

**Self-Determined Major Proposal**

**Name**

**Class Year**

**Cumulative GPA**

**Phone Number**

**Faculty Advisors:** Barbara Garbin & Kate Berheide

**Title**

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## **2.1 Rationale**

In an increasingly globalized society, multicultural interactions are becoming more

The Italian Studies self-determined major is based on the degree requirements of the other World Language and Literature majors at Skidmore, as well as on those for the Italian major at Middlebury College. Both of these programs include courses catering to the development of basic skills in foreign language communication and comprehension, as well as courses that explore past and present themes and issues in Italian literature, film, politics, and society. By incorporating the courses in Skidmore's Italian department with those offered in the IES Abroad Milan: Fashion, Design, and Merchandising program, I will achieve my academic goals.

Coming from a Sicilian family, I was raised with multigenerational traditions and within a specific multicultural context that kept me connected to my familial roots. However, while the relatives who raised me passed on an appreciation for the Italian language and culture, I have a deep desire to cultivate my knowledge of this and to understand my ancestry with a more enlightened perspective, especially as I pursue dual citizenship. In addition, I have a key interest in fashion, specifically shoe design. Therefore, given that Italy is a leading country in fashion design, having a deeper understanding of the language and culture would help me to excel in this field. However, I am uncertain of my post-graduate plans and may be interested in teaching as well, given that both of my parents are high-school language teachers and that I worked as an English tutor in Italian elementary schools this past summer. Regardless of the career path that I choose, I have a huge appreciation for Skidmore as an academic institution and inclusive community, and have made deep-rooted connections here, both academically and socially. Therefore, I am determined to pursue the self-determined major of Italian Studies at Skidmore



### 3. Italian Studies Major Core Classes

#### 3.1 Foundation

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
WLI 203	World Languages - Italian	Intermediate Italian (3)

#### 3.2 Methodology

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
WLIGEN (Skidmore)/ IT 351 (IES)	Italian Language Transfer Elective (Skidmore)/ Italian (IES)	Italian Language in Context: Emerging Independent Abroad II (3)
WLI 206	World Languages - Italian	Italian Language and Culture (3)
WLI 304	World Languages - Italian	Advanced Conversation and Composition
WLI 208	World Languages - Italian	Italian Conversation and Composition (4)

#### 3.3 Theory

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
WLI 363	World Languages - Italian	Special Studies in Italian (3)
MF ### (Skidmore)/ CU/LT 328 (IES)	Religion (Skidmore)/ Religion (IES)	Investigating the Mafia in Literature, Cinema and Media (3)
MF ### (Skidmore)/ FS 325 (IES)	Media and Film Studies (Skidmore)/ Film Studies (IES)	Gender in Italian Cinema (3)

#### 3.4 Other Core Courses

Course Number	Department	Title of Course (Credits)
SD 374	Self-Determined Major	Self-Determined Major Final Project Prep



## **6. Academic Semester Outline**



Third Year  
(2023-2024)

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The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of Italian cinematic history with a special focus on gender issues. The chronological trajectory will outline the transformation of Italian society, the progressive independence of Italian women, the changing relationships between sexes, and the modification of gender roles through film. The course will start with an examination of the social position of women (and men) in Italy during the Fascist regime and the immediate post-WWII period and how this is reflected in film texts. We will then look at the social impact of the so-called miracolo economico in the sixties, the influence of technology and politics in the seventies on both the individual and the couple, and conclude with an examination of film texts by contemporary Italian film directors, including Paolo Sorrentino, Ferzàn Ozpetek, Paolo Virzì and Luca Guadagnino.

### MB 351 (Skidmore)/IB 355 (IES): Managing Fashion and Luxury Companies

#### Credits: 3

The course provides an overview of the fashion system and an in-depth understanding of the strategic, organizational and managerial characteristics of fashion and design-based companies, both in the high end and in the mass market.

Brand Management in fashion and luxury industries is the art and the science of creating the ‘dream factor’: the aim is making people buy products not because they need them but because they desire them; in this way companies may achieve both an increase of the profitability and revenues in the short term and of the brand equity in the long term. The methodology behind can be successfully transferred to other industries too.

From this perspective, the course aims at providing the participants the skills for managing key business processes in fashion and luxury companies in a context undergoing a radical evolution.

Course objectives can be synthesized as follows:

- ! To get acquainted with the concepts of fashion, fashion cycle, fashion and luxury;
- ! To learn about the main landmarks in the development of fashion and luxury companies and how the greatest international designers, brands and countries (France, Italy, US) influenced the current global fashion system;
- ! To analyze the main business strategies and business models in fashion (luxury brands, fashion designers, premium brands, fast fashion retailers);
- ! To understand seasonal strategies at the level of product, distribution and communication;
- ! To understand the peculiarities of growth strategies in fashion and design-based companies with a specific focus on brand extension.

The learning process is facilitated through stimulating teaching methods such as case histories, guest speakers and field projects, taking advantage of being located in a leading fashion center such as Milan.

### MB 399 (Skidmore)/IN 395 (IES): Internship Seminar

#### Credits: 3

This seminar aims to provide students with the theoretical tools and professional skills necessary to work effectively across cultures. By developing students' competency at cultural analysis and interpretation, communication, problem-solving, and self-reflection, the course enables students to make the most out of their international internships and equips them to excel in future intercultural settings. Through readings and lectures, class discussions and activities, a group research project, and a final paper, the seminar will exercise students' abilities to think critically about cultural values, attitudes, and practices and styles of communication, helping them become more adept at managing cross-cultural interactions and more effective at integrating into foreign cultural environments.

The first half of the course focuses on cross-cultural awareness: it explores how social, economic, and political contexts affect cultural attitudes and values by introducing students to theoretical tools for analyzing national and organizational cultures. Lessons encourage students to assess their own cultural profiles and levels of comfort with cultural differences and to perceive, contextualize, and adjust to norms and values shaping professional life in Italy (including those impacting professional relationships, communication, time management, and leadership style). The second half of the class focuses on intercultural competence: it examines specific skills that help in the effective navigation of cultural difference (e.g., intercultural communication, relationship building, and conflict management) and helps students assess their own aptitude with regard to these soft skills so as to can better market their intercultural competence and international internship experience.

## **9. Brief Description of Final Project**

My final project, in a written essay, will explore how Italian fashion products and design standards have been depicted in Italian media and film, with a focus on how these representations impacted Italian fashion labels' design choices. Film is an ideal medium for analyzing Italian fashion because visual media depicts fashion choices within broader storytelling narratives that speak to the cultural norms, gender norms, and symbolic meanings layered within fashion and design choices. As such, my project will examine how Italian film and media portrayed the evolution of Italian fashion from the 1960s to today. Iconic films like *La Dolce Vita* (1960) established an aesthetic that Italian fashion designers both responded to and shaped, moving forward. Depictions of fashion and design in other Italian films, such as *The Conformist* (1970) and *The Family* (1987), can be analyzed in relation to other important cinematic themes, such as the Roman Catholic Church, and the Italian mafia.

Ultimately, I hope to more clearly define the nature of the relationship between Italian film and Italian fashion over the last sixty years, by exploring the ways in which important features of Italian culture (such as the mafia, the Roman Catholic Church, and gender norms) have impacted Italian design standards and fashion products in both film and media. Can the depiction of fashion in Italian film be seen as a reflection of the time periods they represent, and how has it contributed to shaping the cultural identity of Italian fashion? How has Italian film explored the relationship between gender roles in fashion and religious symbolism related to the Roman Catholic Church, and what messages or themes emerge from this intersection?