

# AHA Macerata

## SYLLABUS

### WRITING IN AND ABOUT ITALY

**Instructor: Sharon Schuman**

**Contact Hours: 45**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**MACERATA, ITALY**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This class explores Italy mainly through writing. Each student will develop a body of essays, interviews, and other work, all rooted in the experience of living and traveling in Italy. Class discussion will focus on interesting examples of writing about Italy, from the past and present, and on the process of writing and revision, developing each student's editorial skills, individual voice and sense of audience. The culminating project will be collaborative production of *Secret Places of Macerata*, essays and photos compiled for the benefit of future students. The course entails a combination of reading, writing and discussion, with no exams.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the term, students should be able to understand the elements of an effective interview, travel narrative, opinion essay, and dramatic monologue. They should gain a greater appreciation for those who write well about Italy, past and present. They should also be able to write confidently and edit efficiently in the forms listed above.

#### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY**

Class will be discussion-based, with short mini-lectures to introduce material. Discussions of readings from the packet will be evidence-based (using the evidence found in the texts we read). At several points in the term there will be individual writing conferences. Periodically, class will be conducted as a writing workshop, including peer editing, and, if agreeable to the students, discussions of student work.

#### **METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)**

Ten Papers (including 3 rewrites): 10% each, for a total of 100%

Participation in Discussion, Presentations: bonus credits possible (maximum 10%)

#### **COURSE OUTLINE**

- Week 1: Introduction: Writing in and About Italy  
"My Last Duchess," Robert Browning (in packet); Chapter 1, *La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*, Beppe Severgnini, tr. Giles Watson  
Paper #1 due (1-2 pages): dramatic monologue
- Week 2: Interviewing a Fellow Student  
Interview with Amanda Knox (Reuters, 2013) (in packet); relevant sections of *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White; Chapter 2, Severgnini  
Paper #2 due (2 pages): interview of a fellow student

- Week 3: The Art of Revision  
 “Ten Tips for Effective Editing,” Sharon Schuman; *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White; Chapter 3, Severgnini  
 Individual conferences on papers #1 and #2;  
 Paper #3 due: Rewrite of Paper #1 or Paper #2 (1-2 pages)
- Week 4: Culture Shock  
 Chapter 4, Severgnini; Paper #4 due in class for peer editing: Culture Shock (3 pages); Exercises in Peer Editing.  
 Paper #4 due to professor: Culture Shock (3 pages)
- Week 5: Interview With an Italian  
 Interview with Prime Minister Enrico Letta (Slate, 2013) (in packet); Interview with Tony Servillo, actor (Guardian, 2013) (in packet); Chapter 5, Severgnini  
 Paper #5 due: Interview with an Italian (2 pages)
- Week 6: The Art of Revision (2)  
*Elements of Style*, selected passages;  
 Peer Editing, paper #5; Chapter 6, Severgnini  
 Paper #6: Rewrite of Paper #5 due (2-3 pages)
- Week 7: Travel Narrative  
 Chapter 7, Severgnini; Chapters 24-27, from *The Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain (in packet)  
 Paper #7 due: Travel narrative (3 pages)
- Week 8: Secret Places of Macerata  
 from *A Hand-book for Travelers in Central Italy* (1850), “Ancona to Foligno: Macerata,” 135-138 (in packet); Chapter 8, Severgnini  
 Peer Editing: Paper #8: Secret Places of Macerata (2 pages)  
 Paper #8 due: Secret Places of Macerata (2 pages)
- Week 9: Homeward Bound: Reflective Essay on Returning to the USA  
 “Reverse Culture Shock: Looking Back Six Months,” Liz Murray (in Packet);  
 Chapter 9, Severgnini  
 Writing Workshop  
 Paper #9 due: Homeward Bound (2 pages)
- Week 10: The Art of Revision (3)  
 Setting up editorial and design process for *Secret Places of Macerata*  
 Strunk and White, as appropriate  
 Individual Writing Conferences  
 Paper #10 due: Revision of Paper #8 for *Secret Places of Macerata*
- Week 11: Producing *Secret Places of Macerata*  
 Chapter 10, Severgnini  
 Editorial process: *Secret Places of Macerata*  
 Writing, editing, and design workshops

*Week 12: The Art of Reading Out Loud*  
*In-class presentations (oral presentations of student writings)*  
*Presentation of Secret Places of Macerata to fellow Macerata students and invited guests*  
*Assembling a portfolio of Italian Writings for the return home*

### **COURSE READINGS**

- *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White
- *La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*, Beppe Severgnini, tr. Giles Watson
- Packet: "My Last Duchess," by Robert Browning (poem); from *The Decameron*, Introduction: "The onset of the black death;" Interview with Tony Servillo, actor (Guardian, 2013; interview with Amanda Knox (Reuters, 2013); interview with Prime Minister Enrico Letta (Slate, 2013); Chapters 24-27, from *The Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain; from *A Hand- book for Travelers in Central Italy* (1850), "Ancona to Foligno: Macerata," 135-138; "Reverse Culture Shock: Looking Back Six Months," Liz Murray; "Ten Tips for Effective Editing," Sharon Schuman;

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White
- *La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*, Beppe Severgnini, tr. Giles Watson
- Packet (above)