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SAS – SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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**SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS / HORTICULTURE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY / GENERAL HORTICULTURE**  
**COURSE TITLE: Grow, Cook, Heal: Therapy for Wellbeing**  
**COURSE CODE: LAPYTW300 / HCGJTW300**  
**3 semester credits**

### **1. DESCRIPTION**

The garden is a space traditionally associated with food cultivation and recreational activity. Both are known to have an influence on wellbeing. This course explores a culture of wellness based on the fundamentals of horticulture therapy and the use of plants and green spaces, as well as horticultural and culinary activities to promote wellbeing. Students will explore the traditions related to garden activities to foster cognitive, social, emotional, and physical wellbeing for individuals and specific groups (i.e. the elderly, children, individuals with special needs) in a variety of settings. Adapting horticultural therapy in diverse site conditions from sowing to cultivation and the preparation of food products from the garden harvest will be a focus of this course. Course topics will include principles of horticulture, soils and soil cultivation, plant propagation, and harvesting, and the therapeutic potential of farm to table practices. Students will experience first-hand the restorative powers of green spaces through garden management and cooking labs to examine the benefits of the natural environment as a fundamental outcome of this course. This course includes an Experiential Learning Project with CEMI.

### **2. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Learn the principles of horticultural therapy.
- Discover the benefits derived from people – plant relationships.
- Learn the standard techniques of cultivation and gardening.
- Experience traditional Italian preparations using garden-cultivated ingredients.
- Distinguish garden products according to seasonality.
- Discuss the present and future of green spaces.
- Design green spaces according to different conditions.
- Experience the outcomes of gardening related to issues of health and wellness.

### **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:

Sharon Simson and Martha Straus, *Horticulture as Therapy. Principles and Practice*, CRC Press, 1998

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)

R.L. Haller, C.L. Kramer, *Horticultural Therapy Methods*. CRC Press, 2006

H. Bruce, *Gardens for Senses. Gardening Therapy*, Petals and Pages Press, 1999

C. Clarkeson, *Garden Therapy: Gardening could be the hobby that helps you live longer*, Ind. published, 2019

Royal Horticultural Society, *Your Wellbeing Garden: How to Make Your Garden Good for You - Science, Design, Practice*, DK, 2020

M. Castleman, *The Healing Herbs: The Ultimate Guide to the Curative Power of Nature's Medicines*, Bantam Books, 1999

R. L. Haller, C.L. Capra, *Horticultural Therapy Methods: Connecting People and Plants in Health Care, Human Services, and Therapeutic Programs*, CRC Press, 2016

R.L. Haller, K.L. Kennedy, C.L. Capra, *The Profession and Practice of Horticultural Therapy*, CRC Press, 2019

C.Greenleaf, *The Herbal Healing Handbook: How to Use Plants, Essential Oils and Aromatherapy as Natural Remedies*, Mango, 2018

R.Kaplan, S.Kaplan, *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1989

##### 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:

#### 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.

Students are expected to wear the apron provided by the institution.

### 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

Attendance 10%

Participation and Assignments 20%

Midterm Exam 20%

Final Project or Paper 20%

Final Exam 30%

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.

On the second absence the attendance and participation grade will be impacted. Please note that missing certain field learning activities may count for more than one absence.

On the third absence the instructor may lower the final grade by one letter grade. (Example: Final grade average of 93% or A will become a B).

**The fourth absence constitutes automatic failure of the course. Students with excessive absences will be asked to withdraw with a W (if before the deadline) or leave the course with a WF.**

#### 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**

Example of how exams, papers, and projects are detailed and graded:

The **Midterm Exam** accounts for 20% of the final course grade. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**

Format: the exam is divided into two sections:

- Part I: Multiple choice and short answer questions, for a total of 60 points.
- Part II: Essay questions; for a total of 40 points.

The **Final Project** accounts for 20% of the course grade.

This is a worksheet mapping 20 plants of a city garden of choice within the Florentine area. Each plant needs to be categorized by means of photo, description, details on plant care (watering, light exposure, type of soil needed etc.) and benefits (soothing properties, calming effect etc.).

The **Final Exam** accounts for 30% of the final course grade. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Format: the exam is divided into two sections:

- Part I: Multiple choice and short answer questions, for a total of 60 points.
- Part II: Essay questions; for a total of 40 points.

This course participation and assignments segment also features a 10-hour **experiential learning project**.

## 12. LESSONS

<b>Lesson 1</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>THE ART OF GARDENING: AN INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Presentation of the course, introduction to the class syllabus and course structure. Information on assignments, exams, and final project.</p> <p>A brief history of gardening: from antiquity to modern times.</p> <p>Walking tour of the Cafaggio del Vescovo garden and facilities. Description of the main plants: herbs, trees, etc.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce students to the course contents and requirements</li> <li>• Learn the principles of horticulture</li> <li>• Familiarize with the standard equipment, tools, materials for gardening</li> <li>• Recognize the main species cultivated in the garden</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	Cafaggio del Vescovo garden of Palazzo Villani Stiozzi Ridolfi
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	<p>Reading: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i>, pp. 3 – 20.</p> <p>Reading: <i>Gardens for Senses</i>, pp. 5-12</p> <p>Assignment: Groupwork – Research and Map Florentine gardens in the city center. Visit minimum 4 (1 per neighborhood) of the public ones, and prepare worksheet for each one. A worksheet must include at least 3 photos and a minimum 300-word text on the garden description and history.</p> <p>The suggested gardens are Boboli, Le Cascine, Iris Garden, Nidiaci Garden, Giardino dei Semplici. (due by W4)</p>

<b>Lesson 2</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>HORTICULTURAL THERAPY: FROM THEORY TO BEST PRACTICES</p> <p>An overview of background theories, methods, and practical applications: how horticultural therapy can improve health care and wellness.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn how to apply therapeutic modalities in green activities</li> <li>• Discover people – plant relationships</li> <li>• Recognize the connection between plants and community</li> <li>• Discover the therapeutic potential of gardening for wellness</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 21 – 42.

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	THE ART OF GARDENING: CARING FOR PLANTS Introduction to the basic activities of gardening: sowing, potting, repotting, cultivation, drainage, fertilization, exposition to light, temperature and weather.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn basic cultivation techniques</li> <li>• Illustrate diverse plant needs according to context</li> <li>• Experience the benefits of gardening for health and wellness</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	Cafaggio del Vescovo garden of Palazzo Villani Stiozzi Ridolfi
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 42 - 68. Reading: <i>Horticultural Therapy Methods</i> , pp. 1-7 Assignment: Design a map of the Cafaggio del Vescovo garden with the name of each plant you encounter.

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	COOKING LAB: ITALIAN TRADITIONAL SPREADS AND CONDIMENTS Experience the traditional Italian preparation of jams, marmalade, preserves, and condiments with seasonal fruit and vegetables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Spring</u>: citrus fruits and strawberry spreads, preserved seasonal vegetables and fruits</li> <li>○ <u>Fall</u>: Italian preserved fruit “mostarda” and chestnuts spreads, preserved seasonal vegetables and fruits</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the traditional recipes of spreads and condiments</li> <li>• Understand basic food hygiene procedures</li> <li>• Discuss the history and uses of class recipes</li> <li>• Distinguish the different products available for each season</li> <li>• Experience the act of collective cooking as a therapeutic activity</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 71 - 100. Reading: <i>Horticultural Therapy Methods</i> , pp. 8-20 Submit Group Work.

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	REGENERATION OF URBAN SPACES Review of urbanism and sustainability in cityscapes, the development of regenerated green spaces.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be able to define urban regeneration.</li> <li>• Explore the significance of regenerated urban spaced in Florence.</li> <li>• Learn the history of Le Cure and its current shared garden projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	Walking tour Le Cure.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 287 - 316. Reading: <i>Gardens for Senses</i> , pp. 83-97 Assignment: Prepare a worksheet for a selection of 5 plants at the Cafaggio del Vescovo. Each worksheet / plant must include a photo, description, and details on plant care (watering, light exposure, type of soil needed etc.).

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	HORTICULTURAL THERAPY: ADAPTIVE GARDENING Interior and exterior horticultural space design and techniques for adaptive gardening in the city. Case studies of community gardening programs in Florence.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn different adaptive tools and methodologies</li> <li>• Discuss the present and future of public green spaces</li> <li>• Compare international standards on adaptive gardening in contemporary communities</li> <li>• Learn how to design your green space according to diverse physical mobility, age, and spatial conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 317 - 354. Reading: <i>Gardens for Senses</i> , pp. 99-108 Assignment: Research a case study of “citizen gardening” and describe its creation, mission, and practices (min 300 words)

<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>	THE ART OF GARDENING: STANDARD TECHNIQUES Analysis of the standard activities of gardening (maintenance and development): watering, irrigation, seeding, weekly care and protection (from animals, bacteria and viruses), fertilization with kitchen waste, maintenance of the soil, managing pests, transplanting, pruning, mulching.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the standard techniques of cultivation for maintenance and growth</li> <li>• Illustrate diverse plant needs according to context</li> <li>• Experience the benefits of gardening for health and wellness</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	Cafaggio del Vescovo garden of Palazzo Villani Stiozzi Ridolfi
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: <i>Horticultural Therapy Methods</i> , pp. 33-57

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	MEDICINAL HORTICULTURE IN ITALIAN HISTORY The importance of plants for healing and the interrelation of medicine, religion, and magic.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore a traditional <i>hortus conclusus</i> of Florence.</li> <li>• Learn the history of the Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica of Santa Maria Nuova, one of the world's oldest apothecaries.</li> <li>• Distinguish commonly used aromatic healing herbs and spices.</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	Museo Santa Maria Nuova, focus on Orto dei Semplici.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading Assignment: <i>Gardens for Senses</i> , pp. 55-80 Assignment: Write a journal entry on the visit (min 300 words).

<b>Lesson 11</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	COOKING LAB: HERBS IN ITALIAN CULINARY TRADITIONS Experience the seasonal use of culinary herbs and spices in traditional Italian cooking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Spring</u>: pesto di pantesco (pasta sauce of Pantelleria)</li> <li>○ <u>Fall</u>: 'nduja (spicy spreadable salume from Calabria)</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the history and uses of herbs in the Mediterranean diet and wellness practices</li> <li>• Be able to use a variety of herbs available in specific seasons</li> <li>• Experience the different tastes, colors, and smells of culinary herbs</li> <li>• Prepare a complete meal utilizing seasonal herbs</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading Assignment: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 131 - 156.

<b>Lesson 12</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	MENTAL HEALTH AND HORTICULTURAL THERAPY PRACTICE Overview of mental health problems. Treatment approaches of therapies adapted to diagnostic cases and in relation to psychological methodologies. Group psychology methods.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish between types of diagnostic cases and methodologies</li> <li>• Learn how to apply horticultural therapy</li> <li>• Work in teams on an assigned Case Study</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading Assignment: S. Simson and M. Straus, <i>Horticulture as Therapy, Principles and Practice</i> , pp. 157 - 192. Assignment: Design a decoration strategy for plant pots and vases at the Pomario Botanical Retail Store. Collect natural materials and apply them to Pomario products for a seasonal festivity (Spring: Easter/ Fall: Christmas).



<b>Lesson 13</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	THE ART OF GARDENING: SYSTEMS-BASED APPROACHES Analysis of systems-based activities for gardening: elements of permaculture, hydroculture, vertical gardens, elements of art and gardening
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn gardening techniques from a systems-based perspective</li> <li>• Create a green artistic project with the topics given in class</li> <li>• Experience the benefits of gardening for health and wellness</li> </ul>
<b>Visit</b>	Cafaggio del Vescovo garden of Palazzo Villani Stiozzi Ridolfi
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Reading: <i>Horticultural Therapy Methods</i> , pp.59-84

<b>Lesson 14</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	TASTING: FOOD PAIRING WITH HERBS, SPREADS, AND CONDIMENTS Food pairing analysis utilizing the items sustainably produced through the course. FINAL REVIEW and PRESENTATIONS
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze class recipes for appropriate food pairings</li> <li>• Develop and reflect on the possible uses of the horticultural product in the culinary field</li> <li>• Discuss the Final Project with the class</li> </ul>
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Review all course materials. Submit Final Project. Presentation of Final Project.

<b>Lesson 15</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>