Globalization, Culture and Ethics
Prof. Richard Keeley

June 1 - June 29, 2014

Trade made Venice the global city of its heyday and trade spawned innovations in bookkeeping and finance that have persisted to this day. Trade meant a remarkable fluidity between cultures and opportunities for the growth of a vigorous commercial class. Cultures—East and West, Roman and Venetian—met and clashed in Venice and on the sea but cultures were also in dialogue, witness the splendors of San Marco. Business and government worked out relations sometimes complementary, sometimes competitive. Each of these sets of themes has its parallel in the current discussions of globalization, ethics and culture.

This course will emphasize globalization and its consequences for moral reasoning; nations and transnational corporations and issues of governance and accountability; and emerging issues stemming from information and communications technology when these conflict with state purposes.

Most cultural activities will focus on visits around the city of Venice, including the Rialto bridge, Titian sites, and several markets. The program will also include a day trip to Milan.

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The Imaginary City: Why Writers Love Venice
Prof. Kevin Newmark
June 1 - June 29, 2014

Venice has always occupied a unique place in the artistic imagination of the west. Rising out of the lagoon in a riot of color, form, and texture, the shimmering reflections of Venice have come to incarnate the essence of how we think of beauty itself. This course will study some of the most important ways modern writers and thinkers have discovered in Venice an opportunity to explore and unsettle the traditional meaning that beauty holds for knowledge, art, and life. The class will consist of in-depth examination of novels, essays, films, and specific sites in the city of Venice.

Starting with the post-romantic era, the course will focus on how several literary giants refashion the beauty of Venice into a paradox of great richness and complexity. For Henry James, Thomas Mann, and Marcel Proust, the beauty that is everywhere visible in Venice also possesses a hidden side of risk and peril. The course will study the specific ways that each of these writers—along with John Ruskin before and Joseph Brodsky after them—reveals Venice to be an imaginary site of powerful tensions, traversed by the competing forces of growth and decay, desire and knowledge, truth and illusion. The course will also offer students the means for experiencing their own stay in Venice as a valuable source of self-reflection, an intellectual voyage into unfamiliar territory and waters. To encounter the beauty of Venice fully can open new perspectives on what it means to live, to love, and to understand wherever we find ourselves.

Alongside its central focus on literary masterworks from the modern European tradition, the course will also develop three complementary areas of instruction: a philosophical context stretching from Plato to Nietzsche and beyond; a cinematic dimension composed of "Summertime," "Morte a Venezia," (Death in Venice) "Don't Look Now," "The Comfort of Strangers," and "Pane e Tulipani" (Bread and Tulips); and a regular supplement of on-site visits to Venice itself—the marvel of its churches, palazzi, museums, pathways, and waterways.

Housing & Meals

Students will be housed in residence halls at Venice International University with either two or three other students. All students will receive meal vouchers for breakfast and one other meal per day. Students should budget for additional food costs.