Teaching Italian American Literature, Film, and Popular Culture (Options for Teaching)

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Italian American studies has long been in conversation with American culture at large and is increasingly present in American universities and colleges. Yet once-celebrated works, such as Pietro di Donato's *Christ in Concrete*, have slipped from the public consciousness, and many scholars fear that representations of Italian Americans in popular culture, as in *The Godfather* films and the television series *The Sopranos*, have obscured genuine historical inquiry and understanding. This volume aims to foster a deeper and more complex appreciation for the importance of Italian American texts in the study of American culture.

The editors open the volume by outlining the history of Italians in the United States and exploring the potential of literature and the arts to enable the recovery of a forgotten, even repressed, historical past. Over thirty scholars and teachers then present innovative ways of teaching Italian American texts and integrating them with other texts in courses ranging from American literature and history to multiethnic and women's studies. Contributors discuss Italian American fiction, poetry, memoir, oral history, and theater and performance. A section on film and television provides an overview of popular as well as lesser-known works and interrogates the stereotyped portrayals of Italian Americans. Other contributors offer historical and interdisciplinary approaches to Italian American texts that revolve around themes of race and gender politics, work and social class, and historical intersections. The volume concludes with a review of anthologies that can be used in teaching Italian American studies.

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