in Italian literature, film, history, and culture to submit articles for publication at sandra.waters@rutgers.edu. We also have a list of books to review, if anyone is interested in reviewing.

The Rutgers Libretto

Pet Profiles



No social distancing here. Marbles and Rascal cuddle up on Chiara's favorite chair.



Coco, Carmela's little puppy, is ready to play with the family.

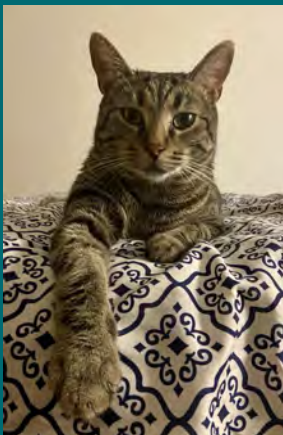


Angie's adorable baby Ollie takes a catnap while Steven's puppy, Jayney wants to play fetch.



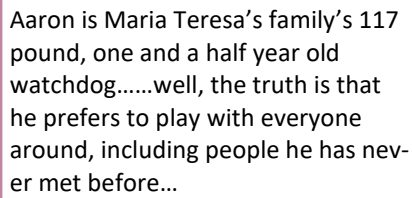
Lucy isn't bothered by this "new normal", since she has much more time to spend with her pet parent, Alessandro.

Our pets provide emotional support during the CoronaVirus pandemic.



A word about the outstanding service of Seamus Kierans:
It's a Cat's Life!

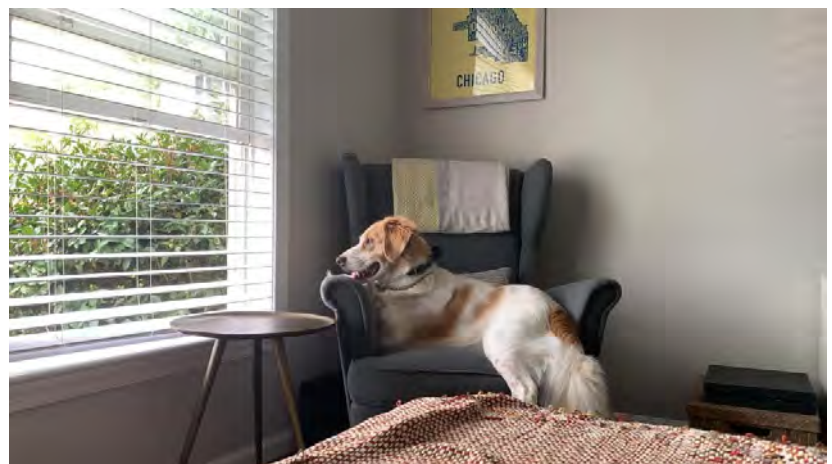
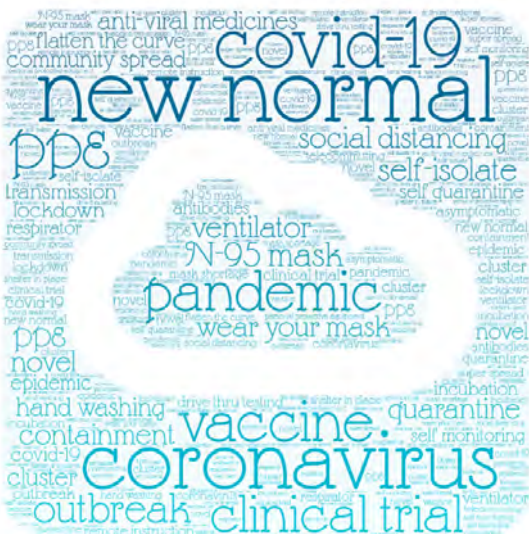
Seamus jiggled with delight when he discovered his human Eilis' academic adventures abroad had been curtailed due to Covid-19. While sequestered at home, the pair munched on bottomless bowls of goldfish crackers in bed as they binge-watched *Tiger King* and meowed with delight. Following long afternoon naps, they set out to purrrfect their yoga positions. No pointing paws, but cat's pose isn't for everyone. When they finally had enough fun procrastinating, they cuddled up to craft the dissertation with calm. To Seamus' dismay, when his human strayed from the righteous topic, he was forced to perch awkwardly on her keyboard in protest. And when he felt like his human really wasn't taking his suggestions seriously, he turned an ominous shade of grey, puffed up his tail, and let out a roar—a frightening sight indeed! In the end, he always regretted his tantrums and would slink off to find a reconciliatory mouse. Despite his occasional hissy fits, he hopes he will one day don a wee cap and gown of his own for his tireless editorial and well-being services. There is not enough salmon in all the waters wide with which to honor this philanthropic feline!

A black and white cat is standing in a grassy area with trees in the background. The cat has a white patch on its chest and white paws. It is looking towards the camera.

A close-up photograph of a dark brown cat with bright green eyes and long white whiskers. The cat is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing hints of yellow and blue.



Sheri and her pets have been spending a lot of play-time in the backyard. Hansel is on the prowl. Lucy gets dirty hunting for chipmunks and TJ man is just waiting for this Covid-19 crisis to be over.



Leopold, Eleonora and Brian's boy, spends the day on lockdown thinking about his future in North Carolina.



School of Arts and Sciences

Department of Italian

Rutgers University—New Brunswick

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New Brunswick, NJ 08901

We'd like to stay in touch...

As part of the Rutgers community we invite you to join us for innovative intellectual and celebratory events. We are grateful for the generous support of alumni, individuals, and our partner Italian foundations and organizations, who have helped to positively shape our students' experience through academics, programming, and financial means. Feel free to stop by the Italian Department for a visit or visit us online on Facebook and our website. We welcome opportunities to collaborate.