



The Center for Italian Studies

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www.stonybrook.edu/italianstudies

Spring 2024

A Message from Dr. Andrea Fedi, Interim Director

Last summer, I was appointed as the Interim Director of the Center for Italian Studies, following Dr. Matteo Brera's departure. My primary objectives were to maintain programming continuity and guide the Center through a period of transition. Since Alicia Ryan-Meuschke had transferred to another department, a search was initiated that ultimately resulted in the hiring of Christine Griffiths as the new Assistant to the Director. In the meantime, Josephine Fusco kindly agreed to return part time, and, as a result, we were able to schedule four sections of Italian for adult learners at various proficiency levels. These classes are being taught by our exceptional group of teachers: Annamaria D'Agostino, Donna Di Natale, and Joseph Tursi Jr.



For the Settimana dell'automobile, in September, we began by screening the 2022 documentary [Alfa Romeo: Designing Dream Cars](#). Shortly after, students from an advanced Italian class performed a live stage reading of *Autosuggestiosupernevrasterminamobilismovertiginomania*, Ugo Farulli's 1907 monologue critiquing the automotive frenzy that swept through Europe at the turn of the century. Due to the northbound trajectory of Hurricane Lee, the XVII Concorso d'Eleganza had to be rescheduled for October 8, and over seventy cars and motorcycles gathered at our new location, Parking Lot 2. [The New York Owners Alfa Romeo Club](#), including President Anthony Intintoli, Vice President Mike Bange, and Secretary Vincenzo Lambroia, played a key role in bringing older and newer vehicles to the event. Other groups and associations, such as the Maserati Club, were also in attendance.

The first week of October featured presentations on Sandro Botticelli and Dante Alighieri. Experts Dr. Joseph Luzzi, Dr. Emanuele Lugli, and doctoral student José Gabriel Alegría discussed Botticelli's illustrations of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. These illustrations were also showcased in a digital exhibit at the Center throughout October. Later in the month, Dr. Antonella Valoroso from the [Romeyne Robert and Uguccione Sorbello Foundation](#) talked about Adelaide Ristori (1822-1903), prominent actress and Risorgimento activist.

On November 15, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the death of Italian American composer Pietro A. Yon. The event included a panel discussion about Yon's life and music, featuring Anne-Marie Lucchese, Roberto and Palmira Mignone Fellow in Italian and Italian American Studies, Salvatore Basile, author and retired musician from St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Elisa Teglia, an Italian organist who has recorded Yon's organ music. During the event, an SBU vocal ensemble performed Yon's popular piece, "Gesù Bambino." Two days later Elisa Teglia gave an organ concerto with a selection of Yon's music at St. James R.C. church in East Setauket. The Center held a second concert during the holiday party, where novelist and songwriter Alessio Arena performed a selection of classical Neapolitan songs on his guitar.

In November, we organized two workshops for K-12 Italian teachers as part of the year-long CIVIS initiative. This project, funded by the Center and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focuses on active citizenship, and draws inspiration from the works of Italo Calvino and Walt Whitman. It includes seminars, demonstrations, a digital platform, and the distribution of free books to teachers from Long Island and New York City. In early February, we offered two more workshops, one at the Center, and one at P.S. 112 in Brooklyn. The project will conclude with a showcase in March, where students and teachers will present their work.

Andrea

Center Updates

DR. ANDREA FEDI, INTERIM DIRECTOR

Andrea Fedi, an Associate Professor of Italian and Cultural Studies, has been a part of Stony Brook University since 1994. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Florence and PhD from the University of Toronto. His contributions at Stony Brook include chairing the Curriculum Committee of the School of Professional Development for a decade, serving as the Director of the Global Studies Undergraduate College, and directing the Language Learning Research Center. Since 2019, Andrea has been involved with the new Globalization Studies and International Relations program. He teaches cultural and cinema studies courses, including a course on automobiles and society, and another on the road movie genre. His published works include an advanced Italian class textbook, *Mercurio* (Yale University Press, 2005), and articles on travel literature.

DR. LOREDANA POLEZZI, D'AMATO CHAIR IN ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



On November 6, 2023, Prof. Loredana Polezzi was officially invested as the Alfonse M. D'Amato Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies. The ceremony, held in the Wang Center at Stony Brook University, celebrated more than a dozen new Endowed Chairs who have taken office at the University since 2020. Dr. Polezzi produced two publications in Summer 2023. The first volume [*Creatività Diasporiche: Conversazioni transnazionali tra teoria e arti*](#) (Rome: Mimesis), co-edited with Simone Brioni (SBU) and Franca Sinopoli (La Sapienza, University of Rome), gathers conversations between academics and artists, including writers, musicians, painters, bloggers and more. Polezzi, along with Serena Bassi (Yale) and Giulia Riccò (Michigan), curated a special issue of [*Forum Italicum*](#) (57:2) devoted to "Critical Issues in Transnational Italian Studies." Both publications are fully available in

Open Access at the above links. At the recent Modern Language Association (MLA) convention held in January, Dr. Polezzi co-organized a panel "Rethinking Ethnic Studies: Affect and the Italian American Experience." In March, she also delivered a paper entitled "Affect and the Diasporic Memory: Narrating the Italian American Experience" at Yale University's First Annual Rossini Symposium: "Italians in New Haven and Beyond."

CHRISTINE GRIFFITHS, ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR



In January 2024, we welcomed Christine Griffiths as the new administrator for the Center. She holds a BA in Art History and Anthropology from Stony Brook University and MA and MPhil in Art and Cultural History from Bard Graduate Center in New York. Her professional background is varied, with experience in academic programs, events management, fundraising, and higher-education teaching. Ms. Griffiths has a strong research portfolio in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European history and material culture and has held fellowships at the New York Botanical Garden and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library in Washington, DC for her doctoral research on perfume and garden history. She looks forward to strengthening the Center's student scholarship and fellowship opportunities and developing more arts-related programming and workshops.

ANNE-MARIE LUCCHESI, ROBERTO AND PALMINA MIGNONE FELLOW



Anne-Marie Lucchese, an Italian American from Louisville, KY, is completing her second year as the Roberto and Palmira Mignone Fellow at the Center for Italian Studies. During her fellowship, she taught first- and second-semester Italian, digitized one of the Center's photograph collections depicting scenes of Italian life, and advised the student CIAO Club. Last fall, she organized a series of events in remembrance of Pietro A. Yon, an Italian organist and composer who immigrated to New York and died on Long Island in November 1943. Her master's thesis "The Italian Immigrant Experience in Louisville, KY (1870-1920)" uses archival and oral history sources to document the varied experiences of Italian immigrants in Kentucky at the turn of the last century. These interviews will be archived at the [Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History](#) at the University of Kentucky later this year. After completing her MA in Romance Languages (Italian) at Stony Brook, Ms. Lucchese

will pursue a doctoral degree in Italian Studies. At the time of publication, she has been accepted to PhD programs at Ohio State University and Indiana University at Bloomington.

News

THE CIAO CLUB

The Cultural Italian American Organization (CIAO), a long-standing student club at Stony Brook University, resumed activities in Fall 2023 under the guidance of their advisor Anne-Marie Lucchese. The group integrates elements of Italian cultural heritage and language, and their events are often accompanied by food! Fall's happenings included a Calabrian Halloween and a Christmas/Holiday celebration featuring panettone and pandoro. The spring semester kicked off with an Italian game night and an evening dedicated to Valentine's Day traditions. The group meets on alternating Tuesdays at 6 pm in the Center for Italian Studies.



CIAO Club members Viktoria Skobodzinski and Diane Rotundi on February 20, 2024

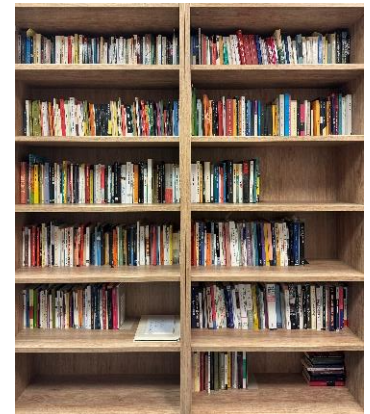
FULBRIGHT RECIPIENT



The Center for Italian Studies wishes to acknowledge Michael Bennett, a PhD Candidate in Critical Music Studies at Stony Brook, who was recently awarded a Fulbright Research Award to conduct archival research in Rome. His dissertation explores the influence of anti-Fascist ideology and the aesthetics of the literary avant-garde on the music of Italian composer Luciano Berio and his contemporaries. Mr. Bennett previously assisted in curating the Center's Paganini exhibit in the spring of 2023, and he was consulted for one of the events on Pietro Yon.

PARATI LIBRARY ON MIGRATION

Dr. Graziella Parati, the Paul D. Paganucci Professor of Italian Literature and Language at Dartmouth College and a professor in the Comparative Literature and Women's and Gender Studies Programs, graciously donated a unique collection of books about migration to Italy. This collection, cataloged by Stony Brook student Maria Grazia Carbone during the Fall semester, was added to the library of the Center for Italian Studies. A searchable catalogue of the 268 books and pamphlets is currently hosted on [Library Thing](#). On April 25, we will inaugurate this special collection with an evening program featuring Dr. Parati and Dr. Marie Orton (Brigham Young University).



The Dr. Graziella Parati Library on Migration

IN MEMORIAM

Joseph A. Tursi

Dr. Joseph A. Tursi, Professor Emeritus of Stony Brook University, passed away on January 5th at the age of 95. After obtaining a degree in Education from Manhattan College, he earned a Master at Fordham University, followed by a PhD in Italian Studies from New York University. His teaching career started in the local school districts, first Valley Stream and later Deer Park, where he became the Foreign Language Coordinator. In 1966, Tursi joined the faculty at Stony Brook University. Among other roles, he served as Chair of the Department of French and Italian and Director of the Foreign Language Teacher Training program. He was involved with the founding of the Center for Italian Studies in 1985, and co-authored a popular Italian language textbook, *Oggi in Italia*. He was also the Chairperson of the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission for several years and received multiple citations and awards from professional organizations and local authorities.

Richard Gambino

Dr. Richard Gambino died on January 12th at the age of 84. He held a BA in philosophy from Queens College, a Master's degree in philosophy from University of Illinois and a PhD from New York University. Gambino was a professor at Queens College (1970 – 1998), where he founded the first Italian American Studies program, and he was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stony Brook University. His 1974 book, *Blood of My Blood: The Dilemma of Italian Americans* (Doubleday), made the *New York Times* bestselling non-fiction list. He also authored *Vendetta: A History of America's Largest Lynching* (Doubleday, 1977), which was adapted into a 1999 HBO movie.

Photo Gallery



From left: Stony Brook University graduate students: Andrei Romanov, Eunsung Lee, Michael Celentano, Michaela Larsen, and Jeanai La Vita, performing at the first of two evenings celebrating Italian American composer Pietro Alessandro Yon, November 15, 2023



Anne-Marie Lucchese, Elisa Teglia, and Andrea Fedi at the second Pietro Yon event, St. James R. C. Church in East Setauket, November 17, 2023



The investiture of Dr. Loredana Polezzi as Alfonse M. D'Amato Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies, with Interim Dean Axel Drees and SBU President Maurie McClinnis, November 6, 2023



Top: NYC schoolteachers participating in the CIVIS workshop held at P.S. 112 in Brooklyn, NY on February 5, 2024

Bottom: Book display organized by Italian children's book author and CIVIS presenter Valentina Rizzi



A 1969 Alfa Romeo Giulia 1300ti TS and a 1957 Dual-Ghia at the XVII Robert D. Cess Concorso d'Eleganza, October 8, 2023

Spring 2024 Events

For the most current information about the events and programs organized by the Center for Italian Studies, please consult our website: www.stonybrook.edu/italianstudies. If you would like to attend any of our upcoming programs, please call (631) 632-7444 or email ctritalianstudies@stonybrook.edu.

FEBRUARY

Thursday, February 22

Film Screenings and Q&A with Director and Producer

Stonebreakers, 1 – 3 pm, Humanities 1008

If Only I were that Warrior, 5:30 – 8 pm, Humanities 1006

Loredana Polezzi and Simone Brioni will moderate a Q&A with Director Valerio Ciriaci and Producer and Cinematographer Isaak Liptzin.

This event is organized by the Humanities Institute and co-sponsored by The Center for Italian Studies and the D'Amato Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies.

Tuesday, February 27, 1 – 2:30 pm

Malgeri Lecture in Italian Culture

Dr. Céline Dauverd, University of Colorado, Boulder

“Paolino Bianchi and Diego Díaz: Narratives of Christian Slaves in 17th-Century Tunis and Algiers”

The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340

MARCH

Monday, March 25, 10 am – 3 pm

CIVIS Showcase and *Whitman on Walls! (WoW!)*

Performance by [Compagnia de' Colombari](http://Compagnia.de.Colombari)

Open to students and teachers of Italian. Advance registration is required. Email: ctritalianstudies@stonybrook.com

APRIL

Thursday, April 11, 5:30 – 7 pm

Nasti Lecture Series

Oronzo Brunetti, University of Naples Federico II

“Representing the Italian South: Rural Architecture and Photography in the 1920s/1930s”

The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340

Thursday, April 18, 4 – 6 pm

Tromba Lecture Series

“The Marsican Bears”

The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340

This evening, introduced by Dr. Roger Thompson (Stony Brook University), will feature talks on efforts to protect the Marsican Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*) population by conservation biologists Paolo Ciucci and Serena Frau and wildlife photographer Bruno D'Amicis

Friday, April 19, 1 – 5 pm

“I'll Tell You a Story”: A Symposium Celebrating Dr. Mary Jo Bona

The Humanities Institute (Humanities 1008)

Organized by the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, co-sponsored by the Center for Italian Studies and the D'Amato Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies.

Program and registration information forthcoming.

Tuesday, April 23, 1 – 2:30 pm

Crazy Fish Sing Book Presentation

With Suranga Katugampala, Simone Brioni, Loredana Polezzi, and Peter Bruno

On Zoom at The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340
Open to SBU students, faculty, and staff only.

Wednesday, April 24, 7 – 9 pm

Premiere of Anthony DiFranco's new play

Woman through the Window

Wang Center Theater

Free tickets are available to the public, but advance registration is required. To reserve, please call (631) 632-7444 or email ctritalianstudies@stonybrook.com

Thursday, April 25, 5:30 – 7 pm

Inauguration of the Center's Parati Library on Migration

With Graziella Parati and Marie Orton

The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340

Tuesday, April 30, 5:30 – 7 pm

A Conversational Remembrance of

Joseph A. Tursi (1928 – 2024)

The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340

MAY

Thursday, May 2, 5:30 – 7 pm

Nasti Lecture Series

Dr. Sandra Palmer, Queensborough Community College

“Great Masters of the Italian Baroque: Bernini & Caravaggio”

The Center for Italian Studies, E-4340

The presentation will focus on two artists, Gian Lorenzo Bernini in sculpture and Caravaggio in painting, both revolutionizing art of the past.

STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The Center for Italian Studies
Annual High School Essay Contest
will return in 2024!

Details will be sent directly to school districts and teachers of Italian in Nassau and Suffolk Counties in mid-March. If you would like more information, please call (631) 632-7444 or email ctritalianstudies@stonybrook.com.



Stony Brook University
College of Arts and Sciences



The Center for Italian Studies
Stony Brook University
E-4340 Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library
Stony Brook, NY 11794-3358
(631) 632-7444
<http://www.stonybrook.edu/italianstudies>

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COMMUNITY ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Classes for adults at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels are being planned for Summer 2024. For more information, visit our website www.stonybrook.edu/italianstudies.

CALL FOR APPLICANTS

The Center is currently accepting applications from graduate students for the 2024 – 2025 academic year for the [Palmina and Roberto Mignone Endowed Fellowship in Italian and Italian American Studies](#) and the [Josephine Fusco Fellowship](#).

MARCH 27 IS GIVING DAY – WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

Our Center thrives on the passion and dedication of our community, comprising students, teachers, and friends who share a deep love for Italian and Italian American culture and heritage. Your generous donations will directly contribute to scholarships for deserving students, cultural events, and workshops. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a significant impact and brings us closer to achieving our goals. Thank you for your ongoing support! [Donate today](#).

Please complete and return this form with your contribution to the address noted above.

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