

Italian Linguistics: Historical Aspects (A006679)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)	Italian	Gent	seminar	0.0h
			independent work	0.0h
			lecture	0.0h
			group work	0.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Serra, Eleonora LW06 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Historical Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

Italian

Keywords

History of linguistic ideas, vernacular codification, early modern grammars, norm and usage, linguistic practices, genre

Position of the course

This specialised course allows students to deepen their knowledge of Italy's linguistic history. In the course we trace the history of linguistic ideas in Italy, mainly as they developed from the fourteenth to the early seventeenth century, and we explore in detail the process of vernacular codification that took place during the Renaissance. We will also examine the other side of this process by asking what linguistic theories and grammars had to do with actual language practices, considering different types of "Italian" as attested in a range of genres. During this course, students will also further develop their language skills.

- Reading skills: reading primary sources, reading scientific articles and chapters;
- Listening skills: listening to the lectures;
- Writing skills: preparing a powerpoint;
- Speaking skills: oral discussion in class, presentation of research project, oral exam.

Exchange students may take up this course unit, for which no prior knowledge of Dutch is required.

Contents

The course will address the following topics:

- linguistic theories that developed in Italy from the thirteenth century (starting from Dante's *Convivio* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*) to the early seventeenth century (with the publication of the *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca* and its aftermath representing our end point);

- the process of vernacular codification in the Italian Renaissance (Alberti, Fortunio, Bembo, Giambullari, the *Vocabolario della Crusca*)
- the relationship of the codified norm with actual linguistic practices, as reflected in texts from different genres and different geographical areas
- possibly, the course will also cover some selected elements of historical grammar.

The course combines traditional lectures with seminar sessions where we closely read, analyse and discuss primary texts in their original vernacular.

Initial competences

- Familiarity with the basic notions of linguistic analysis;
- Thorough knowledge of the Italian language (expected competence in Italian: B2+).

Final competences

1. The student reaches the C1 proficiency level. The student can understand a wide range of texts. They can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. They can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
 - Reading skills: independent reading of articles and chapters; reading of early modern Italian vernacular texts; ppt presentations (self-study; lectures; seminars)
 - Listening skills: lectures; understanding the questions during the seminars / permanent evaluation moments (seminars, self-study, guided exercises)
 - Writing skills: preparation of ppt / handout
 - Speaking skills: oral discussion (seminars; oral exam)
2. Insight into the theory and contents: the student uses the linguistic terminology correctly. They have a knowledge of the development of linguistic thought in late medieval and Renaissance Italy; they have a knowledge of the process of vernacular codification and the main theories and actors at play, and of the relationship of different text types with the prescriptive norm; has a knowledge of how selected linguistic features developed
3. Insight into the theory: the student can relate the content of the course to insights acquired in other linguistics courses.
4. Application of the theory: the student can independently analyse a text or data and can explain the most important features.
5. Research skills: the student will give a presentation in which they situate, present and analyse data.
6. Research skills: the student can independently consult and analyse early modern texts and search for, consult and critically report on scientific sources.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Group work: discussion in small groups during the seminars.
- Lectures: introductory and advanced classes on the subject of the course. During the lectures the students are supposed to take notes in addition to the study materials provided.
- Seminar: during this type of lecture the lecturer leads close reading, discussion and analysis of primary texts/data.
- (Guided) self-study: students must independently study/analyze some texts.
- Peer teaching: Students will be asked to explore a specific topic in depth, which will have them engage closely with primary and secondary sources, and to present their research and reflections to the class in an oral presentation. They are expected to deepen the bibliographic research independently and to approach the topic in a critical manner.

No lecture recordings are provided for this course.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Course slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Type: Reader

Name: Book chapters, scholarly articles, other academic sources

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

References

Non-obligatory literature:

Serianni, Luca & Pietro Trifone (eds.). 1993. *Storia della lingua italiana*, vol. 1: *I luoghi della codificazione*. Turin: Einaudi.

Trovato, Paolo. [1994] 2012. *Storia della lingua italiana. Il primo Cinquecento*.

Padua: libreriauniversitaria.it edizioni.

A more extensive reference list is available via Ufora.

Course content-related study coaching

Specific questions can be asked during the lecturer's office hours (by appointment).

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment, Presentation

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment, Presentation

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Continuous assessment:

- presentation during the course (40%): presentation on a specific topic. The following competences will be evaluated: insights into the theory and contents of the course, application of the theory, research skills, analytical skills, ability to structure an argument clearly, spoken language skills.

- Active participation in classes and extra activities (such as a visit to the library) (10%).

Exam:

- Oral exam (50%): students will be asked questions related to issues discussed in the course. They can also discuss the linguistic phenomena seen during the lectures and can recognize them in texts. A question may be asked in relation to the research carried out for the presentation.

Calculation of the examination mark

- 50% oral exam

- 40% presentation

- 10% active participation in class

When the student obtains less than 10/20 for the exam, they can no longer pass the course unit as a whole. If the total score does turn out to be a mark of ten or more out of twenty, this is reduced to the highest fail mark (9/20).

Students who eschew the presentation or the oral exam can no longer obtain a pass mark for the course unit. Should the final mark be higher than 7/20, it will be reduced to the highest non-passable mark (i.e. 7/20).

Facilities for Working Students

- Working students can arrange a personalized study programme with the lecturer. The program will include scientific articles, books or handbook chapters that can be autonomously studied. To arrange this they should contact the teacher.
- Possibility to deliver the oral presentation at a different time and to take the exam at a different time within the regular exam period.
- Possibility to receive feedback at another time: by appointment.