Genre bending and cross-contamination of styles have been main features of the dramatic arts in Italy since the Renaissance. A kaleidoscopic model for the development of theater across and beyond Europe, the “Italian stage,” with its many faces, has produced a variety of forms that have shaped the notions of drama and theater far beyond the geographical boundaries of Italy, while also triggering productive exchanges with other theatrical traditions. Moving from the canonization of the classical dramatic genres within the classicist frame of the Renaissance, this course explores key moments in the process that, over three centuries, mixed things up. From the broad European reach of the commedia dell’arte to the rise of opera and other hybrid forms of musical theater (which, for a long time, did make Europe speak Italian), through the various “reforms” of the dramatic arts pursued at the dawn of modernity, we will be studying a wide range of texts, always focusing on the interplay between the written sources and their performative lives. Combining close-reading with careful consideration of performance practice as crucial to processes of dissemination and reception, the course will consider Italian theater between 1600 and 1900 through a comparative lens. Sources will be made available both in the original and in English translation.