

ITA2100B
Stories of Italian Canadians
Western University

Instructor: Dr. Pietro Pirani

Communication with the professor:

I will communicate important information to the class via the Newsfeed on the course OWL page. Additionally, I will use e-mail for course updates, and where necessary, I will communicate with you individually through Western e-mail (ppirani2@uwo.ca). All e-mails will be checked on Monday, Wednesday and Friday (Friday till noon), and a response will be given within 24 hours. No e-mail will be opened on weekends or holidays; any e-mail received during that time will be responded to promptly on the following business day.

You can also reach me on Skype. Given the nature of the course, I will not hold regular “office hours” on Skype, but please send me an e-mail if you would like to arrange a Skype meeting.

Course Description (from the calendar)

Discover the unique contribution that Italians have made to Canadian society with a particular focus on your communities. Collect stories from old and new immigrants to build an archive devoted to the Italian experience in Canada. Explore issues of assimilation, integration, and identity.

Course Overview

Canada is a multicultural country, and its identity is deeply affected by the innumerable communities that constitute its social fabric. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in understanding how these communities have contributed explicitly to what Canada is today. Although we know a great deal about how British, French, and Indigenous people have shaped the idea of Canada, we do not know enough about the contribution provided by other communities, including the Italian one. This course tries to fill this gap by exploring the contribution made by Italian men and women in forging contemporary Canadian identity and society.

This will be achieved by employing what has been called oral history, namely, a form of a first-person, personal narrative similar to and different from other forms of the first-person narrative, including storytelling and memoir. Therefore, instead of building this course mainly on secondary sources – books and articles-students will learn about the Italian community first-hand by interviewing Italians and recording their stories and memories.

This course will not only allow students to become aware of the role played by Italians in Canada, but also students will work to preserve local knowledge about the past by making the personal accounts of Italian men and women accessible for future generations so that this vital piece of Canadian history will not be forgotten. For these reasons, all interviews will be stored in a virtual archive as part of the Italian-Canadian Archives Project (ICAP), a national network and not-for-profit dedicated to securing the Italian-Canadian contribution to Canada’s evolving narrative, past and present.

The course is divided into three broad sections: learning about the Italian-Canadian community from the early 1900s to today, making oral history (project planning and interviewing) and using oral history (putting oral history to work in the world).

PLEASE NOTE: The course is in **English**, and interviews can be conducted in **ENGLISH** or **ITALIAN**. Knowledge of the Italian language is **optional**, although it is welcome.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of cultural diversity in Canada with particular emphasis on the Italian community in Italy.
2. Learn how to analyse oral history interviews as a source for writing history.
3. Develop the skills to professionally design and execute oral life history interviews.
4. Learn how to evaluate various approaches to presenting, processing, and analysing oral life history interviews.
5. Contribute with their oral life history interviews to the Italian Canadian Archive Project, thus creating primary sources for studying the Italian community in Canada.

Student Evaluation

Assessment	Weighting	Due Date
Online Discussion	10%	Lesson 5 and Lesson 9
Interview Preparation	20%	Lesson 6
Interview	20%	Lesson 8
Audio/Video Recording Log	20%	Lesson 9
Critical Reflection	30%	December 14

Detailed instructions for each assignment with accompanying rubrics will be available on the course OWL site starting in January.

Course Materials

- All readings for the course will be available electronically through OWL.

Weekly Schedule

Lesson 1	<i>Introduction</i>	
Lesson 2	<i>Italians in Canada: A Brief History</i> - Bruno Ramirez, <i>The Italians in Canada</i> . Canadian Historical Association, 1989. Link: https://cha-shc.ca/uploads/5c374d645ea1e.pdf	
Lesson 3	<i>What is Oral History?</i> - Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," <i>The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History</i> (1990), 45-58. - Lynn Abrams. "Introduction: Turning practice into theory." <i>Oral History Theory</i> , 2010, 1-17.	
Lesson 4	<i>Memory and the Event</i> - Alessandro Portelli. 1991. "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event." In <i>The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories</i> . Albany: State University of New York Press, 1-26.	
Lesson 5	<i>Case Study: The Internment of Italian Canadians during WWII</i> - Venera Fazio, "Frenzy of Fear: Prelude to the Canadian Internment" and Michael Mirolla, "Enemy Aliens: How Canada Declared War on Its Own Citizens". Licia Canton et al. (2012) <i>Beyond Barbed Wire: Essays on the Internment of Italian Canadians</i> . Toronto: Guernica Editions	First Group Discussion Assignment

		- Watch the documentary “Barbed Wire and Mandolins” (48 minutes)	
Lesson 6		Oral History: Interview Preparation - Sommer, Barbara W., and Quinlan, Mary Kay. <i>The Oral History Manual / Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan</i> . 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009.	
Lesson 7		The ICAP Project - Readings: TBD	
Lesson 8		Oral History: Interview and Techniques - Valerie J. Janesick, “Oral History Interviewing: Issues and Possibilities” in <i>The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> , edited by Patricia Leavy, pp. 300-315, 2014	
Lesson 9		Processing: Making Oral History Accessible - Donna DeBlasio, “Transcribing Oral History” in DeBlasio, Donna Marie. <i>Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History / Donna M. DeBlasio ... [et AL.]</i> . Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 2009. Print.	Second Group Discussion Assignment
Lesson 10		Conclusion	

Grade Distribution

1. On-line discussion (10%)

Ten per cent of your final mark will be assessed from **class participation** in **online group discussions**. On two occasions, you will be asked to join a discussion group and respond to questions based on course material. These discussions aim to familiarise you with the essential themes and concepts from each lesson. Discussions are about more than exchanging information; they require you to extend current thinking, introduce alternatives, and facilitate new understandings for yourselves and your group members. You should expect the rest of the group to read the articles/chapters and build on that shared knowledge. A person who merely summarises the readings will receive a lower grade. A person who analyses and applies the readings will receive a higher grade.

❖ **Group discussion activity:** Each discussion comes with two questions, and you must answer one of the two. Your answer must be at least five to seven sentences. The second phase begins after the first round, in which all the group members have answered the questions. All members of the group must reply to the comments that have been expressed by addressing at least one comment of one student in the group. To summarise, you must respond to one question by the end of each discussion and reply at least to one of the other students in your group.

- I will be looking for three features in your answers and replies:
 - Clarity: Does your response analyse the themes and concepts clearly and concisely? Is the material in a framework that helps the other students and me understand the authors’ arguments?
 - Creativity: Are the examples recent and relevant?
 - Correctness: How well did you understand the concepts and themes? Did you include the essential elements?
- **Guidelines and schedule:** The group discussions will be held during Lessons 5 and 9. You must make your contribution according to the schedule, and you must participate in both discussions. You can access each discussion from the “Discussions” tab of OWL.

- **Please note:**
 - Questions discussed in each lesson are the same for all students.
 - This course will require the electronic submission of assignments through the plagiarism detection service Turnitin (<http://www.turnitin.com>).
- **Deadline:** On the week of the discussion, your original posts must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. You have to respond to your group members on Wednesday by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

2. Interview Preparation (20%)

Each student will be paired with an Italian who has an exciting story to tell us. Students are encouraged to look for suitable candidates among their family and community members. Students who do not have direct access to an Italian will be assigned an interviewee after consultation with the professor. Interviews may be held either in English or Italian.

After you have chosen, or been assigned, a suitable candidate, you will write down the questions that you plan to use in your interview. The professor will review these questions before the actual interview.

3. Interview (20%)

4. Audio/Video Recording Log (20%)

5. Critical Reflection Assignment (30%)

The critical reflection assignment is an opportunity for you to generate, deepen, and document the learning from your experience during the interview and the course at large.

We will follow the What, So What, Now What model for this assignment. This model is designed to guide but not limit your thinking. Feel free to add essential ideas not covered in these prompts.

1. What?

- What happened during the interview? What did you observe?
- What was your role in the interview?
- What issue is being addressed in the interview?
- What were your initial expectations?
- What learning occurred for you in this experience?

2. So What?

- Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest?
- Did anything about your interview surprise you? If so, what? How is your experience different from what you expected?
- What impacts the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing from?)
- What did you learn about the Italian community?
- What were some of the pressing needs/issues in the Italian community?
- How does this project address those needs?
- How did the experience relate to your coursework?
- Has your understanding of the Italian community changed due to your participation in this project? If so,

how?

Talk about any disappointments or successes of your project. What did you learn from it?

3. Now, What?

- How can you apply what you learned from your experience?
- What would you like to learn about this project or issue?
- What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?
- What information can you share with your peers or the community?

If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?
Have your career options been expanded by participating in this course?
How can you continue your involvement with this group or social issue?

(adapted from The University of Kansas, Centre for Service Learning)

Instructions for the Critical Reflection

- Must be a **minimum of 1500 words** to a **maximum of 2000 words**
 - **Note:** Under length Deficiency Penalty = -10
- Should have a **separate Cover Page** which has: your name, your student number and this course's number
- Must be typed in **12pt** font in Times New Roman
- Must be written in **formal academic English**, obeying formal British or American or Canadian grammar, spelling, and language rules – check out: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/>
 - **Please Note:** Marks will not be deducted for **occasional errors in grammar or spelling**; the mark primarily reflects the student's ability to **analyse, organise and review** a topic in the review format. However, **significant or consistent style problems will lower the final grade**
- Must have an introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion
- Must have page numbers
- Must be **double-spaced**
- For this critical reflection, please use a **citation style of your choice**. For guidelines: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html>
- **Due Date:**
 - TBD
- A Marking Sheet shows other expectations for your paper.
- The critical reflection **MUST** be submitted **electronically** in **Word** format. Any other formats will not be accepted. The critical reflection must be submitted to the drop-box on OWL by 11:59 p.m. on the due date. There will be a penalty of 2% per day for late reflections. If you are going to be late, **please get in touch with me** before the deadline. No reviews will be accepted after one week past the deadline. The only reason for missing a deadline is an illness or a personal crisis. In both cases, you must document your reason for the late submission.

ESSAY MARKING SHEET:

Student_____.

An **x** beside any item indicates the need for substantial improvement. **OK** indicates that your work meets or exceeds minimum standards.

Style and technical correctness:

Spelling_____; grammar_____; syntax_____.

Effectiveness of prose: stilted_____; colloquial_____; prolix_____.

Concise_____.

Essay format_____.

Structure and organisation

Clear, effective thesis statement_____.

Logical sequence of points_____;

Judgement

Critical and logical analysis_____

General

Mark_____

Common statement for all MLL courses on academic accommodation, academic offenses, support services:

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Modern Languages and Literatures courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department website at

<http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

Missed Assignments:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical or non-medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation.

Please refer to the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> and download a Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca>

Students who found themselves in emotional/mental distress are encouraged to refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwoom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of confidential options about how to obtain help.

E-mails:

While your instructors and TAs will do their best to reply within a reasonable timeframe during weekdays to your e-mails, make sure that the answer to your questions is not already contained in your syllabus. This will save lots of time and concerns.