

Format revised 2025
Syllabus revised in 2025

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SAS – SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LIFE STUDIES AND HUMAN SCIENCES**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY; ANTHROPOLOGY; ART HISTORY; 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.

2. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- 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.
- 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).
- 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 and 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 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):

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

The textbook is mandatory for course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may be provided by the instructor.

FURTHER READINGS

- Artusi Pellegrino, *The Art of Eating Well*, Random House, 1996.
- Capatti Alberto & Montanari Massimo, *Italian Cuisine, A Cultural History*, Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Vezzosi Patrizia, *Tuscany. The Ways of the Medici*, Toscana Promozione Turistica, 2017. Available online here: <https://www.toscanapromozione.it/document/the-ways-of-medici-in-tuscany/>

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)

LIBRARY

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. Texts may be consulted on-site, and scanning/internet services available.

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

25% Participation and Assignments

15% Midterm Assessment

20% Reflection Journal

10% Group Presentation

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.fua.it/standard_regulation

9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

Midterm Assessment: The midterm assessment accounts for 15% of the final course grade. Please note that the assessment consists of an online submission via the course portal. The format may include short definitions and open questions relating to the topics from assigned readings and discussed in class.

Final Exam: The final exams accounts for 20% of the final course grade. Please note that the exam is held in person on Lesson 11. The format includes:

- 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 final exam is cumulative.

Final Group Presentation: The group presentation accounts 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.

Reflection Journal: The reflection journal accounts for 20% of the final course grade. Students are responsible for a weekly writing exercise based on their experience in Florence, observations about the city, the traditions, the language 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.

Assignments: This course requires at least 3 assignments as per the course outline in the syllabus. Further details are provided in the course portal.

10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1

Meet	In class
Lecture	Geography of Italy. Short history of Italy and Florence: Roman origins and initial ethnicities.
Language Component	Introductions and greetings. Countries and nationalities.
Objectives	Identify the key events and ethnicities at the base of the Italian history. Recognize the main geographical characteristics of Italy. Be able to introduce yourself in Italian.
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , "Preface" (pp. XV-XVII), "Profile of the Nation" (pp. 1-11), and "Introduction: Italians" (pp. 13-16). Assignment #1 assigned, due by next class meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on one Italian region, learn about its main characteristics and create a presentation (6-9 slides) that highlights the key geographical, historical, and cultural features.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	The Unification of Italy. The Southern Question: Emigration and social transformation. Florence is the capital.
Language Component	Vocabulary: in a bar, in a restaurant.
Objectives	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. Learn how to order at the bar in Italian.
Visit	Visit Piazza della Repubblica, and its typical coffee shops.
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , "Introduction: Italians" (pp. 16-18) and "The Two Italies and the Southern Question" (pp. 181-206).

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	The Second World War, the Liberation of Florence, the Birth of the Republic, and the Aftermath. The Current Italian Political System.
Language Component	Numbers: quantities and prices. Numbers and dates.
Objectives	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. Learn how to read dates.
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , "Introduction: Italians" (pp. 18-20) and "Chapter 1: Political and Social Foundations" (pp. 31-45). Assignment #2 assigned, due by next class meet:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a timeline featuring a minimum of 15 key events that you deem most salient in Italy's history. Subsequently, compose a 300-400 word reflective piece to explain your selections.
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Lesson 4	
Meet	In class
Lecture	From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance in Florence: art, architecture, and heritage. History and legacy of the Medici family.
Language Component	Vocabulary: art and architecture. Italian verbs.
Objectives	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. Become familiar with the most common Italian verbs.
Visit	Architectural walking tour in Florence to the most significant sites and buildings of the Renaissance.
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Vezzosi, <i>Tuscany. The Ways of the Medici</i> . FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.

Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	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.
Language Component	Vocabulary: food and cooking.
Objectives	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. Learn some relevant Italian vocabulary related to food.
Visit	Traditional Florentine market.
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Capatti & Montanari, <i>Italian Cuisine, A Cultural History</i> , pp. 20-30. Read: Artusi, <i>The Art of Eating Well</i> , "Introduction" (pp. XI-XV). MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.

Lesson 6	
Meet	In class
Lecture	History of the Italian Mafia: focus on Cosa Nostra. Italian Mafia in the world.
Language Component	Bodily language and gestures. Vocabulary: body parts.
Objectives	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. Get to know some relevant Italian vocabulary related to the parts of the body and

	understand the importance of non-verbal communication for Italians.
Visit	Via dei Georgofili, the place of a Mafia attack in 1993. Focus on impact and memorialization.
Readings/ Assignments	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).

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Made in Italy: The role of artisanship in Florence, from the ancient guilds to the contemporary city.
Language Component	Asking and giving directions.
Objectives	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. Be able to talk about jobs, and ask/give directions.
Visit	Oltrarno neighborhood, focus on artisans' labs.
Readings	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , "Chapter 6: Industrial Change and Social Transformation" (pp. 157-165). Assignment #3 assigned, due by next lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the work and mission of a Florentine artisan shop and create a 6-9 slide presentation to describe the business activity.

Lesson 8	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Industrial change and social transformations in today's Italy: "The Economic Miracle" and post-WWII boom in Italy.
Language Component	Vocabulary: Talking about jobs.
Objectives	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.
Readings	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , "Chapter 5: The Economic Recover" (pp. 131-147).

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Italy and Florence in Italian cinema and literature. The ordinary life and sentiments of working-class people in Florence. The Italian identity through television, radio, newspapers, Internet.
Language Component	Talking about free time. Expressing opinions about a book or movie.
Objectives	Identify the main characteristics of modern Florentine and Italian cinema and literature. Gain knowledge about the life of working-class people in Florence. Analyze the Italian contemporary culture in the context of a globalized world. Identify the main historical events related to the media in Italy. Be able to talk about free time and express personal preferences regarding books or

	movies.
Readings	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , “Chapter 13: Cultural Modernization” (pp. 347-273) and “Chapter 14: Communications, Revolutions and Cultural Consumption (pp. 373-384). FINAL PROJECT DUE

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Italian family relations in Italian society. The Italian education system. Final Presentations and Review.
Language Component	Vocabulary: family ties.
Objectives	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. Learn relevant Italian vocabulary related to family ties. Be able to evaluate the main points of the course. Identify the changing patterns in ideas and ideologies as a result of the course.
Readings	Read: Mignone, <i>Italy Today: Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium</i> , “Chapter 9: Democratizing the Educational System” (pp. 235-247). Final Project Presentation

Lesson 11 Final Exam	
Meet	In class
Lecture	FINAL EXAM