Italy may have politically unified as a nation-state in 1861, but it has never been monolithic. From even before this unification, the Italian nation-building project attempted to create a shared and dominant standard language at the expense of Italy’s characteristic linguistic diversity. Despite the successes of television and universal education to spread “standard Italian,” Italy is still home to a rich array of languages. Even more today, in the age of migration, the project of a single national language has been interrupted and challenged by the increasing presence of residents who espouse translingual identities.

This course explores ‘translingualism’ as a source of creativity and imagination for new writers in Italian today. With readings ranging from Jhumpa Lahiri, Amara Lakhous, Igiaba Scego, Cristina Ali Farah, Carmine Abate, Helena Janeczek and many others, we explore what it means to be “from” a place and speak “a language.” These writers take from their other languages and enrich Italian with new expressions, poetic forms, and imaginaries. They are able to narrate Italy with fresh eyes and tongues. Conducted in Italian.