

# HI2F7-15 British Women and the Politics of Italian Unification

**22/23**

**Department**

History

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Sarah Richardson

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

The lure of Italy for British women in the mid-nineteenth century took many forms. The struggles of the Risorgimento added contemporary political spice to the already heady attraction of the nation's Renaissance republican past. The country offered not merely a turbulent present which attracted writers, artists, and politicians to engage with themes of nationalism, liberalism, and civic identities; but also a romantic cultural past. The struggle for Italian unification inspired many women to activism: raising funds for the nationalists; translating political pamphlets; writing for newspapers and periodicals; purchasing arms and acting as field nurses. This module considers why Italy and Italian politics attracted so much attention in Britain in fields such as art, literature, poetry, journalism, travel writing and political activism.

### Module aims

This module aims to further students knowledge and understanding of gender and political culture in the age of Italian Unification through the lens of British women who were active in the movement. Students will consider the multiple ways in which women interacted with the Risorgimento via art, literature, journalism and travel writing and the impact this had on their own identities as political subjects both in Britain and in Italy. The module will draw on a range of

source material to interrogate these relationships. The module will encourage students to consider the role of historians and other scholars in debates on Britain's relationship with Italy, and will allow students to articulate their findings in a range of ways, including through class participation, social media and blogs, in order to develop their transferable skills.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Women and the imagined 'Italy'

Week 2: Romanticism and the Grand Tour

Week 3: The Lure of the Risorgimento

Week 4: Travel Writing: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and Vernon Lee

Week 5: Literature: Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Eliot

Week 6: Reading Week

Week 7: Journalism: Theodosia Trollope and Frances Power Cobbe

Week 8: Art: Jane Benham Hay and Eliza Fox

Week 9: Activism: Jessie White Mario and Maria Ashhurst

Week 10: Legacies

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the role of British women and the struggle for Italian Unification.
- Develop a basic knowledge of approaches to the study of women, gender and political culture.
- Communicate ideas and findings through oral and written discussion, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Generate ideas through the analysis of a broad range of primary source material, showing an appreciation of the possibilities and limitations of analysing primary sources relating to women and Italian Unification.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing scholarship, drawing upon scholarship from art history, literature and politics.
- Act with limited supervision and direction to explore topics and themes of interest within defined guidelines in order to develop individual research skills, accepting responsibility for achieving deadlines.

## Indicative reading list

- Bunbury, Selina, *A Visit to the Catacombs, or First Christian Cemeteries at Rome: and a Midnight Visit to Mount Vesuvius* (London: W.W. Robinson, 1849)
- Chapman, Alison, 'On Il Risorgimento', *BRANCH*  
[http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps\\_articles=alison-chapman-on-il-risorgimento](http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=alison-chapman-on-il-risorgimento)
- Chapman, Alison, *Networking the nation : British and American women's poetry and Italy, 1840-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

- Chapman, Alison and Stabler, Jane (eds), *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 110-36
- Colletta, Lisa, *The legacy of the grand tour : new essays on travel, literature, and culture* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015)
- De Staël, Madame, *Corinne, or, Italy*, trans. by Isabel Hill (London: Richard Bentley, 1833)
- Falchi, Federcia, 'Beyond National Borders; 'Italian' Patriots United in the Name of Giuseppe Mazzini : Emilie Ashurst, Margaret Fuller and Jessie White Mario', *Women's History Review*,
- Foster, Shirley, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990)
- Goodden, Angelica, *Madame de Staël: The Dangerous Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Hamilton, Susan, *Frances Power Cobbe and Victorian Feminism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006)
- Law, John (ed.), *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)
- McCue, Maureen, *British Romanticism and the Reception of Italian Old Master Art, 1793–1840*, (Farnham, 2014)
- Moskal, Jeanne, 'Gender and Italian Nationalism in Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy*', *Romanticism*, 5 (1999), 188-201
- Nightingale, Florence, *Florence Nightingale in Rome: Letters Written by Florence Nightingale in Rome in the Winter of 1847-1848*, ed. by Mary Keele (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981)
- O'Connor, Maura, *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998)
- Pellegrino Sutcliffe, Marcella, *Victorian Radicals and Risorgimento Democrats: A Long Connection* (Woodbridge, 2014)
- Richardson, Sarah, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013)
- Schaff, Barbara (ed.), *Exiles, Emigrés and Intermediaries: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions* (Amsterdam 2010)
- Shelley, Mary, *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843*, 2 vols (London: Edward Moxon, 1844)
- Smith, F. B., 'British Post Office Espionage, 1844', *Historical Studies*, vol.14, no.54, 1970, pp.189–203
- Starke, Marianna, *Travels in Europe between the years 1824 and 1828 adapted to the use of travellers* (London 1828)
- Sweet, Rosemary, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy c.1690 to 1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- Von Rochau, A[ugust] L[udwig], *Wanderings through the Cities of Italy in 1850 and 1851*, trans. by Mrs Percy Sinnett, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1853)

## Subject specific skills

- A greater understanding of how historians are able to utilise debates from other disciplines in their work.

- The ability to carry out independent research and to develop areas of interest.
- To develop critical thinking and analytical skills when reading primary sources.
- To develop comparative skills considering experiences in Britain and Italy.

## Transferable skills

- To develop research and analytical skills, and work as independent researchers with limited supervision.
  - To think critically about their readings, topics and sources covered.
  - To make use of electronic databases and other research platforms to pursue their research.
  - To develop oral, written and presentation skills through the different forms of verbal and written assessment.
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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Tutorials	2 sessions of 1 hour (1%)
Private study	128 hours (85%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>
Seminar Contribution	10%	
1500 word applied task (blog post)	40%	
Blog post totalling 1500 words		
3000 word essay	50%	
Essay analysing the contribution of one or more women to the debate on the Italian Unification		

### **Feedback on assessment**

- written feedback on essays\r\n- student/tutor dialogues in one-to-one tutorials\r\n- written feedback and reports on presentations\r\n- informal interim feedback on progress in seminars

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### **Availability**

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.