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SYLLABUS

Rev. 8
April 2025
Academic
Affairs

Format revised in 2025
Syllabus revised in 2025

Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

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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 visits 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.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Conduct a critical analysis of Italian "made in Italy" culture
- Compare diverse cultural patterns and lifestyles in different Italian contexts
- Analyze regional diversity within Italy
- Identify fundamental features of the Italian economy including food production, tourism, and the "made in Italy" brand
- Analyze how Italian culture creates meaning for its members and how cultural values are interpreted by visitors and outsiders
- Analyze how Italian culture has evolved in a globalized world while maintaining distinctive traditions
- Reflect on personal perspectives regarding Italian culture

3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course.

4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and interaction with the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, integrate relevant academic sources, may include multimedia references, propose creative problem-solving, and other appropriate forms of delivery as deemed appropriate to the course's purpose.

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 course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may 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
Parasecoli F., Food Culture in Italy, Greenwood Press, CT 2004
Ganugi G., Cheese, Mc Rae Books 2001
David E., Child J., Italian Food, Paperback, 1998
Romanelli L., Ganugi G. Olive Oil, Mc Rae Books 2001
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
Locatelli G., Made in Italy Food and Stories, Fourth Estate London, 2008
Whittaker A., Speak the Culture – Italy, Thorogood, 2010

LIBRARY

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the library site for resources such as collections, borrowing, scanning and wifi connection, and research:

<https://www.auf-florence.org/Library/the-library/>

6. 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).

7. 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. If this course requires a fee, the exact amount is communicated prior to enrollment.

8. GRADING AND EVALUATION & ATTENDANCE

10% Attendance

30% Participation and assignments

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

20% Final Paper/Project/Portfolio

20% Final Exam

The above grade breakdown percentages reflect the grading scale standards in the “Grading and Evaluation System” section of the catalog.

Attendance

Class participation is mandatory. Based on the hours defined in the Academic Catalog’s attendance policy, students may miss up to 2 class encounters delivered as lecture hours. A third absence constitutes a course failure.

Please note that absence hours may vary according to the learning methodology, as per the academic catalog policy on credit hours:

https://catalog.auf-florence.org/standard_regulation

9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

Midterm Assessment (11 weeks semester ONLY): accounts for 20% of the final course grade. Topic will be assigned on Lesson 5 and is due by Lesson 6. The Midterm assessment must be uploaded on the course portal.

Special Project (Intensive sessions only): accounts for 20% of the final course grade. The Project is due by Lesson 6 and must be uploaded on the course portal.

Final Exam: accounts for 20% of the final course grade.

The Final Exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

The final exam is cumulative.

Final Project: accounts for 20% of the final course grade. The project details will be assigned the first day of class. The Final Project is due by Lesson 9.

Assignments: This course requires at least 3 assignments as per the course outline in the syllabus.

Assignment #1: Mini Research and Reflection Paper on the Central Market Visit

Students are required to submit a 600-word essay on the San Lorenzo Central Market. The paper should address the history of the market, its significance within the city’s economy, and include a personal reflection on impressions and insights gained during the visit. Due by Lesson 3.

Assignment #2: Survey of quality Italian food products.

Students are required to choose an Italian Specialty Product among those provided by the professor and

develop a 500 words presentation including product origins and area of production, main characteristics, culinary applications. Due by Lesson 7.

Assignment #3: CiboChat Food Blogging Assignment

Students create engaging food blog posts selecting from multiple storytelling formats. See Project outline in the course portal.

Further details are provided in the course portal.

10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Introduction and course overview Relationship between food and culture Food as Culture - The concept of gastronomy and its development through the centuries - Focus on Italian cultural background Food in history: Social and economic evolution in Italy Italian culture through the evolution of cuisine - Development of cuisine throughout the centuries: from Ancient Romans to modern times The technological revolution: preserving food - Modernization: modern food distribution.
Objectives	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 - Understand the evolution of Italian society and cuisine during the last centuries of the past millennium - Discover and understand lifestyle, rituals, food, wine - Develop critical listening and critical observation
Readings/ Assignments	Massimo Montanari - Food is Culture - Chapter 1 and 2 Fabio Parasecoli - Food and Culture in Italy - Chapter 1 and 2 Capatti, Montanari - Italian Cuisine - Identity as Exchange - pp. XIII-XX Assignment #1 topic assigned: Mini Research and Reflection Paper on the Central Market visit. Due by Lesson 3. Assignment #3 topic assigned CiboChat Project - Due by Lesson 10.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>Renaissance art and culture in Italy 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> <p>Italian Renaissance culinary culture - Focus on Tuscany The cult of food as a status symbol - Features of Italian Renaissance cuisine, an overview - The influence of the Medici family on French cuisine - Tuscan Renaissance classics - The importance of nuts and spices in the gastronomy of the past</p>
Objectives	Learn how to value a variety of cultures through history, lifestyle, food and rituals - Understand the importance of food as an art form during the Renaissance - Understand how the Tuscan Renaissance has deeply influenced European cultures - Understand the origin of recipes and how they were related to the cultural background
Visit	Visit to San Lorenzo Central Market
Readings/ Assignments	Delizia! pp. 1-12 & pp. 61-99 - The Italian Way pp. 27-65

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Conviviality and the pleasure of the table Drinking culture in Italy: what's behind a glass of wine? 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</p>
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	Wine tasting: traditional Italian wines
Readings/ Assignments	Belfrange Nicolas MW "The finest wines of Tuscany and central Italy" - Geography, Geology and Climate: Terroir in the Sangiovese belt pp.17-23 + Viticulture: Tradition and Innovation pp.34-42 Assignment #1 DUE Assignment #2 topic assigned: Survey of quality Italian food products. Due by Lesson 7.

Lesson 4	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>Italian regional identity 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</p> <p>Italian Street food 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</p>
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
Visit	Traditional Italian foodservice - Visit to a local traditional “fiaschetteria”
Readings/ Assignments	Delizia! Part III pp.129-166 - Delizia! Part IV pp. 196-215 FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.

Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Rural economy in Italy Italian specialty products: Cheese & Cured meats 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 Focus on Prosciutto and Parmigiano Reggiano: varieties and production process - The importance of a proper aging - Signs of quality</p>
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	Prosciutto di Parma DOP and Parmigiano Reggiano DOP tasting
Readings/ Assignments	The Italian Way pp.174-187 MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED (11 weeks semester ONLY)

Lesson 6	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>Tuscan cuisine</p> <p>Tuscan food ways - How much of Renaissance cuisine is still on Tuscan tables</p> <p>Tuscan cuisine after tomato diffusion: how recipes changed - Influence of the tomato on traditional dishes</p> <p>Highlights of ingredients that became symbol of a cuisine: Tuscan bread, Tuscan black cabbage, bistecca fiorentina, beans, farro, extra virgin olive oil</p> <p>The secret Italian ingredient: love</p> <p>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</p>
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 - Understand the psychological and emotional approach of Italians to food - Food sharing as a fundamental moment in social relationships
Tasting in class	Tasting of products: Tuscan bread, cured meats Tuscan “Pane sciapo”, Schiacciata, Pan di ramerino, Salame toscano, Rigatino
Readings/ Assignments	The Italian Way pp.69-96 - Delizia! pp.256-302 MIDTERM ASSESSMENT DUE (11 weeks semester ONLY) / SPECIAL PROJECT DUE (3 weeks session ONLY)

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>The Italian taste for quality 1</p> <p>Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale DOP</p> <p>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</p> <p>Class discussion on CiboChat Project: see project guidelines</p>
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	Tasting in class: Balsamic vinegar IGP - Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena DOP 12 years & 25 years with fruits and cheese
Readings/ Assignments	<p>www.balsamicotradizionale.it</p> <p>Midterm Assessment Feedback (if applicable)</p> <p>Assignment #2 DUE.</p>

Lesson 8	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>The Italian taste for quality 2</p> <p>Specialty shops</p> <p>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”</p>
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
Visit	Visit to a “luxury” food shop
Readings/ Assignments	Delizia! pp.303-322

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>The Italian family meal & family market</p> <p>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</p> <p>Focus on representative Italian Festivities: Easter, Christmas, Lent</p> <p>The origins: mingling the sacred and the profane - Food and calendar: social and religious influences on Italian menus</p>
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
Visit	Visit to an historical Florentine “gastronomia”
Readings/ Assignments	The Italian Way - pp. 193-233 FINAL PROJECT DUE

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>The influence of foreign civilization on Italian cuisine 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</p> <p>The role of ingredients in the society of abundance Special recipes and ingredients that turned into daily delights - Rice, saffron, chocolate, and their diffusion in Italy</p> <p>Italian food today The impact of industry, globalization, and media on food choices</p>
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 - Analyze how food culture in Italy has evolved in recent decades
Readings/ Assignments	The Italian Way pp. 283-286 Assignment #3 (CiboChat Project) DUE

Lesson 11 Final Exam	
Meet	In class
Lecture	FINAL EXAM