



AUF

*The American  
University of Florence*

## SYLLABUS

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Academic  
Affairs

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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 BAKING AND PASTRY**  
**COURSE TITLE: ITALIAN CLASSICAL CAKES AND TARTS**  
**COURSE CODE: FWBPBC310**  
**3 semester credits**

### 1. DESCRIPTION

Students will study the history and background of various national and regional desserts starting from a focus on the most important and typical Italian ingredients. Special attention will be paid to a detailed analysis of DOP and IGP products that are traditionally used in Italian pastry and their fundamental role for the identity of Italian cakes and tarts. The course will cover the origin of classical desserts and eventual variations from classical methods. Students will study a variety of doughs, batters, fillings and glazes with an emphasis on a thorough understanding of the techniques and proper skills for the execution of classic Italian desserts.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

This course aims to teach students the fundamentals of Italian traditional cakes production. Students will gain confidence with DOP and IGP Italian products used in traditional Italian pastry, with a focus on the most representative and commonly used ingredients. The course will offer a complete overview of Italian specialty ingredients, their features, and applications. Students will have the opportunity to experience traditional preparations and learn methods, secrets, and tips.

Because Italian folklore, festivities, and ingredients have a fundamental role in Italian gastronomic identity, the course will also highlight the symbolic meaning that is a part of many creations.

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

- Produce Italian classic cakes, tarts, and famous classic desserts
- Learn the alternative combinations of ingredients in classic desserts
- Express how Italian DOP and IGP ingredients are used in traditional pastry, their origins, development, and cultural relevance
- Understand the distinguishing features of Italian pastry creations and its close connections with people, places, and ingredients

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

Baking Techniques I or equivalent.

### 4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, and projects. Mediums for instruction used may 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 (Copy available at the university library):

Cresci - Massari, Zoia - Chiriotti Editore

On Baking: A textbook of baking and pastry fundamentals - 3rd ed. - Pearson

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

How Baking Works: Exploring the Fundamentals of Baking Science - Paula I. Figoni

Complete Italian food - A. & P. Carluccio - Quadrille Publishing

## 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

1. All students are strictly required to attend class wearing a clean uniform: the jacket provided by the institution, black pants, apron (color depending on the CA level), safety footwear, a white Chef's hat, and a set of knives. Students with long hair should tie hair back before wearing the hat. Students are not allowed to wear rings, earrings or any other visible piercings, bracelets, watches, and nail polish during lab hours. Students who are not dressed properly will not be allowed in class.
2. All students must attend class fully prepared and on time. Late students will not be accepted.
3. Carefully wash hands at the beginning of each class, before food is handled.
4. During professional cooking classes only small food tastings are allowed as the main purpose of these courses is to develop technical skills. Students are not allowed to take food out of the kitchen.
5. Students are also required to participate in a polite and responsible way. Students are not allowed to sit on the working stations. Students who disturb lessons or are disrespectful to the instructor or the other students will be asked to leave the class. Serious infractions will be evaluated by the Academic Office.
6. Cooking classes will include various tasks which all students must carry out. Classes will include all different types of recipes and students are expected to actively participate in all lessons regardless of personal likes or dislikes.
7. Each student is responsible for washing all utensils used during class and keeping the working station clean and tidy, with all the utensils as listed in the station inventory. Two students at a time will tidy up the kitchen common areas during each class.
8. Students are responsible for kitchen utensils and maintenance of the equipment. The cost of a) any missing utensil b) damages due to student carelessness will be shared by all students.
9. No visits are allowed in class at any time.
10. The use of cellular phones is not allowed within the school building.

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% Class Participation and Assignments

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

**Final Exam:** The final exam is divided into two sections:

- Part I: written test
- Part II: hands-on performance

The written test 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.

No pencil allowed. Blue and black pens only.

Further details (guidelines, grading rubric,...) are provided in the course portal.

The final exam is cumulative and will account for the 20% of the final grade breakdown.

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

**Final Project:** The final project accounts for 20% of the final course grade. The project details will be assigned on the first day of class.

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

1. Assignment #1: **Research Paper:** The Role of DOP and IGP Ingredients in Italian Pastry Identity. Due by Lesson 4
2. Assignment #2: **Analytical Report:** Techniques and Components of Classic Italian Desserts. Due by Lesson 7
3. Presentation: **Evolution and Regional Variations of a Classical Italian Dessert.** Due by Lesson 10.

Further details are provided in the course portal.

Lesson 1	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Origins and development of Italian pastry art from South to North: distinctive features related to specific macro-areas - IGP and DOP commonly used in pastry - The identification of traditional cakes with specific products-Liqueurs in Italian traditional pastry</p> <p>Description and purpose of liqueurs commonly used in Italian pastry - History of liqueur production - Focus on alchermes and rum - History of Babà and Torta Fedora</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Understand the difference between DOP and IGP - Understand the origins of Italian pastry art – Gain confidence with the features of traditional Italian pastry recipes-Learn the features of Italian traditional liqueurs and suitable applications - Learn to balance the amount of liqueur and how to dilute it to match recipes - Learn the features of Torta Fedora and its history - Know the origins and features of Babà - Understand the type of flour used for Babà preparation and the characteristics of the dough</p>
<b>Lab</b>	Torta Fedora - Babà napoletano - Torta Diplomatica Fiorentina
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	<p>Cresci Text Book read pg. 293/296</p> <p>See additional material on the course website</p> <p>Assignment #1 assigned: <b>Research Paper</b> The Role of DOP and IGP Ingredients in Italian Pastry Identity. Due by lesson 4</p>

Lesson 2	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>Nuts 1 - Hazelnuts &amp; Pinenuts</p> <p>Nocciola tonda gentile del Piemonte IGP, Nocciola Viterbese, Nocciola di Giffoni,</p> <p>Pinoli di San Rossore</p> <p>Distinctive features and suitable uses of these top-quality nuts</p> <p>The use of nuts as part of the dough structure and as decorative patterns</p>

<b>Objectives</b>	Gain confidence with the different types of nuts and their different features Learn to apply nuts in traditional cakes production - Understand the importance of traditional mixing methods - Comprehend the tips on how to make a custard-filled cake retain its characteristic dome shape and not collapse
<b>Lab</b>	Hazelnut cake -Torta della Nonna - Prepare Genoise for Torta Delizia on lesson 3
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	See additional material on the course website Complete Italian Food Ch. Fruit & Nuts

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Nuts 2 - Almonds Mandorla di Avola & Presidi Slow Food Pugliesi (Toritto e Ceglie Messapica) - Armellina Origins and development of almonds - Suitable application to traditional Italian pastry - Almond paste
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the origins and importance of almond application in southern Italian pastry – Gain confidence with the different types of almonds and their flavors - Understand why almonds give a characteristic sweet-soft texture - Gain confidence with the use of the piping bag and with various types of tips - Understand and learn to use different fats in pastry
<b>Lab</b>	Torta Delizia - Torta Salentina - Prep. Spongecake for Cassata
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	See additional material on the course website Complete Italian Food Ch. Fruit & Nuts Assignment #2 assigned: <b>Analytical Report:</b> Techniques and Components of Classic Italian Desserts. Due by Lesson 7

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Cheese in Italian pastry Focus on ricotta - Ricotta cheese production - Effects of ricotta on batter texture Almond application: Pasta Reale / Marzipane History of marzipan, production method, preservation and storage
<b>Objectives</b>	Know the history of Sicilian Cannoli and Cassata - Gain confidence with ricotta application in pastry preparations - Understand how ricotta affects texture - Learn how to use and prepare marzipan - Learn how to guarantee shelf-life for both cannoli and marzipan
<b>Lab</b>	Cassata Siciliana - Cannolo Siciliano

<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	See additional material on the course website Complete Italian Food pp. 246-247 <b>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.</b> <b>Assignment #1 Due.</b>
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<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Alternative fats in traditional pastry: strutto and extra virgin olive oil Application and effects of lard and olive oil in pastry preparations - Schiacciata alla Fiorentina: history, tricks and secrets - The difference between Schiacciata alla Fiorentina and Focaccia Pisana - Baking method and time - Potato starch as a substitute of wheat flour
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn the tricks and secrets to prepare a quality Schiacciata alla Fiorentina - Learn to use alternative fats and their effects on the finished products - Understand the effect of starches on the dough - Understand the variation of shelf-life when using alternative fats
<b>Lab</b>	Schiacciata alla Fiorentina tradizionale - Torta all'olio
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Cresci Text Book pg. 314 See additional material on the course website

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Typical Italian fruits Focus on: Mela della Val di Non DOP - Limone Costa d'Amalfi IGP Apple and Lemon structures and characteristics - Short crust dough applications: pasta frolla - Mixing method application: egg foam - Application of apples and lemons in traditional pastries
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn the features and uses of fruits in traditional Italian pastry – Understand how fruit influence structure and texture - Learn to balance dairy products in presence of acidic fruit - Learn how fruit defines the seasonality of tarts and cakes
<b>Lab</b>	Crostata di mele all'Italiana - Delizia al limone
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Cresci Text Book pg. 352 See additional material on the course website Complete Italian Food Ch. Fruit & Nuts

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	Alternative sugars: honey History and production process - Honey classification and features Effects of honey in a dough - Different shelf-life and natural preservative purpose - Effects of honey on final product texture History of Spongata cake and medieval heritage in Italian traditional pastry products
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn the history of Spongata cake - Understand the influence of traditions in Italian traditional pastry - Learn how to use honey in traditional pastry preparations - Understand the features of honey - Understand how honey helps keep texture soft and increases shelf-life
<b>Lab</b>	Spongata di Sarzana - Cavallucci o Biriucoli
<b>Readings</b>	Complete Italian Food pp. 215 See additional material on the course website Assignment #3 assigned: <b>Evolution and Regional Variations of a Classical Italian Dessert.</b> Due by Lesson 10 <b>Assignment #2 due.</b>

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Chestnuts and marrons Italian IGP and DOP products and classification Alternative flours 1 Farina di Neccio della Garfagnana DOP - Farina di castagne della Lunigiana DOP Applications of chestnut flour in pastries and effects on the dough structure Traditional Italian specialties for daily consumption and for celebrations
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the difference between Marrone and Chestnuts - Understand the importance of sustaining the past - Learn about the diffusion of these products in Italian traditions - Gain confidence with chestnut flour application - Learn suitable mixing and cooking methods for chestnut-based batter
<b>Lab</b>	Monte Bianco - Castagnaccio - Necci con la ricotta
<b>Readings</b>	See additional material on the course website Complete Italian Food pp. 263-264

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	Alternative flours 2 - Corn Classification of corn varieties - Corn flour production - Influence of corn flour on cakes texture Application to Italian traditional pastry - Nuts applications in corn flour-based cakes
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the history and features of Sbrisolona and Torta di Varese - Learn the diffusion and importance of corn in modern Italy - Understand the influence of corn on cakes texture - Learn mixing methods applied to the two cakes - Understand the reasons for their long shelf-life
<b>Lab</b>	Sbrisolona - Amor Polenta (Torta di Varese)
<b>Readings</b>	See additional material on the course website <b>FINAL PROJECT DUE</b>

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Cakes for Italian festivities: Christmas & Easter The history of sweet breads and their symbolical meaning - Cultural and technical reasons for the presence of spices, nuts and candied fruits in many traditional Italian sweet preparations - The importance of spices from medieval gastronomy to present days-History and features of Pastiera Napoletana - The symbolic use of cereal grains in pastry preparations - The use and purpose of floral essences in traditional pastry - Influence of religion and folklore on pastry creations: Pinza Triestina
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn the evolution of Panforte production - Learn how to apply and balance nuts and fruits in a mixture – Gain confidence with the use of spices in traditional pastry - Understand how spices, nuts and candied fruits can affect shelf-life - Understand why these desserts are offered all year long-Learn the history of traditional Easter cakes : Pastiera Napoletana and Pinza Triestina-Understand the cultural differences between southern and northern Italian traditions-Gain confidence with suitable proofing and cooking times in Pinza production -Understand the influence of religion and folklore on celebrating cakes
<b>Lab</b>	Panforte - Zelten-Pastiera Napoletana - Pinza Triestina
<b>Readings</b>	See additional material on the course website <b>Assignment #3 Due</b>

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