



ITAL 301: Perugia and Beyond: Advanced Grammar, Conversation and Cultural Reflection

**Course Syllabus
Fall Semester 2026**

Instructor: Livia Matarazzo, MA

Credits: 4

Contact Hours: 60

Class Hours: Mon., Tue., Thu., 4 pm-5:30 pm

Office Hours: By appointment. Italian Faculty Office, first floor, Umbra Institute

Course Type: Standard course

Pre-requisites: 4 semesters of college level language instruction or permission of the instructor

Lab Fee: USD\$95

Course Description

Perugia and Beyond: Advanced Grammar, Conversation and Cultural Reflection is an interdisciplinary course that focuses on achieving and strengthening an Advanced level in cultural and linguistic-communicative competences (speaking, writing, reading and comprehension) regarding a wide variety of topics. At the same time, it asks students to reflect on various aspects of contemporary Perugian life and Italian culture, asking them to analyze their own experience of immersion in a different cultural environment. This course has three pillars: language, culture, and reflection. Advanced Italian language instruction is at the core of the class. Students will consolidate fundamentals of the Italian language already learned and be exposed to new grammatical concepts in order to interact on a sophisticated basis with Italians in various real-world settings. Second, they will use their language learning as a vehicle for delving into the richness and complexity of Italian culture. Third, students reflect on their experiences living in a new culture and understanding how this has impacted their perspective on the United States and their sense of their own identities. Through engaging in interactive assignments, maintaining a reflective course journal, and participating in group activities, students will learn to live in their new environment, build competence and confidence as global citizens, and understand how they can leverage their Perugia experience for their future personal and professional success.

Course Purpose

Students will strengthen and improve upon their skills in speaking, reading, and understanding Italian, study Italian culture and experience it first-hand, and reflect on what they have learned both about Italy, the United States, and themselves through their study abroad experience. At the end of the semester, students should reach the level B2 or B2+ of the Common European Framework in the four basic competencies: listening, speaking and interacting, reading, and writing.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate foundational skills in speaking and understanding Italian, including:

- a. Understanding a wide range of demanding, longer clauses, and recognize implicit meaning.
 - b. Expressing ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
 - c. Using language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
 - d. Producing clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
2. Convey their understanding of contemporary political and economic issues in Italy
3. Participate in sophisticated discussions of contemporary Italian culture.
4. Engage in critical evaluation of their own culture, Italian culture, and other foreign cultures, including:
 - a. Articulating U.S. cultural rules, norms and biases;
 - b. Understanding how their own experiences have shaped their values and priorities;
 - c. Knowing how to respond productively to cultural differences;
 - d. Valuing what is important to members of another culture, including their history, politics, communication styles, economy, beliefs and social practices;
 - e. Interpreting cross-cultural experiences from multiple worldviews and respecting the rights and feelings of other cultural groups;
 - f. Asking complex questions about their own culture and other cultures, seeking out answers to those questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.
5. Understand and articulate the unique benefits of their study abroad experience and anticipate how to leverage those benefits for their future personal and professional success.

Course Materials:

All students are required to purchase their personal copies of the following:

Textbook: *Quitalia.it*, Le Monnier

Assessments

Attendance in class (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You have two “sick days,” per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Attendance at Tandem (10%)

Tandem is your chance to get to know Italian students and have a relaxed, semi-structured conversation with them. Attendance at two Tandem meetings (both dates TBA) is worth 10% (i.e. 5% each). Each class will be assigned two dates.

SoloItaliano Challenge (5%)

Active participation in the SoloItaliano Challenge is a fun way to apply what you’ve learned in class and beyond. Participation in the group activity ‘Present an Italian personality associated with the city of Perugia’ and in Cinema Night are each worth 2.5%.

Participating in class with completed homework (10%)

Another important part of learning Italian is doing exercises after class to practice what you’ve learned. The next day that practice will be part of class. All the written exercises in the book are essentially pass/fail: if you did them, full credit!

Weekly quizzes (20%)

There are weekly online quizzes on Moodle, which you may retake as often as you wish/need in order to reinforce vocabulary and key grammatical concepts. You may repeat these exercises as often as you want: your average score is what will count.

Midterm Exam (20%)

The midterm exam will assess student mastery of course content during the first half of the semester. There will be a full prompt on Moodle with the topics covered on the exam. In addition to a written component, the midterm will include an oral component that will assess students' language competency.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will be cumulative: it will cover material from the whole semester. As with the mid-term, there will be a thorough prompt on Moodle and the exam will include an oral component.

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: *Decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.*

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. The first two absences per course due to illness will be considered excused "sick days" and do not require medical documentation. To receive additional excused absences due to illness, students are required to see a local physician or request a letter from an Institute-approved doctor documenting they should be excused from class for illness.

Unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's academic performance and will result in a reduction of the student's final course grade by 1% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include death in the immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, and medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director, but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class.

Day 1: Prendere il caffè

Activity: *Getting a coffee at a local bar*

Competencies:

- Ordinare
- Invitare qualcuno e rispondere a un invito

Grammar:

- Pronomi diretti
- La particella *ci*

Day 2: La spesa

Activity: *Shopping at the grocery*

Competencies:

- Chiedere e dire il prezzo
- Chiedere una quantità

Grammar:

- Pronomi diretti
- Ne partitivo
- Ce l'ho

Day 3: La casa

Activity: *Around the apartment Interactive game*

Competencies:

- Parlare di case e appartamenti
- Chiedere e dare informazioni su un'abitazione
- Descrivere un appartamento
- Localizzare oggetti nello spazio

Grammar:

- Preposizioni

Day 4: Il viaggio

Activity: *Field trip to Pian di Massiano by Minimetrol*

Competencies:

- Raccontare al passato

Grammar:

- Passato prossimo
- Verbi con il doppio ausiliare

Week 1: Sep. 7, 8, 10

Textbook: l'italiano in testa, Unit 1
Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Parlare di sé e degli altri
- Raccontare fatti al passato

Grammar:

- Verbi transitivi e intransitivi
- Trapassato prossimo

Week 2: Sep. 14, 15, 17

Textbook: L'italiano in testa, Unit 2
Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Fare una scelta: discutere e motivare
- Esprimere preferenze

Grammar:

- Ripresa pronomi diretti e indiretti
- Pronomi combinati

Week 3: Sep. 21, 22, 24

Textbook: Unit 2
Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Dare istruzioni
- Prendere accordi

Grammar:

- Pronomi combinati con l'imperativo
- Pronomi combinati con i verbi modali

Week 4: Sep. 28, 29 - Oct. 1

Textbook Unit 3
Quiz on Moodle
Co-curricular activity: Tandem Language Exchange. Sep. 29

Competencies:

- Esprimere sorpresa
- Esprimere desideri al presente e al passato

Grammar:

- Condizionale presente
- Condizionale passato

Week 5: Oct. 5, 6, 8

Review week

Midterm Exam: October 8

Week 6: Oct. 12, 13, 15

Textbook: Unit 3

Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Mettere a confronto
- Esprimere aspirazioni

Grammar:

- Ripresa del condizionale passato
- Frasi causali
- Alcuni verbi pronominali

***** October 19 - 22: Semester Break *****

Week 7: Oct. 26, 27, 29

Textbook: Unit 4

Quiz on Moodle

Co-curricular activity: Tandem Language Exchange, Oct. 27

Competencies:

- Esprimere il proprio parere
- Motivare un'idea
- Riferire le opinioni degli altri

Grammar:

- Congiuntivo presente
- Congiuntivo passato
- Uso dell'indicativo con *secondo me*

Week 8: Nov. 2, 3, 5

Textbook: Unit 5

Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Riferire informazioni
- Esprimere idee e opinioni

Grammar:

- Le espressioni con il congiuntivo

Week 9: Nov. 9, 10, 12

Textbook: Unit 8

Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Esprimere sentimenti ed emozioni
- Descrivere attività
- Convincere qualcuno a fare qualcosa

Grammar:

- Congiuntivo imperfetto

Week 10: Nov.16, 17

Textbook: Unit 9

Quiz on Moodle

SoloItaliano Challenge

Group activity: choose an Italian personality associated with the city of Perugia and present it while enjoying coffee at a local bar

Competencies:

- Descrivere luoghi
- Programmare un viaggio

Grammar:

- Futuro semplice e anteriore

Week 11: Nov. 23, 24

Textbook: handouts

Quiz on Moodle

Competencies:

- Dare e chiedere informazioni
- Descrivere aspetti di alcune città italiane

Grammar:

- Ripresa del pronome relativo *che*
- Pronome relativo *cui*
- Pronomi relativi *il quale, la quale, i quali, le quali*
- Pronome *chi*

Week 12: Nov. 30 - Dec. 1, 3

Review week

***** December 1: Final Exam*****