This course is dedicated to a close reading of the two major novels of Carlo Emilio Gadda, the great neurotic polymath often referred to as “the Italian James Joyce”:

La cognizione del dolore (serialized between 1938-1941 in Letteratura, then published by Einaudi in 1963) and Quer pasticciaccio brutto de’ via Merulana (serialized in Letteratura between 1944-1946, then published by Garzanti in 1957).

Our study of these novels will be supplemented by discussions of theoretical approaches elicited by his writing—particularly new materialism, science studies, and psychoanalysis. We will conclude with a study of the “Nipotini dell’Ingegnere”—those named by Alberto Arbasino in his influential essay of that title (Abarsino, Testori, and Pasolini); as well as writers of the Neo-Avant-Garde who sought to continue Gadda’s legacy by emulating his famously “baroque” style marked by wild digressions and the extensive use of regional dialects.

Reading knowledge of Italian is required. Class discussion will be conducted in English; Readings will be in English and Italian.