

ITALIAN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

This course examines the relationship between art and culture, society and politics in Italy from the dawn of the nation until today. We will explore the ways in which, though unified, the country has remained socially, economically, culturally, and linguistically divided. We will then consider the period of Colonialism in Africa, the Emigrations and, how the peninsula was affected by crucial events such as Fascism, the 'economic boom', the Cultural Revolution of the Sixties and the Second Republic. A focus will be placed on Italy as a member of the EU and on the new European privacy law. We will then debate on current issues such as: Youth unemployment, the Migrant crisis, the *Security and Migration Decree* and Italy's challenges to multiculturalism. The course will also highlight the dangerous implications of both the Italian indigenous mafias and imported criminal organizations. Lastly, while moving on to look at the Catholic Church and its influence on social behaviors, civil rights and bioethical issues we will consider some minority religious communities. Emphasis will be also placed on the social changes within the Family, Women and, Gender Relations.

While this course studies Italy from a sociological perspective, readings and lessons are interdisciplinary in nature and include: movies and video-documentaries, Italian opera, excerpts from literary sources, documents, newspapers articles, an intercultural tour and, visits to Art and Fashion Museums and exhibitions. Of course, particular attention is given to Florence and its surroundings and to what the city is able to teach about Italian society and culture. The multidisciplinary approach to the course has the aim of stimulating students to be deeply aware of the sense of nationhood, identity and complexity of Italy. By the end of the course students will be familiar with both the past socio-cultural heritage and its influence on current habits, customs, mentality. Students are also invited to reflect critically on how the society has changed over time and, to consider how far similar or different processes are at work in their own country.