

## TMD 301 COMMUNICATING CULTURES

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**Course Instructor:** Kat Tan (katrina.tan@gmail.com)

**Learning facilitator:** Erica Cacopardo courses@gustolab.com

**Credits:** 3

**Contact hours:** 45

**Offered:** Spring/Fall

**Language of instruction:** English

**Prerequisites:** none

**UIUC Articulation:** To be discussed with your Ullinois Academic Advisor

Open to all majors and minors for general elective credit. Recommended for students of Business, Marketing, Management, Computer Science, Engineering, History.

*When you have all these traces of trash moving around, you can ask yourself how we can make the system more efficient. Then we can make better decisions. And perhaps we will not throw away the plastic bottles that go every day to the dump.*

—Carlo Ratti

### Short Description

This course will examine the challenges of communicating the cultural and creative sectors in Italy ranging from art tourism to gastronomic culture.

Italy is often seen as technologically backward when it is in reality a model of a digital innovation, especially with regards to media and communication. A nation which boasts culture as its principal industry (in forms ranging from tourism to art, cinema and fashion) has a vast experience in communicating its cultural assets to the world. And despite stereotypes, Italian culture is and has always been extremely diverse and inclusive, embracing a multitude of cultures from the Mediterranean and further afield. Today more than ever, when it comes to these many cultural realities, Italy is at the forefront of creative, digital communications.

We will also look at cutting edge programs to support new forms of communication. The Next Generation EU fund — with which Italy's National Plan for Recovery and Resilience (PNRR) — is just one stream of aid which has been enabling this digital revolution. As part of the Digital Europe Programme, EU funding of a further €7.5 billion has been made available for European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) which will function as one-stop shops to help companies dynamically respond to digital challenges and become more competitive. Each participates in technology clusters, initiatives, and funding — while offering tech services to those who need them.

Some of the themes addressed in the course include changing communications strategies, the role of writing, images, sound and video in documenting cultural realities, the changing boundaries of local and global, and video-making as a specific tool.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Convey an understanding of Italy's cultural and technological history and current challenges
- Discuss the particularly Italian cultural context and its needs to reach a global audience
- Analyze communications solutions particular to Southern Europe and the Mediterranean regions.
- Draft a communications plan specific to the Italian cultural/creative sectors
- Produce a creative, professional video documentary to promote a specific Italian cultural enterprise

## Expectations

This course expects a reasonable time commitment during and outside of the classroom.

Essay assignments and shorter writing exercises enable students to make connections between the lectures, readings, screenings, discussion sections and their own lives. Over the course of the semester, we will stress strategies for effective writing and oral presentations in the humanities and social sciences.

You will be expected to discuss course readings in class and prepare short written assignments including reactions to the readings. Proofread your work before you submit it.

Take notes from the lectures and the sites that we visit to draw from for your assignments.

All work in the class will be based on lectures, readings and on-site presentations. Pay attention and stay alert. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

All work must be completed on time.

## Attendance and Participation

Being a student in Rome is a wonderful experience but prioritizing all courses is a must.

Attendance is required and will be taken at the beginning of lectures and site visits. This includes program excursions which are all mandatory.

Assigned readings must be completed prior to the weekly seminar and students must arrive prepared to discuss and/or write about them.

Much of the course will take place on site with thematic visits to parts of the city where the themes discussed in the lectures and readings can be observed.

Students are allowed no more than 2 unexcused absences; after the 3rd absence the grade will decrease by 1/2 letter grade or 5% per absence.

Unexcused absences include injury and illnesses that do not require medical attention; therefore, while it is your choice to skip class to travel or spend time with a guest who is visiting, you may regret that choice if you later become ill and have already used up your allowed absences. If you experience prolonged illness that will adversely affect your attendance, you will be asked to provide documentation of the illness and a plan approved by the instructor for making up for the missed work.

As soon as you know you will not be attending a class for whatever reason you are responsible for informing both your instructor and Gustolab International's Learning Facilitator.

## Assignments

Specific assignment briefs will be given during the first week of the course; the description here is generic and subject to modification.

### 20% Midterm Exam

It is essential that students absorb the information given in the classes and readings, and a mid-term exam will evaluate the degree to which this takes place. It will test factual knowledge of the places visited through short answer questions and students' understanding of the themes of the course and ability to apply them to specific urban situations through one or more short essays. The exam will include questions from 1. readings 2. lectures and 3. previous site-visits, including student presentations. It will be graded for accuracy and precision, based on a total of 100%.

### **20% Oral presentation - Communications Analysis or Plan**

Students will work individually or in small groups to draft either

- A. a communications plan for a hypothetical or real business in a cultural or creative sector of their choosing, or
- B. analyze the way a specific sector presents its offerings

In both cases students will present their findings in an oral presentation to the class.

### **50% Video Project**

The work will be done in groups and graded individually. The task will be to plan, write, shoot, edit and promote a short nonfiction video about a chosen topic related to Italian culture. A video-making team will accompany students on this mission; no prior video-making experience is necessary.

### **10% Class Participation**

Class participation evaluates the student's preparedness to answer and ask questions during class meetings, willingness to offer ideas, observations and opinions, and general active and energetic participation in class.

## **Grading Criteria**

The following general criteria will be used when grading all assignments:

1. **Research:** the degree to which the student demonstrates that the subject matter has been adequately investigated. Grades will be determined by the ability to demonstrate in the assignments that material supports knowledge building by using empirical research –such as field observations–, theory, and practice wisdom.
2. **Conceptual Ability:** the ability to grasp abstract concepts, think logically and organize ideas into a conceptual whole. Grades will be determined on the basis of the student's ability to move along a continuum from abstraction to concreteness, to deal systematically with material presented in class, in readings and in field observations.
3. **Communication:** the ability to organize and transmit ideas in written, graphic, and, when appropriate, oral form. Students should strive to use proper syntax; express ideas clearly, punctuate, spell and, where appropriate, employ symbolic and visual modes of communication.
4. **Analytical Thinking:** the ability to analyze, present and evaluate concepts.
5. **Timeliness and Completeness**

Final grades are reported at the end of each term in the following way:

100%	A+	Exceptional; significantly exceeds the highest expectations for undergraduate work
95%	A	Outstanding; meets the highest standards for the assignment or course
90%	A-	Excellent; meets very high standards for the assignment or course
85%	B+	Very good; meets high standards for the assignment or course
80%	B	Good; meets most of the standards for the assignment or course
75%	B-	More than adequate; shows some reasonable command of the material
70%	C+	Acceptable; meets basic standards for the assignment or course
65%	C	Acceptable; meets some of the basic standards for the assignment or course
60%	C-	Acceptable, while falling short of meeting basic standards in several ways
55%	D	Minimally acceptable; lowest passing grade
50%	F	Failing; very poor performance

## Class Organization

### A note on “Critical Field Studies”

At the Borromini Institute we use ‘critical field studies’ to refer to courses where considerable time is spent observing and participating in activities in the ‘field.’ We recognize this as a distinct method of learning and one quite distinct from normal classroom activities. It requires students to be active learners, and to seek out learning opportunities often while working with or observing local people or specialists. Such opportunities are often explored with other members of the student group in research or ethnographic projects. Projects give students the opportunity to grasp the significance of behavior occurring in a second culture and to situate it using the best available ideas in today’s academy.

In the same way, we encourage our students to always carry a notebook and to use it to take notes or draw sketches whenever confronted by unusual behavior. Increasingly students are taking advantage of digital ways to record and edit local culture. Indeed, it is not unusual for students to present digital portfolios at the end of courses as part of their assignments.

Our courses are ‘critical’ in the sense that we ask students to study the way the world “is” but also to think about or design how it “might be” or “should” be. This argument goes beyond a “value neutral” position and suggests that we have created ourselves – and our world -- in the Anthropocene era and bear responsibility for our collective future. It is, indeed, ‘our world’ and its future is in our hands.

### Communication

The professor is always available during and after class to answer questions and can be contacted by email for additional feedback or clarification. Emails will be answered within 24 hours, unless otherwise indicated. To request an appointment to speak in person or video-conference send an email indicating the issue and possible times.

First-name basis is welcome but there is an expectation of professional tone in verbal and written communication. Salutation and sign-off are required in emails (essential to determine the intended recipient and sender) and avoid emojis and slang.

Check your spelling and grammar before submitting any written work, including an email to your professor. (It’s a good habit to get into now).

### Learning Facilitator

Students may also reach out to the Learning Facilitator (Lindsay Maldari, [programs@gustolab.com](mailto:programs@gustolab.com)) to discuss general matters related to the course. The GLi Learning Facilitator is available to provide practical support as well as assist students should any misunderstandings emerge in relation to their academic courses. For instance, any needs related to learning accommodations, drop/add period, or attendance policy should be taken up directly with the GLi Learning Facilitator.

The GLi Learning Facilitator is not a Teaching Assistant and as such cannot provide personal assistance related to course content.

### First Amendment Protection

Gustolab International/Borromini Institute supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

## Non-Discrimination, and Anti-Harassment Policy

Gustolab International/Borromini Institute is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity; discrimination and harassment of any form are strictly prohibited, as better explained in the Student Handbook.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic violation and should be taken seriously. One is responsible for plagiarism when: the exact words of another writer are used without using quotation marks and indicating the source of the words; the words of another are summarized or paraphrased without giving the credit that is due; the ideas from another writer are borrowed without properly documenting their source.

## Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Per Gustolab International/Borromini Institute policy and in compliance with the home university's policies, students with a documented disability are required to communicate their academic accommodations and subsequently provide **official written documentation**. They are entitled to, and will receive, reasonable academic accommodations to ensure their ability to successfully participate in and complete this course. Such students must make an appointment during office hours to discuss any such disability with the instructor, and are responsible for bringing to the instructor's attention any accommodation needs prior to or early in the term.

## COVID-19 Health and Safety Requirements

Students are responsible for abiding by their university's and Gustolab International/Borromini Institute's safety and health expectations including for COVID-19. All students attending this course are required to follow Gustolab International/Borromini Institute policies regarding health, safety, and face coverings. Please see <https://www.gustolab.com/covid-19/>

## Pass/Fail (UIUC)

Students can request their grades to be pass/fail after they come back from their semester. This process differs from college to college, but it is always something that the student is responsible for. Gustolab International/Borromini Institute will report grades as normal and the student needs to work with their academic advisor in their home college for the pass/fail to appear on their record.

## Drop/Add (UIUC)

Students should be enrolled in a full-time course load abroad. All students are enrolled in a full-time placeholder while they are abroad, but some colleges/departments will have their own requirements as to if they actually need to complete 12 credits abroad. Many majors do not require this in LAS, but it is part of advising by LAS that a student should always take a full-time course load abroad. Enrollment in specific courses cannot be guaranteed but depends on a minimum enrollment. Students may request to switch courses within the first week of the program and Gustolab International/Borromini Institute will attempt to grant such requests.

## Course Calendar

This outline is intended merely to present the course and its principle themes. It is subject to variation before and during the semester. Refer to the academic calendar for further details.

WEEK	Content	Tasks
WK 1	Course Introduction, Concepts and Themes. Assignment brief preview.	<a href="#">A Brief History of Writing</a> (Oregon State University Library). Reading: Berman, Marshall, All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity, New York. Rushkoff, D. Life, Inc. (extracts)
WK 2	Current Italian Cultural Trends: Diversity and Inclusion	Reading and Listening: <a href="#">Alessandro Beda interview</a>
WK 3	Current Italian Cultural Trends: Sustainability and Climate Change	Reading: López, Antonio. 2021. " <a href="#">Expanding Ethics to the Environment with Ecomedia Literacy.</a> " Video: Rushkoff, D. Generation Like
WK 4	Italy and New Media	Reading: extracts from Rushkoff, D. Present Shock Video: Rushkoff, D. Generation Like
WK 5	The Urban Age and Media	Mitchell, William J. Me++ The Cyborg Self and the Networked City. MIT Press, 2004. Trabalzi, Ferruccio. 2014b. "Marginal Centers: Learning from Rome's Periphery." Video: Carlo Ratti, <a href="#">Inventions that will Change our Cities</a>
WK 6	From Television to Tik Tok: the changing role of video. Food + chefs as celebrities, TV and web formats	Reading: <a href="#">Khaby Lame, the Everyman of the Internet</a> Video: Katie Parla's Rome
WK 7	Mass Tourism, the Local vs. the Global. Food and social media (Guides, TripAdvisor and online reputation for the restaurant and food industry)	Reading: <a href="#">The impact of mass tourism on Venice</a> Video: selected "Rome locals" YouTube channels  Oral Presentations in class - Communications Analysis or Plan
WK 8	Midterm	In class written test
WK 9	BREAK	
WK 10	Phase 2: Video – Introduction to Storytelling	Reading: <a href="#">Tips for Writing a Documentary Script From Ken Burns</a> Video: <a href="#">The Lens of Ken Burns: A Conversation on History, Storytelling, and the Power of Film</a>
WK 11	Phase 2: On-location Filming	Video: selected documentary screenings Screenplay due.
WK 12	Studio Visit: Roadshine Productions, Ostiense	Video: selected documentary screenings
WK 13	Phase 2: Studio Editing	Video: selected documentary screenings. Rough cut due.

WEEK	Content	Tasks
WK 14	Phase 2: Studio Editing	Reading: tbd, Video: tbd
WK 15	Final Class Meeting	Video Screening
WK 16		Departure

## Course Related Trips

During the program there will be a number of program excursions with components related to each course. Each semester these change depending on the season and general teaching opportunities. Occasionally, short assignments from these field trips will be included in the class participation component of the course grade.

## Bibliography

The principal readings this semester are listed below and noted in the course calendar. A digital copy of all required readings will be provided in pdf format. An additional bibliography of suggested and recommended readings is provided below to assist students in their research. Some of these readings will be provided as digital downloads.

### Required

Ratti, Carlo and Matthew Claudel. *The City of Tomorrow: Sensors, Networks, Hackers, and the Future of Urban Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016

Winner, Langdon, *Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977.

Berman, Marshall, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, New York.

Ruskoff, D. López, Antonio. 2021. "Expanding Ethics to the Environment with Ecomedia Literacy." In *The Handbook of Media Education Research*, 381–97. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Trabalzi, Ferruccio. 2014b. "Marginal Centers: Learning from Rome's Periphery." In *Global Rome: Changing Faces of the Eternal City*, edited by Isabella Clough Marinaro and Bjørn Thomassen, 219–231. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Rushkoff, Douglas. *Life, Inc.* NY: Random House, 2009.

Rykwert, Joseph. "Architecture is for Everyone". in Giulia Vola, ed. *Transmitting Architecture*. 2008.

Sassen, Saskia. "Seeing Like a City" in Burdett, Ricky, ed. *The Endless City*. London: Phaidon. 2007.

Mitchell, William J. *Me++ The Cyborg Self and the Networked City*. MIT Press, 2004.

### Recommended

Bonacini, Elisa. "Engaging Participative Communities in Cultural Heritage: Using Digital Storytelling in Sicily (Italy)." *International Information & Library Review* 51 (2019): 42 - 50.

Cesário, Vanessa. "People-Place Interactions: From Pictures and Stories to Places and Sense of Place." (2021).

Nisi, V., Bostock, H., Cesário, V., Acedo, A., & Nunes, N.J. (2021). Impalpable Narratives: How to capture intangible cultural heritage of migrant communities. *C&T '21: Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Communities & Technologies - Wicked Problems in the Age of Tech*.

Giglietto, D., Ciolfi, L., Claisse, C., & Lockley, E. (2019). Bridging cultural heritage and communities through digital technologies: Understanding perspectives and challenges. *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Communities & Technologies - Transforming Communities*.

Pietroni, Eva. "Experience Design, Virtual Reality and Media Hybridization for the Digital Communication Inside Museums." *Applied System Innovation* (2019): n. pag.