Dr. Janine Certo

Tuesday, April 16
11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Erickson Room: 133F

In Years of Wine and Steel: A Poetic Inquiry

Italian Americans are only beginning to study their cultural heritage. Part presentation, part poetry reading, Janine Certo’s talk will focus on her ongoing project, “In Years of Wine and Steel,” in which she explores: 1) some experiences of second generation southern Italian immigrants living in western Pennsylvania, 2) her own experiences as a third generation southern Italian American, and 3) Italian American consumer culture, especially depictions of Italian Americans in U.S. film and television. Drawing on poetic inquiry and documentary poetics, Janine will read original poems engaging questions such as: How were southern Italian immigrants confronted with otherness? What is the history of race-making in which Italian Americans alternately asserted, challenged, reified and subverted whiteness? How did the Italian American community and U.S. consumer culture produce an identity rooted in food and taste? Janine’s talk may be of particular interest to those interested in learning about poetic inquiry methods and/or alternative forms of writing.

Dr. Janine Certo is a poet and associate professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. Her interests include contemporary poetics; gastronomical poetry; identity in the southern Italian diaspora; poetic inquiry; arts-based research; children’s poetry writing practices; and supporting educators to teach poetry. She is the author of In the Corner of the Living, first runner-up for the 2017 Main Street Rag Poetry Book Award. Her poetry has appeared in New Ohio Review, Mid-American Review, Crab Orchard Review, Italian Americana, and elsewhere. She is also author of the book Children Writing Poems: Poetic Voices in and out of School (Routledge, 2018). Her articles appear in Journal of Literacy Research, English Education, Language Arts, The Reading Teacher, and English Journal. Her writing has been supported by grants from the Spencer Foundation and the Humanities and Arts Research Program at Michigan State University.