

# AP<sup>®</sup> Italian Language and Culture

## Sample Syllabus 3

### Course Overview

Students meet two or three times a week for 77 minutes per class. The course is divided into two semesters, two quarters for each semester. The four skills and culture are integrated throughout the four quarters. The school does not have a language laboratory so the interactive and receptive oral communication skills are performed in class with the use of a computer or CD/tape player. The class is conducted entirely in Italian so that students' receptive and productive communication skills are constantly developed. [C4, C5]

### Content and Materials

#### First and Second Quarters

##### Unit 1

- Selections from *Tempi Moderni*
- Civilization sections from *Primo Libro* (Amsco) [C9]
- Schaum's *Outline of Italian Vocabulary* workbook
- Role-playing activities among peers using the informal register
- Listening to native-speaker interviews

##### Unit 2

- Weekly diaries
- Schaum's *Outline of Italian Grammar* workbook
- Class debates on selected topics
- Pen pals (**emails to an Italian student in the informal register**) [C8]
- Taped broadcasts from RAI TV

##### Unit 3

- *Stanno Tutti Bene* (film)
- *Cinema Paradiso* (film)
- Articles from Italian newspapers: *Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, and *La Nazione*
- Taped TV advertisements from RAI
- Articles from Italian magazines: *Panorama* and *Epoca* [C3, C5, C6, C9]

**C4**—The teacher uses Italian almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.

**C5**—Instructional materials include a variety of authentic, audio, and/or video recordings that develop students' listening abilities at the Intermediate High level.

**C9**—The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

**C8**—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write Interpersonal and Presentational texts in Italian.

**C3**—In addition to **communication**, the course also addresses the Standards' other four goals: **cultural** competence, **connections** to other school disciplines, **comparisons** between Italian language and culture and those of the learners, and the use of the language within the broader **communities** beyond the traditional school environment.

**C6**—Instructional materials include a variety of written texts, such as newspapers and magazine articles, literary texts, and other authentic writings that develop students' Interpretive reading abilities at the Intermediate High level.

#### Unit 4

- Written texts on history, music, art, geography, and culinary art from *Primo Libro* and *In Italia*
- Information from movies and literature pieces, and national exams
- Selected articles on Italian lifestyles from *Bar Italia*

#### Unit 5

- *Ace the AP Italian Exam* workbook

### Third and Fourth Quarters

#### Unit 1

- Selections from *Racconti romani* by Alberto Moravia
- Civilization Sections from *Primo Libro*
- Schaum's *Outline of Italian Vocabulary* workbook
- Role-play activities among formal identities using the formal register
- Listening to native-speaker interviews

#### Unit 2

- Weekly diaries
- Schaum's *Outline of Italian Grammar* workbook
- Selected topics
- Pen pals through Internet (emails to an Italian teacher in the formal register)
- Taped broadcasts from RAI TV

#### Unit 3

- *Il Postino* (film)
- *La Vita è Bella* (film) [C5, C9]
- Tapes from National Italian Examinations
- Articles from Italian newspapers: *Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, and *La Nazione*
- Taped TV advertisements from RAI
- Articles from Italian magazines: *Panorama* and *Epoca*

**C5**—Instructional materials include a variety of authentic, audio, and/or video recordings that develop students' listening abilities at the Intermediate High level.

**C9**—The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

## Unit 4

- Selections in Italian on history, music, art, geography, culinary art from *Primo Libro* and *In Italia*
- Films and literary works [C6, C9, C10]
- Selected articles on Italian lifestyles from *Bar Italia*

## Unit 5

- *Ace the AP Italian Exam* workbook

## Sample Student Activities

### Weekly Diaries

Once a week, students hand in an entry, written in Italian, that addresses an assigned or self-selected topic. I use these diaries similarly to response journals, in that I respond to each of their entries with a series of follow-up questions that they are required to respond to. In this way, each student is given the opportunity to engage in interpersonal writing on a regular basis. Many of these dialogues continue well beyond the week in which they began. [C2, C8, C10]

**C6**—Instructional materials include a variety of written texts, such as newspapers and magazine articles, literary texts, and other authentic writings that develop students' Interpretive reading abilities at the Intermediate High level.

**C9**—The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

**C10**—The course provides students with frequent opportunities to interpret and utilize a variety of formal and informal registers across skills.

**C2**—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Italian proficiency across the three communicative modes—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (Standards). (For Standards descriptions, see the Standards Executive Summary.)

**C8**—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write Interpersonal and Presentational texts in Italian.

## Films

Students watch one film, without subtitles, per quarter. [C2, C3, C10]

The first 15 minutes of each film are shown *three* times. I call these “three observations.” For each observation, students receive a worksheet to complete while they are watching the movie. This three-observation approach provides remarkable opportunities for class discussions.

**Observation 1:** There are two tasks for the students to complete. They are asked to (1) jot down any information about the film that they feel is significant [C2, C8] and (2) guess the theme of the film. I collect their work and compile their suggestions for the next day. As a class, we discuss the material [C2, C7] to make sure each student has an accurate understanding of the story line.

**Observation 2:** Students respond to 10 specific questions about the film. Again, I compile their answers, and on the next day we discuss their ideas, suggestions, or opinions as a class to make sure each student is aware of what the film is about. [C2, C8] Their work can be set up as true/false statements.

**Observation 3:** Students complete another worksheet of 10 very different questions, several of which ask the students to consider how Italian cultural perspectives drive the characters’ behaviors, or to consider how the story might be different if it were occurring in the United States. By this time, they have a clear understanding of the main characters and what may occur. They have also become interested in the film on several levels. [C3]

After the third observation, students receive a packet on the film consisting of a synopsis in Italian, a list of idiomatic expressions (optional), and a lengthy list of vocabulary words, including nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The packet is divided into five parts, with the film divided into five corresponding segments. Each part of the packet has a list of detailed questions about its segment of the film. Students watch a segment in class and answer questions for homework.

During class, after forming a circle, students express themselves in a variety of ways, [C7] from simple to complex. They learn how to agree and disagree with each other in a second language.

The purpose of integrating films in the AP curriculum is to expose all students to different cultures; to help them understand the importance of making comparisons to promote languages and cultures by having the students share the information about each film with the class and, most importantly, to give them a variety of topics on which to write or about which to have a class discussion in the target language.

### Teaching Elementary School Students

All students enrolled in the class are given the opportunity to teach the basics of the Italian language to several elementary school children for a period of eight weeks. [C2, C3, C7, C10] Students teach once a week, with a partner or individually. They plan their lessons at home two to three weeks prior to this activity. I review all lessons before the students present their lessons to the children. This activity solidifies the students’ understanding and knowledge of the basic language and forges an important interdisciplinary connection with the field of foreign language pedagogy.

**C2**—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Italian proficiency across the three communicative modes—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (Standards). (For Standards descriptions, see the Standards Executive Summary.)

**C3**—In addition to **communication**, the course also addresses the Standards’ other four goals: **cultural** competence, **connections** to other school disciplines, **comparisons** between Italian language and culture and those of the learners, and the use of the language within the broader **communities** beyond the traditional school environment.

**C10**—The course provides students with frequent opportunities to interpret and utilize a variety of formal and informal registers across skills.

**C8**—The course provides instruction and frequent opportunities to organize and write Interpersonal and Presentational texts in Italian.

**C7**—The course provides students with frequent opportunities, in class or in a language laboratory, to practice their Interpersonal and Presentational speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, and registers.

Through this experience outside of the regular classroom, they teach the words for days of the week, months, colors, numbers, fruits and vegetables, dates, common expressions, time of day, weather, holidays, and so on. This is an amazing life-learning activity for all students. In fact, several of the students have decided to become teachers because of this experience. [C3]

## Culture

The Civilization section in *Primo Libro* is divided into 10 sections: nine are lessons, and one is a review of those lessons. The information is distributed to the students in Italian. I prefer having the packet in English and discussing the information in Italian. This packet is meant to help students learn cultural aspects straightforwardly and then be able to communicate those aspects in their second language.

Each of the films introduces students to a broad variety of cultural topics. [C5, C9] At the end of each film, students work on a cultural project and present the information to the class. Examples of projects include discussions of operas, composers, geography, political differences, family life, and historical periods. At the end of the course, students can compare and contrast various behaviors, attitudes, and values that reflect the culture.

Once a week students pair up and use “culture cards” to ask and answer each question. Answers are on the back side of each card. I observe their active participation.

## Supplementary Activities

- Once a month students play Scrabble in Italian.
- Once or twice a month students learn an Italian song.
- Students role-play scenes that require formal and informal registers in a broad variety of situations/settings.
- Role-play presentations are videotaped so that at the end of the year students can assess their progress.
- Each student prepares and teaches one or two Italian grammar lessons a year to the rest of the class.
- Students participate in storytelling on any topic. [C2, C7]
- Students prepare themselves for the AP Italian Exam by completing the exercises in the *Ace the AP Italian Exam* workbook and by practicing the free-response tasks in a timed format.

**C3**—In addition to **communication**, the course also addresses the Standards’ other four goals: **cultural** competence, **connections** to other school disciplines, **comparisons** between Italian language and culture and those of the learners, and the use of the language within the broader **communities** beyond the traditional school environment.

**C5**—Instructional materials include a variety of authentic, audio, and/or video recordings that develop students’ listening abilities at the Intermediate High level.

**C9**—The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

**C2**—The course prepares students to demonstrate their level of Italian proficiency across the three communicative modes—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—and as articulated in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (Standards). (For Standards descriptions, see the Standards Executive Summary.)

**C7**—The course provides students with frequent opportunities, in class or in a language laboratory, to practice their Interpersonal and Presentational speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, and registers.

## Student Evaluation

Weekly quizzes ..... 20%

Quizzes on vocabulary and grammar take their lead directly from the cultural texts used during the week, [C11] and are given in a variety of formats including cloze, matching, English-to-Italian, Italian-to-English, and open-ended questions. The purpose is to introduce as many vocabulary words as possible so that students do better on the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam.

Tests ..... 30%

All end-of-unit tests include sections on listening, reading, and writing. Students conduct speaking sections of the tests on an individual basis with the instructor to assess oral proficiency. These, too, are closely linked to the cultural content contained in whatever is being read or viewed at the time.

Diaries..... 10%

Students receive a weekly grade based on the conceptual understanding they exhibit in their writing, both in their original drafts and in our ongoing dialogues. A rubric for these diaries is presented to students at the beginning of the course. [C11] **Through these projects students will make connections between Italian and other disciplines. For example, they may choose a discipline and present to the class how it relates to Italian or they may present an interdisciplinary lesson to the class combining Italian with another discipline.**

Projects ..... 10%

Quarterly projects are assigned on operas, composers, geography, historical events, family life, poems on love (after watching *Il Postino*), writers, artists, and political differences. [C9]

Class Participation ..... 20%

Homework..... 10%

## Teacher Resources

Bonaffini, Luigi, Conrad Schmitt, and Fiorenza Clark. *Schaum's Outline of Italian Vocabulary*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.

This workbook can be used to review or expand students' vocabulary. It helps students develop vocabulary needed to converse effectively in Italian about everyday topics. Two or three lessons per quarter are selected in order to expose students to as many new words and idioms as possible.

Boyle, Bruna P. *Ace the AP Italian Exam*. New York: Edizioni Farinelli, 2006.

This workbook helps students prepare for the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam. It contains 10 practice exercises of each component on the AP Exam: listening, reading, writing, culture, and speaking. The order of each component is exactly the way the students will encounter it on the AP Exam.

Chelotti Burney, Anna. *Tempi Moderni*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1982.

This textbook contains literary works that deal with some of the contemporary issues Italy faces today ("La Torre," "Pantomima," and

**C11**—Assessments are frequent, varied, and explicitly linked to the Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational modes. Prior to assigning an assessment task, teachers share with their students the criteria against which their performances will be evaluated.

**C9**—The course frequently integrates Italian cultural topics, including geography, contemporary life, arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.

“Esami di Maturità”). It also includes numerous exercises that allow students to practice their comprehension ability, review verb tenses and prepositions, and acquire new vocabulary words.

Germano, Joseph E., and Conrad J. Schmitt. *Schaum's Outline of Italian Grammar*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

This workbook can be used to engage students in a thorough review of grammar from Levels I, II, and III and expose them to finer grammatical concepts.

Gimondo, Angelo. *Primo Libro/Italian First Year*. New York: Amsco Publications, 2002.

Students complete all grammar exercises and all review sections. The civilization section is useful for helping students learn or review material about geography, art, history, writers, explorers, sculptors, and scientists from different periods of time; culinary and musical terms; and Italy's education system.

Moravia, Alberto. *Racconti romani*. Milano: Tascabili Bompiani, 1977.

These short stories are useful for helping students further develop their reading comprehension and speaking skills. They read a story at home and, as a class, discuss it, summarize it orally or in writing, or simply answer questions based on the material. Often students receive lists of words, taken from the story, to focus on.

### **Supplementary Resources**

Di Francesco, Annamaria and Ciro Massimo Naddeo. *Bar Italia: Articoli sulla vita italiana per leggere, parlare, scrivere*. Firenze: Alma Edizioni, 2002.

*Italia & Italia*. Firenze: edizioni La Certosa 1994, (selected articles)

Italiano, Francesca and Irene Marchegiani. *Crescendo!* Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2007.

Lucas, Ceil. “Italia Contemporanea: Conversations with Native Speakers. New Haven” Yale University Press, 2001.

Martina, Graziella and Pagliarulo, Antonia. *In Italia*. Stuggart: Chancercel International, 2004.

Moneti, Annamaria and Gaziana Lazzarino. *Da capo*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2007.

Naddeo, Ciro Massimo and Giuliana Trama. *Canta che ti passa*. Firenze: Alma Edizioni, 2000.

Tognozzi, Elissa and Giuseppe Cavatorta. *Ponti*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

## **Listening/Speaking Materials (Films)**

*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*

*Il Postino*

*La vita è bella*

*Stanno Tutti Bene*

## **Websites**

[www.corriere.it](http://www.corriere.it)

[www.lanazione.quotidiano.net](http://www.lanazione.quotidiano.net)

[www.lastampa.it](http://www.lastampa.it)

[www.garzantilinguistica.it](http://www.garzantilinguistica.it)

[www.linguaitaliana.rai.it](http://www.linguaitaliana.rai.it)

[www.raiclick.rai.it](http://www.raiclick.rai.it)

[www.raiinternational.rai.it](http://www.raiinternational.rai.it)

[www.mediaset.it](http://www.mediaset.it)

[www.radioitalia.it](http://www.radioitalia.it)

## **National Italian Examinations**

Sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of Italian, the National Italian Examinations are administered annually to all participating high school students. There are four levels of examinations, corresponding to the four levels of course work in a fully developed high school Italian curriculum. AP Italian students practice the released fourth-level exams during extra tutoring sessions after school.

Each exam assesses listening, writing, and reading skills as well as some cultural knowledge.