

**Duke Ellington School of the Arts**  
**World Languages Department**  
**Italian I - Course Syllabus**  
**SY 2011-12**

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**Credit:** 1 Carnegie Unit

**Room:** 1  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course develops students' ability to communicate thoughts and ideas related to their identity and immediate environment in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). It emphasizes the use of basic language structures and vocabulary to promote oral communication so that students are able to function in a variety of real-world situations. To this end, lessons are based on a single theme, *My Life*, a broad enough subject that promotes discussions on various topics of interest to young adults while allowing them to explore- through cross-cultural comparison- the cultures of the Italian-speaking world, its geography and history. Upon completion of the course, students are expected to achieve the Novice Low-Mid proficiency level described in the *Proficiency Guidelines* of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Instructions to students will be given first in Italian to promote familiarity with the vocabulary and structures of the Italian language and then repeated in English to facilitate understanding. This method of instruction enables students to assimilate vocabulary related to classroom routines and procedures, words and idioms related to the theme they are learning and the proper use of syntax in the target language through repetitive usage. Moreover, great emphasis is put in this early stage of second language acquisition on students' recognition of phonemes and graphemes to facilitate respectively correct pronunciation and orthography of words in the target language. The goal of this approach is to foster students' confidence in their own ability to communicate in the target language, albeit with limitation, from the moment they are introduced to it. Within this methodological context, the course provides students with multifaceted opportunities to accomplish the goals outlined below.

**COURSE GOALS:**

**Students will...**

- Respond to and give oral directions and commands and make routine requests in the classroom and in public places;
- Understand and use appropriate forms of address in courtesy expressions and talk about daily routines and events;
- Ask and answer simple questions and participate in brief guided conversations related to their needs and interests;
- Read isolated words and phrases in a situational context, such as menus, signs, and schedules;
- Comprehend brief written directions and information;
- Read short narrative texts and poems on simple topics; and

- Write familiar words and phrases in appropriate contexts and respond in writing to various stimuli.

**Additionally, students will learn:**

- About nonverbal communication, such as gestures and body language;
- About the use of circumlocution to express themselves with a limited vocabulary;
- About awareness of current events in the culture;
- The major holidays and geographical features of the countries being studied;
- Greeting and leave taking behaviors in a variety of social situations;
- The appropriate way to respond to introductions and use courtesy behaviors; and
- Appropriate etiquette in a variety of social settings.

**TOPICS USED TO MAXIMIZE VOCABULARY AND CULTURE:**

The following theme, topics and related sub-topics will be emphasized to maximize the acquisition of vocabulary and the appropriate use of grammatical structures.

**Theme:** My Life

**Topics/Subtopics:** greetings and introductions, expressing likes and dislikes, school and schedules; leisure and sports; weather and seasons; food; health, family celebrations, traditional festivities; house layout, inside the house; family life; family chores; neighborhood and town places, things to do in the community; and frequently used means of transportation.

**GRAMMAR**

Students will be introduced to the level 1 grammar specifications endorsed by the American Association of Teachers of Italian in the context of selected readings.

Emphasis will be placed on identifying the parts of speech before presenting to students the grammatical structures of the Italian language.

**ALSO...**

Emphasis will be placed on correct pronunciation and spelling of words. This is particularly important considering that many students belong to the Vocal Department.

**MATERIALS TO BRING TO CLASS EVERY TIME**

- textbook Oggi in Italia
- any photocopy distributed in class
- a separate composition book for this course
- a binder to collect any corrected homework and photocopies
- two pens, or two pencils, or a pen and a pencil
- 3x5 note cards. These will be used to make flashcards of the vocabulary learnt in class
- a pocket dictionary and a verb book (strongly recommended)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS: every student will be required**

- to maintain a composition book to write notes during class

- to maintain a binder into which all papers given and produced in class will be placed to record achievement and for future reference. Never turn in work on paper torn from a spiral notebook. It will not be accepted
- to do all written work in pencil or pen with blue or black ink. NO other colors will be accepted (only exception: creative activities or personal note-taking)
- to bring materials to each class, unless otherwise specified
- to attend classes on a regular basis and to arrive in class on time
- to participate fully in all classroom activities
- to display behavior that enables the student and his/her classmates to learn. Respect is expected of all students. Students will treat each other with respect and consideration at all times. Cell phones, iPods, MP3s, pagers, hats, sunglasses, gum, food and drinks (with exception of water) are not allowed. Fundraising activities like selling candy- and other items- is unacceptable. All electronic devices have to be tucked away in a bag or backpack, or even better they have to be left in the lockers
- to turn in all homework assignments on time in order to be prepared for the next stage of learning and in order to alert the teacher when extra help is needed. The homework assignments will be printed on a paper placed on one of the classroom walls. If a student misses a class, for whatever reason, it is his his/her responsibility to make up all missed assignments. The assignments will be due within two lessons after the student's return to class. Homework due on the day of the absence will be checked immediately upon the return to class. Homework prepared during the lessons will not be accepted.

As a general rule, homework is due when the teacher asks for it; overdue homework will be corrected, but will receive no credit

I also want to remind students that the classroom is to be considered a learning environment at all times. Sleeping, chatting, passing notes, reading of any material not related to the lesson, doing homework, combing or brushing one's hair, walking around the classroom, dancing, applying make up, shouting, going out of the classroom without the teacher's approval, etc., are all unacceptable behaviors, which will have to be disciplined first by a verbal warning, then by a written warning, then by contacting the parent/guardian and finally by scheduling a parent conference.

### **GRADE DISTRIBUTION/SCALE AND GRADING POLICY:**

Classroom participation will impact students' grade percentage dramatically (see course requirements above). Grades will be recorded to reflect the grading scale in the Community Handbook.

The grade percentage will be distributed as follows:

- Tests and quizzes will constitute **40%** of the grade
- Homework, projects will be worth **25%** of the grade
- Classroom participation (which is affected in part by attendance and classroom behavior) will constitute **25%** of the grade
- Composition book and binder will be worth **10%** of the grade

Note: in order to receive a top score the composition book and the binder will have to be maintained in an orderly way and will have to contain all the distributed materials, the notes, the class assignments, and the corrected homework

Grades will be lowered for unexcused tardiness and absences.

## APPROACHES TO REALIZE THE GOALS OF THE COURSE

To realize the goals set forth above the following methods will be used to help students achieve their potential. They will:

- Work on oral and written exercises in the classroom.
- Practice listening comprehension as teacher models correct pronunciation.
- Participate in educational games that reinforce lessons on particular topics, including structures and vocabulary.
- Take dictations to improve listening comprehension and use of acquired vocabulary.
- Learn how to use an Italian dictionary.
- Read short literary passages, plays, poems and stories in Italian as many times as necessary without the help of a dictionary and when they are finished they will be asked to write down everything they remember from the text in English. This method of testing comprehension provides the teacher student generated data for future lesson plans that address the cultural, conceptual and grammatical features that seem to interfere with comprehension.
- Write short compositions both in English and Italian on assigned topics.
- Listen to songs in Italian to improve both the pronunciation and the listening comprehension.
- Watch documentary films about Italy and other selected films that bring to life the Italian culture in all its diversity.

## TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Students' use of technology will be encouraged for the following activities:

1. Use of the Internet for practicing pronunciation, learning vocabulary and looking up word definitions on Web dictionaries.
2. Research a historical person, a city, a historical monument, a region, fashion, cuisine, a holiday, and so on.
3. Listen to real time audio from an Italian area.
4. Research the weather in various Italian areas.
5. Research the exchange rates of the U.S. Dollar versus the Euro.
6. Study current events or situations using web resources.
7. Study traditions and customs surrounding Italian holidays.

## CONTENT STANDARDS:

### Communication:

**1.1:** Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

**1.2:** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

**1.3:** Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

### Cultures:

- 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied
- 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied

**Connections:**

- 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language
- 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures

**Comparisons:**

- 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own
- 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

**Communities:**

- 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting
- 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Learning is a team effort involving the teacher, the student, and the parents/guardians. Each member of the team has a part to play. In particular, the student's role is to come to class prepared to learn each day. Being ready includes – studying the material covered, looking over notes, doing homework, having appropriate supplies for class, and having a learning attitude.

If you start to get behind in your studies, try to catch up by asking questions! Start with your classmates, those who have figured out the topic are often your best resource. If no one can help you, I will be available for help during lunch, provided that you inform me about your needs and that you show up punctual.

**PARENTAL ROLE:**

As stated above, learning is a team effort. The parents/guardians have a crucial role in this team. Give your child support by providing a consistent, quiet time and a place to study. This will help your student succeed.

Your child will have homework from me almost every time. In the event that your child will be absent from class, please notify me as soon as possible. If I am given enough warning, I will try to have assignments ready.

Encourage your student to always do his/her best. A foreign language might be a challenge for some kids. I understand and recognize this, but hard work and a willingness to learn will make this a good year for all of us.