



AUF

*The American  
University of Florence*

**SYLLABUS**

Rev. 8  
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Academic  
Affairs

Format revised 2025  
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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. FUA study abroad programs may include AUF offerings, which are US-aligned in terms of higher education standards as per the university's institutional structure. Common courses offered by FUA and AUF have been jointly selected by both institutions as eligible for mutual recognition and delivery. As such, equal academic standards, credibility, and outcomes are vetted by the Academic Offices of the institutions for all courses and syllabi offered in the study abroad program.

**SCHOOL OF FOOD AND WINE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WINE EXPERTISE**  
**COURSE TITLE: WINE APPRECIATION - WINES OF ITALY**  
**COURSE CODE: FWWEWA340**  
**3 semester credits**

#### 1. DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to Italy's wine culture, tradition, and heritage as well as to the importance of wine within the Italian socio-economic framework and how to read an Italian wine label. The major grape varieties cultivated in Italy will be analyzed and an emphasis will be placed on the main wine production techniques in order to understand the winemaking processes for red, white, rosé, Italian sparkling, sweet, and fortified wines. Students will learn the differences among types and styles of wine according to the winemaking choices, developing a critical capability of analysis and classification.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Determine the first notions of viticulture
- Identify all the processes of winemaking technique, understanding the differences among red, white, sparkling, sweet, fortified, etc.. wines
- Recognize the most important Italian grape varieties and their most relevant characteristics
- Define the basic wine types and explain how they are made
- Compare different styles of wine
- Analyze the relevance of Italian wine culture in daily drinking habits
- Correctly use basic terms to describe the sensory properties of wines

#### 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):

- Kim, Stevie. Italian Wine Unplugged Grape by Grape, Italian Positive Press, 2017.
- Small, Robert W. Understanding and Appreciating Wine, Beer and Spirits, Wiley and Sons, 2011.

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

ROBINSON, JANCIS (ed.), The Oxford Companion to Wine (New Edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

VINE, RICHARD P., Wine Appreciation, Second Edition, New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1997

PEYNAUD, EMILE, The Taste of Wine, Wine Appreciation Guild, 1989

CLARKE. OZ & RAND, MARGARET, Grapes & Wines. A comprehensive guide to varieties and flavours – the key to enjoying modern wine, Boston, Websters 2001

OUGH, C. S. Winemaking basics. NY: Food Products Press, 1992.

UNWIN, TIM. Wine and the vine. NY: Routledge, 1996.

CLARKE, OZ. Encyclopedia of Wine, An A-Z Guide to the Wines of the World, London: Websters International Publishers Lmtd. 1999, 2003

JENS PRIEWE WINE from Grape to Glass Abbeville Press 2002 updated and revised edition

KAREN MACNEAL The wine bible - Workman Publishing NY - 2<sup>nd</sup>ed. 2015

## 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

No additional course materials are necessary.

## 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% Class Participation and Assignments

20% Midterm Exam, Field Learning project (if applicable), Special/Research Project (if applicable)

20% Final Exam

20% Paper/Project

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](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 details will be assigned the first day of class. It 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: The Global Phenomenon of Prosecco**

Historical origins, the Glera grape, production methods, distinctive fresh style, and the economic and cultural factors behind one of the world's best-selling wines. Due by Lesson 3.

**Assignment #2: The Winemaking of Orange Wines**

Understanding how this hybrid technique bridges traditional and innovative approaches in winemaking. Due by Lesson 7.

**Assignment #3: Decoding an Italian Wine Label**

The instructor will assign a specific Italian wine to analyze in detail. Due by Lesson 10.

Further details are provided in the course portal.

## 10. COURSE OUTLINE

<b>Lesson 1</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	Intro to course outline and organization Syllabus Review Wine culture, regional identity, tradition of winemaking in Italy Basics of Wine tasting: what and how to appreciate wine Sight, Smell, Taste, overall Assessment
<b>Objectives</b>	Get confident with course content, objectives, assignments and expectations Identify the importance of regionality in Italian winemaking Understand the cultural implications related to a correct wine appreciation Learn about the importance of visual, olfactory and gustative analysis Gain knowledge on the main elements to be analyzed in a professional wine tasting Get confident with wine terminology
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Vermentino di Sardegna 1 Falanghina 1 Pinot Nero Alto Adige
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook “Italian Grape Unplugged” Positive Press, History Geology and Climate pp. 11-22, Grappling with Italian Grapes pp. 36-44 Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 6 pp. 96-113 <b>Assignment #1 The Global Phenomenon of Prosecco assigned, due by Lesson 3.</b>

<b>Lesson 2</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Intro to winemaking: harvest as the potential of wine Macro climate and micro climate
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand how harvest timing might differ according to geographical locations and weather conditions Critically assess how the quality of grape represents the quality of wine Get involved in the process of winemaking, from grape to bottle
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Prosecco Doc Extra Dry 1 Muller Thurgau Alto Adige 1 Cabernet Franc Toscana
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons Chapter 4 pp. 40-69

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	White wines: most common techniques and procedures The different styles of white wine The most important Italian white grape varieties

<b>Objectives</b>	Learn about the vinification process for white grapes Gain knowledge on the main characteristics and styles of white wine Identify the regional identity of Italian white grape varieties
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Greco di Tufo 1 Chardonnay Alto Adige 1 Chardonnay Friuli (aged in barrique)
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small "Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits"; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 5 pp. 70-96 part I Textbook "Italian Grape Unplugged" Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Falanghina, Fiano, Garganega, Greco, Vermentino <b>Assignment #1 DUE.</b>

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Red wines: most common techniques and procedures The different styles of red wine The most important Italian red grape varieties
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn about the vinification process for red grapes Gain knowledge on the main characteristics and styles of red wine Identify the regional identity of Italian red grape varieties
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Lambrusco Grasparossa 1 Nebbiolo Langhe 1 Merlot
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small "Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits"; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 5 pp. 70-96 part II Textbook "Italian Grape Unplugged" Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Aglianico, Lambrusco, Nebbiolo <b>Assignment #2 The Global Phenomenon of Prosecco assigned, due by Lesson 7.</b> <b>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.</b>

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Rosè and Orange Wines Vinification process for rosé and orange wines: most common techniques and procedures.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand how to obtain a rosé/orange wine according to different production techniques Critically assess style and versatility of these wines Identify the most common grapes used for rosé/orange vinification

<b>Tasting</b>	1 Cerasuolo 1 Pinot Grigio ramato 1 Sangiovese rosé
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 7-8-9 Textbook “Italian Grape Unplugged” Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Sangiovese, Barbera, Corvina, Dolcetto <b>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.</b>

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Sweet Wines: Late harvest, Botrytized, Passiti wines
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand how to concentrate sugars in the grape Learn about the traditional Appassimento method Gain knowledge on several methods and related styles of wine
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Moscato d'Asti 1 Malvasia delle Lipari 1 Muffato
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 18 pp. 292-301 Textbook “Italian Grape Unplugged” Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of the different Moscato varieties, Malvasia, Aleatico, Vernaccia <b>Assignment #3 Decoding an Italian Wine Label assigned, due by LESSON 10.</b> <b>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT/SPECIAL PROJECT DUE.</b>

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Sparkling Wines: overview on the most common sparkling methods Different styles of sparkling wines
<b>Objectives</b>	Critically assess the organoleptic differences among different styles of sparkling wine and the importance of the Dosage Gain knowledge on Traditional Method and Charmat Method Identify what is Frizzante and Spumante
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Trento Doc Blanc de Blancs 1 Oltrepo Pavese 1 Cartizze Docg

<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook “Italian Grape Unplugged” Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Glera, Albana, Grechetto, Ribolla, Trebbiano, Tocai Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 17 pp. 270-291 <b>Assignment #2 DUE.</b>
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<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Terroir and Italian Classification System The culture of drinking wine in Italy The main historical events that influenced the evolution of winemaking in Italy Introduction to Wine Blind Tasting
<b>Objectives</b>	Demonstrate understanding of the historical background of Italian viticulture Learn about the importance of Terroir for Italian winemaking identity Critically assess the culture of drinking wine with moderation and pairing food and wine
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Inzolia 1 Freisa 1 Sagrantino di Montefalco 1 Blind Tasting (In-Class Exercise)
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 11-12-13 Textbook “Italian Grape Unplugged” Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Ansonica, Freisa, Sagrantino, Cannonau, Montepulciano, Vernaccia

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Fortified Wines and Italian Spirits: Grappa, etc. The history and classification of Marsala
<b>Objectives</b>	Demonstrate understanding of what is a fortified wine Critically assess the differences among Liquors, Spirits and Liqueurs Gain knowledge on the famous Italian wine Marsala
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Marsala Fine 1 Marsala Vergine o Vergine Stravecchio 1 Grappa
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Textbook Robert W. Small “Understanding and appreciating wine, beer and spirits”; John Wiley & sons; Chapter 18 pp. 301-309 Textbook “Italian Grape Unplugged” Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Grillo, Catarratto, Nero d’Avola, Primitivo <b>FINAL PROJECT DUE.</b>

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	Wine and Health: wine consumption in Italy and links to the Mediterranean Diet Conclusions and Review
<b>Objectives</b>	Demonstrate understanding of the metabolism of alcohol Learn about the nutritional value of wine Gain knowledge on antioxidant effects and contraindications Review the topics discussed throughout the course in preparation for the Final Exam Gain Knowledge on how to research and present findings in a structured and effective way
<b>Tasting</b>	1 Riesling 1 Friulano 1 Teroldego 1 Blind Tasting (In-Class Exercise)
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Jamie Goode "The science of wine" University of California Press, 2014 Section 3 – chapter 24 pp. 204-206 Textbook "Italian Grape Unplugged" Positive Press, Must know Grapes + Mind Maps of Teroldego, Corvina, Negroamaro, Schiava, Tocai Friulano Review and study all the materials covered in class, lectures, handouts, online references, research, book extracts, etc. distributed throughout the course. <b>Assignment #3 DUE.</b>

<b>Lesson 11 Final Exam</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In Class
<b>Lecture</b>	FINAL EXAM