ESSENTIAL INFORMATION
Chiara Marchelli
Office hours: Wednesday 4:45PM-5:45PM, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, Room 303
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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 EXCERPTS OF THE VIDEOS INDICATED ON THE SYLLABUS WILL BE WATCHED IN CLASS AND ARE NOT A REQUIRED OR OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT.

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 apart from excused absences; additional absences may result in a lowered participation grade.

GRADE BREAKDOWN
Your grade will be calculated as follows:
15 % Participation
30 % Final paper (8-10 pp.)
15 % In-Class presentation
25 % Short paper (1 x 5 pp.)
15 % Response Papers (5 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 the first day Week 14 and their final paper by the first day Week 15. Late submissions will negatively impact on the grade.

FINAL PAPER
This is an 8-10 page paper in which you should develop an original argument and support your claims with close readings and specific, relevant, textual evidence. You will be asked to identify and develop themes, aspects, critical approaches explored during the course and offer your interpretation and considerations. 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 the first day of Week 15.

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 the first day of Week 8.

RESPONSE PAPERS (RP)
You will write five response papers of about 500 words each during the semester. The first, to be handed in on the last day of Week 2, should elaborate your position with regards to the assigned articles by Compagno, Foucault, Morrison and Clark regarding the debate on authorship and the biographical fiction genre. The remaining four response papers—to be handed in during Weeks 4, 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-page summary or outline.
Disability Disclosure Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is 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)
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.

The Task of the Author
Dario Compagno, “Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century” (Classes), pp. 1-17
Michel Foucault, “What is an Author” (Classes), pp.141-160
Jorge Luis Borges, “The Task of the Artist” (link: link), approximately 16 pages
Blake Morrison, “Too much information? The writers who feel the need to reveal all”, The Guardian, approximately 9 pages
Alex Clark, “Drawn from life: Why have novelists stopped making things up?” The Guardian, approximately 6 pages
Excerpts of VIDEO – Writing the self: Center for Fiction

WEEK 2

So British – Edward St. Aubyn
Stephen Moss, “Edward St. Aubyn: Writing is Horrible”, The Guardian, approximately 4 pages
Never Mind, pp. 3-37
Excerpts of VIDEO – Edward St. Aubyn: Adelaide Writers’ Week

1st RP due

WEEK 3

Never Mind, pp. 38-81

So British – Rachel Cusk
Lara Feigel, “Collective Thought – The final instalment of Rachel Cusk’s freedom-seeking trilogy”, The TLS, approximately 2 pages

WEEK 4

Fran Bigman, “Rachel Cusk’s Home Interiors”, The TLS, approximately 2 pages
Outline, pp. 3-78
Excerpts of VIDEO – Rachel Cusk: NYPL.
2nd RP due

WEEK 5
Heidi Julavits, “Choose your own Rachel Cusk” The Cut, approximately 6 pages
Outline, pp. 79-135

The French Eye – Annie Ernaux
Edmund White, “Reclaiming the Past in the Internet’s ‘Infinite Present’” The New York Times, approximately 2 pages
The years, pp. 3-25

WEEK 6
The years, pp. 26-96
Excerpts of VIDEO – Annie Ernaux: Shakespeare and Company

3rd RP due

WEEK 7
The years, pp. 97-127

The French Eye – Emmanuel Carrère
Susannah Hunewell, “Emmanuel Carrère: The Art of Fiction No. 5” The Paris review, approximately 3 pages
The Adversary, pp. 4-30

WEEK 8
The Adversary, pp. 31-120
Excerpts of VIDEO – Emmanuel Carrère: The American Library in Paris

Short Paper due

WEEK 9
The Spy Who Came from the Cold – Karl Ove Knausgård
My Struggle, pp. 3-83
4th RP due

WEEK 10
My Struggle, pp. 87-160
Excerpts of VIDEO – Karl Ove Knausgård Louisiana Channel

WEEK 11
His Majesty Philip Roth

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. 3-80
Excerpts of VIDEO – Philip Roth PBS

WEEK 13
The Facts, pp. 81-120
Excerpts of VIDEO – Philip Roth BBC Part 1 BBC Part 2

Italian Heritage – Natalia Ginzburg
Family Lexicon, pp. 3-45

5th RP due

WEEK 14
Rachel Cusk, “Violent Vocation” The TLS, approximately 2 pages
Margaret Drabble, “The Writer's Vocation” The TLS, approximately 2 pages
Family Lexicon, pp. 46-110

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, approximately 2 pages
“Divorce, Islamic Style”, The Globe and Mail, approximately 3 pages
Divorce Islamic Style, pp. 14-89
Excerpts of VIDEO – Amara Lakhous Montclair University

Final paper due