

COMMUNICATING THROUGH THE ARTS: LESSONS FOR MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Proceedings from Symposium: June 15-21, 2012

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Emory University

Italian Studies Symposium

2012 Symposium

***Communicating Through the Arts:
Lessons for Medicine and Public Health***

June 15-21, 2012

Paestum, Caserta, and Matera, Italy

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Italian Studies Summer Abroad Course Program Director

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Professor of Summer Course “Medicine and Compassion”

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School of Medicine, Department of Religion
Professor of Summer Course “Healing and the Healer:
Religion, Ethics, and Compassion”



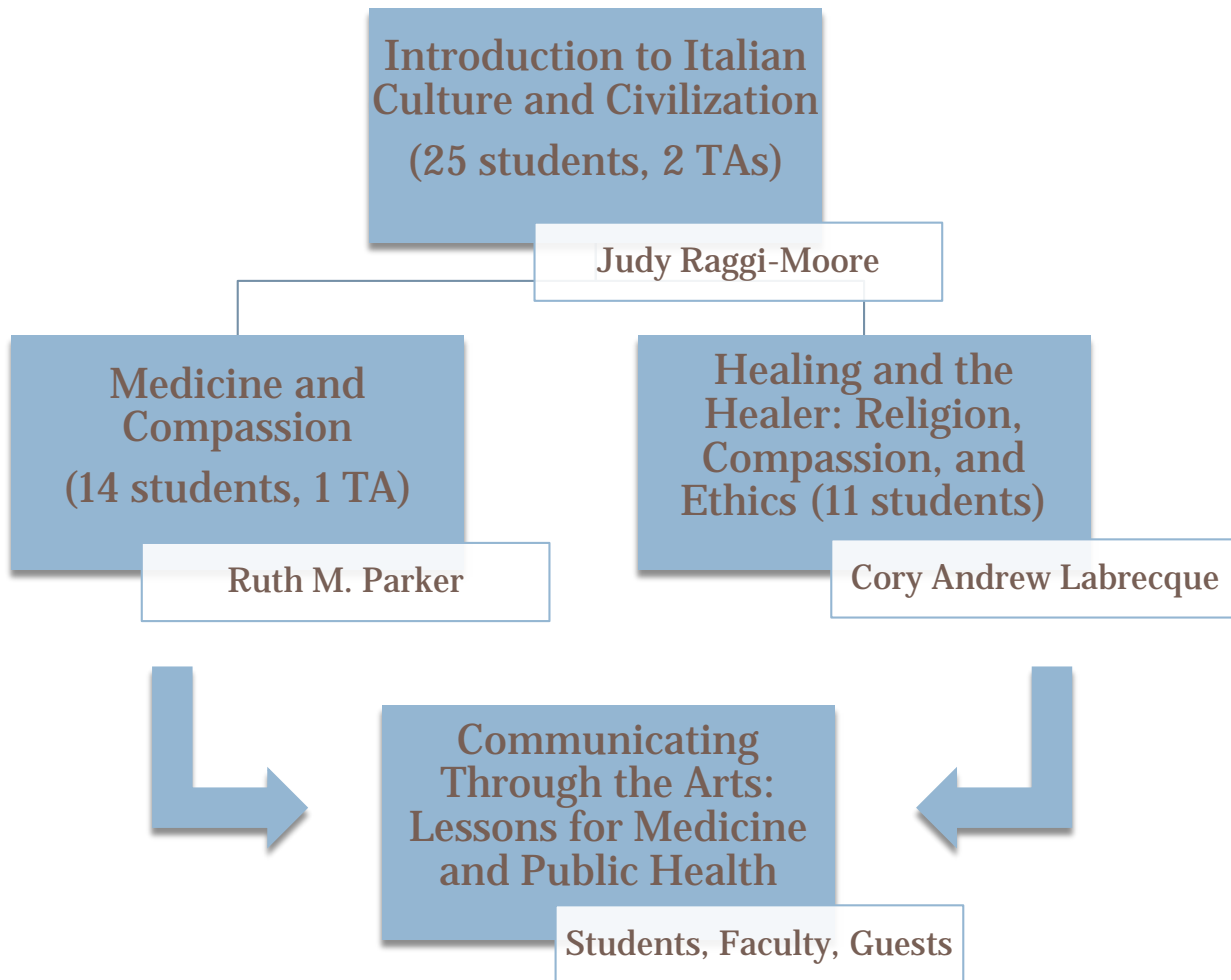
L'arte rinnova i popoli e ne rivela la vita.

“Art renews a people and reveals their way of life.”
Teatro Massimo: Palermo, Sicily

Objectives

- Explore concepts:
 - ▣ death, dying, suffering
 - ▣ compassion, communication
 - ▣ beauty, harmony, and balance
- Identify how and why these are important for health
- Investigate lessons that art and humanities contribute to health
- Engage in teaching and learning across disciplines, ages, and cultures

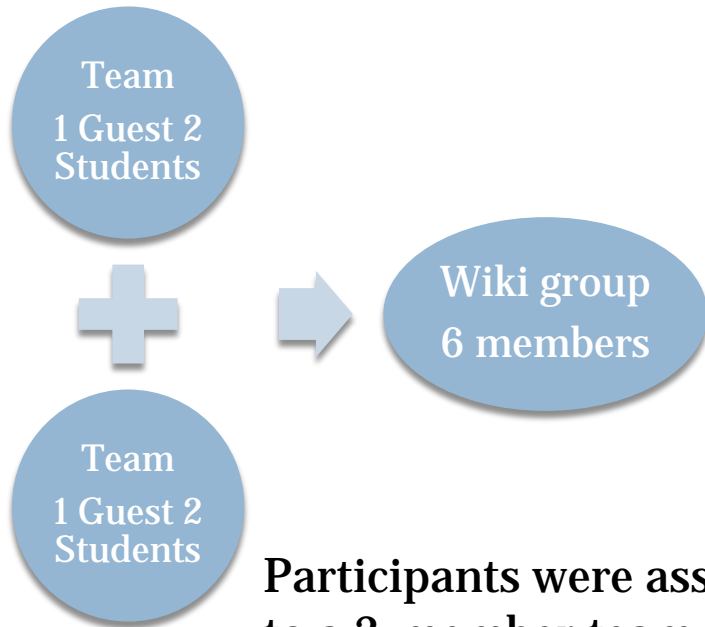
Symposium nested within existing 6-week courses



22 guests from medicine, public health, religion, basic sciences, the humanities, and the arts arrived during the 5th week of Emory University's Italian Studies Summer Abroad Course.

For that week, all courses were suspended and students combined with guests to reflect on three wiki themes. Guests brought only knowledge of their specialties, and students contributed knowledge and experiences of their preceding 4 weeks in Italy.

Wiki Teams and Groups



Participants were assigned to a 3-member team and a 6-member group (a combination of 2 teams) for the duration of the Symposium. In each of 3 wiki sessions, the participants discussed one of the three sets of themes and submitted a summary of their responses to the authors. Each participant discussed each theme set only once.

Wiki Themes and Report

The responses from the 6-member groups were compiled and synthesized to create the proceedings so that each member directly contributed to the report of the symposium.





Itinerary: 8am-8pm daily

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6 Symposium	Day 7
8am		Caserta Gardens	Greek Temples	Wiki 2	Tour Matera	Greeting	Depart for Rome
10a m	Bus from Rome			Ecological Farm		Lecture 3	
			Class			Lecture 4	
12p m		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lecture 5	
1pm			Lecture 2	Drive to Matera	Lecture	Lecture 6	
4pm		Faculty Meeting	Museum		Museum		
6pm	Arrive Paestum	Lecture 1	Wiki 1		Wiki 3	Dinner	

Italy

Le Regioni di Italia



A.

Beauty, Balance, Harmony

1. Beauty expresses humanity
2. Beauty as ideal: balance, harmony, symmetry, community, society
3. Manmade and natural beauty
4. Art as voice, power







Inhabited residences in Palermo, Sicily where rubble remains from WWII. The lack of maintenance reflects the community and government structure.



Lex
-sten



Questions: Beauty, Balance, Harmony

- ❑ Do fragility and vulnerability have value?
- ❑ Can art be beautiful without being aesthetically pleasing?
- ❑ Does death restore balance within a population? If so, does this make death beautiful?
- ❑ Do disharmony, disorder, and asymmetry have value? Do the arts value these things?

B.

Death, Dying, Suffering

1. Art creates a forum for discussion of difficult topics
2. Art illustrates and expresses suffering
3. Art as language, teacher

Death, The Great Equalizer, comes for peasant and royalty, alike.

Large murals initiate conversation and create a space for consideration of the death, dying, suffering depicted.

Italy was devastated by the 13th century plague. Death was all around. This mural circled the walls of a graveyard sanctuary in Pisa.





Wealthy patrons commissioned murals for public buildings, churches, and even private homes, suggesting an **omnipresence of death.**

Symposium participants contrasted this with the scarcity of fora for conversations about death in modern Western society, even in fields like medicine and public health.



Pain has an element of blank;
It cannot recollect
When it began, or if there were
A day when it was not.

It has no future but itself,
Its infinite realms contain
Its past, enlightened to perceive
New periods of pain.

- Emily Dickinson

Questions: Death, Dying, Suffering

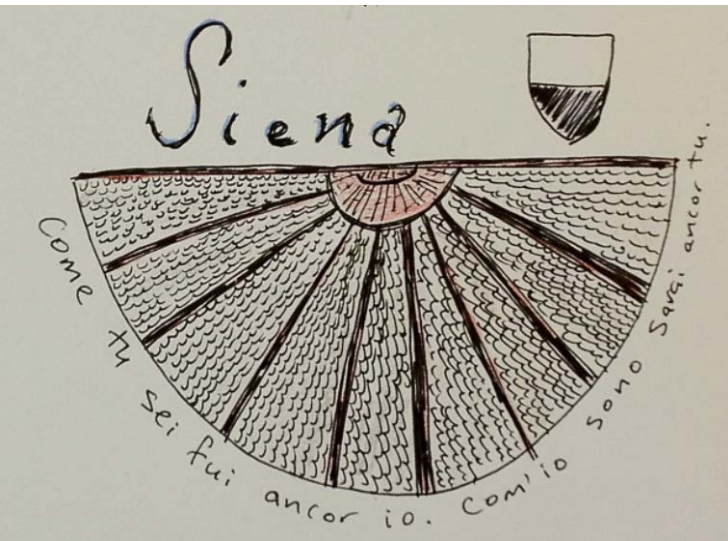
- Is suffering a prerequisite for compassion?
- Must a person know the experience of suffering in order to be compassionate?
- Does suffering have value?
- Is death an 'enemy' to be conquered?
- Does the process of dying itself elicit respect?
What is owed (if anything) to persons who are dying?
- Do/Should health care providers treat the *body* of the patient or care for the *whole person*?

C. Communication, Compassion

1. Compassion as communication
2. Confraternities: group compassion
3. Art as a way to listen, to acknowledge ambiguity



Come tu sei fui ancor io. Com'io sono sarai ancor tu.
 “What you are, I once was. What I am, you will also be.”



Entire cities were built on the premise that humans are obligated and expected to take care of each other because we all live, suffer, and die in the same way.

Symposium participants questioned whether anonymous charity organizations, confraternities, act compassionately if they refuse to be recognized for their work.



Religious and civic organizations served those in need. Orphanages and hospitals initially served those who were unable to care for themselves. Hospitals treated orphans, widows, and travelers. Mothers dropped children they were unable to care for at the 'Spedale degli Innocenti in Firenze (top left), leaving lockets in hopes of identifying their children later in life (bottom left). Members of the confraternities wore hoods to ensure anonymity of their work (top right).

“Heat has a sound. The spaces are telling you who they are. I want you to resonate in the spaces.”

—Symposium Instructor to Participants in Matera





Four layers of Matera: gravina, caves, old city, new city. Carlo Levi was willing to suffer with his patients/peasants. Was he more willing to do this because he was an artist?

Questions: Communication, Compassion

- Is there a difference between listening and hearing?
- Is there such a thing as communal suffering?
- Is suffering a pre-requisite for compassion?
- What is the difference between sympathy, empathy, compassion, and mercy? How do these different definitions impact the way we communicate?
- Is communication essential for compassion?
- Does the healthcare professional have a “duty to be compassionate” and/or a “duty to communicate?”

Reflections From Guest Faculty



[Enter question prompts]

[Enter link to video]



“The greatest travelers have not gone beyond the limits of their own world; they have trodden the paths of their own souls, of good and evil, or morality and redemption.”
- Carlo Levi *Cristo si è Fermato a Eboli*

Symposium Faculty Participants

□ Emory University

- S. Wright Caughman, MD, Executive Vice President Woodruff Health Sciences Center
- Ann D. Critz, MD Faculty Co-host (Neonatology)
- John A. Petros, MD (Urology)
- Phillip M. Thompson, PhD (Aquinas Center)
- Sarah G. Candler, MD/MPH Candidate 2013 (Symposium Manager)
- Benjamin D. DeMoss, MD (Internal Medicine Resident)
- Jonathan De Olano, MD Candidate 2013

□ Interdisciplinary Participants

- Linda C. Samuelson, PhD
- Teresa M. Petros, MD
- Alison Y. Caughman
- Stephanie Messler
- Emily Wolf
- A. Murphey Parker

□ Other Institutions

- Domenica Newell-Amato, PhD Eastern Illinois University (French, Italian)
- Rose Marie Martinez, ScD Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Science
- Michael S. Wolf, PhD, MPH Northwestern University
- Joel D. Howell, MD, PhD University of Michigan
- Donald E. Shriber, JD CDC
- JordanC. Messler, MD
- Samuel G. Candler The Cathedral of St. Philip, Atlanta, Georgia

Student Participants

- Amin Addetia
- Rana Alsiro
- Marcia Ash
- Dilser (Vanessa) Ayala
- Anna Bausum
- Angelica Calderon
- Daniel Feder
- Brian Fuller
- Rosy Gomez
- Nicholas Goodwain
- Handy Hermawan
- Andrew Jones
- Bramwel Kithuka
- James (Tyler) Lassen
- Eun Si Lee
- Emma Mustafa
- Zizhou (Justin) Nie
- Ijeoma Okafor
- Megha Penmetsa

- Tayeb Rahim
- Graham Smith
- Laurie Ann Taylor
- Nina Truong
- Dennis Valerstain

Teaching Assistants

- Amanda Chi
- Blanca Boccardo
- Rachel Postlethwait
- Salvatore Incardona

With special thanks to

- Carlo Cacciamani
- Hotel Poseidonia Mare, Paestum
- Hotel in Pietra, Matera
- Hotel Italia, Matera
- Museo Nazionale d'Arte Medievale e Moderna della Basilicata in Palazzo Lanfranchi, Matera

Resources

For More Information About the Italian Sites

- ❑ **Santa Maria della Scala (Siena)**
http://www.santamariadellascala.com/w2d3/v3/view/sms2/percorsi/luoghi/1_edifici/piani/sale--17/index.html
- ❑ **Museo Nazionale d'Arte Medievale e Moderna della Basilicata (Matera)**
http://www.basilicata.beniculturali.it/beni.php?ev=dett&id_bene=500055
- ❑ **Camposanto Monumentale (Pisa)**
<http://www.opapisa.it/en/activities/restorations/the-frescoes-in-the-cemetery.html>

For More Information About the Courses

- ❑ **Italian Studies Summer Abroad**
<http://www.italianvirtualclass.com/travel.html>
- ❑ **Medicine and Compassion**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbxIhgLEHJk>