

Format revised 2025  
Syllabus revised in 2025

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**SCHOOL OF SPORTS AND HEALTH SCIENCES****DEPARTMENT OF SPORT SCIENCES / DIETETICS AND NUTRITION / HAPPINESS SCIENCES****COURSE TITLE: HEALTH AND FITNESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN****COURSE CODE: SHSSHN150 - FWDNHN150 - GSHSHN150****3 semester credits****1. DESCRIPTION**

Studies have shown that following the Mediterranean diet has many health benefits, especially when combined with exercise. This course includes lectures on various forms of physical and lifestyle activities and an overview of their respective health benefits. Lectures will also include visits to athletic centers within the local community and the nutritional aspects of the Mediterranean diet, and particularly the Italian culinary tradition. Food and wine tastings, and physical activity are integral components of the course and will result in the creation of a customized exercise and nutritional program by the student. This course also features a field learning component in relevant Italian locations to supplement and enrich academic topics.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to introduce students to the principles of fitness and wellness and their relationship to a healthy lifestyle, with a particular focus on the Mediterranean diet. Students will explore how balanced nutrition and diverse forms of physical activity interact to support overall health and well-being.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the interactions between diet, exercise, and their physiological effects on the body.
- Apply the principles of the Mediterranean diet and structured exercise to personal health practices.
- Design a personalized fitness and nutrition plan that integrates Mediterranean dietary patterns with an individualized exercise program.

**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):

**Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health** - Hopper, Chris; Fisher, Bruce; Munoz, Kathy D. - Human Kinetics, 2008.

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

## FURTHER READINGS

### *Wellness*

Anspaugh, David J.; Hamrick, Michael H.; Rosato, Frank D. *Wellness: Concept and Applications*, McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Corbin, Charles; Welk, Greg; Corbin, William; Welk, Karen. *Concept of Fitness & Wellness*, McGraw-Hill, 2013.

Human Kinetics, *Health and Wellness for Life*, IL Human Kinetics, 2010.

McLoud, Ace. *Health: Ultimate Health Secrets*, Pro Mastery Publishing, 2014.

Meeks, Linda; Heit, Philip; Page, Randy. *Health & Wellness*, McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Robinson, James & Mc Cornick, Deborah J. *Concepts in health & wellness*, Cengage Learning, 2010.

### *Mediterranean Diet*

Harmon Jenkins N., *The New Mediterranean Diet Cookbook*, Bantam, 2009.

Williams-Sonoma, *Mediterranean Cooking*, Time Life Books, 1997

Cloutier M. - Adamson E., *The Mediterranean Diet*, Avon Books, 2004

Capatti A., Montanari M., *Italian Cuisine*, Columbia University Press, N.Y. 1999

Artusi Pellegrino, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, NY, 1997 (1891).

Piras C., *Culinaria Italy*, Ullmann 2007

Mueller T., *Extravirginity*, Atlantic Books, 2012

Wardlaw G., Smith A., *Contemporary Nutrition*, McGraw Hill, 2009 (7ed.)

Elliot R., *Mediterranean Feasts*, Little Books, 2004

## 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

30% Class Participation – 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.fua.it/standard\\_regulation](https://catalog.fua.it/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 Midterm assessment 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 and is due by Lesson 9.

Topic: Create a **1-weeks Personal Wellness Plan** (fitness + meal plan) for yourself.

The plan should include:

- Daily exercise
- Mediterranean-style meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks)

and must be supported by research findings.

The project details will be assigned the first day of class.

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

### **Assignment #1: Mini Research on Med Diet benefits**

Choose one health benefit of the Mediterranean diet (e.g., heart health, longevity, energy) and write a 400 words summary explaining it in simple terms. Include at least one example from Italian cuisine.

Due by Lesson #3.

### **Assignment #2: Physical Activity Reflection**

After the fitness activities in Lesson 2, 3, and 5 write a **400 words reflection** about what you learned and how you could apply one of the activities to your own lifestyle. Due by Lesson 7.

### Assignment #3: Olive oil in the Mediterranean Diet

Students must provide a 500 words essay on the health benefits of olive oil, classification of olive oil and most common applications in a daily diet.

Due by Lesson 10.

Further details are provided in the course portal.

## 10. COURSE OUTLINE

<b>Lesson 1</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>General overview and introduction to the course</b> Part. I. Focus on the exercise contents; Part. II. Focus on the evolution of the Mediterranean diet from Italy, Greece, and all over the world. Geography, culture, food rituals and development. Food pyramids: The Traditional Mediterranean food pyramid meet the PAT (Piramide Alimentare Toscana).
Objectives	Discover and understand lifestyle, rituals, food, wine related to the Mediterranean diet. Become familiar with the traditional ingredients and produce of Italy. Fish, meat, pasta, rice, bread, legumes, fruit, vegetables will be described and commented by the teacher to understand the typical produce available around Italy.
Visit	The typical Florentine Food Markets: Sant'Ambrogio Market (refer to course website)
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages. Assignment #1 topic assigned: Mini Research on Med Diet benefits. Due by Lesson 3.

<b>Lesson 2</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Power Walking Part I: Principles &amp; Technique Optimization</b>
Objectives	Understand power walking form, technique and effective positioning - Analyze and compare energy consumption in relation to body parts and targeted movements - Understand the biomechanical principles involved and apply optimal techniques for increased efficiency and reduced risk of injury
Activity	Power walking session to Assi Giglio Rosso <i>Assi Giglio Rosso: located on the hills of Viale Michelangelo, the terrace of Florence. Students will explore sports such as tennis, football, roller skating, hockey and basketball at a facility founded in order to promote sport and physical activities within the Florentine territory and intended to improve the quality of life in the city.</i>

Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages.
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<b>Lesson 3</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Power walking Part II: Training Progression</b> Common Errors & Corrections
Objectives	Evaluate power walking in relation to other forms of physical fitness - Understand how to design a safe and effective power walking training program - Learn how to incorporate interval training principles - Understand the importance of monitoring progress and rest/recovery - Identify and correct common power walking errors
Activity	Power walking session to Piazzale Michelangelo
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages. <b>Assignment #1 DUE.</b> <b>Assignment #2 topic assigned: Physical Activity Reflection.</b> Due by Lesson 7

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Mediterranean Lifestyle Patterns</b> History and nutritional facts of the main mediterranean ingredients - Application to the daily diet - Influence of the mediterranean diet on other dietary regimens <b>Focus on Cheese, Cured Meat, Balsamic Vinegar, Olive oil</b> Production process and culinary applications
Objectives	Become familiar with cheese and cured meats production and application in Italy - Understand how to read a food label - Learn the characteristics of the main mediterranean ingredients - Analyze the diffusion of the mediterranean lifestyle patterns worldwide
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages. <b>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Biking</b>

Objectives	<p>Examine cycling as an aerobic activity, following its effects on internal organs and blood flow. Monitor physiological reactions such as deeper breathing, perspiration, and increased body temperature, and the ways in which these effects and interactions contribute to overall fitness level.</p> <p>Analysis of health benefits of regular cycling such as: increased cardiovascular fitness, increased muscle strength and flexibility, improved joint mobility, decreased stress levels, improved posture and coordination, strengthened bones, decreased body fat levels, prevention or management of disease, reduced anxiety and depression.</p>
Activity	Biking at Cascine Park in Florence
Readings/ Assignments	<p>Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i>, 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages.</p> <p><b>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED</b> - Due prior to the next class meet</p>

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Rowing</b>
Objectives	<p>Recognize the unique benefits and effects of rowing: build and tone muscles, strengthen cardiovascular function, and increase your stamina.</p> <p>Aerobic states and the role of endurance exercise in heart function, effects of rowing technique and manipulation of tension levels in relation to speed and resistance</p> <p>Role of carbohydrates to provide the energy required to exercise.</p> <p>Benefits of rowing as aerobic exercise and low impact exercise. Analysis of muscles involved in exercise and how they work together to facilitate rowing activity.</p>
Activity	Rowing at Canottieri di Firenze
Readings/ Assignments	<p>Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i>, 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages.</p> <p><b>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT DUE (11 WEEKS SEMESTER ONLY)</b></p> <p><b>SPECIAL PROJECT DUE (INTENSIVE SESSIONS ONLY)</b></p>

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p><b>Mediterranean drinks: Wines</b></p> <p>White, Red wines produced in Italy and their impact on the daily diet.</p> <p>Special use of the dessert wines to celebrate festive meals.</p> <p>Production, grapes, cellars of typical Italian regions to represent the cultural heritage from Northern, Central, and Southern Italy. Nutritional value of wine.</p> <p>Classification and role of the antioxidants present into the different grape varieties.</p>

Objectives	Identify the different regional productions Learn how to produce different kinds of wine Identify the harvest season, according to the wine produced DOC, DOCG, IGT labels Understand the different categories of wine classification
Tasting	Typical Italian wines
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages. <b>Assignment #2 DUE</b> <b>Assignment #3 topic assigned: Olive oil in the Mediterranean Diet.</b> Due by Lesson 10.

Lesson 8	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Mediterranean Ingredients: Vegetables, Fruit, and Nuts</b> The heart and soul of the traditional Mediterranean diet - Fiber intake and nutritional facts - Sources of vitamins
Objectives	Understand the different categories of vegetables, fruit, and nuts produced in Italy - Understand their seasonality and different origins in the Mediterranean diet - Identify different uses in cooking
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages.

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Wheat and grains</b> The grains of the Mediterranean: Nutritional value from fibers and carbohydrates. Wheat and Flour. Classification of different types of grains used in the Mediterranean diet. Classification in “Fresh” and “Dry Pasta”.
Objectives	Understand the main features and the importance of wheat, a versatile grain full of resources. Become familiar with the different kind of pasta and similar used in the Mediterranean diet. Further understand the use of legumes versus processed flour.
Tasting	Cecina and <i>pizza al taglio</i> .
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages. <b>Final course review: nutrition component</b> <b>FINAL PROJECT DUE</b>

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<b>Aerobic capacity improvement</b>
Objectives	Understand the principles of submaximal testing for aerobic capacity - Learn to perform and interpret the results of a common test, and apply this knowledge to monitor training progress
Activity	Testing the improvement of aerobic capacity (Cooper/Conconi/Gacon tests) (Giardini di Porta Romana)
Readings/ Assignments	Hopper, Fisher, Munoz. <i>Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health</i> , 2008. Refer to course website for assigned pages. <b>Final course review: fitness component</b> <b>Assignment #3 DUE</b>

<b>Lesson 11</b>	
Meet	In class
Lecture	FINAL EXAM