

ITA 2318/4318 – Eldre italiensk litteratur

Course overview – module description

ITA2318 (or 4318 for postgraduate students) offers an overview of Italian literature in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mainly through a close reading of the works of the three major authors in the Italian canon, namely the three “crowns” (Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio). A contextualization of the literary main trends in the period was also offered as well as a discussion of each genre (epic/sacred poem for Dante’s *Commedia*, lyric poetry for Petrarch’s *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* and ‘novelle’/short stories for Boccaccio’s *Decameron*).

Readings In addition to the primary texts mentioned above, the reading list included three introductions to each author and a book on Italian medieval literature. Academic articles on specific topics were also uploaded onto Fronter and a few monographs were suggested in class and in the ‘pensum’ online.

Teaching The course consisted of 8 lectures and 4 seminars. To delve deeper into such complex and culturally remote texts it would be good to add two more lectures. See below suggestions for improvement.

Resources and infrastructure at the disposal of ITA2318 were adequate.

Examination Portfolio assessment: every student submits a qualification essay graded on a pass/fail basis. Final exam is a longer essay which also entails a critical discussion of secondary bibliography.

Learning outcomes and assessment Students demonstrated a thorough understanding of the class’s texts and concepts as well as a good capacity to discuss them critically and originally. The average grade was B and the feedback received from the students was extremely positive. Comments from the final questionnaire include: “Jeg er svært fornøyd med foreleser”, “Foreleser er svært godt forberedt, har gode forelesninger og er svært hjelpsom med å legge relevant materiale på Fronter uten forsinkelser. Har er hjelpsom med å finne referanser og svare på spørsmål”, “F. Venturi er en glimrande foreleser, som instituttet må satse på å behalde”, and “Jeg er spesielt fornøyd med forelesningene”.

Changes to previous ITA2318 courses Several changes have been made in the programme which has been rethought from scratch. Whereas the previous courses

encompassed authors from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, the new programme only examines three major late-medieval authors (Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio) but with more extensive close readings. Not only are these the most important authors in the Italian/European canon, but they are also very challenging for many reasons. A whole course devoted to them therefore seems necessary.

Suggestions for improvement. As explained above and as a couple of students suggested, two more lectures will be introduced (10 in total). In addition, the seminars (4) will be held on the same week as the lectures in order to have immediate discussions of texts and issues. No further major change is foreseen at this stage.