



Academy of Architecture
Mendrisio Campus

USI Università della Svizzera italiana

Fact Sheet optional Italian language courses

The USI Università della Svizzera italiana is a multilingual university with a strong international orientation, in fact its students come from at least eighty different countries.

Italian is the third language in Switzerland and 350.000 inhabitants of Canton Ticino uses it as its main language. Being USI the only University of Italian language and culture in the Swiss Academia, since 2006 it is particularly committed in the organization of Italian language courses, both intensive and semestral.

The programme is designed for USI students and USI professionals at all levels who want to develop and improve their practical Italian skills.

Each year about 600 USI students enroll in the Italian language courses and 400 obtain the certificate of attendance.

WHY STUDY ITALIAN

- There is an increase in need for communicative skills in a second or third language.
- According to the European Commission, Italian is the fourth most commonly used language in EU.
- Multilingualism is a central issue in Switzerland.
- Italian is a minority language in Switzerland. Only 8,1% of the Swiss populations speaks Italian.
- Switzerland and canton Ticino has long been a magnet for the tourism industry.
- Italy is the country with the highest number of UNESCO sites in the world and a very popular destination for travelers.
- Many literary authors known worldwide are Italian writers.
- The 1980s saw a celebration in the Swiss architecture of the movement Ticino Tendenza. It represents a unique symbiosis of rationalism, modernism, awareness of history and reference to landscape.

COURSE OVERVIEW, MENDRISIO CAMPUS

INTENSIVE COURSES PRIOR TO THE START OF THE AUTUMN SEMESTER	SEMESTRAL COURSES DURING EACH SEMESTER	SELF STUDY
60 hours General Italian courses	28 hours General Italian courses	The official Italian language proficiency test PLIDA is programmed twice a year in April and November on Lugano Campus.
Absolute Beginners (A1)	Beginners 1 (A1-A2)	
Beginners 1 (A1-A2)	Elementary 2 (A2)	
Elementary 2 (A2)	Intermediate 1 (B1)	
Intermediate 1 (B1)	Intermediate 2 (B1-B2)	

Alternative enrollment programs are available on Lugano Campus.

PARTICIPANTS

All non Italian-speaking students, researchers, assistants, professors and staff studying or working at Università della Svizzera italiana are most welcome to take the free of charge Italian language courses offered every semester. As class size is an important factor in language learning it is on the other hand not possible to admit family members, friends or students studying in other higher Institutions.

LECTURERS

USI value good teaching. All lecturers have a long teaching experience and are highly motivated to make the learning experience as pleasant as possible favoring friendly and stimulating contacts with all participants.

COURSES

All courses are designed accordingly to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. All four skills are taught (reading, writing, listening and speaking) with particular emphasis on grammar in the lower levels A1-B2 and particular emphasis on oral communication and reading authentic texts in the higher levels B2-C1.

→ Detailed information regarding courses from level A1 until level B1-B2 on Mendrisio Campus and courses from level A1 until level B2-C1 on Lugano Campus can be found at the following link: www.italiancourse.usi.ch

INTENSIVE COURSES

ORGANIZATION

Autumn Semester:

Four intensive courses are offered at the Academy of Architecture, Mendrisio Campus, two weeks prior to the semester start at Absolute Beginner (A1), Beginner (A1-A2), Elementary (A2), and Intermediate level (B1).

Spring Semester:

Four intensive courses are offered on Lugano Campus (about 20 km from Mendrisio) two weeks prior to the semester start at Absolute Beginner (A1), Beginner (A1-A2), Elementary (A2), and Intermediate level (B1).

COURSE LOAD INTENSIVE COURSES ON MENDRISIO CAMPUS

Tuition involves six hours per day taught over a period of two weeks from Monday to Friday from 09:00 until 12:30 and from 14:00 until 15:30.

The intensive courses encourage to get fully involved in the language. The morning class focus on grammar and writing whereas the afternoon class focus on improving listening and speaking skills, expanding vocabulary and developing confidence.

SEMESTRAL COURSES

ORGANIZATION

General Italian courses:

The courses develop grammatical accuracy and builds vocabulary with a communicative teaching method incorporating reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

The courses held on Academy of Architecture are divided into four levels: Beginners 1 (A1-A2), Elementary (A2), Intermediate 1 (B1) and Intermediate 2 (B1-B2).

Alternative enrollment programs are available on Lugano Campus. Further information can be found at the following link:

www.italiancourse.usi.ch

COURSE LOAD SEMESTRAL COURSES

Our aim is to provide participants with the opportunity to acquire as much knowledge of the language as possible in a corresponding amount of time. Tuition involves two hours per week taught over a period of thirteen or fourteen weeks (in total 26 or 28 hours per semester depending from the course). Additionally, all courses requires at least two hours of individual study each week.

INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Each week students will be offered self-study exercises based on the areas of grammar which the class has focused on. Depending from the teacher and level, participants will also be encouraged to read short chapters of continuous reading, produce pieces of writing or prepare presentations. The student would be expected to perform at least two hours of homework outside of class every week.

ENTRANCE TEST

All higher level courses require knowledge of material covered in other courses. A definitive decision about admission can consequently be taken only after the entrance test organized the first day. The lecturer will address participants who chose the wrong level to the correct one after the first lesson.

EXEMPTION

All students who passed the exam of the lower level intensive course held before the start of the semester are exempted and are automatically admitted in the higher level semestral course. All other students have to take the entrance test even after successful completion of the final exam of the previous course.

LATE ARRIVAL

Since the entrance test is compulsory, students have to take the course starting from the first week. Exceptionally a new examination date can be scheduled for those students who experience delays in their arrival plans due to unexpected problems. The latest possible access in the classes is however the 1st of October in Autumn Semesters and 1st of March in Spring Semesters.

FINAL EVALUATION TEST

Regular examinations, midterm and final, are held each semester. The results are strictly informative (passing or failing) and give the chance to the teaching staff to recommend following courses.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- A regular and active attendance is required once admitted. In order to benefit fully from the course, a 100% attendance is recommended.
- Participation in classroom activities is the basis for all course work together with independent learning and homework. For this reason, though three absences during the semester are excusable, not more than three consecutive absences are accepted. It is the participant's responsibility to always notify in advance any absence via email to the teacher and ask about assignments and homework.
- For the good quality of the courses, any student wishing to drop the class once admitted should contact the teacher as soon as possible.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

All students who attended at least the 75% of the course and took the final test obtain a Certificate of Attendance. The attendance certificate will state the name of the participant and the level of the course but not the grade.

ECTS POINTS AND FINAL COURSE GRADE

Italian language courses do not count towards a degree at Università della Svizzera italiana. Only Swiss-European Mobility Programme (SEMP), Swiss Mobility and International Exchange students are entitled to receive ECTS points after having passed the final test and attended at least the 75% of the course. At USI all examinations on official courses are graded on the 1 to 10 scale. For language courses the evaluation is however expressed by a binary system (Pass or Fail).

COURSE REGISTRATION

Participants should use the self-assessment Grid of the European Language Portfolio before registration. Central to the European Language Portfolio are the six levels of communicative proficiency defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The levels are summarised for the five skills of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. Based upon the result, students can choose the most appropriate course level. Self-assessment Grid:

www.usi.ch/self-assessment-grid-159526.pdf.

The application is online. Registration begins in May (for Autumn semesters) and late November (for Spring semesters). For the good organization of the programme, students should register only if seriously interested. Online registration: www.italiancourse.usi.ch.

CONFIRMATION OF ENROLMENT

The online application enrolls participants automatically. A detailed informative email confirming the enrolment will however be sent few days before the beginning of each course. In case of unexpected withdrawal, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the administration by writing to italiancourses@usi.ch as soon as possible.

COURSE BOOK

The course material is not covered by the University and must be purchased by the student before the start of the course. A confirmation message with the details will be sent to the registrant prior to the course start.

Extra materials are chosen by the teacher depending on the needs of the class.

GRADED READERS

Graded readers or 'readers' are books that have had the language level simplified to help second language learners read them. The language is graded for vocabulary, complexity of grammar structures and also by the number of words.

A collection of graded readers from level A1 until level B2 can be borrowed in the Biblioteca universitaria di Lugano.

SUGGESTED GRAMMAR BOOKS

Fabia Gatti, Stella Peyronel; *Grammatica in contesto. Strutture e temi di italiano per stranieri*. Loescher editore, 2006.

Mina Ricci, *Via della grammatica A1-B2*, Edilingua edizioni

COURSE FEEDBACK

We value your opinion. All participants have the opportunity to give general feedback on the courses either by filling out an evaluation form in class at the end of the semester or by speaking to the teacher.

OFFICIAL ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PLIDA

Università della Svizzera italiana also offers an official Italian language proficiency test in Lugano twice a year in cooperation with *Società Dante Alighieri* in Italy. The PLIDA Certificate attests competence in Italian as a foreign language according to a scale of six levels.

The levels advance from A1 to C2 in progression of difficulty and correspond to the levels established by the Council of Europe.

For more information, please visit the webpage:

<http://desk.staging.usi.ch/it/convenzioni-certificati-di-lingua>

ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSES IN FIGURES

Academic Year 2016-2017, Lugano Campus

Total number of students enrolled in the Italian language courses:

453 participants

Total number of students who obtained the certificate of attendance: **284** participants.

Academic Year 2016-2017, Mendrisio Campus

Total number of students enrolled in the Italian language courses:

185 participants

Total number of students who obtained the certificate of attendance: **110** participants.

CONTACT

For any issue relating to the Italian language courses please write to italiancourses@usi.ch.

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