


**AUF**
*The American  
University of Florence*
**SYLLABUS**
**APCIUS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY  
SAS SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**
**SCHOOL OF FOOD AND WINE STUDIES / LIFE STUDIES AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND CULTURE / SOCIOLOGY  
COURSE TITLE: FOOD, CULTURE & SOCIETY IN ITALY  
COURSE CODE: FWFCFC240 / LSSOFC240  
3 semester credits**
**1. DESCRIPTION**

This course is targeted towards students with an interest in Italian food traditions, society, and culture. The main focus consists of what is generally defined as “made in Italy” culture and style in post-war Italy. Also covered are the relationships between Italian traditions, folklore and contemporary Italian society drawing from examples including festivals, food, tourism and economy, and the influence of foreign civilizations. Students will be asked to regard the subject of food outside of the context of ingredients and the procedures used to create a dish; we will instead examine a large scale context in which food is either featured as a main component or an integral element in cultural situations. Thus the student is asked first and foremost to observe the presented material across an anthropologic lens that roves over the entire Italian peninsula.

Lectures will be complemented by students cooking labs and tastings.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the links between Italian culture, style and traditions. After this class, students will be able to deal with the contradictions and peculiarities of contemporary Italy, a country where traditions survive in a context of constant avant-garde. The cooking practice proposed will also help the students learn the true Italian cooking performed in Italy.

**3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**4. METHOD**

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, and projects. Mediums for instruction used may include but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

**5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES**

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

John Dickie - **Delizia! The epic history of Italians and their food** - Free Press

Harper-Faccioli - **The Italian Way** - The University of Chicago Press

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

## FURTHER READINGS

M. Montanari - **Food is Culture** - Columbia University Press  
Carole M. Counihan - **Around the tuscan table** - Routledge  
Belfrange Nicolas - **The finest wines of Tuscany and central Italy** - Fine Wines Editions  
David E., Child J., Italian Food, Paperback, 1998  
Parasecoli F., Food Culture in Italy, Greenwood Press, CT 2004  
Field C., Celebrating Italy. Harper Perennial, N.Y. 1997  
Pray Bober P., Art, Culture and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy  
Roden C., The food of Italy, Vintage, London 1989  
Strong R., Feast-A History of Grand Eating  
Flandrin J. L., Montanari M., Food-A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present  
Capatti A., Montanari M., Italian Cuisine, Columbia University Press, N.Y. 1999  
Anderson B., Wines of Italy  
Piras C., Culinaria Italy, Ullmann 2007  
Plotkin F., Italy for the Gourmet Traveler, Kyle Cathie 2006  
Ganugi G., Cheese, Mc Rae Books 2001  
Romanelli L., Ganugi G. Olive Oil, Mc Rae Books 2001  
Barzini L., The Italians, A Full-Lenght Portrait Featuring Their Manners and Morals, NY, 2005  
Mignone M., Italy Today: Facing The Challenges of the New Millennium, 2008  
Artusi Pellegrino, Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well, NY, 1997 (1891).  
Locatelli G., Made in Italy Food and Stories, Fourth Estate London, 2008  
Whittaker A., Speak the Culture – Italy, Thorogood, 2010

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATIONS AND SOURCES

Monthly magazine:

- Firenze Spettacolo: the guide for all events in and around Florence. It shows, events, restaurants, bars, cinemas, theaters and a lot more...

Regional touristic Web-sites:

- Ristorante tipico: [www.ristorantetipico.net](http://www.ristorantetipico.net)
- Regione Toscana: <http://www.regione.toscana.it/>
- Provincia di Firenze: official website <http://www.provincia.firenze.it/>
- Comune di Firenze: official website <http://en.comune.fi.it/>
- Piramide alimentare toscana: <http://www.regione.toscana.it/piramidealimentare>
- Museum Firenze com'era <http://www.museicivici-fiorentini.it/en/firenzecomera/>
- <http://www.turismo.intoscana.it/intoscana2/export/TurismoRTen/>
- Diladdarno (sito ufficiale): <http://www.diladdarno.it/index-eng.asp>

Historical stores in Florence:

- Historical stores: <http://www.esercizistorici.it/>
- Historical Bar and Restaurants in Florence:
- Gilli: <http://www.gilli.it/>
- Paszowski: <http://www.paszowski.it/>
- Pegna: <http://www.pegna.it/>
- Vivoli: <http://vivoli.it/>
- Carabe: <http://www.gelatocarabe.com/>
- <http://www.turismo.intoscana.it/>
- Process: [http://www.antinori.it/eng/attorno\\_al\\_vino/procacci.htm](http://www.antinori.it/eng/attorno_al_vino/procacci.htm)
- Il Latini: [www.iltatini.com](http://www.iltatini.com)
- Giubbe Rosse: <http://www.giubberosse.it/>

Slow Food: the international organization involved in food awareness, reviving and sustaining local and artisanal food production, food education:

- Slow Food Toscana <http://www.slowfoodtoscana.it/>
- Slow Food Firenze <http://www.slowfoodfirenze.it/>

Wineries:

- Antinori(English):<http://www.antinori.it/eng/>

## **LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE**

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed.

Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

### **BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA**

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca\\_palagio\\_di\\_parte\\_guelfa/](http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/)

### **BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE**

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it)

### **THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE**

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: [www.britishinstitute.it/en](http://www.britishinstitute.it/en)

## **6. FIELD LEARNING**

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

## **7. COURSE MATERIALS**

Students are expected to wear the apron provided by the institution.

Should students wish to store materials or equipment, lockers are available with a deposit (given back after returning the key).

## **8. COURSE FEES**

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

## **9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM**

10% Attendance

25% Participation and assignments

20% Midterm exam / Field Learning Project (if applicable) / Special/Research Project (if applicable) / Practical evaluation (if applicable)

20% Final Paper/Project/Portfolio

25% Final Exam

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C-

=70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

## 10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

**Absences** are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.

- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

### LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

### TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

**Participation:** Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

## 11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

**The Midterm exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade.**

For exam time and date consult the course website.

**The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**

**The Field Learning Project (if applicable)** accounts for 20% of the course grade.

The Field Learning Project consists of

1. Preparatory research about the field learning
2. Activities during the field learning
3. Reaction paper after the field learning
  - Format: topic, length, guidelines, and due date will be provided in the course website.
  - Material for research will be available in the FUA-AUF Library in Corso Tintori 21.

**The Final Paper/Project** accounts for 20% of the course grade.

- Format: topic, length, guidelines, and due date will be provided in the course website.
- Material for research will be available in the FUA-AUF Library in Corso Tintori 21.

**The Final Exam** accounts for 25% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course

addendum. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**  
**Hand writing should be clear, neat and legible.**  
**Blue or black pens only.**

## 12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
Topic	<p><b>Introduction and course overview</b>  Introduction to the syllabus and used materials. Assignment and exam details.</p> <p><b>Relationship between food and culture</b>  Food as Culture - The concept of gastronomy and its development through the centuries - Focus on Italian cultural background</p> <p><b>Food in history Part I</b>  Development of cuisine throughout the centuries: from Ancient Romans to the Renaissance.</p>
Objectives	<p>Overview of the course.</p> <p>Understand the relationships between culture and food and how the two concepts share the same journey in time - Understand how Italian history and cultural background are related to Italian food - Discover and understand lifestyle, rituals, food, wine - Develop critical listening and critical observation</p>
Assignments	Massimo Montanari - Food is Culture - Chapter 1 and 2
Suggested readings	<p>Fabio Parasecoli - Food and Culture in Italy - Chapter 1 and 2</p> <p>Capatti, Montanari - Italian Cuisine - Identity as Exchange - pp. XIII-XX</p>

Lesson 2	
Topic	<p><b>Renaissance art and culture in Italy - Focus on Tuscany</b>  Italian society during Renaissance - The cult of food as a status symbol - Food and art in Renaissance Italy - Features of Italian Renaissance cuisine, an overview  The Medici Legacy - Artists and Cooks: parallel between these two types of artists during the Renaissance - Buontalenti and his tables - Michelangelo, Caravaggio and food in their paintings</p>
Objectives	<p>Learn how to value a variety of cultures through history, lifestyle, food and rituals.</p> <p>Understand the importance of food as an art form during the Renaissance -</p> <p>Understand how the Tuscan Renaissance has deeply influenced European cultures</p>
Field learning activity	<b>Visit to San Lorenzo Central Market</b>
Assignments	Delizia! Part II pp. 61-99 - The Italian Way pp. 27-65
Suggested readings	Fabio Parasecoli - Food and Culture in Italy pp.41-111

Lesson 3	
Topic	<b>Italian Renaissance culinary culture</b> Renaissance cooking style and flavor profiles - The influence of the Medici family on French cuisine - Tuscan Renaissance classics - The importance of nuts and spices in the gastronomy of the past
Objectives	Experience real traditional Renaissance-style recipes still present in Tuscan cuisine - Understand the origin of recipes and how they were related to the cultural background - Gain confidence with the typical flavors of Tuscan cuisine classics that originated in the Renaissance
Lab	<b>Carabaccia (tuscan onion soup) - Torta di riso (rice cake)</b>
Assignments	Delizia! pp. 1-12

Lesson 4	
Topic	<b>Conviviality and the pleasure of the table</b> <b>Drinking culture in Italy: what's behind a glass of wine?</b> Symbolical and cultural meaning of wine during the evolution of Italian society - History of wine consumption in Italy - Development of an Italian style in wine production - The importance of the “terroir” and the tradition of combining wines and food of the same area
Objectives	Understand the importance of conviviality as a lifestyle in Italian culture – Gain confidence with the role of wine as a sign of societal identity - Become familiar with the traditional typical wines from Italy
Tasting in class	<b>Wine tasting: traditional Italian wines</b>
Suggested readings	Belfrange Nicolas MW "The finest wines of Tuscany and central Italy" FINE WINES Editions 2009 - Geography, Geology and Climate: Terroir in the Sangiovese belt pp.17-23 & Viticulture: Tradition and Innovation pp.34-42

Lesson 5	
Topic	<b>Italian regional identity</b> Cultural and political influences that determined Italian identity from North to South - Italian society evolution and revolution - Evolution of Italian cuisine based on local habits and seasonal products <b>Italian Street food</b> A style of food that has ancient origins - Local “fiaschetterie”: from the taverns of the past to informal dining - Focus on an Italian classic: gelato - The history of gelato: from Romans to Buontalenti and the Arab influence
Field learning activity	<b>Traditional Italian foodservice - Visit to a local traditional “fiaschetteria”</b>

Objectives	Understand the evolution of Italian local cuisine as the result of a slow sedimentation - Gain confidence with the Italian concepts of <i>local</i> and <i>seasonal</i> when it comes to food consumption - Understand the main characterizing influences that determined Italian society evolution - Know the different types of street food in Italian traditions
Assignments	Delizia! Part III pp.129-166 - Delizia! Part IV pp. 196-215 <b>Topic of the final paper DUE</b>

Lesson 6	
Topic	<b>Food in history - Part II</b> <b>Social and economic evolution in Italy</b> Italian culture through the evolution of cuisine during the 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries. The technological revolution: preserving food. Modernization: modern food distribution. <b>The secret Italian ingredient: love</b> The importance conviviality as a distinctive cultural feature of Italian lifestyle - The influence of family - Italians like to share food with those who they care about - Sharing food as a social and sentimental moment
Objectives	Understand the evolution of Italian society and cuisine during the last centuries of the past millennium - Understand the psychological and emotional approach of Italians to food - Food sharing as a fundamental moment in social relationships
Tasting in class	<b>Tasting of products: Bread from Northern, Central and Southern Italy</b> Grissini, Tuscan Pane sciapo and Schiacciata, Treccia Ferrarese, the Apulian durum wheat bread, Sardinian Carta da Musica Honey & bread: acacia, chestnut and millefiori honey
Assignments	The Italian Way pp.69-96 - Delizia! pp.256-302
Note	<b>Midterm review</b>

Lesson 7	
Note	Midterm Exam
Field learning activity	<b>Gelato tasting in an artisan “gelateria”</b>

Lesson 8	
	Academic Break

Lesson 9	
Topic	<b>Tuscan cuisine</b> Tuscan food ways - How much of Renaissance cuisine is still on Tuscan tables Tuscan cuisine after tomato diffusion: how recipes changed. Influence of the tomato on traditional dishes Highlights of ingredients that became symbol of a cuisine: cavolo nero, bistecca fiorentina, beans, farro, extra virgin olive oil
Objectives	Understand the culinary heritage of Tuscany and its cuisine style - Gain confidence with the Tuscan food pyramid - Learn traditional recipes that became symbols of Tuscan cuisine
Lab	<b>Fagioli all'uccelletto - Ribollita (Fall/Spring) / Pappa al pomodoro (Summer)</b>
Suggested readings	Counihan C.M. - Around the tuscan table pp 17-56

Lesson 10	
Topic	<b>Rural economy in Italy</b> <b>Italian specialty products: Cheese &amp; Cured meats</b> The importance of curing and cheese making as preservation methods - Preserved ingredients in Italian history From the origins to the art of cheesemaking - Focus on the role of cheese in ancient times - Use of cheese in Italian cuisine: past and present - History and evolution of cured meats: from the Etruscans to the present day - Overview of Italian specialty cured meats: Culatello di Zibello DOP, Finocchiona IGP, Ciauscolo marchigiano IGP <b>Focus on Prosciutto and Parmigiano Reggiano:</b> varieties and production process - The importance of a proper aging - Signs of quality
Objectives	Learn prosciutto production process – Gain confidence with the role of salumi in Italian cuisine - Understand the difference between salumi and salami - Learn the signs of quality of salumi and how to tell the industrial from the artisan products
Tasting in class	<b>Prosciutto di Parma DOP and Parmigiano Reggiano DOP tasting</b>
Assignments	The Italian Way pp.174-187

Lesson 11	
Topic	<b>The Italian taste for quality 1</b> <b>Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale DOP</b> History and origins of the most famous and expensive vinegar in the world - A tradition that runs in the family - Production process and PDO rules - Modena VS Reggio Emilia - Differences between balsamic vinegar and traditional balsamic vinegar: production, cost, flavor
Objectives	Understand the development in the use of vinegar from antiquity to the present day - Learn the production method of Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale and what makes it different from other vinegars - Gain confidence with the various applications of aceto



	balsamico in Italian gastronomy
Tasting in class	<b>Tasting in class: Balsamic vinegar IGP - Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena DOP 12 years &amp; 25 years with fruits and cheese</b>
Assignments	<a href="http://www.balsamicotradizionale.it">www.balsamicotradizionale.it</a> - Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale paper DUE

Lesson 12	
Topic	<b>The Italian taste for quality 2</b> <b>Specialty shops</b> Unique delicacies, crafts, and traditions that made the excellence of Italian food: when time, patience and dedication make the difference - The importance of a specific environment for the quality of a product - Food as a sign of identity - The respect of Italians for food: protecting food from “fakes”
Objectives	Gain confidence with the importance of environmental and cultural factors for the quality of specialty products - Understand the respect Italian have for food - Be familiar with the idea of food as a status symbol - Learn the basics of Italian and European quality labelling
Field learning activity	<b>Visit to a “luxury” food shop</b>
Assignments	Delizia! pp.303-322

Lesson 13	
Topic	<b>The Italian family meal &amp; family market</b> The logic of the table - The division of the meal in courses as an imitation of past aristocratic meals - How contemporary nutritional awareness and social changes influenced Italian culinary habits in the past decades - The “myth” of the daily 4-course meal <b>Focus on representative Italian Festivities: Easter, Christmas, Lent</b> The origins: mingling the sacred and the profane - Food and calendar: social and religious influences on Italian menus
Field learning activity	<b>Visit to an historical Florentine “gastronomia”</b>
Objectives	Understand the origins of the structure of Italian meals - Understand the difference between meals for celebrations and ordinary meals in Italian tradition – Gain confidence with the influence that the calendar and religious rules had on the Italian way of eating - Understand the social and cultural changes of past decades and their influence on the Italian way of eating - Learn about the typical dishes Italians eat during festivities
Assignments	The Italian Way - pp. 193-233 - <b>Final paper DUE</b>

Lesson 14	
Topic	<b>The influence of foreign civilization on Italian cuisine</b> Food as one of the sediments of different cultures - Overview of specialty “exotic” ingredients that turned into daily treats in Italian cuisine - The value of food for the local economy <b>The role of ingredients in the society of abundance</b> Special recipes and ingredients that turned into daily delights - Rice, saffron, chocolate, and their diffusion in Italy
Objectives	Understand the diffusion of specialty ingredients throughout time - Understand the different forms of social relevance related to specialty ingredients in the society of abundance - Learn the secrets of the risotto production method - Learn how to prepare a homemade chocolate sauce to pair with desserts
Lab	<b>Risotto alla milanese - Panna cotta con salsa al cioccolato</b>
Note	<b>Final review</b>
Assignments	The Italian Way pp. 283-286

Lesson 15	
	FINAL EXAM