

LA TAVOLA ITALIAN CLUB



Le Ore di Conversazione

Our Ora di Conversazione is always a really fun and engaging way to practice Italian outside of regular class. We've played games like Pictionary using new vocabulary that different Italian levels are learning, making it easier to remember words in a relaxed setting. We also had themed conversation hours like for San Valentino where we painted canvases inspired by Valentine's Day, often with Italian words, and displayed them in the hallway on our bulletin board for La Tavola. On top of that, Advanced Ora di Conversazione was offered once per month for students in Italian 116 or higher, where students spoke entirely in Italian. It was a great way to build confidence, improve fluency, build community, and get help practicing in a fun environment.

Written by Courtney Cairo



Serata Mosaico

As part of Languages Week, La Tavola hosted a Serata Mosaico/Mosaic Night. The evening began with co-president Rosa Baker sharing a brief history of mosaic making and providing instructions for participants to create their own. We had a fantastic turnout, resulting in many beautiful artworks. Students also enjoyed a selection of Italian snacks and desserts. We were so happy to share this part of Italian culture with other students.



Written by Bella Mitchell

Written by Faith Love

"Pasquetta" (Little Easter) is an informal Italian holiday that occurs on the Monday immediately following "Pasqua" (Easter). It is celebrated outdoors with food, friends, and family. For Pasquetta, La Tavola hosted our own version of the holiday on the quad. Board members brought different entrees and desserts for attendees to enjoy such as cavatappi pasta, caprese salad, Italian meats and cheeses, and cannoli for dessert. After we finished eating, we moved on to the second (and arguably most important part of the festivities) "La caccia al tesoro" (The Treasure Hunt). Participants ran through the quad in search of clues that would lead them to eggs containing other clues. These clues (all in Italian), were handed out by members of the La Tavola Exec Board who were stationed in different buildings. After the last team made their way to the final stop, we ended the event by distributing prizes and enjoying good conversation.

Pasquetta



Italian Studies Minor - Ci sono tanti motivi per farlo!

Written by Bella Mitchell

The Italian Studies minor was one of the best decisions I've made in my education. I began studying Italian in high school and immediately developed a strong interest in the language. When I discovered that Illinois State had a program, I knew I wanted to continue pursuing it. Through taking classes at ISU, I have not only strengthened my language skills but also deepened my connection to my heritage.

My Italian heritage comes from my mother's side. My great-great-grandfather, Antonio, immigrated to Chicago in 1920 from the Piemonte region. Antonio started a bakery, and a long standing family rumor is that he introduced grissini (breadsticks) to America. During that time, Italian was stigmatized, so my family felt pressured to assimilate into American culture. As a result, I did not grow up with many Italian traditions. The Italian studies minor has given me the opportunity to reconnect with the culture and language of where my family came from.

What I especially appreciated about this program was its immersive approach to learning. In addition to traditional language instruction, I explored Italian through literature, film, and pop-culture. We were consistently encouraged to engage in discussions and to approach language learning in a diverse and meaningful way.

My most cherished memory of the program was studying abroad in Bologna. It was another opportunity to fully immerse myself in Italian language and culture. Living abroad taught me so much about myself and others. We explored the historic streets of Bologna, connected with other students from around the world, and shopped in local markets. Locals would encourage us to speak in Italian with them, which pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me gain confidence. This experience challenged me to see life from a different perspective, and because of it, I have grown into a better person.

Italian has had such a positive impact on my life and education and has brought me so many amazing connections and friendships that I will cherish forever. I have been able to further my education of the Italian language with great professors and I am so thankful to have been a part of it.



Sanremo & Mania Musicale

La Tavola's Instagram Sanremo is a March Madness style bracket containing a multitude of new songs from different Italian artists. This semester La Tavola followed along with the official Sanremo Music Festival, a very popular song contest in Italy, which was hosted in February. There was a very wide variety of musicians, with 30 different artists in total. Italian students listened to songs in class from the likes of Fedez to Sayf during the first part of the bracket. Students then voted for their favorite song every Monday through Thursday. Each winning song advanced until both sides of the bracket each had one song that competed against the other in the final two. While Italy crowned Sal da Vinci's "Per sempre si" as its Sanremo winner, La Tavola had a different champion. It was a pretty close battle between Ditonellapiaga's "Che fastido!" and Fulminacci's "Stupida sfortuna." In the end, La Tavola's Sanremo crowned Ditonellapiaga's "Che fastido!" as its Spring 2026 winner! Listen through the QR code down below!

Carnevale

Carnevale is celebrated in Italy in the days and weeks leading up to Lent. It is a time for indulgence, parades, costumes and masks, and many other festivities. The celebrations culminate on Martedì Grasso, which is when La Tavola held its own Carnevale mask-making event. We enjoyed homemade, traditional Italian sweets such as crostoli and castagnole, while painting and decorating masquerade masks. It was a wonderful way to participate in cultural traditions and find camaraderie with other Italian students.



Written by Rosie Chappell

Written by Sofia Link

ITA 112 Course Review

Written by Analisa Scafidi

Looking back at the Spring 2026 school year, Italian class 112 flew by quickly but memorably. The class has hit many new milestones and learned a lot about Italian grammar and important new vocabulary that we use everyday like explaining time routines through past and present, as well as food and dining culture, interactions with others, technology, shopping, clothing, and health. Last semester we had the basics down and now it's time to wrap it all together and begin learning how to get the hang of communicating towards each other in Italian. There are many available times to be able to talk to fellow students in the class who are also interested in Italian just like you and it's a great way to connect with your culture and the people in your culture while making new friends.



ITA 116 Course Review

Written by Natalie Piemonte

ITA 116 is a fourth semester Italian language course that is required for the Italian Studies Minor. At the beginning of the semester students reviewed previous grammar tenses like il passato prossimo, l'imperfetto, il trapassato, il futuro, il condizionale, pronomi, ci e ne, and l'imperativo. This semester we learned new vocabulary related to art, music, dance, performance, professions, jobs, working in the office, nature, animals, the environment, and protecting the planet. We also learned new grammar structures including infinitive constructions, non-standard noun forms, the gerund and progressive tenses, ordinal numbers, suffixes, impersonal expressions, the present subjunctive, irregular present subjunctive, verbs that required the subjunctive, past subjunctive, subjunctive with conjunctions, the imperfect and past perfect subjunctive, hypotheticals types I, II, and III, and tense correlations with the subjunctive. We created our own resumes in Italian, presented them in class, and then received peer feedback on them. We watched Fotoromanzo (a soap opera) and learned more about Italian culture. Our final project was to create a project on an environmental problem of our choice, explain what causes it, and then research solutions. During the last week of class, we will have a watch party and provide feedback on each other's presentations. This course helped us to develop our grammar, speaking, conversation, vocabulary, and comprehension abilities. We have all learned so much from the past 4 semesters of Italian!



IDS 121A20 Course Review

In Texts and Contexts: Italian Film, Dr. Ferrari showcases integral film genres and styles to Italian culture. The class begins with viewing neorealist films set after World War II. A notable film such as "Bicycle Thieves" is the perfect example of moving out of studios for filming and into the real world to show the devastating effects of World War II. Additionally, Dr. Ferrari touches on the abstract, weird, and surreal aspects of Italian films. In "Le Quattro Volte" all the actors are goats and it has a focus on the sounds, the soundtrack, and any noise that occurs in the movie. Dr. Ferrari ends the semester with the emerging trend of movies that follow a goal of "ecocriticism" and immigration. The movies "Red Desert" and "Terraferma" discuss real political issues that have been ongoing for many decades. Whether it is rapid industrialization, or the treacherous immigration across the Mediterranean; Dr. Ferrari shows the approach Italian film has been taking to address political issues of the modern age.

Written by Luke Faulkner



IDS 121A19 Course Review

Dr. Ferrari's class focuses on Italians immigrating into America with a highlight on the hardships that they experienced. A much discussed example from class are the struggles of assimilation and liminality which is the feeling of being in between two stages of life. We also talked quite a lot about the importance of food within Italian culture and how it can be a rich representation of remembrance. We read texts about struggles with identity, assimilation, sacrifice and loss, cultural disconnections, feeling "out-of-place," and other difficulties Italians/Italian Americans have faced in America.

Written by Faith Love



Cineforum

Written by Natalie Piemonte

This semester students in Italian classes chose to watch one out of three different movies with La Tavola. The first was *Vermiglio*, a film about a family living in the mountains of northern Italy at the end of World War 2 that represents rural, alpine life, and how the war affected citizens and families. It also explores a romance between the eldest daughter of the family and a Sicilian soldier who deserted the army. The second film was *Terraferma*, which takes place on an island off the coast of Sicily. It explores the fates of two struggling families living there and an important narrative about rescuing immigrants at sea that forces a family to choose between survival and what is morally right. The final film we watched was *Un mondo a parte*, which takes place in a small village in Abruzzo. It dives into the life of an elementary school teacher trying to find enough students to keep the school open. After watching each film, students discussed their thoughts, questions, opinions, and analysis of each movie. These movies help us to understand different aspects of Italian culture as well as develop our language and listening skills.



ISU in Bologna 2026

Eight ISU students are eagerly preparing for three weeks of study and fully immersive experience in Italian life that go from mid-May to early June. Five Italian Studies minors and three Fine Arts majors have been meeting once per month to prepare for their sojourn to Bologna, Italy. While there, they will take daily lessons at an Italian language school in the Santo Stefano neighborhood, a second course about Italian Food Culture with Dr. Sciubba and Dr. Edwards, and loads of hands-on activities (such as gelato and pasta making) and excursions (tours to Modena to learn about balsamic vinegar and organic Parmigiano Reggiano, trips to Florence and the Fellini museum and neighborhood and beach in Rimini). Follow their stay on Insta @ISU_in_Bologna.



Studiare a Firenze 2026

Written by Grace Adamson

Being able to experience two different types of schooling is really cool! Here in Florence I'm taking Love and Natural Selection, Women in Religion, Food and Wine pairing and History of Architecture. For me I find it so fascinating to be able to go on trips like a winery visit for my food and wine class, going on a daytrip to Rome for my architecture class to see the architecture in real life in front of you rather than a textbook. It is such an experience to walk past ancient history: buildings, churches, statues on your everyday stroll to classes or just on a walk! I also love my classes because they bring a lot of different European focus to my studies. In my cooking class we are learning how to make authentic Italian food from not only Florence but from different regions within Italy and try new wines from these regions too!

My confidence when speaking Italian with locals started off rocky. I hadn't practiced it in a minute, so I was out of rhythm but as soon as I got back into the flow of it, I felt a lot more confident. I try my best to keep the conversation in Italian rather than switching to English so I can practice my listening and responses.

Before coming abroad, I was someone who didn't take to change easily/ freaked out when something wasn't in my routine. I didn't go to the dining hall by myself until April of my freshman year. I was terrified of being alone. But I took a risk of picking up my life and moving to a different country with no one I knew. I took a big chance, and it was definitely rocky at first but of course nothing new is ever easy. I find myself being able to fully go out to dinner by myself, manage my relationships with friends and family with such a big time difference, travel by myself and see new things, and make deep meaningful connections with people I would have never met if I didn't take this opportunity. After this, I will always rather do things scared than not do them at all. Studying abroad is such a unique and amazing experience that shapes you into someone new and gives you so many unique opportunities.



La cerimonia dei nostri laureati

Written by Rosa Baker

As the spring semester came to a close, members of La Tavola Italian Club gathered for a special evening dedicated to celebrating students completing their minor in Italian Studies. The evening opened with remarks from incoming co-president Faith, followed by warm congratulations by Dr. Edwards as she highlighted each student's various majors, but common Italian minor. She spoke about how their studies went beyond just the classroom in unique ways for each student.

Dr. Ferrari gave each student an Italian cord to wear at graduation while Dr. Edwards gifted them a handcrafted laurel crown, made by the executive board just the night before. They stood in front of a custom banner made by our thoughtful co-social media chair, Courtney Cairo.

A highlight of the evening was the reading of three poems by Gianni Rodari: *Che cos'è la felicità*, *Filastrocca dell'amicizia*, and *Una scuola grande come il mondo* (about happiness, friendship, and continuing to learn as we go through life) read by Dr. Ferrari, incoming co-president Natalie, and Dr. Edwards. After closing statements were made, students and professors gathered around to mingle and snack on Italian biscotti!

The laurel crown has a long and meaningful history. Rooted in ancient Greek mythology, the laurel plant is tied to the story of Daphne, a nymph, and symbolizes honor and endurance. In both Greek and Roman societies, laurel crowns were awarded to those who achieved greatness, including athletes, military leaders, and rulers. This tradition was later embraced by academic institutions and continues to be a symbol of hard work and dedication by graduates across Italy.

Congratulazioni ai nostri laureati e alle nostre laureate! Farete tutti e tutte grandi cose!



La Tavola Executive Board

Written by Rosie Chappell

The 2025-2026 academic year executive board met once a month to plan events and learning opportunities for students in the Italian program. This year's board is made up of Co-Presidents **Rosa Baker** (Financial Accounting major, Italian Studies minor) and **Luke Faulkner** (History major, Political Science and Italian Studies double minor); Co-Treasurers **Bella Mitchell** (Horticulture & Landscape Management major, Italian Studies minor) and **Natalie Piemonte** (Elementary Education major, Italian Studies minor); Co-Secretaries **Sofia Link** (Psychology major, Sociology and Italian Studies double minor) and **Faith Love** (Political Science and Legal Studies double major, Italian Studies minor); and finally, Co-Social Media Chairs **Rosie Chappell** (Mass Media major, Italian Studies minor) and **Courtney Cairo** (Public Relations major, Italian Studies minor). It has been an absolute pleasure working with this board this academic year and we wish our senior executive board members - Rosa, Luke, Bella, Sofia, Rosie, and Courtney - all the best after graduation. Please give a warm welcome to next year's executive board composed of Natalie Piemonte, Faith Love, Mary Cooper, Carm Wilson, Angelina Cacucciolo, Analisa Scafidi, Sofia Chiarito, and Alana Blangiardo!

Executive Board Dinner

Every semester our Italian Executive Board gets together for dinner. This past semester we went to Rosa Baker's (co-president) family-owned Italian restaurant, Filippo's Pizza, in Monticello, Illinois! Rosa's grandparents opened the restaurant in 1970, and it has been family run ever since. The menu is completely authentic and traditional to Italian culture and is absolutely phenomenal. This evening is a great moment for the executive board to get together and bond; strengthening the ties formed through being a part of the Italian Club together! My personal recommendation at Filippo's would be the chicken alfredo pasta (which I get every time.) Exec board dinner is a tradition that we hope will continue through the years.

Written by Luke Faulkner

