Call for Papers
Imagining Italy: Transatlantic Encounters, Diaspora, and Cultural Belonging
Date: June 24-26, 2027
Location: University of Macerata
Abstracts & Proposals Due: Friday, February 26, 2027
Notifications Sent Out by Monday, March 15, 2027
Submittable Link:
https://italianamericanstudies.submittable.com/submit/369993/university-of-macerata-imagining-italy-transatlantic-encounters-diaspora-and

The Italian American Studies Association invites submissions for presentations, panels, and roundtables addressing all aspects of Italian American experience, Italian diaspora studies, and transnational scholarship. We welcome work from scholars, independent researchers, artists, and cultural practitioners working across disciplines and methodologies.

This symposium embraces diverse approaches to understanding Italian American life and culture, including but not limited to historical inquiry, literary and textual analysis, film and media studies, visual culture, oral history and community archives, ethnography, sociology, gender and sexuality studies, labor and economic history, religious studies, culinary and material culture, digital humanities, and creative practice.

Cultural and artistic engagements with Italy form a central focus. We welcome scholarship that examines how American and international creators across all media, writers, filmmakers, musicians, visual artists, and others have engaged with Italy through their work. This includes literary fiction, poetry, journalism, and memoir; cinema and television; popular and art music; visual arts and photography; and any other cultural form. Consider, for example, how writers like Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Henry James, as well as contemporary authors like Elena Ferrante, have explored Italy as a space to examine identity, displacement, and cultural belonging. We are interested in work that explores how artistic and cultural encounters with Italy have shaped the American imagination, how creators have used Italy as a setting to explore questions of otherness and belonging, and how cultural production across media has both shaped and been shaped by Italian history and culture.

Travel Writing, Tourism, and the Grand Tour Tradition are equally central to our scope. We invite submissions on American travel narratives about Italy; the evolution of the Grand Tour in American cultural practice; tourism and the construction of Italy in the American imaginary; and how travel accounts, whether historical or contemporary, have negotiated encounters between American and Italian cultures. How have American travelers, tourists, and wanderers imagined, documented, and transformed their understanding of Italy? How do these narratives relate to broader patterns of diaspora, settlement, and transnational belonging?

We particularly encourage submissions that employ comparative frameworks (examining Italian American experience alongside other diaspora communities and American cultural engagement with Italy), transnational perspectives (tracing connections between Italy, the United States, and other sites of settlement and cultural encounter), and intersectional analysis (centering questions of class, gender, sexuality, racialization, regionalism, and generation).

Scholars working in migration studies, postcolonial studies, American studies, European studies, diaspora studies, ethnic studies, film studies, media studies, music studies, and related fields are equally welcome. We seek work that challenges conventional narratives, recuperates marginalized voices and experiences, and advances new theoretical and methodological interventions in the field. Presentations drawing on archival research, community-based inquiry, family history, and activist scholarship are especially encouraged.

Submission Guidelines:
The Symposium Committee will consider proposals that do not specifically address this year's conference theme but may complement it.

Panel Format: Organized panels should feature no more than three presenters (or creative writers or artists, as the case may be), not including the chair and respondent. All presentations are limited to 15–20 minutes based on the number of people on the panel.

Required Materials: Proposals should include a 250-word abstract for each paper and a 75-word bio for each participant, including chairs and respondents. For all participants in a proposed panel, please provide each person's name, institutional affiliation, email address, and preferred mailing address.

Technical Requirements: Please indicate if your presentation or panel requires AV equipment. Each room will be equipped with a computer, projector, and speakers.

Notification: The Symposium Committee will send an email notification of acceptance for individual abstracts or proposed panels through Submittable by Monday, March 15, 2027.

All presenters, respondents, and discussants must be members in good standing of the Italian American Studies Association by Monday, May 31, 2027. Participants who have not completed membership and conference registration by that date will not be included in the final program.

For further information, please visit www.italianamericanstudies.net