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SAS – SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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**SCHOOL OF LIFE STUDIES AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ITALIAN CULTURAL STUDIES**  
**COURSE TITLE: CULTURAL INTRODUCTION TO ITALY**  
**COURSE CODE: LSSOCI202; GSANCI202; LAAHCI202; ISISCI202**  
**3 semester credits**

**1. DESCRIPTION**

The study of Italian culture helps the student to acquire a deep awareness of both cultural unity and regional diversity. This course is intended to provide students with an in-depth introduction to Italian culture and to broaden one's awareness and understanding of the role of cultural heritage in customs and lifestyles. Lectures will provide students with an organized, focused, and academic understanding of Italian history, art, architecture, food, religion, and culture. The course provides additional enrichment through basic notions of Italian language and terminology along with assigned readings and a final paper. On-site teaching is a significant part of this course and is aimed to provide the student with an incomparable experience of studying important sites of artistic architectural and social relevance in present-day Italy. Students are encouraged to observe the sites through active participation and to discuss their observations using specific and analytic social assessment skills. Florence only.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

This course is intended to provide students with an in-depth introduction to Florentine and Italian culture. Students will be encouraged to become active visitors and not passive observers, and to understand a culture beyond the stereotypes. We will begin by identifying the common stereotypes of Italians and Italian culture and revisit those stereotypes after being immersed for three weeks in Italian language and culture. The course will focus on several topics: culture, art history, enogastronomy and on relevant aspects of contemporary Italian culture and society, such as political and social changes that Italy is going through. Students should acquire a global understanding of history, traditions, and contemporary issues of Italian culture by the conclusion of the course. Upon completion of the course the students should:

- Analyze and describe how culture creates meaning for its members and how values are interpreted by visitors.
- Conduct a critical analysis of Italian culture and identify its key issues, themes, styles, and forms.
- Analyze Italian culture in his historical development and in the context of a globalized world.
- Experience that there are many "Italies" and understand the historical and geographical reasons for the cultural diversity of the Italian regions.
- Compare the diversity of cultural patterns and lifestyles in different contexts throughout class discussions.
- Describe how cultures are different according to the historical heritage of each region or area.
- Recognize how both verbal and non-verbal behavior is affected by history, geography and

- culture.
- Discover the relation between landscape, art and architecture in different contexts in Tuscany and Italy.
- Outline the cultural development of Tuscany and Italy including the development of tourism during the last century.
- Identify the fundamental features of Tuscan economy (i.e. wine and oil production, fishing industry, tourism, outdoor markets).
- Describe the geography of Italy and of Central Italy in particular.
- Examine and reflect how their points of views have changed through interaction in a multicultural environment and re-evaluate the components of personal worldview.
- Analyze and describe Italian Contemporary culture in relation to social and cultural trends, identity and citizenship, tradition and evolution of social norms and customs.
- Identify basic introductory phrases and vocabulary in Italian.
- Be able to engage in simple conversations and understand the meaning of key words of the Italian Culture.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### 4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and site visits within the local community. Mediums for instruction used will 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:

- Mignone, Mario, *Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium* (Peter Lang, 2008)

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

(Books listed below are available in the FUA-AUF library)

#### ABOUT ITALY AND ITALIANS

- Brucker, Gene A., *Renaissance Florence*, (University of California Press, 1983)
- Baranski, Zygmunt, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Bondanella, Peter, *A History of Italian Cinema* (Continuum, 2009)
- Brand, Peter, *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Calcagno, Anne (ed.), *Italy* (Travelers Tales, 2001)
- Cunaccia, Cesare, *Tuscany Marvels* (Assouline, 2021)
- D'Epiro, Peter – Pinkowish, Mary Desmond, Sprezzatura, *50 ways Italian Genius shaped the World* (Anchor 2001)
- De Mauro, Tullio, *Linguistic Variety and Linguistic Minorities* (Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Duchartre, Pierre Louis, *The Italian Comedy* (Dover Publications, 1966)
- Duggan, Christopher, *A Concise History of Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Linda Falcone, *Italians Dance and I'm a Wallflower* (The Florentine Press, 2006)
- Field, Carol, *Hill Towns of Italy* (Chronicle Books, 1997)

- Field, Carol, *In Nonna's Kitchen* (Morrow Cookbooks, 1997)
- Forgacs, David & Lumley, Robert, *Italian Cultural Studies: an Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Ginsborg, Paul, *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006)
- Ginsborg, Paul, *Silvio Berlusconi: Television, Power and Patrimony* (Verso, 2005)
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Italian Journey: 1786-1788* (Penguin Classics, 1992)
- Hibbert, Christopher, *The Rise and the Fall of the House of Medici* (Penguin Books, 1979)
- Holmes John, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Italy* (Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Hofmann, Paul, *That Fine Italian Hand* (Henry Holt, 1990)
- Jones, Tobias, *The Dark Heart of Italy* (Faber and Faber, 2003)
- Mc Adam, Alta, *The Blue Guide Florence* (Blue Guide; Ninth Edition edition, 2005)
- McCarthy, Mary, *The Stones of Florence* (Mariner Books, 2002)
- Munari, Bruno, *Speak Italian: The Fine Art of the Gesture* (Chronicle Books, 2005)
- Parks, Tim, *Italian Neighbors* (CCV, 2003)
- Parks Tim, *An Italian Education* (CCV, 2001)
- Pasquale, Maria, *How to Be Italian: Eat, Drink, Dress, Travel and Love La Dolce Vita* (Smith Street, 2021)
- Reeder, Linda, *Italy in the Modern World: Society, Culture and Identity* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2019)
- Richards, Charles, *The New Italians* (Penguin Books Ltd, 1995)
- Severgnini, Beppe, *An Italian in America* (Rizzoli Intl Pubn 2001)
- Severgnini, Beppe, *Ciao America! An Italian Discovers the U.S.* (Broadway, 2003)
- Trease, Geoffrey, *The Grand Tour* (Yale University Press, 1991)

#### LITERATURE

- Calvino, Italo, *Fiabe Italiane* (Mondadori, 1993)
- Leavitt, David, *Florence, A Delicate Case* (Bloomsbury, 2002)
- Leavitt, David, Mark Mitchell, *In Maremma: Life and a House in Southern Tuscany* (Counterpoint LLC 2011)
- King, Ross, *Bookseller of Florence: The Story of the Manuscripts That Illuminated the Renaissance* (Vintage, 2021)
- Tomasi di Lampedusa, Giuseppe, *The Leopard* (Vintage, 2007)
- Twain, Mark, *The Innocents Abroad* (Wordsworth, 2010)

#### FOOD TRADITIONS

- Artusi, Pellegrino, *The Art of Eating Well* (Random House, 1996)
- Belfrage, Nicholas, *The Finest Wines of Tuscany and Central Italy: A Regional and Village Guide to the Best Wines and Their Producers* (Fine Wine Editions, 2009)
- Capatti, Alberto, Montanari, Massimo, *Italian Cuisine, A Cultural History* (Columbia University Press, 1999)
- Dickie, John, *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and their Food* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2007)
- Lazzaroni, Laura, *The New Cucina Italiana: What to Eat, What to Cook, and Who to Know in Italian Cuisine Today* (Rizzoli, 2021)

#### FLORENCE - ART AND ARCHITECTURE

- Borsook, Eve, *The Companion Guide to Florence* (Collins 1979)
- Goy, Richard, *Florence. The City and its Architecture* (Phaidon, 2002)
- Martucci, Roberto, Giovannetti, Bruno, *Florence* (Canal & Stamperia Editrice, 1997)

- Regione Toscana, *Tuscany, The Ways of the Medici* (1998)
- Trachtenberg, Martin, *Dominion of the Eye. Urbanism, Art and Power in Early Modern Florence* (Cambridge, 1997)

#### ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES:

Language:

<https://www.cyberitalian.com/>(drawings for visual learners)

Italian Hand Signals:

<http://www.eurocosm.com/Eurocosm/AppEC/Pdcd/Handsignals/HandsignsGB.asp>

News:

<http://www.rai.it> (RAI – Italian state television networks – in Italian)

<http://www.corriere.it/english/> (Corriere della Sera – in English)

<http://www.repubblica.it/> (La Repubblica – in Italian)

Tourism and Interest:

<http://www.giraitalia.it> (for researching travel and events throughout Italy)

<http://www.firenze.net> Firenze Net

<http://en.comune.fi.it> (Official Website of the City of Florence)

<http://www.polomuseale.firenze.it> (Websites of Florence Museums)

<http://www.theflorentine.net> (English Language Magazine)

#### **LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE**

The FUA-AUF library is located in Corso Tintori 21. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. 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.bibliotecadelleoblade.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblade.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**

No additional course materials are necessary.

#### **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

20% Participation and Assignments

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

20% Reflection Journal

10% Presentation

20% 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 FUA-AUF 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 always the student's responsibility to know how many absences he or she has in a course. 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 **Reflection Journal** counts for 20% of the final grade. Students are responsible for a weekly writing exercise based on their experience in Florence, observations about the city, the traditions etc. This

should not be a travelogue or diary account, but rather a selection of specific subjects to write about in their journal. Each entry is 250 words. In addition, if a student's perspective of what they wrote in a past week changes, that could be the topic of a later entry and how their opinion changed.

The **Midterm** and **Final Exams** each count for 20% of the final course grade.

Format:

Part I: Multiple-choice questions worth 30 points.

Part II Short-answer questions worth 40 points.

Part III: Essay-based question worth 30 points.

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

The **Presentation** counts for 10% of the final course grade. This is a group presentation focusing on one specific topic related to the course and assigned by the Instructor. Each student should talk for about 5 minutes. The students are assessed for their accuracy, legibility of slides, and public speaking abilities.

## 12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Geography of Italy. Short history of Italy and Florence: Roman origins and initial ethnicities.
<b>Language Component</b>	Introductions and greetings. Countries and nationalities.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the key events and ethnicities at the base of the Italian history. Recognize the main geographical characteristics of Italy.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Discussion: Stereotypes about Italy and Italians.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Preface</i> , pp. 1-11

Lesson 2	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	The Unification of Italy. The Southern Question: Emigration and social transformation. Florence is the capital
<b>Language Component</b>	Vocabulary: in a bar, in a restaurant.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the key events and dates of the Italian history from the Unification to recent times. Recognize the main issues related to the Southern Question. Identify the main changes in Florence during its role as Italian capital.
<b>Visit</b>	Visit Piazza della Repubblica, and its typical coffee shops.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>The Two Italies and the Southern Question</i> , 181-213 Assignment 1: Focus on one Italian region, learning about its main characteristics.

Lesson 3
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	The Second World War, the Liberation of Florence, the Birth of the Republic, and the Aftermath. The current Italian political system.
<b>Language Component</b>	Numbers: quantities and prices. Numbers and dates.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the main events of the Second World War. Understand the changes in Italian politics and society in second half of the 20th century. Recognize the basic pillars of the Italian political system.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Exercise: Find war-related memorials in Italy and explain their significance.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Italians</i> , pp. 14-28

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance in Florence: art, architecture, and heritage. History and legacy of the Medici family.
<b>Language Component</b>	Vocabulary: art and architecture. Italian verbs.
<b>Objectives</b>	Recognize the history of Medieval Florence and the subsequent period of the Renaissance. Identify the main art and architecture from the Renaissance in Florence. Apprehend the history and legacy of the Medici family.
<b>Visit</b>	Architectural walking tour in Florence to the most significant sites and buildings of the Renaissance.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: <i>Tuscany, The Ways of the Medici</i> , 3-35

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Gastronomical tour of Italy: Food Culture in Italian Festivities. The role of food in Italy, from Pellegrino Artusi to contemporary cuisine. The Slow Food movement.
<b>Language Component</b>	Vocabulary: food and cooking.
<b>Objectives</b>	Analyze the relationship between Italians and their food. Recognize the significance of Artusi's kitchen book in identity-building. Identify the importance of local products in the Italian cuisine, and the rituals and the meaning of food in Italian traditions and celebrations. Identify the role of the Slow Food movement.
<b>Visit</b>	Traditional Florentine market.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: <i>Pellegrino Artusi and the Italian Unity in the Kitchen</i> . Assignment 2: Research a typical Florentine dish, its history, flavors, and significance.

<b>Lesson 6</b>
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	History of the Italian Mafia: focus on Cosa Nostra. Italian Mafia in the world.
<b>Language Component</b>	Bodily language and gestures. Vocabulary: body parts.
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn about the formation and history of the main Italian mafia organizations. Discover and analyze the role of the Mafia power in contemporary Italy. Learn about the main characteristics of Cosa Nostra.
<b>Visit</b>	Via dei Georgofili, the place of a Mafia attack in 1993. Focus on impact and memorialization.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Paul Ginsborg, <i>Corruption and the Mafia</i> in Ginsborg, Paul, <i>Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State</i> , 2006 (pp. 179-212).

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Midterm Exam

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
	Academic Break

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Economy 1: Made in Italy. “The Economic Miracle”: post-WWII boom in Italy.
<b>Language Component</b>	Vocabulary: Talking about jobs.
<b>Objectives</b>	Analyze the factors that led to the economic miracle and the role of Italy in the international economy. Learn about la Dolce Vita lifestyle. Identify the significance and characteristics of Made in Italy.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Discuss the distinctiveness of the Dolce Vita lifestyle.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>The Economic Recovery</i> , Ch. 5, pp. 131-156

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Economy 2: the role of artisanship in Florence, from the ancient guilds to the contemporary city. Industrial change and social transformations in today's Italy.
<b>Language Component</b>	Asking and giving directions.
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn about the Italian small family businesses and explain the effects of the globalization on this type of business. Identify the main types of arts that were protected by the ancient guilds. Recognize the main social transformations of contemporary Italy.
<b>Visit</b>	Oltrarno neighborhood, focus on artisans' labs.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Industrial Change and Social Transformation</i> , pp. 157-180 Assignment 3: research the work and mission of a Florentine artisan shop.

<b>Lesson 11</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Italy and Florence in Italian cinema and literature. The ordinary life and sentiments of working-class people in Florence.
<b>Language Component</b>	Expressing opinions about a book or movie.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the main characteristics of modern Florentine and Italian cinema and literature. Gain knowledge about the life of working-class people in Florence.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Exercise: find excerpts of books and/or movies that describe Florence. Compare and share the findings in class.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Cultural Modernization: Changes and Conflicts</i> , Ch. 13, pp. 347-372

<b>Lesson 12</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	The Italian identity through television, radio, newspapers, Internet.
<b>Language Component</b>	Vocabulary: free time.
<b>Objectives</b>	Analyze the Italian contemporary culture in the context of a globalized world. Identify the main historical events related to the media in Italy.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Exercise: find an ancient and a modern movie/tv series that describe Florence. Compare and share the findings in class.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Communication Revolution and Cultural Consumption</i> , Ch.14, pp. 373-402 Excerpts from the website or RAI, Radiotelevisione Italiana. Assignment 4: review of a literature/cinema/theatre illustration focusing on Florence.

<b>Lesson 13</b>
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Italian family relations in Italian society. The Italian education system.
<b>Language Component</b>	Vocabulary: family ties.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify the changes in the family relationships and the role of the family in contemporary Italian society. Identify the structure of the Italian education system.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Discussion about present-day Italy and comparisons with other countries.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Democratizing the Educational System</i> , Ch. 9, pp. 235-262

<b>Lesson 14</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Final Presentations. Final recap and discussion about stereotypes on Italian culture. Confirmations and changes in perspective.
<b>Objectives</b>	Be able to evaluate the main points of the course. Identify the changing patterns in ideas and ideologies as a result of the course.
<b>In-Class Activity</b>	Presentations, Q&A.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Read: Mignone, <i>Conclusion</i> , Ch.16, pp. 427-434 Submit Reflection Journal and Presentations Slides. Submit FL Project (if applicable)

<b>Lesson 15</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Final Exam