

# The Italian Immigrant Experience in the United States

Prof. Marcella Bencivenni

Mondays/Wednesdays 11-12:15

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, Library (Room 203)

This course will introduce students to the history, culture and contributions of the fourth largest European ethnic group in the United States: the Italian Americans. Interdisciplinary in nature, the syllabus integrates historical, literary and audiovisual sources to promote a holistic understanding of the Italian immigrant experience as part of a global labor diaspora that from 1870 on has propelled some twenty-six million people out of Italy. The scope is intentionally broad; the topics that will be explored cover different dimensions of Italian American cultural, political and social life from the late nineteenth century to the present, such as arrival and settlement, community and family life, women's roles, labor, discrimination, ethnic identity formation, and incorporation into American society. Emphasis will be placed on the multidimensional and transnational character of Italian immigration, with a particular focus on questions of class, gender and race.



The study of Italian immigration will also be placed within the larger context of American immigration, highlighting the contradictions characterizing the migratory experience and its complexity, and showing how external and internal pressures—social, economic and political conditions, racialization, and cultural factors—all influenced the construction over time of a multicultural and diverse American society with different and complex ethnic and hyphenated identities.



Conducted in English.