Self-Determined Major Proposal

Name

Class Year

Cumulative GPA

Phone Number

Faculty Advisors: Barbara Garbin & Kate Berheide

Title: Italian Studies

Date of Submission

Table of Contents:

Rationale	**Page 3**
Italian Studies Major Core Classes	**Page 6-7**
Breadth and Depth Requirement	**Page 7**
Proposed Electives	**Page 7-8**
Academic Semester Outline	**Page 8-9**
Catalog Description of Courses	**Page 9-13**
A Brief Description Final Project	**Page 14**

2.1 Rationale

In an increasingly globalized society, multicultural interactions are becoming more common and more important. Thus, the study of languages and diverse cultures has become critical both for one to become a global citizen and for the whole of global society to function effectively. By developing the skills to communicate linguistically and with cultural appreciation, one is prepared to not only engage with other cultures and diverse populations as a global citizen, but also to apply these skills to any field of one's choosing. Therefore, the Italian Studies major will prepare me to competently speak, understand, and write in Italian, as well as to learn to appreciate the cultural traditions and perspectives of Italians over time.

During the course of this major, I will improve upon my skills to communicate effectively in Italian, and to comprehend both written and spoken Italian across a variety of contexts, while simultaneously gaining insight into the ways in which the Italian culture and language are intertwined, thereby gaining the ability to act with cultural competence. Further, I will apply these skills to an array of interdisciplinary arenas to gain experience using the language in professional, academic, and specific cultural settings. In order to accomplish these goals, I will learn to think critically about both historic and modern Italian literature, film, art, and other cultural productions, as well as about the influence of technology, politics, and geography on the Italian language and culture. More specifically, I will be interested in evaluating the motivations behind different artistic decisions, such as costume design in different genres of Italian film, and the value of different cultural productions to society. Finally, I will further develop my skills in communicating in Italian about cultural concepts and ideas to both educate and present my informed opinions in an effective and respectful manner.

The Italian Studies self-determined major is based on the degree requirements of the other World Language and Literature majors at Skidmore, as well as on those for the Italian major at Middlebury College. Both of these programs include courses catering to the development of basic skills in foreign language communication and comprehension, as well as courses that explore past and present themes and issues in Italian literature, film, politics, and society. By incorporating the courses in Skidmore's Italian department with those offered in the IES Abroad Milan: Fashion, Design, and Merchandising program, I will achieve my academic goals.

Coming from a Sicilian family, I was raised with multigenerational traditions and within a specific multicultural context that kept me connected to my familial roots. However, while the relatives who raised me passed on an appreciation for the Italian language and culture, I have a deep desire to cultivate my knowledge of this and to understand my ancestry with a more enlightened perspective, especially as I pursue dual citizenship. In addition, I have a key interest in fashion, specifically shoe design. Therefore, given that Italy is a leading country in fashion design, having a deeper understanding of the language and culture would help me to excel in this field. However, I am uncertain of my post-graduate plans and may be interested in teaching as well, given that both of my parents are high-school language teachers and that I worked as an English tutor in Italian elementary schools this past summer. Regardless of the career path that I choose, I have a huge appreciation for Skidmore as an academic institution and inclusive community, and have made deep-rooted connections here, both academically and socially. Therefore, I am determined to pursue the self-determined major of Italian Studies at Skidmore

and through an approved study abroad program, which will provide an opportunity to build upon my education outside of the classroom.

2.2 Special Aspects

A) While there is an Italian Studies minor at Skidmore, the absence of an Italian Studies major has led me to propose this self-determined major. I have explored many other courses of study in a variety of different departments at Skidmore, but my passion lies in my intellectual curiosity related to the Italian language and culture. There are no other majors or minors, nor combinations thereof, that allow me to study Italian language and literature to the depth that this self-determined major would allow, nor would prepare me, in the same way, to pursue a profession within the context of the Italian language and culture.

B) Aside from my pursuit in the aforementioned approved study abroad programs (IES Abroad Milan: Fashion Design and Merchandising, and Syracuse University in Florence) offered through Skidmore's Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges, there are no other specialized resources that would be required for me to complete this self-determined major.

3. Italian Studies Major Core Classes

Please note: some course numbers reflect the designation of both Skidmore and my study abroad programs (IES).

3.1 Foundation

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
WLI 203	World Languages - Italian	Intermediate Italian (3)

3.2 Methodology

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
WLIGEN (Skidmore)/ IT 351 (IES)	Italian Language Transfer Elective (Skidmore)/ Italian (IES)	Italian Language in Context: Emerging Independent Abroad II (3)
WLI 206	World Languages - Italian	Italian Language and Culture (3)
WLI 304	World Languages - Italian	Advanced Conversation and Composition
WLI 208	World Languages - Italian	Italian Conversation and Composition (4)

3.3 Theory

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
WLI 363	World Languages - Italian	Special Studies in Italian (3)
MF ### (Skidmore)/ CU/LT 328 (IES)	Religion (Skidmore)/ Religion (IES)	Investigating the Mafia in Literature, Cinema and Media (3)
MF ### (Skidmore)/ FS 325 (IES)	Media and Film Studies (Skidmore)/ Film Studies (IES)	Gender in Italian Cinema (3)

3.4 Other Core Courses

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
SD 374	Self-Determined Major	Self-Determined Major Final Project Prep

ID 371	Interdisciplinary Studies	Interdisciplinary Independent Study (4)
MB 351 (Skidmore)/ IB 355 (IES)	Management and Business (Skidmore)/ International Business (IES)	Managing Fashion and Luxury Companies (3)
MB 399 (Skidmore)/ IN 395 (IES)	Management and Business (Skidmore)/ Internship Seminar (IES)	Internship Seminar (3)

4. Breadth and Depth Requirements

Disciplines incorporated into this major are: World Languages - Italian, Media and Film Studies, and Management and Business.

Discipline	Related Courses
World Languages - Italian	WLI 203: Intermediate Italian (3) WLI 206: Italian Language and Culture (3) WLIGEN: Italian Language in Context: Emerging Independent Abroad II (3) WLI 208: Italian Conversation and Composition (4) WLI 304: Advanced Conversation and Composition (3) WLI 363: Special Studies in Italian (3)
Media and Film Studies	MF ###/CU/LT 328 (IES): Investigating the Mafia in Literature, Cinema, and Media (3) MF ### (Skidmore)/FS 325 (IES): Gender in Italian Cinema (3)
Management and Business	MB 351: Managing Fashion and Luxury Companies (3) MB 399: Internship Seminar (3)

5. Proposed Electives

Course Number	Department	Title of Course/Credits
AH 215C (Skidmore)/	Art History (Skidmore)/ History (Syracuse)	History of Fashion (3)
HI 351C (Skidmore)/	History (Skidmore)/ History (Syracuse)	The Italian Mafia (3)

RE ### (Skidmore)/ REL 409 (Syracuse)	Religion (Skidmore)/ Religion (Syracuse)	A History Witchcraft: Popular Culture, Folk Magic, and Religious Reform in Europe in the 14th-17th Centuries (3)
ITA 117 (Syracuse)	WLI (Skidmore)/ Italian (Syracuse)	Italian Community and Culture I (2)

6. Academic Semester Outline

Academic Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
First Year (2021-2022)	● JLAR 140: Western Art: History and Practice (4) ● JLID 151: First-Year in London: Interdisciplinary Seminar (1) ● JLSO 251: Ethnic Tapestry of Contemporary British Culture (4) ● JLSS 100: Decoding the British Legacy (4)	● EN 105: Writing as Radical Empathy (4) ● PS 101: Introduction to Psychological Science (4) ● SW 212: Power, Privilege, Oppression (4) ● SW 222: Introduction to Social Work (3)
Second Year (2022-2023)	● PS 102: Colloquium in Psychological Science (1) ● PS 214: Psychological Disorders (4) ● PS 225: Perception (3) ● RE 105: American Gods (3)	● PS 205: Social Psychology (4) ● PS 276: Exploratory Research (1) ● WLI 102: Elementary Italian II (3)

Third Year (2023-2024)	• PY 115: How Stuff Works: The Physics of Everyday Technology (2) • PS 275: Exploratory Research (1) • WLI 203: Intermediate Italian (3) • WLI 206: Italian Language & Culture (3) • DS 119: Contemporary Poetry Storytelling (2) • PA 111C: Self-Paced Fitness (1)	• WLIGEN (Skidmore)/IT 351 (IES): Italian Language in Context: Emerging Independent Abroad II (3) • RE 230 (Skidmore)/ CU/LT 328 (IES): Investigating the Mafia in Literature, Cinema and Media (3) • MB 351(Skidmore)/IB 355 (IES): Managing Fashion and Luxury Companies (3) • MB 399 (Skidmore)/IN 395 (IES): Internship Seminar (3) • MF ### (Skidmore)/ FS 325 (IES): Gender in Italian Cinema (3)
Fourth Year (2024-2025)	• SD 374: SDM Final Project Prep (1) • WLI 304: Advanced Conversation and Composition (3) • WLI 208: Italian Conversation and Composition (4) • PA 111: Self-Paced Fitness (1) • AM 261: Prince as a Cultural Icon (3)	• ID 371: Interdisciplinary Independent Study (4) • WLI 363: Special Studies in Italian (3) • RE 230: God, Sex, Love (3) • AH 265: History of Modern Design (3)

Fifth Year (2025-2026)	• AH 251C (Skidmore)/ HST 300.8 (Syracuse): History of Fashion (3) • HI 351C (Skidmore)/HST 415 (Syracuse): The Italian Mafia (3) • RE ### (Skidmore)/ REL 409 (Syracuse): A History Witchcraft: Popular Culture, Folk Magic, and Religious Reform in Europe in the 14th-17th Centuries. • (3) • WLI ### (Skidmore)/ ITA 117 (Syracuse): Italian Community and Culture I (2)	N/A

8. Catalog Description of Courses

WLI 203: Intermediate Italian

Credits: 3

Continuing study of the structures of the Italian language. Extensive practice in conversation and writing. Vocabulary building through the reading of appropriate texts in the literature and culture.

This course will help me to continue building upon my knowledge base of vocabulary and grammar in the Italian language through reading and writing, as well as through conversation. This course will also incorporate the study of Italian cultural texts and themes.

WLI 206: Italian Language and Culture

Credits: 3

Development of Italian skills at the advanced intermediate level. Extensive practice in idioms. Development of vocabulary and reading skills necessary for communication at native speed. Texts include contemporary news materials, film, Internet sources, literature, and music.

This course will help prepare me to communicate and comprehend the Italian language with vocabulary, a basis of grammatical knowledge, and a pace necessary to become fluent. In addition, this course will help me to review Italian current events and pieces of art, thus building upon my appreciation for Italian culture.

WLIGEN (Skidmore)/IT 351 (IES): Italian Language in Context: Emerging Independent Abroad II

Credits: 3

This course reviews and then expands upon all aspects of grammar acquired in Emerging Independent Abroad II and helps students master with greater ease and self-confidence more complex tasks, with a special focus on speaking and listening skills. In fact, it is based on a communicative direct approach to the language.

This course will help me to communicate directly with native Italian speakers about contemporary issues in Milan. Therefore, this course will aid in my ability to communicate and comprehend Italian within the context of Italian culture.

WLI 208 (Skidmore): Italian Conversation and Composition

Credits: 4

This course is for students who can follow a conversation on general subjects, who can command a wider vocabulary, who can write short essays, and read and understand the meaning of simple texts. The course aims at giving a good knowledge of grammar and improving both spoken and written Italian. Particular importance is given to the usage of moods and tenses in principal and subordinate clauses. Linguistic exercises, conversation, reading and essays complete the course.

This course will help me to achieve fluency in the Italian language by incorporating the usage of culture-specific slang and intonations. Additionally, I will be able to communicate clearly and comprehend a large body of Italian literature and art.

WLI 304 (Skidmore): Advanced Conversation and Composition

Credits: 3

Intensive practice of oral and written Italian to increase active vocabulary and fluency in spoken Italian and to develop and refine writing skills.

This course will help me to increase comfortability with conversational skills in Italian. Additionally, I will develop grammar skills that I will apply to my work as I complete the major, and as I continue to write in Italian in my professional life.

WLI 363 (Skidmore): Special Studies in Italian

Credits: 3

Advanced literary or cultural study in an author, a genre, a period, or a topic.

This course will allow me to complete a more independent and focused study of topics relating to my final project, such as fashion portrayed in Italian media and film. Under the guidance of a faculty member in the World Languages department, I can do a "deep dive" into primary sources, like individual texts or films from the time period in Italian history that I am most interested in.

MF ### (Skidmore)/CU/LT 328 (IES): Investigation the Mafia in Literature, Cinema and Media

Credits: 3

The Mafia and the Italian State originated in the same period, the end of the 19th century, and from then on their histories have always been closely related. From Sicily, the "octopus" (piovra), as the Mafia is called in Italy, has spread throughout Italy, and has pervaded almost every facet of Italian life, including cultural life. It has exerted an enormous appeal on literature, cinema and the media in general. This course presents a selection of the long-standing tradition of fiction and non-fiction texts that scrutinizes the Mafia from distinct intellectual and creative angles of vision. The selection of novels, films, testimonies and TV series will offer different representations of the Mafia: its ethics; its relation with politics, religion and business; its ideas of friendship, family, masculinity and femininity. It will challenge some of the clichés around the Mafia and will offer interesting insights on the Italian cultural identity. A section will be dedicated to the Mafia in Milano.

This course will help me to conceptualize the social, economic, and political changes that have influenced Italian cinema, specifically within the famous city of Milan. Therefore, I will be practicing my Italian language skills while learning about how modern Milanese history has shaped the artistic body of work in cinema.

MF ### (Skidmore)/FS 325 (IES): Gender in Italian Cinema

Credits: 3

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of Italian cinematic history with a special focus on gender issues. The chronological trajectory will outline the transformation of Italian society, the progressive independence of Italian women, the changing relationships between sexes, and the modification of gender roles through film. The course will start with an examination of the social position of women (and men) in Italy during the Fascist regime and the immediate post-WWII period and how this is reflected in film texts. We will then look at the social impact of the so-called miracolo economico in the sixties, the influence of technology and politics in the seventies on both the individual and the couple, and conclude with an examination of film texts by contemporary Italian film directors, including Paolo Sorrentino, Ferzàn Ozpetek, Paolo Virzì and Luca Guadagnino.

This course will allow me to explore how gender in Italian fashion products and design standards have been depicted in Italian media and film, which directly supports my final project idea.

MB 351 (Skidmore)/IB 355 (IES): Managing Fashion and Luxury Companies

Credits: 3

The course provides an overview of the fashion system and an in-depth understanding of the strategic, organizational and managerial characteristics of fashion and design-based companies, both in the high end and in the mass market.

Brand Management in fashion and luxury industries is the art and the science of creating the 'dream factor': the aim is making people buy products not because they need them but because they desire them; in this way companies may achieve both an increase of the profitability and revenues in the short term and of the brand equity in the long term. The methodology behind can be successfully transferred to other industries too.

From this perspective, the course aims at providing the participants the skills for managing key business processes in fashion and luxury companies in a context undergoing a radical evolution.

Course objectives can be synthesized as follows:

- To get acquainted with the concepts of fashion, fashion cycle, fashion and luxury;
- To learn about the main landmarks in the development of fashion and luxury companies and how the greatest international designers, brands and countries (France, Italy, US) influenced the current global fashion system;
- To analyze the main business strategies and business models in fashion (luxury brands, fashion designers, premium brands, fast fashion retailers);
- To understand seasonal strategies at the level of product, distribution and communication;
- To understand the peculiarities of growth strategies in fashion and design-based companies with a specific focus on brand extension.

The learning process is facilitated through stimulating teaching methods such as case histories, guest speakers and field projects, taking advantage of being located in a leading fashion center such as Milan.

This course will help me to understand how global fashion and luxury brands, many of which are based in Italy, are managed and operated. Given that Milan is Italy's fashion capital, I will be learning about how specific social, political, and economic circumstances shape the management of some of the world's most well-known fashion brands.

MB 399 (Skidmore)/IN 395 (IES): Internship Seminar

Credits: 3

This seminar aims to provide students with the theoretical tools and professional skills necessary to work effectively across cultures. By developing students' competency at cultural analysis and interpretation, communication, problem-solving, and self-reflection, the course enables students to make the most out of their international internships and equips them to excel in future intercultural settings. Through readings and lectures, class discussions and activities, a group research project, and a final paper, the seminar will exercise students' abilities to think critically about cultural values, attitudes, and practices and styles of communication, helping them become more adept at managing cross-cultural interactions and more effective at integrating into foreign cultural environments.

The first half of the course focuses on cross-cultural awareness: it explores how social, economic, and political contexts affect cultural attitudes and values by introducing students to theoretical tools for analyzing national and organizational cultures. Lessons encourage students to assess their own cultural profiles and levels of comfort with cultural differences and to perceive, contextualize, and adjust to norms and values shaping professional life in Italy (including those impacting professional relationships, communication, time management, and leadership style). The second half of the class focuses on intercultural competence: it examines specific skills that help in the effective navigation of cultural difference (e.g., intercultural communication, relationship building, and conflict management) and helps students assess their own aptitude with regard to these soft skills so as to can better market their intercultural competence and international internship experience.

This course will help me to develop an in-depth cultural appreciation and awareness of Italian societal norms, as well as how these are influenced by political and economic issues. Further, this course will aid in my ability to interact productively with people belonging to other cultures, specifically people from Italy, while working in a professional setting.

9. Brief Description of Final Project

My final project, in a written essay, will explore how Italian fashion products and design standards have been depicted in Italian media and film, with a focus on how these representations impacted Italian fashion labels' design choices. Film is an ideal medium for analyzing Italian fashion because visual media depicts fashion choices within broader storytelling narratives that speak to the cultural norms, gender norms, and symbolic meanings layered within fashion and design choices. As such, my project will examine how Italian film and media portrayed the evolution of Italian fashion from the 1960s to today. Iconic films like La Dolce Vita (1960) established an aesthetic that Italian fashion designers both responded to and shaped, moving forward. Depictions of fashion and design in other Italian films, such as The Conformist (1970) and The Family (1987), can be analyzed in relation to other important cinematic themes, such as the Roman Catholic Church, and the Italian mafia.

Ultimately, I hope to more clearly define the nature of the relationship between Italian film and Italian fashion over the last sixty years, by exploring the ways in which important features of Italian culture (such as the mafia, the Roman Catholic Church, and gender norms) have impacted Italian design standards and fashion products in both film and media. Can the depiction of fashion in Italian film be seen as a reflection of the time periods they represent, and how has it contributed to shaping the cultural identity of Italian fashion? How has Italian film explored the relationship between gender roles in fashion and religious symbolism related to the Roman Catholic Church, and what messages or themes emerge from this intersection?