

The Rutgers

ITALIAN Libretto

Spring 2023



From the chair's desk:

Care amiche e amici del Dipartimento d'Italiano a Rutgers,

It has been a busy year for our department! In the fall 2022 we welcomed a new colleague, Prof. Vetri Nathan, who was hired as Associate Professor of Italian and Mellon Associate Professor at the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice. He was granted tenure this past January. His specialization is the cinema of migration and he will also be teaching courses on Black Italy, sustainability, and food studies. Prof. Carmela Scala has been promoted to Associate Teaching Professor, a very well-deserved recognition of her hard work and great accomplishments.

As is customary by now, in the spring semester we invited a visiting professor to teach a Digital Humanities class for our graduate students, as we have done for the past 8 years now. Prof. Lisa Tagliaferri taught a course entitled Digital Humanities: Methods, Project Management, and Sustainability, which was very successful in giving students a strong background in DH.

Besides many fascinating events, lectures, and screenings, this past year we partnered with other language departments on the occasion of the Year of Languages, which was organized and sponsored by the Humanities Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Prof.

Table of Contents

- Undergraduate News, pp. 4-5
- Graduate News, pp. 7-10
- Alumnae/i News, pp. 12-14
- Italian Graduate Society, p. 6
- Department Events, p. 11
- Faculty News, pp. 16-17

(from the chair's desk, continued)

Rebecca Walkowitz. We hosted students in our classes during a “Visit a Language Classroom Week,” we awarded prizes to students at all levels, and we got together with all other members and students of languages to draw attention to the study of languages other than English at Rutgers.

We also welcomed the Consul General of Italy in New York City, Ministro Fabrizio De Michele, who spent a considerable amount of time talking to students, doctoral candidates, and faculty. We were very sorry to have to say goodbye to Dr. Annavaleria Guazzieri, the Director of the School Office at the Italian Consulate, who concluded her term, and we look forward to welcoming a new director soon. We are very grateful to the Italian Government for our Italian Government Lecturer, Dr. Rosario Giovanni Scalia, who is doing a fabulous job teaching and developing new class materials.

Rutgers Giving Week (no longer Giving Day—donations are accepted during an entire week in March now) was particularly gratifying for our Department this year. We raised over \$11,000! Thank you all, donors, alums, faculty, graduate students, and friends of the Department for your generosity. The money we collected will be used to the benefit of our students and our programs.

We mourn the loss of Dr. Elda Coccia of the Coccia Foundation, who has been a great supporter of our Department, donating generously to our students over the last two decades. Read more about her in Prof. Baldi's obituary in this Newsletter.

Here is wishing everyone a happy and regenerative summer,
Alessandro

Launch of Other Voices of Italy—OVOI

Rutgers University Press Translation Series has a global reach

Editorial Team: Eilis Kierans, Sandra Waters, and Alessandro Vettori



OVOI, Other Voices of Italy. The book series edited by Eilis Kierans, Alessandro Vettori, and Sandra Waters is doing very well. The first three volumes came out January 13th, 2023: Genevieve Makaping, *Reversing the Gaze*, translated by Giovanna Bellesia Contuzzi and Victoria Offredi Poletto; Dacia Maraini's *In Praise of Disobedience*, translated by Jane Tylus; and Adrián Bravi, *My Language is a Jealous Lover*, translated by Victoria Offredi Poletto and Giovanna Bellesia Contuzzi. Three more books will be published in August and three more will come out in October. After publicizing the series at an event at the Italian Cultural Institute in New York City in February we have received over twenty submissions that we are evaluating. If you have titles of Italian books that you think should be made available to English speakers, please send us proposals at ovoi@rutgers.edu. A full list of books slated for publication and our mission statement can be found on the Rutgers University Press website <https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/ovoi>

In Memoriam



Mrs. Elda M. Coccia, a selfless donor and beloved friend of our Department, passed away on March 29, 2023, surrounded by her family. In 1994 Elda established the Coccia Foundation, alongside her late husband, Cav. Joseph Coccia, Jr., distinguishing themselves for their vibrant engagement with Institutions of higher education across the Tri-State area and beyond, as well as the Italian American community. With their numerous pioneering initiatives, they contributed to our didactic mission in exemplary ways.

The Coccia Foundation's collaboration with our Department began more than 20 years ago, at first through their sponsorship of our Italian Club's activities and the generous scholarships they granted to our graduate and undergraduate students. More recently, they dedicated their financial efforts to aid our undergraduates in improving their fluency in Italian and their knowledge of Italian culture. This was made possible by the substantial support they provided through the Anna & Angelo Soriano Memorial Scholarship and the Clementina & Joseph Coccia, Sr. Memorial Scholarship, among others. Scores of students have benefited from these considerable awards, which allowed them to pursue their dreams.

Exceptionally poised, perceptive, and gracious, Elda tirelessly devoted herself to the promotion and dissemination of the Italian American heritage, thus touching the hearts and minds of many people. We will deeply miss Mrs. Elda M. Coccia, but her ideals, memory, and legacy will live on through the Coccia Foundation and their academic branch, the Joseph and Elda Coccia Institute for the Italian Experience in America.

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A unique opportunity for New Jersey high school students and teachers of Italian language.

more info? slama@rutgers.edu



A message from Rutgers Italian Club



Ciao!

As the spring semester is in full swing the Rutgers Italian Club is thrilled to continue to bring Italian-themed events to campus. The club has held events ranging from pasta and cannoli making, playing tombola, educational lectures on history, and having guest speakers like Giuseppe Grispino lecture on the Italian language. This semester we have many events in the works like a Bocce tournament and a game show night!

If you are interested in joining, follow up on Instagram @ruitalianru and click the link in our bio!



Photos of Prof. Baldi with scholarship winners Emilia Marucci, Andrea Potesta-Oliva, and Matthew Esaia. Congratulations to the Italian Graduating Class of 2023!

Undergraduate News

from Undergraduate Director, Asst. Teaching Professor and Director of the Italian Language Program, Carmela Scala



The Italian Undergraduate Program had an exceptional year, marked by various accomplishments and the establishment of the Italian National Honor Society chapter: GAMMA KAPPA ALPHA. Apart from the esteemed recognition, the program offers numerous advantages. Indeed, the Honor Society offers many scholarships providing financial support for the members' academic endeavors. It also facilitates great networking opportunities. Additionally, [there are plans to](#) introduce new and exciting internship opportunities, further enhancing the prospects for student success. Notably, our Undergraduate students received prestigious awards, demonstrating their outstanding achievements:

- Sophia Scala received a Coccia Foundation Study Abroad Scholarship
- Matthew Esaia was awarded a Coccia Foundation Study Abroad Scholarship
- Emilia Marucci was granted two sponsored scholarships: Anna & Angelo Soriano Memorial Scholarship as well as the Clementina & Joseph Coccia, Sr. Memorial Scholarship, for her Italian Studies
- Catia Gage received the Salvatore Davino Memorial Sponsored Scholarship to study abroad in Italy
- Andrea Potesta-Oliva received Italian Teachers of New Jersey College Borsa Award



RU in Rome 2023 co-hort connects at orientation session

Creating a summer full of memories for life

We are thrilled to announce that this year, a group of 23 enthusiastic students will embark on an unforgettable journey to Rome with our RU ROME Summer Study Abroad program. This immersive experience goes beyond language learning as students can study Art, Food Studies, and Culture or engage in an internship tailored to their interests. But that's not all – RU Rome offers exciting excursions to the Ancient Ruins of Pompeii and the captivating city of Florence, known as the cradle of the Renaissance. The 2023 cohort had a chance to meet fellow students and professors during the May orientation, and the atmosphere was vibrant with camaraderie and excitement. With anticipation running high, we can't wait to explore everything Rome offers. Undoubtedly, this month-long adventure will be an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.

This program is open to students from all universities and colleges. Questions can be directed to our staff.

RU in Rome Director, Carmela Scala carmela.scala@rutgers.edu

Administrator, RU in Rome, Sheri La Macchia slama@rutgers.edu



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

HEARTFUL THANKS

WE APPRECIATE OUR DONORS.



During the third week in March 2023, RUTGERS GIVING DAYS, there was an outpouring of support for the Italian Dept. With heartfelt thanks we express our gratitude. Your contributions can help Rutgers students in many ways.

Graduate Scholarships and Student Travel Grants

Study Abroad Scholarships for Undergraduate Students

Tuition scholarships for NJ teachers pursuing a Masters in Teaching Italian degree.

Name Awards for Graduate and Undergrad Students

Click the link below to give a one-time donation or monthly contribution, or save the date...

RUTGERS GIVING DAYS
MARCH 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/RutgersItalian>

Italian Graduate Society

In the Fall semester 2022 the IGS-Italian Graduate Society hosted a talk by Prof. Efe Khayyat (Rutgers University, AMESALL) on Roberto Calasso. Calasso's profile, that of a neo-gnostic polyglot and editor-in-chief for one of the most prominent independent publishing houses in Italy (Adelphi), has long been considered a *unicum* in the Italian literary system. His multidisciplinary approach has been regarded as an original mix of classical literature, Asian philosophy and mythology.

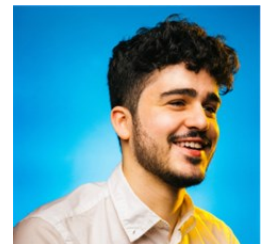
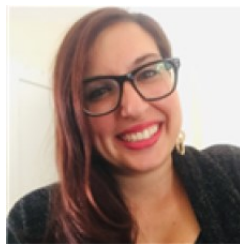
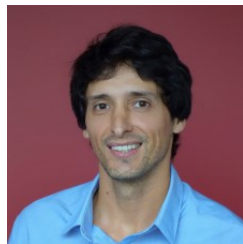
In the Spring semester 2023 the IGS sponsored the German Graduate Conference, *The Eternal Return of the Vampire*: an occasion to reflect on how "the ever-resourceful vampire survives each staking and refashions itself according to the contemporary blood pool". Talks, presentations and movie screenings have stimulated a fierce debate on the vampire's status as a folklore figure.

In the same semester, together with the Department of Italian and the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice (ISGRJ), the IGS hosted the Liberian Italian singer, songwriter, theatrical performer and beatmaker Karima 2G. IGS' member Steven Jacobs and Professor Vetri Nathan interviewed Karima 2G on racism, bigotry and how politics can shape contemporary identity.

The title for the next conference will be "Masks". The tentative dates are November 17-18. Call for papers will be advertised on our website:

<https://sites.rutgers.edu/italian-grad-society/>

You can contact us here.: italian.grad.society@gmail.com

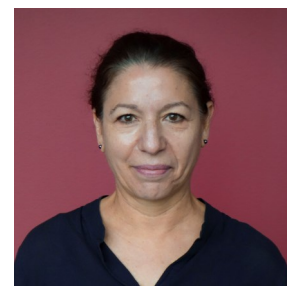


IGS officers (left to right):
Marius Rusu, President
Angela Mininni, Vice President
Salvatore Taibi, Secretary
and Steven Jacobs, Treasurer



Graduate News

from Graduate Program Director, Professor Paola Gambarota



This past academic year has been rich with exciting news. We admitted two new students in our PhD program, Maria Laura Spanedda and Sean Widlake, who, with their strong interdisciplinary experience and their many languages, bring their knowledge of the wider world, beyond the Italian culture, to our department. We are very happy to welcome them in our community. We also welcomed to our graduate community Prof. Vetri Nathan, who taught a brand-new seminar on Post-Colonial Italy and, as a member of the Graduate Advisory Committee, contributed to our annual revision of the curriculum. We are thankful for his enthusiasm and bright ideas. Among the many accomplishments, Eilis Kierans defended her dissertation brilliantly, Paolo Scartoni received the prestigious, university-wide Louis Bevier Fellowship, and Federica Soddu was invited to participate in the Oxford workshop on "Italy, the Mediterranean, and the South." In our series "Food for Thought," Giuseppe Grispino presented his work "When the Silence Isn't Quiet: Tondelli, Bellezza and the HIV Stigma," and Ariana Guzman and Steven Jacobs shared their collaborative project "Barriers to Integration in Modern Italy: A Digital Humanities Project."

The Italian Graduate Society and all our graduate students continue to be exceptionally active and visible in our field, participating in numerous international conferences and contributing to professional initiatives such as the Dante Society of America, the journal Italian Quarterly, and the Rutgers Italian Book Series OVOI. This year the news from the job market has been extremely gratifying, with Eilis Kierans and Giuseppe Grispino securing positions respectively at Penn State and at the University of Oklahoma, and Paolo Scartoni invited as Visiting Assistant Professor at Vassar College. Hiromi Kaneda was hired as Visiting Instructor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA. Some of our alumni are moving into excellent, steady positions: Arianna Fognani will move from her tenure-track position at Coastal Carolina University to a new position at the University of Pennsylvania, Alberto Iozzia was hired at Boston University, and Michele Monserrati secured a tenure-track position at Smith College. Congratulations to our students and Alumni on their many successes! Click hyperlinks here: [website](#), [Facebook page](#), [Instagram account](#).



The Italian Department is well represented at NeMLA conference in Niagara Falls - March 2023

Left to right: Eilis Kierans, Paola Gambarota, Vetri Nathan, Giuseppe Grispino, Rosario Scalia, and Frederica Soddu.

News from Current Graduate Students

Natascia Cappa

This year Natascia has been working on her dissertation, which focuses on the representation of Literary fascism. Her research project is based on a comparative study between Italy and Latin America and uses the haunting theme to understand how ideas and concepts travel across time and space. This summer, she will participate in "CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE DI CULTURE NEOLATINE – BESTIARI", organized on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Italo Calvino's birth by the University of Wrocław (Poland). She will present a study on the postcolonial novel *Tempo di uccidere* by Ennio Flaiano. The novel is an excellent example of animal symbolism related to the metaphor of spectrality. Furthermore, she has published on writer Juan Rodolfo Wilcock for "Memoria presente: The Common Spanish Legacy in Italian and Latin American Cultures", which is a research and curriculum development project launched thanks to an [NEH \(National Endowment for the Humanities\) Faculty Award for Summer 2021](#), regularly supported by the Inserra Endowment at Montclair State University, and linked to this university's federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution. The project focuses on the cultural commonalities between Italy and Latin America as the result of a shared colonial and migratory experience.

Maria Teresa De Luca

This past academic year Maria Teresa has taught both as a TA for the Italian Department at Rutgers, and as an adjunct Lecturer at Columbia University where she also audited a graduate course on the European novel, and spent long afternoons in the Butler Library working on her dissertation. She was invited to publish her paper *Why study math? The case of ms. Ashburnham 956* in the volume 'Cultures of Exchange' (University of Toronto Press). Work on the final draft of this submission occupied much of the winter months. The editors of the volume have accepted her submission for inclusion in the volume, and the entire volume is now under peer review. In September she will present a paper on Maria Corti at the AdI Congress in Naples.

Giuseppe Grispino

During the past academic year, I have successfully defended my prospectus and I have started working on my dissertation. The SGS funded a research trip to the town of Correggio, where I had the opportunity to collect material on Pier Vittorio Tondelli. In addition, this year I presented a paper on the work of queer antimafia activist Nino Gennaro at NeMLA in Niagara Falls. I have also taught two classes of Italian for Travel. I am grateful to have received the Paragano Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship for Italian Studies at the Alumni Night. I will use this scholarship to support my research and dissertation writing. Finally, I am happy to share that I will be spending the next academic year teaching Italian at the University of Oklahoma. I will truly miss Rutgers, but I also look forward to this new adventure and to all that the future holds for me.

Ariana Guzman

During this first year, I had the opportunity to take courses in Comparative Literature, Women's and Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Public Humanities. These courses have allowed me to follow my interests in these fields and have motivated me to pursue certificates in Public Humanities and Women's and Gender Studies. During the Spring semester, Steven Jacobs and I began the process of creating a digital component for our project on Latin Americans immigrants in Italy. We are very excited about this digital humanities project and look forward to continuing working on it. In the summer 2023, I participated in the Calandra Italian American Institute's Italian Diaspora Summer Studies Seminar, which was held in collaboration with Università degli Studi Roma Tre. Through this summer seminar, I learned about various aspects of migrations from/to Italy, mainly focusing on the Italian American experience.



Steven Jacobs

This past year has been full of growth and stimulating challenges. I took courses in the Italian and German departments, with a focus on developing my digital humanities skills and sharpening my research interests. I successfully completed my Comprehensive Exams and I am beginning to prepare for my Qualifying Exams. Besides serving as Treasurer for the Italian Graduate Society, I have engaged in departmental service as a graduate student liaison and a member of the website committee. In the Spring semester, Ariana Guzman and I began a digital humanities project on Latin-American immigrants in Italy, which we presented at Rutgers and intend on submitting to other forums in the Fall 23' semester. This summer I am very fortunate to be teaching Italian 101 for the Rutgers in Rome program.

Dora Labate

I spent the academic year 2022-2023 setting things in motion for my forthcoming PhD qualifying exams in September. Despite the temptation to jump in an invigorating academic life, it was clear to the “forever student” in me that the year would be a low-key work-in-progress period, not one of concrete and finite accomplishments. To say it with a metaphor, my biggest accomplishment for the year 2022-23 was planting the seeds for a crop to come. Keeping up with the spirit of building tomorrow with today's choices, I served as an advisory member for RU Global, and I recently interviewed for a summer appointment not to be disclosed yet.

Angela Mininni

This past academic year has been one of the best yet. I finally found my passion project to work on for long-term research, returning to my roots as a classicist while remaining anchored to my interest in gender studies. Therefore, as I prepare to finally complete the Comprehensive Exams, I look forward to starting to work on my new research project and participating in conferences to get my work out there and receive qualitative feedback. In the meantime, I also serve as Vice-President of the Italian Graduate Society (IGS) and have been developing my teaching skills with language and culture classes.

Marius Rusu

The academic year 2022-2023 (the 2nd in my PhD career) has been challenging and stimulating at the same time. I took classes from both the Italian and German departments and taught two language courses per semester. I improved my understanding of the different aspect of literary theory and explored new ways to

approach texts. I gave talks at conferences hosted in institutions in Europe and the United States (Paris, Reggio Emilia, South Orange-NJ) and published two articles for the reviews “La Bibliofilia” and “Bibliologia”.

Diletta Pasetti

Exciting, challenging, and inspirational: The past academic year has been the first both as a PhD student and as a Teaching Assistant. I had the opportunity to teach two Italian language courses, exploring the face-to-face approach and the asynchronous online mode. I truly enjoyed walking the learning curve as a teacher: the more I attended the Methodologies of Teaching World Languages course, the more confidence I gained in the class environment. Also, I had the chance to work on the Italian for Music course syllabus and to teach it in class, learning a lot. Taking advantage of the interdisciplinary approach of the Italian Department, I took courses in several areas exploring literature, theories, and methodologies. With a talk on Meloni's exploitation of the Virgin's tale, I attended the Graduate student conference of UPenn in March and the University College Cork's in June. In July, I participated in the Language Policy International Summer School hosted by Università per gli Stranieri di Siena, where I presented my research on Primo Mazzolari and his dedication to the education of marginalized groups.

Paolo Scartoni

This year, Paolo published two contributions, [“Come al nome di Tisbe’: Vocal Encounters On Top of Purgatory,”](#) in *Dante Notes*, and [“Music and Grammar: Models of Dantean Inquiry from the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* to Inf. 3,”](#) in *Textual Cultures*. The Dante Society of America awarded him the Presidential Service Award for co-founding and representing the Society's Graduate Students Group. He was also awarded the Dr. Vito and Mrs. Carolyn De Simone Endowed Fellowship for Italian Studies and the Louis Bevier Dissertation Completion Fellowship for the next academic year. He declined the latter and accepted an appointment at Vassar College, where he will teach Italian language, conversation, and opera classes. He was invited as a speaker to a round table on Dante and DEI at Yale University and to give lectures and talks at the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, and Berkeley's Graduate Theological Seminary. He presented his research at the MLA convention in San Francisco, the International Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, and New York University.





Rosario Scalia
*Italian
Government
Lecturer*

Throughout the previous academic year, I had the pleasure of conducting the majority of my courses in person. This experience reminded me of the valuable advantages students gain from attending classes in a physical setting. Furthermore, I dedicated my time to advancing my doctoral dissertation, which focused on mafia mythology. In the context of NeMLA 2023, in March, I chaired a roundtable discussion on Diversity in the Mafia World alongside my colleague Irene Lottini from Iowa University. During this engaging event, I presented a paper titled "Fighting the Mafia: Is it primarily a man's issue?". Also, I am thrilled to share that I have been offered the exciting opportunity to teach a course on Mafia movies at Rutgers in the upcoming academic year. I eagerly await the chance to engage with students in this captivating subject matter.

As a government lecturer, I actively pursued the strengthening of collaboration between the Italian Department and the Italian Consulate General of New York. In pursuit of this objective, I contributed to the visit of Consul General of Italy, Fabrizio Di Michele. Furthermore, I supported Professor Carmela Scala in her application for a grant from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thanks to this funding, the department was able to offer a professional development course on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Italian classes. A great opportunity for high school and university Italian teachers! I actively offered tutoring services to students, both online and in person. Additionally, I devoted my time to writing numerous letters of recommendation to support students in their pursuit of scholarships and academic programs. The opportunity to connect with students, learn from their diverse experiences, and witness their growth has been truly enriching and remains one of the most exciting aspects of my service at Rutgers.

More from Current Ph.D. Students

Federica Soddu

This year has passed fast and has been a full one for me.

In the Fall, I taught Expos for the first time. Expos is for sure a challenging class to teach, with many students and much grading, but I must say that it has also been a rewarding experience in many ways. It allowed me to leave the comforting nest of College Ave and the Italian Department and explore the buildings of Livingston while interfacing with the Writing Program. Teaching students how to write academic essays started to become very thrilling once I saw their progress, plus, it made me gain a master's in transitions and topic sentences!

In my free-from-teaching Spring, I sent the first draft of my dissertation's first chapter and worked on a better structure for the thesis overall, which I continue working on. In March, I travelled to Niagara Falls to present a paper at Nemla. In June, I went to Oxford to participate in a workshop titled "Italy, the Mediterranean, and the South", where I had the opportunity to present my work and interact with scholars and activists from the US, Italy, and the UK and engage closely with their research.

Besides working on the dissertation, in the Summer I'll be dedicating myself to writing one chapter of the second volume of *Filosofie de logu. Decolonizzare il pensiero e la ricerca in Sardegna*.

Salvatore Taibi

The 2022-23 academic year brought new and rewarding challenges. To begin, I was provided the remarkable opportunity of teaching Contemporary Italian Cinema, a 300-level course in which I was given carte blanche to exercise *my* ideas regarding cinema in Italy today. Starting with a blank slate was daunting: being able to decide every film and every article and every metric can be overwhelming! At the same time, the support I received from the students was motivating beyond measure. Teaching the course, especially the discussions I had with my students, was the highlight of my nascent academic career. Additionally, I began to see an idea—one that was at first just the smallest of notions—develop into something much more concrete. My research on *Pinocchio* and its relationship with the free market, capitalism, and entrepreneurship earned two conference presentations ("Ottocentesimi: Second Symposium of the Interdisciplinary Network for Nineteenth-Century Italian Studies" at Seton Hall University in March and "Italian Studies Postgraduate Conference" at the University of Cork in June) and has also been accepted for publication as a chapter in a volume dedicated to Paul Cantor. I will spend a large part of the autumn working on this research, while also preparing for the Comprehensive Exams. Finally, I am spending the early part of July attending the summer school "Language Policy and Language Planning" at the Università per Stranieri di Siena. I very much look forward to what I will learn during this course and applying some of the techniques to my own teaching in the fall.

Events

Karima 2G

Italian Graduate Society—IGS, together with the Department of Italian and the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice (ISGRJ), the IGS hosted the Liberian Italian singer, songwriter, theatrical performer and beatmaker Karima 2G. IGS' member Steven Jacobs and Professor Vetri Nathan interviewed Karima 2G on racism, bigotry, and how politics can shape contemporary identity.



a book
presentation
with the author
Igiaba Scego

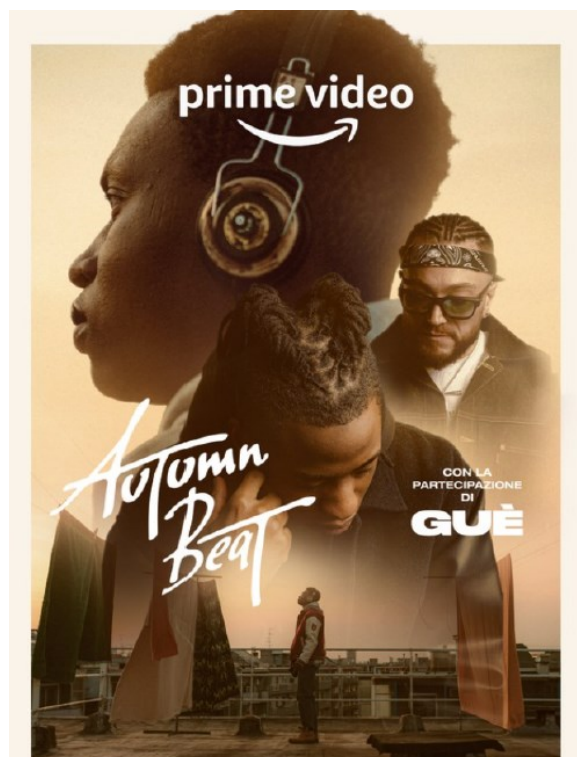
oct. 31
10am



Igiaba Scego, presents her book, *The Color Line*,
Alexander Library, 4th floor, Teleconference
Center, College Avenue Campus

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Department of Italian



Autumn Beat film screening with Antonio Dikele Distefano, well-known Italian author turned screenwriter, along with Fred Kudjo Kuwornu, filmmaker-activist-producer-educator. *Autumn Beat* is an exciting and unprecedented story about Black culture in Italy, and the role of music as a means of redemption and search for identity.



Opera Night

In March, the Italian Department sponsored an exciting Opera Night to celebrate the Year of Languages. A friend of our Department, Morgan Griffith (language educator and soprano), moderated a musical conversation with Lesley Craigie (soprano), Tammy Hensrud (mezzo), Fredrick Schlick (tenor), and Filippo Anselmi (artists manager). Accompanied at the piano by our very own Paolo Scartoni, they performed pieces by Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, Leoncavallo, and Gounod and concluded with a brilliant rendition of "O Sole Mio."



Alumni Reunion



On May 4th, 2023, Rutgers held their annual alumni reunion. Annachiara Mariani, Rutgers '10 (above) and William E. Roney, Rutgers '08, (above) along with Rossella Di Rosa, Rutgers'16—University of Pennsylvania (below) and Alberto Iozzia, Rutgers '18—Boston University (below) made up a round table of alumni who shared their experience and experiences of starting out in careers. The round table was led by Professor Paola Gambarota, Graduate Director of the department (above). It was a great time to catch up, socialize, and enjoy dinner.



LEFT: Sheri La Macchia, (center) Rutgers Italian Department Program Coordinator, welcomes back, Rossella Di Rosa, Rutgers'16—University of Pennsylvania (left) and Alberto Iozzia, Rutgers '18—Boston University (right). ABOVE: Paolo Scartoni, receives award from Vito De Simone.

Grad. Fellowships and Awards

Best Final Projects –

Diletta Pasetti—*A Kaleidoscope of Truths. An Analysis of Merini's Polychromatic Memoir L'altra verità.*

Joseph Isaac—*Italiani Brava Gente: An Italian Myth Turned into a 3-5 Player Worker-Placement and Engine Builder Game*

William E. Roney Awards

Innovative Teaching – Salvatore Taibi

Dedication to Service – Marius Rusu

Excellence in Scholarship – Steven Jacobs

Italian Dept. Summer Research Fellowships –

Ariana Guzman, Diletta Pasetti, Marius Rusu, and Salvatore Taibi

Paragano Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship—
Giuseppe Grispino

Dr. Vito and Mrs. Carolyn DeSimone Endowed Fellowship
for Italian Studies – Paolo Scartoni

Joseph E. & Marie E. Laggini Memorial Endowed
Graduate Fellowship – Federica Soddu



ABOVE: Stephanie Laggini Fiore and her daughter Francesca present fellowship award to Federica, TOP RIGHT: Giuseppe Grispino, pictured with Professor Alessandro Vettori, receives Paragano scholarship. BOTTOM RIGHT—Steven Jacobs accepts the William E. Roney award for scholarship.

Interested alumni who would like to have an Italian Dept. webpage, should contact Sheri La Macchia, Web-Administrator, at slama@rutgers.edu. Please provide your bio, current email and square headshot, plus year of graduation and degree received.

Alumni News

Alberto Iozzia (RU'18) After four years as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Italian, Film and Media Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, I am moving to Massachusetts to start my new job as a Lecturer at Boston University. My last year at Pitt was productive: I coordinated for the second time the Italian Theater Workshop and taught History of Italian Cinema to undergrads; I have also placed an article on Italian director Umberto Lenzi for publication (currently in press on *Film Criticism*) and I have authored a chapter on Italian science-fiction of the late 19th/early 20th century (also in press).

Eilis Kierans (RU'23)

Eilis bids a bittersweet farewell to all of her friends at Rutgers. She is, however, elated to be joining old colleagues for a new adventure at Penn State during the fall of 2023, where she has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Teaching! She would like to thank all of her Rutgers people for the heartfelt support over the past year as she put the final touches on her dissertation while facing unexpected challenges. Grazie and slainte!

Giovanna Miceli Jeffries (RU'83) A new collection of stories in Italian with a preface by Chiara Ingrao, tackling with Italian women's migration, identity and agency on the wave of flow of the middle of last century's immigration in Canada and the USA.

<https://www.villaggiomaori.com/store/%E2%80%8B8BGiovanna-Miceli-Jeffries-Le-radici-non-sanno-affondare-p551954794>

<https://www.bookrepublic.it/ebook/9791280928245-le-radici-non-sanno-affondare-villaggio-maori/>

Massimo Riva's (RU'86) digital monograph

[Shadow Plays: Virtual Realities in an Analog World](#), published by Stanford University Press in June 2022, is the category winner in eProduct for the 47th Annual PROSE Awards of the Association of American Publishers. PROSE awards recognize the very best in professional and scholarly publishing by celebrating the authors, editors, and publishers whose landmark works have made significant advancements in their respective fields of study each year.



Eilis Kierans, Ph.D. graduate 2023



Villaggio Maori Edizioni, 2023

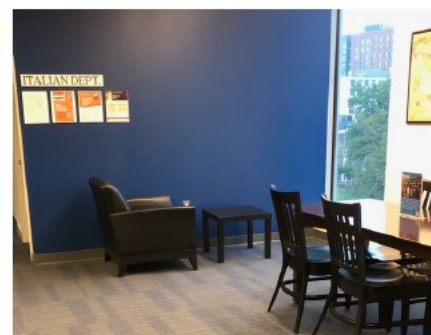
Department News

ITANJ Italian Language and Culture Day 2023

After a three-year virtual program spell ITANJ (Italian Teachers of New Jersey) returned to its annual “dal vivo” Italian Language and Culture Day on March 23, 2023, at the Rutgers Student Center on Busch campus. The event celebrating Italian Culture as middle school and high school students from across the state converged to perform original skits that presented the theme of “La Bellezza e’...”. 180 students participated. First, second, and third place awards went respectively to the Middle School and High School categories after the performances. Students attending were enthusiastic and happy to enjoy a day which enriched their Italian language experience and allowed them to mingle with students from other schools. The ITANJ ILCD committee was comprised of: Silvana Berardo ITANJ President, Anna Ranieri ITANJ Vice President of Programs, Phyllis Pizzolato, Marcella Clatworthy and Marisa Fusaro Co-chairs, Guido Morsella, and Federica Proietti. Visit <https://www.itanj.org/> for more information.



Welcome to the Italian Department.
Need a place to study or hang out between classes?
Stop by RU Academic Building 5th Floor. Individual workstations and a collaborative study space await you.



social media **@ItalianRutgers** on Instagram and
@RutgersDepartmentofItalian on Facebook

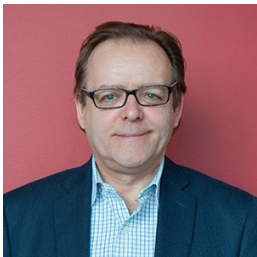


Italian Quarterly

The Department's journal has two upcoming volumes. One is a special issue containing the proceedings of the conference that was held in Torino in June 2022 entitled “Ribaltare, rimediare, oltrepassare i modelli: la preghiera nella cultura letteraria italiana” and is edited by Erminia Ardisino, Maria Magdalena Kubas, Alessandro Vettori, and Sandra Waters. The other one is the regular annual issue. We have partnered with Torrossa Casalini Libri and started digitizing old issues of the journal; soon enough we should make the whole list of issues

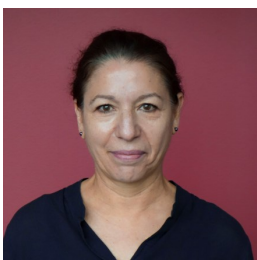
available to readers online. Editor Alessandro Vettori and managing editor Sandra Waters invite specialists in literature, culture, film, pedagogy, and history to send article submissions to sandra.waters@rutgers.edu. Send proposals for creative reviews to Eilis Kierans emk177@italian.rutgers.edu. To start your subscription to *Italian Quarterly*, contact the department at itquarterlybilling@gmail.com.

News from the Faculty



Andrea Baldi
Professor

This past academic year was a very fruitful one, as I had the opportunity to devote myself entirely to research. Last October, I gave a long presentation (*Conferencia*) at an International Conference on *La misoginia* held in Oviedo, Spain. My talk was then published in the volume *Voces disidentes*. In March, I attended the NeMLA Convention, chairing a session and presenting a paper on Maria Ortese's urban narratives. Moreover, I published an article on Guasco's *Letters* in *Laborhistorico*, while an essay I wrote on Guasco's daughter, Lavinia, and her entanglement with witchcraft, was accepted for publication by *Hipogrifo*. In early July, I will participate in the AATI Conference in Catania. Finally, I served as a member of the Academic Advisory Board of the NJIHC and chaired the panel of judges that selected the 2022 recipient of the Coccia-Inserra Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Teaching of Italian.



Paola Gambarota
Associate Professor

This past academic year I decided to experiment with a new graduate seminar that prepares doctoral students (first and second year) to transform their papers into talks and for publication. Learning about the different disciplines in which participants were delving and experiencing the vigorous co-operation of students while they carved their original positions within the broader scholarly conversation was truly thrilling. I continued to study and write on everyday life in Allied occupied Naples, and in March I gave the keynote for the 2023 NEMLA Special Events in Italian Studies on the year's theme "Resilience." In May I organized an inspiring and productive roundtable on career paths at our Graduate Alumni Reunion.



David Marsh
Professor

David Marsh will retire on 1 January 2024 after nearly 40 years at Rutgers.

In the past year he has written a dozen reviews for *Italian Quarterly*, and his translation of Leon Battista Alberti's *Dinner Pieces* will appear next year in the Harvard series, the I Tatti Renaissance Library. This fall he will be a Fowler Hamilton Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford, and in early 2024 he will be Visiting Professor at Villa I Tatti, Florence.



Vetri Nathan
*Associate Professor,
Mellon Associate Professor in
Global Racial Justice*

I have had an incredibly stimulating first year at Rutgers. I completed writing and edits on two forthcoming articles: one on Postcolonial and Critical Race Theories in the journal *Italian Culture*, and a chapter in an edited volume through Routledge Press on Somali diasporic food culture. I gave a total of seven invited talks and presentations in professional conferences in the United States, India and virtually. Harnessing multiple intellectual resources via my dual-role as *Mellon Chair of Global Racial Justice* and faculty in the Italian department, I was able to create and teach my first graduate seminar on *Postcolonial Italy*, as well as create syllabi for three new undergraduate courses that explore migrations, race and biopolitics and global food studies. I also created a new *Food and Cultural Studies* track, co-taught by Chef Angelo Guida, for the 2023 *RU in Rome* summer program.



Carmela Scala

*Associate Teaching Professor,
Director of the Italian Language
Program*

I have received a grant from the Italian Embassy to create and teach an online professional development course for Italian teachers on “Diversità, Uguaglianza e Giustizia Sociale Nelle Classi D’Italiano.” The course was well attended by K-12 teachers and higher education instructors from all over the United States and Italy. Together with my colleague, Rick Anderson, I have continued working on an app to teach languages, and we finally received a grant for 25K from Tech Advance (Rutgers University) to develop the first phase of the app.

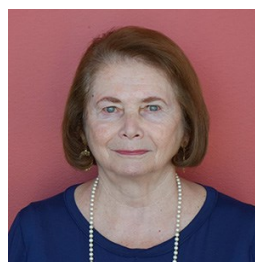
Furthermore, I have co-authored an article, “Building Space for Belonging: The Critical Race, Diasporas, and Migrations Caucus (CRDM),” in *Forum Italicum: A Journal of Italian Studies*. I have also published an edited volume, “How to Engage Today’s Learners in Language Classes.” I have also been researching the effect of Artificial intelligence on language acquisition and the ethical issues related to AI (particularly Chat Gpt4). I am working on two articles on the topic. Finally, I have participated in many conferences presenting papers on language acquisition and my app project.



Alessandro Vettori
Professor

I was Visiting Professor at Yale in the spring 2023 where I taught a graduate seminar on Dante. I continued to research the concept of money as related to Franciscan poverty in Dante. I published a collection of essays, *Dante at 700*, 4 articles and 1 introduction; 3 more articles are forthcoming; I also gave 7 invited talks and 2 presentations at professional association conferences in the US and Italy. I continue to

edit *Italian Quarterly* with Sandy Waters; two issues are coming out this fall. With Eilis Kierans and Sandy Waters I edit the translation series Other Voices of Italy (OVOLI) with Rutgers University Press; 9 books are coming out this year. I was elected Vice President of the Dante Society of America and Appointed to the Executive Committee of the Rutgers Translation Studies Initiative.



Laura S. White
Professor

Teaching and mentoring have been two important activities in the past year.

I continued in my role as liaison to the alumni of our department and as recorder of our department faculty meetings. I also participated as a judge in a Middle and High School Italian Language and Culture competition sponsored by ITANJ at Rutgers. A very good experience.

I continued my activities as Vice-President for IACE (Italy America Committee on Education) sponsored by the NY Italian Consulate, as member of the Italian Heritage Committee, sponsored by the Governor and as member of the Advisory Board for the Departments of French and Italian at Princeton University.

I finished an article on the culture of Venice and managed to progress with my book on Petrarch and Boccaccio. I am looking forward to my Sabbatical!



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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 on social media @ItalianRutgers on Instagram or @RutgersDepartmentofItalian on Facebook and our website. We welcome opportunities to collaborate.

Italian.Rutgers.edu