

ITAL 204

Intermediate Italian

General Description

Introduction

In ITAL 101 through ITAL 203 you learned the essentials of the Italian language: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension. ITAL 204 is an advanced-intermediate Italian course that reviews and deepens the linguistic knowledge developed in the earlier courses. The course is organized around cultural topics, and the exercises that make up the lessons are designed to develop fluency. You will work on select areas of Italian grammar, and you will be expected to use the fundamentals of Italian grammar that you learned in ITAL 101–203. You will expand your vocabulary with special attention to idiomatic language, and you will continue to work on pronunciation. You will write essays for each lesson, which will allow you to integrate lexical and grammatical points covered in the chapters. The writing is always contextualized within the themes of the chapter. As you progress through the course, you should find yourself able to communicate more and more with the proficiency of a native speaker.

Required Materials

- Capek-Habeković, Romana and Claudio Mazzola, *A vicenda: Cultura*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009.
- A cassette recorder (regular or mini) and a set of blank audiocassette tapes to use with it.
- A good Italian/English dictionary. I recommend *Webster's New World Italian Dictionary* or, if you have access to the Internet, *Garzanti* (www.garzantilinguistica.it).

You may purchase *A vicenda: Cultura* from Friday Center Books & Gifts by using the book order form in this manual or by ordering online at <https://itsapps.unc.edu/fcbooks>.

Organization of Lessons

There are eighteen lessons in this course. You may submit one lesson at a time or more than one at a time, up to a total of four lessons per two-week period. Sixteen of the lessons introduce new material from your textbook, while two are review lessons, including the final lesson (Lesson 18), which you may use as a mock exam. Each lesson requires the submission of four or five assignments that include a grammar exercise, a vocabulary exercise, a recording or a reading comprehension exercise, and an essay. When you come across an exercise that will be submitted for grading, it will be preceded by a star (*). As a reminder, assignments to be submitted are listed again in the *Da fare* section at the end of each lesson.

Lesson subheadings include the following (not every lesson will have the same subheadings):

Per cominciare: Every other lesson begins with a warmer (*per cominciare* means “to begin”), a brief exercise that introduces you to the theme of the assigned chapter from your textbook. These themes include family, young people, food, immigration, fashion, and film. This section gives you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with (or to review) vocabulary relevant to reading or writing about such themes. ***Do not submit the Per cominciare exercise for grading.***

Lettura culturale: Every other lesson contains a reading (*lettura*) from *A vicenda* on the theme of the chapter. Before beginning these readings, you should consult the word bank in the text (just before the reading), as well as the supplemental word bank offered in the course manual.

Comprensione: In this exercise, you will answer questions on the cultural reading or on issues suggested by the reading.

Pronuncia: Every other lesson contains a pronunciation exercise (which alternates with the *lettura/comprensione* section). For this exercise, you will be asked to read aloud and record an excerpt from the text that you read for the preceding lesson.

Vocabolario: In each lesson, you will learn a list of idiomatic vocabulary. For example, idioms used with certain

prepositions, such as *a, di, da*, and so on, or idioms used with certain verbs—*andare, fare, avere*, and so on. After reading over and studying this vocabulary, you will be asked to do a written exercise in which you use some of the new terms.

Sintassi: This section reviews or deepens your knowledge of an element of Italian syntax (grammar). Such elements include past tenses, impersonal verbs like *piacere*, the subjunctive, indirect discourse, and the passive. After reading a brief explanation of the topic under review, you will do an exercise in which you show your understanding.

Espansione: The final segment of each lesson will be an essay in which you will be asked to integrate the cultural, lexical and grammatical knowledge of the chapter.

Da fare: At the end of each lesson you will find a list of all of the exercises *da fare* (“to do”) that you must submit to your instructor for grading. You will have already come across all of these in the lesson, each preceded by a star (*).

How to Approach This Course

Learning a language independently can be deeply gratifying, but there are challenges to this endeavor as well. Following are some tips for good study practices and for achieving a confident attitude towards your goal of linguistic mastery.

Dedicate yourself to conceptual understanding and memorization at the same time.

For the most part, Italian grammar is straightforward and easy to grasp; however there are a few concepts that are difficult for English speakers, because they function very differently in the two languages. It’s a good idea to read the explanations of new grammar offered in this course manual very attentively. Study the examples, and if you have any questions, contact your instructor immediately.

There is also a large amount of detailed information (for example, vocabulary, verb conjugations, and so on) that is not conceptually difficult but demands a good system of memorization. You should identify a system of memorization

that works best for you and should use it from the first lesson on. Many students find it helpful to make flashcards, and although this might seem like a big investment of time up front, it is a great way to streamline your studies in the long run. Having a stack of cards that you can peruse while waiting for the bus, taking a coffee break, or getting dinner ready, will put you ahead on the learning curve. Whatever method you find for learning all these details, do not delay! If you wait until the week before the final exam to start your memorization, you may feel very stressed and may not be happy with your performance on the final.

Use a good dictionary wisely.

Although each chapter provides you with a list of words relevant to mastering its grammatical and thematic content, you will frequently need to look up new words that come up in your reading, or even more commonly, words that you need in order to express an idea in an essay. *Webster's New World Italian Dictionary* is recommended or, if you have access to the Internet, *Garzanti* (www.garzantilinguistica.it). Use your dictionary carefully. It's always a good idea to look at all the definitions provided for any one word, together with the examples. This will help you achieve a higher degree of fluency and will help your instructor understand you.

Keep a vocabulary notebook.

As you learn new vocabulary (from outside of your textbook), keep a list of your new words in a small journal that you can study regularly. You will find that through reading and listening exercises and through regular use of your dictionary, your vocabulary, especially your idiomatic vocabulary, will grow impressively. Jotting down these new words and expressions will help you retain them and will enhance your fluency even more.

Work consistently and don't rush a deadline.

You are advised to think carefully about your timetable for finishing the course *before* you begin it. There is a limit to the number of lessons you may turn in during a two-week period

(four), and it is rare that the instructor will agree to an exception to this rule. Further, it is really important for you to leave yourself sufficient time to prepare for the final. Given the fact that the final is worth so much of your grade (40 percent) and that passing the final exam is required in order to pass the course, it is extremely important that you do not take the final exam before you are ready.

Most students rely on their books and notes when completing assignments, but these may not be true assessments of your mastery of course content. If you want to get a better sense of your strengths and weaknesses with new material, try doing a first draft of each written assignment without your notes. You can then correct yourself using the text and submit a clean version for grading.

Keep in touch with your instructor.

Never feel that any question is too easy, difficult, silly, redundant, or irrelevant to ask. If you are confused by a concept or confused by the instructions of a given exercise, do not let this confusion delay your progress in the course; contact your instructor right away to ask for clarification, so that you can finish your lesson and advance towards your goal.

Honor Code

When completing your work, you must comply with the UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Code. (If you have Internet access, see honor.unc.edu.) You are expected to do your own work in all aspects of your course. This means that when doing assignments, including writing essays, you should work alone. You should not seek help from friends, relatives, tutors, or online translators. Any failure to respect this policy will be reported to the Office of the Honor System.

Grade Distribution and Final Exam

You will receive a letter grade on each lesson that corresponds roughly to the following numbers:

A+ → 100 A → 95 A- → 90
B+ → 88 B → 85 B- → 80

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C+ → 78 C → 75 C- → 70
D+ → 68 D → 65 D- → 60 F → below 60

Your eighteen lesson grades will be averaged to form a number that is worth 60 percent of your final grade. The remaining 40 percent will come from the grade you receive on the final exam. As you know, you must pass a supervised final exam (which is cumulative), in order to pass the course and to receive credit for it.

Course Evaluation

Please complete a course evaluation form when you finish your course or otherwise end your enrollment. A course evaluation form can be found near the end of this manual; a copy of the form will also be provided when you take your final exam. If you would prefer to complete your evaluation online, visit <https://itsapps.unc.edu/CPPEval>. You will need to enter your PID in order to access the online evaluation form.