

# Dissertation Defense: Ermanno Conti



*Monday, April 23, 2012*  
*1:00 pm*  
*Ballantine Hall 120*

## COMMITTEE IN CHARGE

Andrea Ciccarelli , Chair

(French & Italian)

Colleen Ryan

(French & Italian)

Massimo Scalabrini

(French & Italian)

Antonio Vitti

(French & Italian)

David Hertz

(Comparative Literature)

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

## GLI “ANNI DI PIOMBO” NELLA LETTERATURA ITALIANA

In the historical period that spanned from 1969 to 1989, Italy witnessed the advent of the phenomenon of political violence. From the Piazza Fontana bombing (December 1969) to the assassination of the politician and political scientist Roberto Ruffilli (April 1988), left- and right-oriented political violence caused the death of 429 people and wounded approximately 2,000. Above all, it has profoundly affected the historic memory and the collective consciousness of the Italian people. Historians, writers, and journalists retrospectively use the term “anni di piombo” to designate this period.

In my dissertation I focus on the works of contemporary Italian authors who utilize the recurrent theme of political violence in their narratives. The works discussed have been written by some of the most important writers of the post-war period, including Alberto Moravia, Natalia Ginzburg, Paolo Volponi, Dario Fo, Leonardo Sciascia and Umberto Eco. The literature created by these authors is rich and original and touches on different literary genres from tragedy to farce; from *bildungsroman* to historical novel; and from spy story to detective story. Very often literary genres merge and intermingle to better convey the complexity of the realities narrated.

So far the issue of Italian political terrorism has been well-analyzed both politically and historically. Hundreds of studies have been published by historians and journalists; there are also a few studies on the cinematic representation. However, literature on this topic has not yet received the attention it deserves, as clearly proven by the lack of scholarly publication. Therefore, the primary purpose of my dissertation is to offer a complete and systematic organization of the literature on political terrorism in Italy. The other main goal of my study is to show the contribution of these works of literature to the global understanding of the phenomenon of domestic terrorism.