



**COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: HUM 399/WGS 321 - The Neapolitan Woman in film and literature from Emma Hamilton to Elena Ferrante  
(45 contact hours, 3 credits)**

This syllabus is informational in nature and is not an express or implied contract. It is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, as a result of any circumstance outside the University's control, or as other needs arise. If, in the University's sole discretion, public health conditions or any other matter affecting the health, safety, upkeep, or well-being of our campus community or operations requires the University to move to remote teaching, alternative assignments may be provided so that the learning objectives for the course, as determined by the faculty and the University, can still be met. The University does not guarantee specific in-person, on-campus classes, activities, opportunities, or services or any other particular format, timing, or location of education, classes, activities, or services.

**Mask Policy**

Please be advised that the mask policy in this class will follow Sant'Anna Institute requirements. When/if the University enacts a mask policy, all students are expected to adhere to the policy.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore a series of texts and films that present and focus on female Neapolitan protagonists. We will see six films and read six novels, five of them written by Neapolitan women writers, and one by an American novelist about a British woman who, transplanted to Naples, caused one of Europe's biggest scandals during the Napoleonic wars. These texts and films will give us ample fodder to follow the history of the city and the role that women, as well as women writers and one filmmaker, have played in their own self-definition.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Our objectives will be three-fold: Primarily we will focus on the literary and cinematic presentation of Neapolitan women gaining a familiarity with its themes and the various textual strategies that it employs. Secondly, we will enrich our knowledge of Neapolitan literature written by women over the course of the last one hundred and thirty years, as well as getting an artistic view of the history of this fascinating and complex city over the last three centuries.

Lastly, beyond simply examining and interpreting this material in your written work, I would like to help students improve their

rhetorical and essay-writing skills by inviting you to re-write your essays based on my comments. Combining these three-fold objectives, the measurable objective of this course will be to make its students capable of writing a coherent and knowledgeable critical literary essay on any aspect of the literature and films presented.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Susan Sontag, *The Volcano Lover*
- Matilde Serao, *The Land of Cockayne*
- Fabrizia Ramondino, *Althénopis*
- Anna Maria Ortese, *Neapolitan Chronicles*
- Elena Ferrante, *Troubling Love*
- Elena Ferrante, *My Brilliant Friend*

## FORMAT/TEACHING METHOD

I do not believe that I (or anyone else) can coerce or cajole anyone into “learning.” Rather I believe that intellectual progress is made through the sharing and discussion of reactions and interpretations. Therefore this course will be conducted as a seminar and be totally dependent upon your individual contributions and courtesy. Obviously, then, it is absolutely necessary that each of you take control of your own education not only for your own sake, but also in accordance with your responsibility to the rest of those participating in this course. You must both keep up with the reading and begin the process of digesting the material by coming to class with something either to say or ask about it. I strongly recommend that you take notes while reading with both questions and observations and that you come to class prepared to challenge and/or benefit from the group’s discussion. You cannot depend on me to lecture on material that you have not read, nor will I accept the role of monitor for your reading or policeman for discourtesy to the class during the discussions. Concerns of this kind should be voiced and dealt with by the community during the class sessions. Remember that I am only one in a group of people here to explore and learn from this very interesting group of texts.

That said, I am extremely available both in class and out to offer my expertise and experience to help you digest and write about this material. (I also have a lot of experience living, studying, and now teaching here in Italy and I can offer a sympathetic ear to culture shock concerns as well!) Therefore I’m always available for private conferences and very open during the in-class discussions to address both our method and the material of our study if the group as a whole is in agreement as to the utility and feasibility of changing them. All of this is said and done to clarify from the start my particular approach—based on the assumption that we are each mutually dependent individuals demanding of respect and ultimately responsible for our own intellectual progress—and to allow the greatest flexibility in our proceeding so that the most appropriate and useful materials and methods are addressed in this course.

## **EXAMS and ASSIGNMENTS**

Beyond the completion of the requisite reading and participation in the class discussions, students will be asked to give an oral report to the class (see topics in the calendar below) and to complete two essays of 5-7 pages each. The written work will consist of two interpretive literary essays that closely examine one of the texts or films that we study, isolate and interpret motifs, themes, or commonalities that you may find in two or more texts or films, explore and interpret an applicable text outside of our reading list, or isolate and examine a current of literary or film criticism, a sub-genre, or a historical, social, or political topic related to the figure of the Neapolitan woman or Neapolitan writers, literature and films focused on or set in Naples, or literature or films dealing with Women and Southern Italy in general. These essays will, I hope, spring ideally directly from our class discussions and will be due one at midterm time (insert date here) and the other on the last day of class. For those who want to work on their essay writing skills, any paper handed in before the final due date will be duly marked up with editing suggestions and I will accept a rewrite (and consider altering the paper's grade) all the way up to the last day of class. All papers and re-writes are absolutely due no later than the last day of the course during our last class session. Grades will be based on the written work with positive or negative considerations for attendance and participation in the class discussions: roughly that's 35% for each paper and 10% for your oral report, 10% for your having completed the reading assignments, and 10 % for general class participation and attendance. Note: A student who does not complete one of the written assignments or who is absent more than 4 times during the semester will not receive a passing grade regardless of the percent values of the individual assignments on the grounds that they have not completed the course requirements.

### **Grade Breakdown:**

- Both papers: 35% each
- Oral Report: 10%
- Reading: 10%
- Participation and attendance: 10%

Detailed instructions/guidelines for writing a college level essay in the field of literary criticism will be distributed in class.

### **GRADING SCALE**

A	95%-100%
A-	90%-94%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%

C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F	< 60

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**

### **Unit 1**

- Lesson 1 Introduction: Topic, Materials, and Methods.
- Lesson 2 Film: That Hamilton Woman (1941), Alexander Korda

### **Unit 2**

- Lesson 1 Film discussion: The Volcano Lover, Susan Sontag (1992) Part 1
- Lesson 2 The Volcano Lover, Susan Sontag (1992) Part 2, chpts. 1-4
- Oral report: Susan Sontag

### **Unit 3**

- Lesson 1 The Volcano Lover, Susan Sontag (1992) Part 2, chpts. 5-7
- Paper Writing Guidelines
- Lesson 2 The Volcano Lover, Susan Sontag (1992) Parts 3 & 4
- Oral report: The real Emma Hamilton

### **Unit 4**

- Lesson 1 Film: Assunta Spina (Scarred; 1948), Salvatore Di Giacomo (play) Mario Mattoli
- Lesson 2 Film discussion

### **Unit 5**

- Lesson 1 Matilde Serao, The Land of Cockayne (1891) Chpts. I-V
- Oral report: Matilde Serao, novelist
- Lesson 2 Matilde Serao, The Land of Cockayne (1891) Chpts. VI-X

- Oral report: The Neapolitan lottery, dreams and superstitions

## Unit 6

- Lesson 1 Matilde Serao, *The Land of Cockayne* (1891) Chpts. XI-XV
- Oral report: Matilde Serao, journalist
- Lesson 2 Matilde Serao, *The Land of Cockayne* (1891) Chpts. XVI-XX
- Oral report: Italian Verismo and French Naturalism

## Unit 7

- Lesson 1 Film: *Pasqualino Settebellezze* (1975, written and directed by Lina Wertmuller)
- Lesson 2 Film discussion
- First papers due.

## Unit 8

- Lesson 1 Fabrizia Ramondino, *Althenopis* (1981)
- Oral report: Fabrizia Ramondino
- Lesson 2 Fabrizia Ramondino, *Althenopis* (1981)
- Oral report: Naples and WWII

## Unit 9

- Lesson 1 Fabrizia Ramondino, *Althenopis* (1981)
- Oral report: Curzio Malaparte and *The Skin*.
- Lesson 2 Film: *The Four Days of Naples* (1962), Nanny Loy

## Unit 10

- Lesson 1 Anna Maria Ortese, *Neapolitan Chronicles* (1953) "A Pair of Glasses," "Family Interior"
- Oral report: Anna Maria Ortese
- Lesson 2 Anna Maria Ortese, *Neapolitan Chronicles* (1953) "Gold in Forcella," "The Involuntary City"
- Oral report: Later Ortese and Italian magic realism

## Unit 11

- Lesson 1 Anna Maria Ortese, *Neapolitan Chronicles* (1953) "The Silence of Reason"
- Oral report: Domenico Rea and the review *Sud*

- Lesson 2 Elena Ferrante, Troubling Love (1992) Chpts. I-XV
- Oral report: Who is Elena Ferrante (and why don't we know for sure)?

### Unit 12

- Lesson 1 Elena Ferrante, Troubling Love (1992) Chpts. XVI-XXVI
- Oral report: Open Topic (surprise us!)
- Lesson 2 Film: Troubling Love (1995), Mario Montone

### Unit 13

- Lesson 1 Film discussion
- Lesson 2 Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (2011)
- Oral report: Open Topic

### Unit 14

- Lesson 1 Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (2011)
- Oral report: Open Topic
- Lesson 2 Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (2011)
- Oral report: Open Topic

### Unit 15

- Lesson 1 Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (2011)
- Oral report: Open Topic
- Lesson 2 Film: My Brilliant Friend, S01E01 (2018), Saverio Costanzo

Last chance for all papers and rewrites! ALL PAPERS DUE

## CLASS POLICY

### Attendance

You are allowed **ONE** unexcused absence. Documentation for any other absence **MUST** be produced and **APPROVED** by your faculty. For absences due to illness, please provide the faculty with a doctor's note upon returning to class as well as inform them and/or the Office the first day of illness.

Participation grants the student one point for each lesson they attend. Unjustified absences result in 0 points. Participation in **field-trips**, if any, awards 2 points, while non-participation results in a loss of 2 points.

Both by school policy and Italian law attendance at all classes is required of all students. (Yes, your student visa is dependent on perfect attendance.) Even so, I will reward students (round a borderline grade up) for perfect or very good attendance, but I am also forced by school policy to penalize students who accrue more than two unexcused absences, so please do your very best to be here and engaged when you are here. Students are expected to arrive at class on time, having completed the readings and written assignments due that day (see schedule below), in order to receive a passing (C or better) grade.

Since our texts are provided in electronic form, you will have a laptop in front of you during our class sessions, both the literary discussions and the workshops. Having lived for some years in a world free of such devices, I can tell you from experience that your laptop is *not* your friend, that it has already damaged your ability to concentrate and made it far more difficult for you to stay focused and benefit from classroom education than those of us lucky enough to have studied before this very tempting distraction-machine was invented. Serious psychological studies have demonstrated again and again that the laptop (and the myth of “multitasking”) is seriously detrimental to human information retention, that taking notes on a computer is a far less effective memory jog than notes written on paper, and that the distractions that computers offer (social media, online shopping, games, etc.) are the greatest impediments to your education at the present moment. Please do your best to defeat these temptations and use the laptop only to refer to the text under discussion and, if you must, to take notes and jot down thoughts, interpretations, and possible paper topics. For 1.5 hours twice a week, please try your best to leave the buzz of the cyber world behind, to stay with us and live “in the moment.” This is your only hope.

**Late submissions:**

Assignments not submitted by the due date will receive a penalty of 10% for the first 24 hours, 20% for a 48-hour delay. No submissions will be accepted more than 3 days after the deadline, unless arrangements have been made with the instructor (for extensions under exceptional circumstances, apply to the course instructor).

**Personal Technology:**

Please turn cell phones off during class. You can use laptops to take notes, however social networking, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, playing games, etc. are forbidden during class. Any student caught using their laptop/cell phones inappropriately during class will be asked to turn them off. Repeated violations of this rule after the first warning will result in the student being marked absent for the day and permanently losing their laptop privileges. Please be respectful and limit your use of personal electronic devices during class to academic purposes.

**Contesting a grade:**

If students wish to contest a grade, they must make an appointment to do so in person. The student should contact the instructor with any concerns within ONE week of receiving the grade. The student must also demonstrate that they have read the comments accompanying the grade by presenting a brief written statement specifying why the grade does not reflect the quality of the work. It is at the discretion of the instructor to decide whether the work and the student’s request warrant any increase or decrease in the grade. Students should retain a copy

of all submitted assignments and feedback (in case of loss) and should also retain all of their marked assignments.

**Recommended behavior:**

- Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period. It is advisable that you be in your seat and ready to start participating in class at that time.
- Always bring the required supplies and be ready to be actively engaged in the learning process. This communicates preparedness and interest.
- Turn your cell phone off or to vibrate mode before the start of class;
- It is fine to bring a drink or a snack to class, as long as it is not distracting. In conjunction with this, please pick up your trash when you leave the room.
- Your professor expects your full attention for the entire class period. If you know that you'll need to leave before the class is over, try to sit as close to the door as possible so as not to disrupt others. Similarly, if you arrive in class late, just slip in as quietly as possible and take the first available seat you come to.
- Do not sleep in class! Laying your head on the desk or sleeping in class is rude, and it is distracting to others. Turn in assignments on time.
- When you have a question or comment, please raise your hand first as a courtesy to your classmates and the professor. Remember, your questions are NOT an imposition – they are welcome. So, ask questions! You'll learn more, it makes the class more interesting, and you are helping others learn as well.
- If an emergency arises that requires an absence from a session, it is your responsibility to get the notes and all other information that was covered in class from a colleague you trust.

**Secular and religious holidays:**

Sant'Anna Institute recognizes that there are several secular and religious holidays - not included in the Italian calendar - that affect large numbers of its community members. In consideration of their significance for many students, no examinations may be given and no assigned work may be required on these days. Students who observe these holidays will be given an opportunity to make up missed work in both laboratories and lecture courses. If an examination is given on the first class day after one of these holidays, it must not cover material introduced in class on that holiday. Students who wish to observe such holidays must inform their instructors within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday even when the exact date of the holiday will not be known until later so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for



such students to make up missed work and examinations. For this reason it is desirable that faculty inform students of all examination dates at the start of each semester.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

“Members of the Jacksonville University community are expected to foster and uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity, which are foundations for the intellectual endeavors we engage in.

To underscore the importance of truth, honesty, and accountability, students and instructors should adhere to the following standard:

“On my honor as a student of Jacksonville University, I promise to uphold the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all my dealings with faculty, staff, and students.”

Academic misconduct occurs when a student engages in an action that is deceitful, fraudulent, or dishonest regarding any type of academic assignment that is intended to or results in an unfair academic advantage. In this context, the term “assignment” refers to any type of graded or ungraded work that is submitted for evaluation for any course. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, collusion, falsification, misrepresentation, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, copying another student’s work, using or providing unauthorized notes or materials, turning in work not produced by the individual, attempting to get credit for a single instance of work submitted for more than one course, and plagiarism. Furthermore, providing deceitful, fraudulent, or dishonest information during discussions of an academic matter with faculty are also examples of academic misconduct.” (Jacksonville University Academic Integrity [Policy](#)).

Throughout this course we will be reading and reporting about the work of others. All information that is not original to the student must be appropriately attributed in both presentations and written work. All students are expected to do their own work and give appropriate credit for all sources used in the process of preparing papers, presentations, and homework assignments. Group assignments will be graded based on the product of the work, although some adjustment may be made for participation. [If you have a question about whether or not collaboration is allowed, or how to cite a reference, please ask. It is always better to check than to be accused of an unintended violation of the academic honesty policy]. Violations of the academic honesty policy will be dealt with in accordance with university policies

Course Level Penalties: A first offense may result in a failing grade for the assignment. Second offenses may result in failure in the course. Significantly egregious violations may result in expulsion from the university. When in doubt give credit for all information that did not come directly out of your head!

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

Students with a documented disability requesting classroom accommodations or modifications, either permanent or temporary, resulting from the disability are encouraged to inform the faculty in the first week of the program.