ITALY READS NEWS – DECEMBER 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

ITALY READS SCHOLARSHIP winners announced.
EN346 Study of the Works of a Single Modern Writer: Hemingway. Classes begin Tuesday, January 14th at 7:30pm
ITALY READS STUDENT VIDEO Contest Deadline: 4:00p.m. Monday, 20 January 2014
ITALY READS visits with Italian public and international high schools will start again in January 2014.
See our website for Italy Reads 2014 announcements.

ITALY READS is presented at the 38th ITALIAN NATIONAL TESOL CONFERENCE ENGLISHING November 29-30, 2013, Rome

The literary journeys promoted over the last five years by John Cabot University’s Italy Reads were illustrated by Academic Administrative Assistant Gina Marie Spinelli, Coordinator of the Italy Reads Program, to an audience of teachers of English to speakers of other languages gathered together from across Italy at this annual national conference held in Rome. In her talk on Friday, 29 November entitled “Literary Journeys: Best Practices with John Cabot University’s Italy Reads”, Ms Spinelli summarized the key aspects of the program and how thousands of students are benefitting from it each year. This talk was followed by a Poster Session.

ITALY READS STUDENT DIGITAL VIDEO PRODUCTION WORKSHOP is a Great Success! 29 November, 2013

Over 20 students from 4 different high schools in Rome, Anzio and Pomezia benefitted from the expertise of the JCU Student Film, Media and Communication Club in a Workshop which was a follow-up to the Italy Reads Public Lecture by Professor Brian Thomson on 14 October. Professor Thomson’s students

ITALY READS WELCOMES STUDENT VOLUNTEERS from AACUPI PROGRAMS

Italy Reads was recently illustrated to representatives from the 150 institutions of the ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS IN ITALY. Now, students attending these other study abroad programs throughout Italy have the opportunity to register, be trained and become an Italy Reads Volunteer.

For more information, contact italyreads@johncabot.edu.

ATTENTION !!!

Video Contest participants The Video of tips has arrived !!! Ignite Your Adaptation Part One - Before You Shoot (John Cabot University Italy Reads) by Brian Thomson, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Communications at JCU http://youtu.be/ho1NceSMGjc

ITALY READS BOOKS:

- Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird
- Thornton Wilder’s Our Town
- Carson McCullers’ The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter
- F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby
- Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake

NEXT YEAR:

- Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms

This document and other resources for teachers and students is available at: http://www.johncabot.edu/about_jcu/italy-reads/resources-for-teachers.
Italy Reads Volunteer Spotlight
Rosa Elizabeth Calderon

Study abroad student from San Diego State University, Rosa joined Italy Reads as soon as she arrived in Rome for the Fall 2013 semester. As part of the program, Italy Reads Volunteers are invited to get involved in Italy Reads Theater.

Each year The English Theatre of Rome presents an adaptation of the work of literature that is the focus of the year’s activities.

Being a drama enthusiast, Rosa jumped at the opportunity to audition for a part production of Under the Overcoat, an adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake.

Rosa was selected by Casting Director Theodora Voutsa for the role of Moushimi, as well as a member of the chorus.

Theatre director Gaby Ford said, “It was a pleasure to have students of John Cabot University actually involved in this production.”

Italy Reads Goes to Anzio - (Liceo ‘Chris Cappell College’), 11 October
After a warm welcome to Anzio by our hosts, volunteers and 8 classes of students split up into smaller groups and visited with each other. They engaged in a variety of discussions of and around the novel. Even those Italian students who are new to the program and have not yet finished reading the novel benefitted from this initial encounter.

While students were working together, Professor Dews illustrated details of the Italy Reads program to the 5 teachers at Liceo ‘Chris Cappell College’ who are new to the program and were unable to attend one of the Teacher Training Workshops held at JCU.

Volunteers say, “I really enjoyed my session with a group of six students. They asked me about what high schools were like in the U.S., and they told me about their own liceo and daily life.

We related our experiences to the book and touched upon other themes, such as identity and culture shock.

I really appreciated the opportunity to interact with Italian students, and learn more about day-to-day life in Italy. It was a pleasure getting to know the various Italian students and share ideas about life in America.

Italy Reads is a great program, and I’m very glad that I was able to be a part of it!”
Simone, Study Abroad student, majoring in ... from the University of Notre Dame

Italy Reads thanks the Principal, teachers and students of Liceo ‘Chris Cappell College’ for their hospitality and hope to visit them again next semester.

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Volunteering with Italy Reads

There are many Community Service activities available to students who come from all over the U.S. and 40 different countries to study at John Cabot University. To become a trained Italy Reads Volunteer and meet with high school students of English means to commit to living a unique study abroad experience.

During the Fall 2013 Semester, Italy Reads Volunteers visited with students from high schools in Rome, Pomezia, Rignano Flaminio, Anzio and Naples both in their schools and at JCU.

What are Volunteers saying about their Cultural Exchange Experience with Italy Reads?

“I thought it was a lot of fun!! I really liked getting to know all of the kids and hear their point of view on culture and their responses to the book. But I also got to know my group of students personally and I thought that was the best and most interesting part. I would definitely love to do this again!!!”

Tamara, Study Abroad student, majoring in Biology from Saint Leo University

Ms Spinelli described how John Cabot University has developed this simple yet dynamic program to fulfill a need for optimization of resources that has been perceived within the community since the first edition called The Big Read Rome.

The Big Read Rome was made possible through a grant to JCU from the American National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 2009. The success of this program underlined how JCU, as an American liberal arts university in Rome, could continue this program and provide professional training and academic resources to teachers and their students. Thus, Italy Reads was established and is now in its 5th year of activity.

Italy Reads Volunteer and Student Assistant Alexandra Summers illustrated the program from a Volunteer’s perspective and outlined the procedures followed when organizing Italy Reads exchange visits.

Teachers and students came away from the TESOL Conference with a clear idea of how versatile the Italy Reads program is and how well it lends itself to an interdisciplinary, multi-skilled approach toward teaching and multi-cultural exchange.

It’s no surprise that this program has grown by 550% over the past 5 years!

“It was so insightful to see how these students learn in a culture different from what I am accustomed to. I feel like I learned from them as much, if not more than, they learned from me speaking English with them. It was so nice to see how happy they were when they were able to communicate in English to me and understand me.”

Shannon, Study Abroad student, majoring in Psychology from Georgian Court University

in Digital Video Production and Portfolio class offered to share their knowledge in a practical, hands-on afternoon with high school students working on their submissions to the Italy Reads Student Video Contest.

Headed by Italy Reads Volunteer Nikolai Berger, these JCU students shared their know-how with high school students in a workshop prepared and conducted completely by students. This exchange is mutually beneficial as it helps students perfect their English while working on a technical activity that reflects a shared passion. JCU students gain important teaching experience as well as added insight into creative approaches.

Gina Marie Spinelli said, “When Nikolai proposed this project, I immediately accepted and have happily facilitated this in any way possible. It is exactly this kind of collaborative, interdisciplinary and proactive approach to teaching and Study Abroad that is what Italy Reads is all about!”
Friday, 4 October –

Seven Italy Reads volunteers, accompanied by Prof. Dews, Chairman of the Department of English Language and Literature and Director of the Italy Reads program, visited ISIS ‘E. de Nicola’, in Naples.

The Italy reads group met with four professors of English at the Italian public high school, including Prof. Mariarosaria Savino, Director of the Department of Languages and Foreign Civilizations, and about 80 of their students to discuss aspects of Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake, the focus novel of this year’s Italy Reads Program.

The JCU group was warmly welcomed by the school’s Vice-Principal and Head of Language Department, Prof. Carla Crescenzi. After a brief introduction, the students gave the volunteers a loud and bountiful applause, which was a great indicator of how the rest of the day would progress. The students were ready and excited to meet the volunteers and get a chance to practice their English skills with native speakers.

Italy Reads volunteers visited four classes to discuss The Namesake. In each class, the volunteers met with small groups of students, engaging them in thought-provoking discussions.

The students asked questions that they had prepared on their own and used the Discussion Topics prepared by the volunteers during their online training course. Students shared thoughts about key topics such as immigration, family, boundaries, racism, name changing and identification with country and cultures. These are all essential elements of the story.

Now in its 5th year, Italy Reads has, this year, received financial support from the Embassy of the United States in Italy to promote these kinds of cultural exchange activities between students.

Saturday 9 November –

Forty students from ISIS ‘E. de Nicola’, (Naples), came to JCU to participate in a day-long Italy Reads Workshop. These were the same students with whom Italy Reads visited on Oct. 4th.

Six Italy Reads volunteers, joined by Italy Reads Coordinator Gina Marie Spinelli, welcomed the students to JCU. Students were divided into smaller groups where discussions focused on developing ideas for the Student Video Contest.

After a pizza lunch together in the Lemon Tree Courtyard, the group was joined by professors and their students from schools in Rome and Pomezia for Italy Reads Theater.

In preparation for the theatrical performance, Mr. Bill Guion, a cast member with The English Theatre of Rome, met with the students and introduced the adaptation Under the Overcoat and his role as Akaky Akakievich.

This character, from Nikolai Gogol’s short story The Overcoat, does not appear in Lahiri’s The Namesake. Students, teachers and Italy Reads Volunteers then proceeded to the Aula Magna Regina to enjoy the performance of Under the Overcoat.