

Guidelines for Italian Seminar / Honors Thesis in Italian / Senior Thesis in Italian



The Italian Seminar (ROIT 53000) is open to anyone who meets the prerequisite (two 3-credit 30000 or 40000 level courses taught in Italian). It is required for Full and Supplementary Majors in the Lit/Culture concentration, and for anyone doing an Honors Major or Senior Thesis. It is a 3-credit course, taught mostly in Italian. It is offered in the Fall, and is normally taken in the student's senior (or last) year. Students can also take it as a normal elective, writing a normal seminar paper, without writing a thesis.

The Italian Seminar will focus on a few texts / works from different genres and periods (i.e., short story, novel, play, film, opera, etc...) in their contexts. This will allow students to learn basic research methods in different areas and time periods, and to pursue the topic of their thesis, whatever it may be, or a course paper topic that interests them. About half the focus of the course will be on the skills of researching and writing a scholarly article: doing research, finding bibliography, evaluating sources, online databases, library catalogues, developing a thesis topic and proposal, note taking, structuring an argument, revising drafts, citing sources, formatting bibliography, etc. . . .

Any undergraduate thesis for Italian, whether Honors, a regular Senior Thesis, or College Honors, is written over two semesters.

Any student planning to write a thesis is strongly encouraged to choose an adviser in the spring semester of their junior year, to begin to narrow a topic, and begin reading and research in the summer.

Students who think they are eligible for the Honors Track in Italian (whether in the Lit/Culture concentration or Italian Studies concentration), should contact their Italian adviser in the spring of their junior year. The Honors Track requires all the requirements for the Full Major, with a GPA in Italian courses of 3.6, plus an 11th course, the 3-credit Honors Thesis tutorial (ROIT 58000) in the spring semester of the senior year.

In the spring of their junior year, students who plan to write a thesis should apply for funding to support their research in the summer before their senior year. They should consult the CUSE (Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement) website for information, and for useful mini-classes on applying for funding, finding advisers, etc... Some funding sources to explore: Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, the Sciola Grant for Research in Italy (through ISLA), Ravarino Scholarships in Italian, Nanovic Institute for European Studies, Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Office for Undergraduate Studies, the Center for the Study of Language and Culture; the President's Circle Fund.

Any student who is planning to write a thesis should enroll in the Italian Seminar in the fall semester of their senior year (or the year they are writing the thesis). The Italian Seminar is a prerequisite for enrolling in Thesis Direction Tutorials in the spring. Exceptions may occasionally be made for irresolvable conflicts, or if the student takes a graduate course in the fall instead of the Italian Seminar. To proceed with writing a thesis in the spring semester, students must earn at least a B in the Italian Seminar (or the grad course).

Any student doing Honors in Italian, or a College Honors Thesis, will then take ROIT 58000, a 3 credit Honors Thesis Tutorial, in the spring of their senior year, as their required 11th course, to expand / rework / revise / their Italian Seminar paper into a full thesis.

Any student writing a regular Senior Thesis, will then take ROIT 48000, a 1 credit Senior Thesis Tutorial, in the spring of their senior year, to expand / revise / rework their Italian Seminar paper into a thesis.

Students taking the Italian Seminar just as an elective or as a requirement for the Lit/Culture concentration, will simply write the course paper.

The Italian Seminar will be taught mostly in Italian (with some English to discuss research methods, abstruse issues, etc...); Majors, Supplementary Majors, and Honors Track Majors in the Lit / Culture Concentration will write their paper (and thesis) in Italian; Majors, Supplementary Majors, and Honors Track Majors in the Italian Studies Concentration have the option of writing their paper (and thesis) in English.

In a few cases, Honors Majors may enroll in a graduate course in the spring to finish their thesis, instead of the Honors Thesis Tutorial. In that case, their Italian Seminar paper should be already geared toward that graduate course. If they take a graduate course in the fall, that can replace the Italian Seminar; they then turn their grad course paper into a thesis in the Honors Thesis Tutorial in the spring. In these cases, the teacher of the grad course should be their adviser.

While students who plan to write a Thesis are strongly advised to choose an adviser and topic in the spring of their Junior year, the deadline for declaring the intention to write a thesis, for any student enrolled in the Italian Seminar, is September 15. The Italian Seminar will require a two-page research proposal by September 15; a detailed outline with annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources by October 15; a rough draft of the preliminary Seminar paper by November 15; and the final submitted Seminar paper (which serves as the first, basic version for any student writing a thesis) on the first day of exam week of the fall semester. The Italian Seminar paper is normally 15-20 pages (3,750-5,000 words).

Spring semester thesis writing deadlines: February 15: an expanded / revised abstract / proposal with annotated bibliography; March 20 (or the Monday after Spring break): draft of first 10-15 pages of expanded / reworked thesis; April 5: complete first draft of the expanded / reworked thesis; April 20: final draft of the thesis, with bibliography; April 25: abstract and title page; May 1 (or first day of exam week): completed thesis delivered, in full proper formatting.

An Honors Thesis (6 credits) is normally 35-50 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font; or 9,000-13,000 words); a regular Senior Thesis (4 credits) is normally 25-30 pages (6,000-7,500 words). All theses require: a) a properly formatted title page; b) an abstract of 250-300 words; c) a research essay in proper academic style, with properly formatted notes, on the model of a scholarly article; d) a bibliography or list of works cited, properly formatted.