ESSENTIAL INFORMATION
Chiara Marchelli
Office hours: Wednesday 4:45PM-5:45PM, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, Room 303
cm107@nyu.edu

This course will focus on identity and the autobiographical experience as narrated by a selection of contemporary American and European authors, with a particular attention to Italian examples. Through the analysis of their work, it will focus on how authorship and the identity/presence of the author has evolved in contemporary times, and how this evolution reverberates beyond national borders. We will investigate what moves these authors, what aspects of their experience they choose to narrate and how they relate to their own subjectivity and the world. We will explore thematic differences and convergences, social and historical influences, the relationship between the self and society, the evolution of narrative languages and purposes.

The selection of readings is representative of the emergence of a new literary genre that blends memoir, autofiction and fiction, and describes the changing intellectual, cultural and social landscape of a literature that can no longer be contained within its national boundaries, but is inspired by a quest for a new identity or new identities, ignited by and reflected in today’s globalized world.
The class will be conducted in the style of a seminar, with an introductory presentation by the professor followed by structured discussion. All students are expected to participate actively in the activities of the class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

• Rachel Cusk, *Outline*, Faber & Faber, 2014
• Annie Ernaux, *The Years*, Seven Stories Press, 2017 [Translated from French by Alison L. Strayer]
• Philip Roth, *The Facts*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1988
• Amara Lakhous, *Divorce Italian Style*, Europa Editions, [Translated from Italian by Ann Goldstein]

PLEASE NOTE: ALL OF THE ABOVE NOVELS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT BOBST.

The remaining of the required readings will be available on NYU Classes.

ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION
You are expected to attend class regularly, complete all required readings, and participate actively in class discussions. You should come to class prepared to discuss all assigned material.

Note on attendance: Attendance at every lecture and section is mandatory. Students are allowed two absences; additional absences may result in a lowered participation grade.

GRADE BREAKDOWN
Your grade will be calculated as follows:
10 % Participation
30 % Final paper (8-10 pp.)
25 % In-Class presentation
20 % Short paper (1 x 5 pp.)
15 % Response Papers (4 x 500 words each)

- Papers must include a bibliography and citation to any author cited or used as a source of argument and/or information. All papers will be run through Turnitin.
- Students must submit their paper draft by **Monday, November 30** and their final paper by **Monday, December 7**. Late submissions will negatively impact on the grade.

FINAL PAPER
This is an 8-10 page research paper in which you should develop an original argument and support your claims with close readings and specific, relevant, textual evidence. You are encouraged to choose your own topic for the final paper, though I am happy to offer suggestions if needed. A title
and abstract must be submitted and agreed with me by Week 9. The final paper is due on Monday, December 7.

**SHORT PAPER**
In this 4-5-page paper you will be asked to develop an original argument in response to a prompt that will be distributed during Week 5. It is due on **Wednesday October, 21.**

**RESPONSE PAPERS (RP)**
You will write three response papers of about 500 words each during the semester. The first, to be handed in on **Wednesday, September 9,** should elaborate your position with regards to the assigned articles by Compagno, Morrison and Clark regarding the debate on authorship and the biographical fiction genre. The remaining three response papers—to be handed in during **Weeks 6, 9 and 13,** should be cogent discussions of the assigned readings and novels. Good questions to write about are relevant themes, revealing passages, author's style, voice, and narrative choices (What is the author writing about? Why? What’s interesting in their choice?).

**FORMATTING PAPERS**
Please submit all papers in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1” left, right, top, and bottom margins. Note that the default setting for Microsoft word is 1.25" left and right margins and Cambria font, so you will have to change it.

**REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL READINGS**
Please note that in terms of page-count, the reading load for this course is heavy. Optional readings are not required, but may be useful as you work on the papers.

**PRESENTATIONS**
You will be required to do one presentation of 45 minutes. Sign-ups for presentations will be circulated during the second week of classes. Presentations will be on the novels read and additional readings, generally articles related to the assigned readings. Presentations should consist of a clear summary as well as an interpretation or critique of the reading. Students who know Italian may instead choose to do their presentations on a passage in Italian, highlighting important differences and explaining their significance. On the day of your presentation you should also turn in a one-paragraph summary or outline.

**Disability Disclosure Statement**
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

**Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating** (adapted from the website of the College of Arts & Science, [https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html](https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html))
Academic integrity means that the work you submit is original. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses
someone else’s idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects).
CALENDAR

WEEK 1  
**Introduction to the Course**  
Introductory session to the Italian contemporary literary scene, and to the authors who will be studied during the course.

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**The Task of the Author**  
Dario Compagno, “Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century” (Classes)  
Blake Morrison, “Too much information? The writers who feel the need to reveal all”, The Guardian  
Alex Clark, “Drawn from life: Why have novelists stopped making things up?” The Guardian  
VIDEO – Writing the self: Center for Fiction

WEEK 2  
**So British – Edward St. Aubyn**  
Stephen Moss, “Edward St. Aubyn: Writing is Horrible”, The Guardian  
Never Mind, pp. 3-37

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VIDEO – Edward St. Aubyn: Adelaide Writers' Week  
Never Mind, pp. 38-81

**1st RP due**

WEEK 3  
Never Mind, pp. 82-132

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**So British – Rachel Cusk**  
Lara Feigel, “Collective Thought – The final instalment of Rachel Cusk’s freedom-seeking trilogy”, The TLS  
Outline, pp. 3-57

WEEK 4  
Fran Bigman, “Rachel Cusk’s Home Interiors”, The TLS  
Outline, pp. 58-131

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VIDEO – Rachel Cusk: NYPL  
Outline, pp. 132-178

WEEK 5  
Heidi Julavits, “Choose your own Rachel Cusk” The Cut  
Outline, pp. 179-249
The French Eye – Annie Ernaux

Edmund White, “Reclaiming the Past in the Internet’s ‘Infinite Present’” The New York Times
The years, pp. 3-25

WEEK 6

The years, pp. 26-96

VIDEO – Annie Ernaux: Shakespeare and Company
The years, pp. 97-160

2nd RP due

WEEK 7

Simon Kemp, “Annie Ernaux and the Narrating of Time”, French Fiction into the Twenty-First Century, University of Wales Press (2010), Chapter 1 (NYU Classes)
The years, pp. 161-232

The French Eye – Emmanuel Carrère

Susannah Hunewell, “Emmanuel Carrère: The Art of Fiction No. 5” The Paris review
The Adversary, pp. 4-30

WEEK 8

The Adversary, pp. 31-120

VIDEO – Emmanuel Carrère: The American Library in Paris
The Adversary, pp. 121-191

Short Paper due

WEEK 9

The Spy Who Came from the Cold – Karl Ove Knausgård
My Struggle, pp. 3-86

My Struggle, pp. 87-186

3rd RP due

WEEK 10
VIDEO – Karl Ove Knausgård Louisiana Channel
My Struggle, pp. 187-317

My Struggle, pp. 317-441

WEEK 11
His Majesty Philip Roth
The Facts, pp. 3-50

WEEK 12
Debra Shostak, “Philip Roth’s Fictions of Self-Exposure”, Shofar, Purdue University Press, Vol. 19, No. 1, Special Issue: Philip Roth (FALL 2000), pp. 19-39 (NYU Classes)
The Facts, pp. 51-102

VIDEO – Philip Roth PBS
The Facts, pp. 103-155

WEEK 13
VIDEO – Philip Roth BBC Part 1 BBC Part 2
The Facts, pp. 156-208

ITALIAN HERITAGE – NATALIA GINZBURG
Family Lexicon, pp. 3-50

4th RP due

WEEK 14
Rachel Cusk, “Violent Vocation” The TLS
Family Lexicon, pp. 51-110

Margaret Drabble, “The Writer’s Vocation” The TLS
Family Lexicon, pp. 51-221

WEEK 15
ITALIAN BICULTURALISM AND OPEN IDENTITY – AMARA LAKHOUS
Caterina Romeo, “Italian Postcolonial Literature”, pp. 1-23 (NYU Classes)
Franco Gallippi, “Amara Lakhous: I Arabize the Italian and Italianize the Arabic” (NYU Classes)
“The Lighter Side of Terrorism”, The New York Times
Divorce Islamic Style, pp. 14-64
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“Divorce, Islamic Style”, The Globe and Mail
VIDEO – Amara Lakhous Montclair University
Divorce Islamic Style, pp. 65-180

Final paper due