


JOHN D.  
CALANDRA  
ITALIAN  
AMERICAN  
INSTITUTE

Annual Report  
2020–2021





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## Contents

- 5 Letter from the Dean
- 6 Introduction

### RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS

- 10 Annual Conference
- 11 Counseling
- 12 International Study
- 13 Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar
- 14 *Italics*
- 16 ItalicsTV
- 18 Public Programs
- 20 Publications
- 22 Research

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 26 Advisory Councils
- 27 Outreach
- 28 Partnerships

### RESOURCES

- 30 Facilities
- 31 Library
- 32 Staff



Dear Friends,

For more than forty years the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute has been committed to documenting and preserving the Italian American experience. To fulfill this mission, the Institute has built a comprehensive, multifaceted approach involving scholarly research, public programs, visual arts, literature, film, and counseling services. This report highlights the Institute's work during academic year 2020–2021.

The Institute was established to represent the largest European ancestral group in New York City and State and fosters higher education among and about Italian Americans, advising students, generating awareness of issues affecting the community, and conducting demographic, humanistic, and social science research in order to deepen the understanding of Italian American and Italian diasporic history and culture.

This most recent academic period, as difficult as it was, has offered the Institute unforeseen opportunities for creative thinking about how to fulfill our mission. Working remotely, we adapted our research and publishing projects only slightly and have reimagined our public programming to host more viewers and an international audience for online events. It is impossible to adequately express our gratitude for your steadfast support during this time.

Now that the light is at last visible at the end of the tunnel, please join us in moving toward a brighter future together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony J. Tamburri". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Cav. Anthony Julian Tamburri, PhD  
Dean and Distinguished Professor

# Introduction

The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of The City University of New York (CUNY) began as the Italian American Institute to Foster Higher Education. In 1978, New York State Senator John D. Calandra, then chairperson of the Italian Legislative Caucus, called for the creation of an Italian American institute to address historical, sociological, political, and cultural issues specific to the demographic group.

The New York Conference of Italian American State Legislators funded the institution in 1979 to respond to the educational needs and concerns expressed by Italian American students, faculty, and staff at CUNY. Eight years later, the Institute was renamed the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, in honor of the late senator. In 1995, the CUNY Board of Trustees officially placed the Institute under the aegis of Queens College and designated it as a university-wide research institute devoted to the Italian American experience.

The Institute's mission is in keeping with that of The City University of New York: to foster higher education among future generations. The Institute seeks to heighten awareness of the immigrant experience and broaden the understanding of the history of Italian Americans in the United States. The Institute fulfills its mission through its commitment to:

- Conduct, sponsor, and publish empirical, theoretical, and analytical research that will expand critical understanding of the Italian American experience.
- Operate specialized counseling programs in areas of outreach, articulation, student retention at CUNY, and career aspirations.



- Publish a peer-reviewed biannual journal, *Italian American Review*.
- Serve as a central hub for the dissemination of research to academia, government, industry, and the civic community.
- Organize conferences, lectures, seminars, and symposia on Italian America and the Italian diaspora.
- Administer a CUNY/Italy Exchange program between CUNY and Italian universities.
- Maintain a resource library of printed and video material pertaining to Italian America.
- Maintain databases regarding Italian American students and faculty at CUNY as well as faculty, scholars, and professionals at other universities.
- Produce and distribute a television program, *Italics*, to disseminate news about Italian America and feature influential figures in related fields.

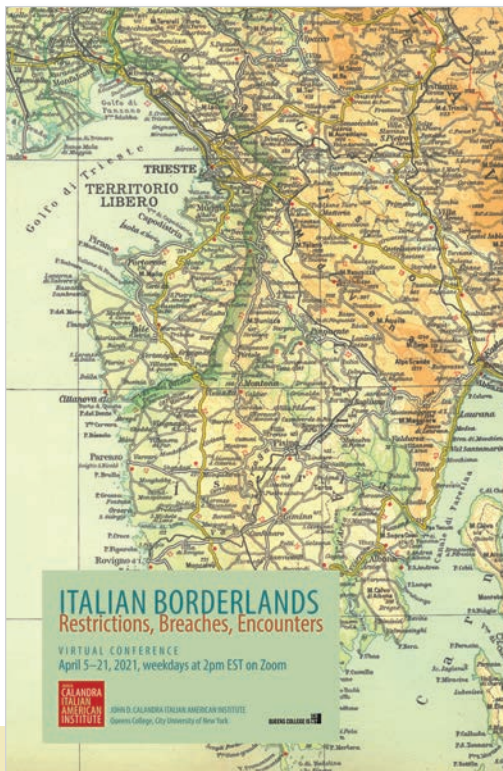


# Research and Programs

# Annual Conference

Since 2008 the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute has hosted an annual interdisciplinary conference attended by scholars and participants from around the globe.

The 2021 conference, “Italian Borderlands: Restrictions, Breaches, Encounters,” proposed a transnational, mobile, and inclusive approach to Italy and “Italians” in order to elucidate the consequences and possibilities that border studies suggest and to gain a deeper understanding of class, gender, and race. This year the conference, which took place virtually, presented one panel per day over the course of three weeks.



# Counseling

The Institute has provided counseling services to Italian American students and the community since 1979. Specialized counselors are trained in and sensitive to the history, culture, and experience of Italians in America. The counselors are licensed clinicians who provide an array of services including academic advising, career development, personal counseling, and workshops to foster psychosocial wellness.

## CUNY CAMPUS COUNSELING

Counselors work at select CUNY campuses, providing support to Italian American students. The critical goal of student retention and development is accomplished through academic, career, and personal counseling. Counselors assist students to develop and refine their educational plans, from associate degrees to doctoral and professional levels. During the 2020–2021 academic year, counselors provided liaison to CUNY campuses at Baruch, Queens, and Queensborough Colleges.

## HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING

Outreach services are offered at high schools with high concentrations of Italian American students or strong interest in Italian language and Italian American culture. Counselors promote interest in higher education through career exploration and college advisement. During the 2020–2021 academic year, counselors provided services to Holy Cross High School and Moore Catholic High School.

# International Study

The Institute's international study initiatives involve the participation of undergraduate and graduate students, research fellows, and visiting scholars.

## CUNY/ITALY EXCHANGE

The CUNY/Italy Exchange program is designed for undergraduate and graduate students interested in coursework and research in many areas of intellectual pursuit. The program provides participants with an individualized focus in their academic discipline and opportunities to gain international perspectives and skills to support their career goals. Participating universities include: Roma Tre University, University for Foreigners of Perugia, University of Perugia, and the University of Siena. The exchange program also places researchers at the Institute and various CUNY campuses.

## SUMMER STUDY ABROAD IN PERUGIA

The Summer Study Abroad in Perugia program provides American students the opportunity to study Italian language and culture in Perugia, a medieval city in Umbria, Italy. This program is offered in collaboration with the Department of European Languages and Literatures at Queens College, CUNY.

# Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar

The Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar was established in 2015 as a three-week professional development seminar conducted primarily for college professors and advanced graduate students. It is held in Rome in collaboration with Roma Tre University.

Fellows have come from as far away as Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America to participate in the Seminar. IDSSS provides participants with a foundation of knowledge of the Italian diaspora so that they may return to their home institutions and offer a course on any aspect of Italian migration and its impact on host countries. Scholars have gone on to develop coursework and lead courses based on research conducted during the Seminar.

The Seminar is the recipient of a recurring gift from Alexandra de Luise and Normand Tourangeau and a five-year grant from the Francesco and Mary Giambelli Foundation. Previous supporting institutions include the Italian American Studies Association, Italian Language Inter-Cultural Alliance, National Italian American Foundation, Order Sons of Italy Grand Lodge of New York, Unico National, and CUNY's Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

# *Italics*

*Italics: Television for the Italian American Experience* is a monthly half-hour magazine-format presentation in the CUNY Presents timeslot featuring prominent Italian Americans in academia, the arts, business, government, sports, and more. Each episode explores the Italian diaspora, Italian American history and traditions, and contemporary Italian American life. *Italics* has been in production since 1988, serving the Italian American community and those interested in Italian American culture.

JULY 2020

Edoardo Ballerini: “The Voice of God . . . ”

AUGUST 2020

Marino Auriti’s Encyclopedic Palace, B.G. Firmani

SEPTEMBER 2020

Immigration Laws between 1882 and 1965, Maddalena Marinari

OCTOBER 2020

Vetere’s Prolific Work, Richard Vetere

NOVEMBER 2020

*Such a Pretty Girl: A Story of Struggle, Empowerment, and Disability Pride*, Nadina LaSpina

DECEMBER 2020

An American Author, Mark Rotella





JANUARY 2021

*The Shadow King*, Maaza Mengiste

FEBRUARY 2021

Italian American Committee on Education: Promotion of the Italian Language, Berardo Paradiso and Ilaria Costa

MARCH 2021

Italian Diaspora and Italian Communities Transnationally, Loredana Polezzi

APRIL 2021

Celebrating Poetry, Maria Lisella and Luigi Fontanella

MAY 2021

Humor as Microaggression in the Italian American Community, Donna Chirico and Fred Gardaphé

JUNE 2021

Queens College President Frank Wu



# ItalicsTV

In academic year 2020–2021, a series of informal conversations with thought leaders in the Italian American community were recorded and archived on the Institute’s YouTube channel.

## INTERVIEWS

Stefano Albertini on *Moonstruck* and opera

Ashley Johnson Bavery on *Bootlegged Aliens: Immigration Politics on America’s Northern Border*

Giancarlo De Cataldo, Giovanna Di Lello, Fred Gardaphé, Lia Giancristofaro, and Frank Spotnitz on *Dalla parte di John Fante*

Luisa Del Giudice on WWII Italian military internees

Christine Grimaldi on the Italian American Pentecostal church “La Cappella dei Miracoli” in pre–World War II Brooklyn

Jessica Barbata Jackson on *Dixie’s Italians: Sicilians, Race, and Citizenship in the Jim Crow Gulf South*

Frank Lentricchia on *A Place in the Dark / The Glamour of Evil*

Anthony Dion Mitzel on Italian American memes

Rachel Harworth on Italian pop singer Mina

Michael Moore on translating Alessandro Manzoni’s *I promessi sposi*

Richard Moss on *Creating the New Right Ethnic in 1970s America: The Intersection of Anger and Nostalgia*

Vincent Panella on *Sicilian Dreams*

Matteo Pretelli on Italian American World War II GIs in US cinema

Marco Rafalà on *How Fires End*



# Public Programs

In academic year 2020–2021, public programs took place virtually and were recorded and archived on the Institute’s video platform, ItalicsTV.

JULY 27, 2020

Film Screening and Discussion: *Columbus on Trial* (2020), Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno, directors

OCTOBER 1, 2020

Discussion: Talking Columbus, with William Connell, Fred Gardaphé, Laura Ruberto, Joseph Sciorra, Leslie Wilson

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Presentation: Eugenio Colorni in the United States, with Valeria Aniello, Osvaldo Feinstein, Michael Gilmartin, Ernest Ialongo, Natalia Indrimi, Luca Meldolesi, Chiara Pulvirenti, Nicoletta Stame

MARCH 3, 2021

Lecture: Italian Internment During World War II and the Limits of Racism in America, Laura E. Ruberto

MARCH 11, 2021

Lecture: Dante’s American Comedy, Guy Placido Raffa

MARCH 25, 2021

Lecture: Dante’s Adventures in Italian America, Martino Marazzi

MAY 25, 2021

Keynote: “Ricostruire: i luoghi di memoria nelle Americhe” conference, Centro di Ricerca Interdipartimentale di Studi Americani, Anthony Julian Tamburri

The Institute's regular programming includes:

**"DOCUMENTED ITALIANS" FILM AND VIDEO SERIES**

Film screenings documenting the Italian diasporic experience

**PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

A forum where scholars present their research to the public

**WRITERS READ SERIES**

Presentations by creative writers reading from recently published works

**MICHELLE GIANNATTASIO LECTURE SERIES**

Off-site events co-hosted by St. Nick's Alliance

**FUORI COLLANA**

Additional events organized and hosted by the Institute

**GALLERIA**

A showcase for the visual arts and history

# Publications

## BY THE INSTITUTE

*Italian American Review*, a biannual, peer-reviewed social science and cultural studies journal, publishes leading scholarship on topics of interest in Italian American studies. It is designated a category I journal by the Ministry of Education, University and Research, Italy.

Volume 10, Number 2 / Volume 11, Number 1

*Il Bollettino* highlights semester activities and serves as a biannual report to the New York Conference of Italian American State Legislators.

Volume 13, Number 2 / Volume 14, Number 1

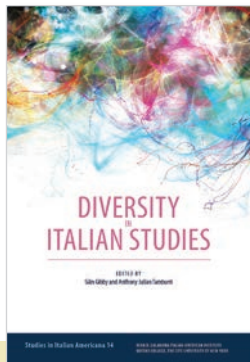
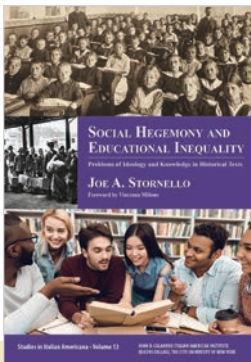
*Il Giornalino* showcases the writings of high school and college students studying Italian.

*Social Hegemony and Educational Inequality: Problems of Ideology and Knowledge in Historical Texts*

Joe A. Stornello

*Diversity in Italian Studies*

Edited by Siân Gibby and Anthony Julian Tamburri



FROM THE STAFF

*This Hope Sustains the Scholar: Essays in Tribute to the Work of Robert Viscusi*

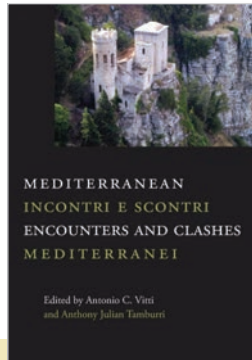
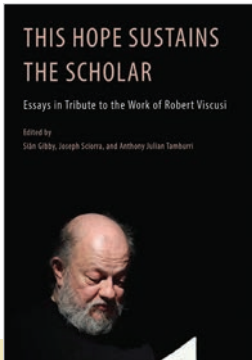
Edited by Siân Gibby, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri

Published by Bordighera Press

*Mediterranean Encounters and Clashes / Incontri e scontri mediterranei*

Edited by Anthony Julian Tamburri and Antonio C. Vittì

Published by Bordighera Press



# Research

Institute initiatives employ a range of disciplines and methods—from interpretive analysis to quantitative research—to study individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions of the past and present.

In addition to research conducted by staff, the Institute supports international scholars by providing access to facilities and opportunities to present ongoing and published work.

## CULTURAL STUDIES

Research in the arts and humanities examines the ways in which Italian American culture is articulated in historical, social, economic, cultural, and political contexts. Areas of exploration include literature, music, cinema, theater, the interdisciplinary fields of migration and diasporic studies, literary and film criticism, media, popular culture, folklife, and vernacular culture.

## ITALIAN LANGUAGE RESOURCE LABORATORY

In 2015 the Institute established the Italian Language Resource Laboratory to provide educators with a forum through which participants can conduct and publish research, disseminate information, and organize symposia focused on teaching. The laboratory publishes a refereed online publication, *Teaching Italian Language and Culture Annual*, to discuss the empirical and theoretical concerns of teaching language and learning and to facilitate scholarly exchange among teachers and researchers.



## SOCIODEMOGRAPHICS

Quantitative analyses in sociodemographic fields interpret the lives of Italian Americans in the United States. Research in the disciplines of demographics, linguistics, political science, psychology, and sociology highlights the cultural presence, economics, educational achievements, family structure, life cycles, and occupational participation of Italian Americans.

Periodic reports provide the basis for Italian American affirmative action accountability at The City University of New York.

## PUBLISHED RESEARCH BY STAFF

Fred Gardaphé

“A Coupla Paisanos Talk Italian American Life,” and “‘Made in America’: A Conversation.” In *Off the Back of a Truck: Unofficial Contraband for the Sopranos Fan*, edited by Nick Braccia. Tiller Press, 2020.

La fantasia americana di John Fante come base del suo “lavoro cinematografico.” In *Dalla parte di John Fante: Scritti e testimonianze*, edited by Giovanna Di Lello and Toni Ricciardi. Carocci editore, 2020.

“Dancing with Italians in American Culture.” In *This Hope Sustains the Scholar: Essays in Tribute to the Work of Robert Viscusi*, edited by Siân Gibby, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri. Bordighera Press, 2021.

“I Gotta Wear Shades: Multiculturalism’s Contents and Discontents.” Afterword to *JAm It! Disentangling the American*

*Patchwork Heritage*, edited by Francesco Chianese and Cristina Di Maio. Public Knowledge Project, 2021.

“White Immigrant Trajectories in US Urban Literature: The Italian American Case.” In *The City in American Literature and Culture*, edited by Kevin McNamara. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Joseph Sciorra

“‘He made us all look like gavones’: Marking Cafoneria and Policing the Boundaries of Propriety, Taste, and Ethnic Identity among Italian Americans.” In *This Hope Sustains the Scholar: Essays in Tribute to the Work of Robert Viscusi*, edited by Siân Gibby, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri, 193–231. Bordighera Press, 2021.

“Toppling Columbus, Recasting Italian Americans” (with Laura E. Ruberto). *Process: A Blog for American History*. July 23, 2020.

Anthony Julian Tamburri

“Introduction: The Scholar with the Red Scarf: Personal Reflections on Robert Viscusi” and “Italian Diaspora Studies and the University: Professional Development and Curricular Matters.” In *This Hope Sustains the Scholar: Essays in Tribute to the Work of Robert Viscusi*, edited by Siân Gibby, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri, 1–8, 243–258. Bordighera Press, 2021.

# Community Engagement

# Advisory Councils

The Institute has convened and maintains meeting schedules for several prominent advisory groups. Participating members represent a range of academics and professionals in the Italian American community.

ITALIAN AMERICAN FACULTY AND STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL is comprised of representatives from each CUNY campus who advise college presidents on matters affecting the university's Italian American community. Delegates report on the concerns of students, faculty, and staff at individual campuses and recommend methods of resolution.

ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES ADVISORY COUNCIL consists of members of the CUNY community and advises on research, service projects, and other academic programs that focus on Italian American studies curricula and development.

ITALIAN LANGUAGE ADVISORY COUNCIL advises on the status of Italian language instruction at CUNY. The council addresses the involvement of the university's Italian departments and advocates for the expansion of Italian American studies curricula.

ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL includes members from major Italian American organizations. The council facilitates the development and growth of various Italian American associations.

# Outreach

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Institute collates and disseminates monthly events information submitted by community organizations. The calendar is distributed via email to more than 6,000 subscribers.

## FRIENDS OF THE JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE

This foundation was established to support and advance the education and research mission of the Institute, in particular the sponsorship of recommended projects and programs.

# Partnerships

## ITALIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE MONTH

Since 1976, leading institutions in New York's Italian American community have organized a series of events each year to coincide with Columbus Day celebrations in October. The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute is a major sponsor of the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of New York, Inc., and its work upholding this significant cultural responsibility. Additionally, the Institute coordinates and produces the annual directory of Italian Heritage and Culture Month special events, concerts, lectures, and proclamations in and around New York City. The 2020 theme was "Fellini:100."

## ITALIAN LANGUAGE INTER-CULTURAL ALLIANCE

Since 2009, the Institute has cosponsored the Italian Language Inter-Cultural Alliance's annual conference and provided critical support to further the cause of the Advanced Placement exam in Italian language at high schools in the United States.

## SOCIETÀ DANTE ALIGHIERI OF NEW YORK

In October 2017 a collaborative protocol was established between the Società Dante Alighieri and the Institute, leading to the relaunch of the New York chapter.

# Resources

# Facilities

In academic year 2020–2021, the Institute sponsored use of its office space and facilities to:

Bordighera Press

Italian American Studies Association

Italian Heritage and Culture Committee, Inc.

La Commedia di Dante in Italiano in Midtown

National Organization of Italian American Women

Roma Tre University

Società Dante Alighieri of New York



# Library

The Institute's research library contains books, journals, magazines, and newspapers pertaining to Italian American and Italian history and culture, including unique holdings on economics, literature, and politics. In addition to its general holdings, the library has four significant collections:

## *IL PROGRESSO ITALO-AMERICANO*

A nearly complete collection of the most widely circulated, longest-running Italian-language daily newspaper (1880–1988) in the United States, archived on microfilm.

## THE SARACENO COLLECTION

This 13,500-volume collection, a gift from the estate of Pietro Saraceno (University of Rome), contains books and periodicals from the eighteenth-century Kingdom of Italy—including rare volumes of the *Leggi e Decreti*—to the Italian Republic up to 1959.

## THE CAMMETT COLLECTION

This 5,500-volume collection, a gift from the estate of John Cammett (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY), includes the complete works of Antonio Gramsci and books on Italian Communism and anti-Fascism.

## THE CANNISTRARO COLLECTION

This 2,000-volume collection, a gift from the estate of Philip V. Cannistraro (Queens College, CUNY), contains books on Italian Fascism.

# Staff

Rosangela Briscese	Associate Director for Academic and Cultural Programs
Stephen Cerulli	College Assistant
Lisa Cicchetti	Communications and Publications Manager
Fred Gardaphé, Dr.	Distinguished Professor of English and Italian American Studies
Siân Gibby	Communications Writer-Editor
Joseph Grosso	Counselor
Nicholas Grosso	Editorial Coordinator
Rachel Hoyle	Office Assistant
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Vincenzo Milione, Dr.	Director of Demographic Studies
Rosaria Musco	Associate Director of Administration
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Itala Pelizzoli	Demographer
Carmine Pizzirusso	Research and Program Manager
Eugenio Pizzorno	Broadcast Associate
Marianna Prestigiacommo	Office Assistant
Catalina Santamaria	Broadcast Associate
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Olivia Tursi	Counselor
Nancy Ziehler, Dr.	Counselor

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Italian American Studies Association

Italian Language Inter-Cultural Alliance

Alexandra de Luise

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