· Italy’s CULTURAL HISTORY is one of the most diverse in the world. Did you know that Michelangelo was queer, that the first duke of Renaissance Florence was a black man, that the word “ghetto” comes from Venetian dialect, or that the first European treatise on Africa was written in Italian by an African scholar at the court of pope Leo X? If you are interested in gender and sexuality, in race and ethnicity studies, in the history of the Jewish diaspora or in postcolonial literature, Italian can be the cornerstone of your studies.

· Italian is a foundational language for LITERARY STUDIES. Authors like Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto are prime influences throughout the history of poetry and fiction: from Shakespeare’s theatre and Don Quixote’s adventures to Harry Potter’s hippogriffs and Star Wars.

· Italy is THE LAND OF ART (artists like Giotto, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio, Antonio Canova, Giorgio de Chirico, and Renzo Piano spoke Italian, thought in Italian, and wrote—a lot!—in Italian); Italian is THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC AND OPERA (even non-Italian masters of the past like Haydn, Gluck, and the great Mozart wrote their operas for Italian librettos, and some of the greatest musicians in the world—from Ennio Morricone to Claudio Abbado and Riccardo Muti—are Italian); Italian CINEMA is one of the most studied and appreciated in the world (from great classical masters like Rossellini, Fellini, Pasolini, Visconti, to genre cults that inspired American iconic films—like Quentin Tarantino’s ones: Sergio Leone’s spaghetti westerns for instance, or Dario Argento’s gialli and horrors, or Lucio Fulci splatters). Directors like Sorrentino, Tornatore, and Benigni recently won academy awards, and with works like Gomorrah and My Brilliant Friend, Italy is entering the world of high quality TV shows. And of course, Luca is Italian!
Italy is a cradle of **FEMINISM**. From the Medieval age to early modernity, Italian women like Caterina da Siena, Moderata Fonte, Vittoria Colonna, and Artemisia Gentileschi have changed European politics, philosophy, literature, and art. The #metoo hashtag was re-launched after the Italian campaign #quellavoltache, and Italian actress Asia Argento is one of the most vocal leaders of the movement. If you want to read legendary texts of 20th century feminism by Adriana Cavarero, Luisa Muraro, and Carla Lonzi, learn Italian.

Italy is the land of **ARCHAEOLOGY**, of Latin, and used to be a Greek colony. Italian is a gateway to learn about antiquity, about the classical roots of the West, about the origins of juridical and medical terms. Pompei and other legendary archaeological sites are in Italy, just as a huge chunk of the world’s cultural patrimony.

From the Mediterranean to the Alps, Italy is one of the most **BIOLOGICALLY DIVERSE** countries in the world: a fact that makes it unique in Europe. If you want to study animals, plants, or **ECOLOGY** in general, Italian can give you access to an incredible variety of parks, landscapes, and climates.

Italy is the land of **FASHION**. Italian futurists invented the jumpsuit, Milan became a capital of fashion, designers like Versace and Armani revolutionized the taste of the planet, Donatella Versace and Miuccia Prada are global icons. Italian offers access to a business niche devoted to beauty, elegance, inventiveness, and quality, which includes some of the most famous brands in the World: Ferrari, Lamborghini, Eataly, Bulgari, Seletti, Fornasetti.

Italy is the homeland of the Slow **FOOD** Revolution, a movement initiated in 1980 and now with a world-wide following to counteract fast food and to promote local food traditions.

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