

# PATHOS

FORMS AND FORTUNES OF  
LITERARY EMOTIONS

3 PLENARY LECTURES, 5 SEMINARS  
FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS, PHDS, POSTDOCS

VALIDO COME CORSO DI AGGIORNAMENTO PER DOCENTI



# PATHOS

The goal of this summer school is to explore the role of emotions in literature, namely with respect to the **excess of pathos in different forms and times**.

Pathos has been a fundamental aspect of literature in every epoch. Great **poetry** has always foregrounded its ability to represent feelings, evoke intense and vivid moods, and elicit readers' emotions and empathy. On the other hand, the **novel** – the genre dominating literary modernity – has been often accused of indulging in sentimental excess, giving too much space to **melodramatic expression**. Indeed, in Western cultures, there is a widespread suspicion towards pathos, which has often been identified as a shortcoming of literature. Great books – according to a common implicit assumption – can prompt reflection and laughter, but not tears: pathos only concerns lowbrow production.

The summer school is an opportunity to engage in a reflection on issues related to pathos in literature in the last few centuries. **Different perspectives** will be taken into account: specific literary works, reader response theory, cognitive narratology, transmedia adaptation, and publishing history.

The program includes 5 seminars and plenary talks by **Karin Kukkonen** – specialised in eighteenth-century literature and cognitive literary studies – **Françoise Lavocat** – leading scholar on the facts/fiction debate – and **Paolo Giovannetti** – expert of poetry and nineteenth-century Italian literature. Participants will be involved in dialoguing with scholars specialised in different fields and they will work on personal projects that will be presented and discussed during plenary sessions.

## ORGANIZERS

Federico Pianzola  
(University of Milan-Bicocca)

Mariarosa Loddo  
(University of Eastern Piedmont)

Antonio Sotgiu  
(Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Mario Barengi  
(University of Milan-Bicocca)

Luigi Battezzato  
(University of Eastern Piedmont)

Angela Borghesi  
(University of Milan-Bicocca)

Stefania Sini  
(University of Eastern Piedmont)

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Graduate students, PhDs, Postdocs

## CREDITS

2 ECTS, *attestato per attività di aggiornamento docenti*

## VENUE

“Prospero Rendella” public library (seaside)  
Monopoli (Bari), Italy

## REGISTRATION FEE

€ 160 (travels, meals, and accommodation not included)

Participants will have access to all seminars; they will write a paper for a single seminar of their choice.

More information about required readings will be given upon confirmation of participation.

Seminars consists of two sessions: one in which the researcher will introduce the topic and discuss it with all participants; after that, the students will have one day and a half to revise their paper and present it for discussion.

The program is organised to allow every participant to attend all lectures and seminars, and to give more value to the interaction between different theoretical perspectives.

# PROGRAM

The schedule requires attending a total of 24 hours within four days and includes:

- Three plenary lectures:

**Françoise Lavocat**

(Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)

*Facts and fiction: pathos as a criterion*

**Karin Kukkonen**

(University of Oslo)

*How many ways can this story go?*

*Emotions, Plots and Sentiment Analysis*

**Paolo Giovannetti**

(IULM University, Milan)

*Social functions of female pathos in Italian Romanticism*

- Five seminars:

**Stefania Sini and Antonio Sotgiu**

(University of Eastern Piedmont and Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)

*Neither tragic nor comic: the resurgence of pathos in Auerbach and Bakhtin*

**Elisa Gambaro**

(University of Milan)

*Moving to tears. Ferrante's My brilliant friend from Kunstlerroman to screen melodrama*

**Cinzia Scarpino**

(University of Turin)

*The melodramatic imagination of 1930's American bestsellers in the Mondadori catalogue*

**Federico Pianzola**

(University of Milan-Bicocca)

*Digital methods for analysing text and readers' emotions*

**Mariarosa Loddo**

(University of Eastern Piedmont)

*The uses of literature: empathy and other responses to narrative*

- Evening event:

*Success and tears*

Conversation with **Angela Borghesi** on Elsa Morante's *History*

# INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

## PARTICIPANTS SELECTION

Applications to the summer school will be accepted until **June 30th, 2019**. To apply, fill the form at the following link, indicating a preference for a seminar topic and including an abstract of the proposed paper (300 words maximum): <http://bit.ly/ent2019>

Participants will be selected by the organisers and the scientific committee, based on the proposed papers' quality and relevance for the summer school topic, and on participants' Curriculum Vitae.

**The maximum number of participants is 20.**

Note: the activities by Giovannetti, Sini and Sotgiu, and Borghesi will be in Italian. Lavocat's lecture will be in French. All discussions will be in English.

**“CELUI QUI NE SAIT PAS VERSER DES LARMES NE SAIT PAS NON PLUS EN ESSUYER”.**

**ALFRED AUGUSTE PILAVOINE, *LES PENSÉES, MÉLANGES ET POÉSIES* (1845)**

## PREPARATION TO THE SUMMER SCHOOL

Selected participants will have to complete the **required readings** and **prepare a paper** (1000-1500 words). The paper should be sent to the following email address by June 30th, 2019: [enthymema@gmail.com](mailto:enthymema@gmail.com)

Papers can have the form of an essay, a conference presentation, a synthesis of a PhD dissertation, a summary of a course for university students, a project for high-school students, or another kind of project for a wider audience.

Each participant will be assigned a **tutor** who will provide feedback on the paper within two weeks before the beginning of the summer school, so that participants can already start revising it.

## TOPICS

Chronologically, we will consider many examples of pathos in Western literature, from the seventeenth century to the present day. **Eighteen-century sentimental literature** will be explored using cognitive narratology to gain insights on how to interpret the interactions of plot, characters' emotions and readers' engagement.

A look at **nineteenth-century reception of Italian Romantic literature** will allow us to reflect how negative biases can arise in aesthetic judgments and how they can be questioned in order to re-establish a gender-balanced evaluation of cultural production.

The international reception of **early twentieth-century American fiction** will be investigated by analysing the success of "melodramatic" bestsellers in Italy and the impact they had on the publishing industry and in the development of readers' taste.

A rereading of works by **Erich Auerbach and Mikhail Bakhtin** will focus on understanding the reasons that lead them to ground their literary histories on principles seemingly distant from sentimentalism and pathos. However, they were nonetheless engaged in reflecting about the source and the power of emotions in literature.

**Elsa Morante's** novel *History* (1974) will be the centre of further reflection on the biases of literary critics towards pathos and female authors.

"IT IS A FALLACY CAUSED BY AN EXCITED STATE OF THE FEELINGS, MAKING US, FOR THE TIME, MORE OR LESS IRRATIONAL".

**JOHN RUSKIN, OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY (1856)**

The work by one of the most famous contemporary authors – **Elena Ferrante** – will be an example of how the screen adaptation of *The Neapolitan Novels* (2011-2014) emphasized pathos by using narrative strategies that differ from the books.

In a more theoretical fashion, it will be disputed that pathos is not only a literary feature whose effect influences readers' emotional response. Rather, it can also operate as a criterion in establishing the **factuality or the fictionality of a narrative artefact**.

The emotions prompted by literature find useful application in different fields. We will explore how **empathy** is triggered by textual cues, how ethical values are negotiated in narrative, and how these effects can be used in teaching and **therapeutic contexts**.

Last but not least, we will see how **digital literary studies** apply computational methods to investigate the emotions expressed in texts and those that readers share during social reading practices.

This summer school has been organised thanks to the support of the Doctoral course in *Public, cultural, and social institutions: languages, law, history, curriculum in Linguistic and literary traditions*, of the University of Eastern Piedmont; of the Department of Human Sciences for Education of the University of Milan-Bicocca; and received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 792849.

*Monopoli - Bastione Santa Maria, picture by Monopoli91 at Italian Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0*

