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SYLLABUS

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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 CULINARY ARTS / FOOD AND CULTURE / GRADUATE TOPICS IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS STUDIES

COURSE TITLE: ITALIAN PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

COURSE CODE: FWCAPK670 / FWFCPK670

3 Semester Credits

1. DESCRIPTION

This course offers an overview on traditional Italian ingredients, prepared goods, dairy products, and Italian specialties. The course explores fresh, prepared, and preserved foods and focuses on the products that represent an important cultural background for traditional and contemporary Italian cuisine. Special attention will be put into the analysis of the Slow Food movement and how it helped (and helps) to preserve the gastronomical heritage that made Italy become a landmark for quality food. Students will also learn to evaluate products for taste, texture, smell, appearance, and other quality attributes. Lectures will be also dedicated to the knowledge of distinctive liqueurs and wines. Field learning and practical experience will offer a wide panorama on both famous and niche products deeply rooted in Italian history.

2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to provide students with an in-depth knowledge of emblematic Italian food products, exploring their characteristics, varieties, production methods, and quality standards. The course emphasizes both theoretical understanding and direct experience through guided tastings, field visits, and hands-on practice. Students will have the opportunity to meet local producers, gain insight into artisanal and industrial processes, and taste products that embody Italy's rich gastronomic heritage.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify, evaluate, and taste a wide range of Italian cheeses, table and dessert wines, and liqueurs, understanding their cultural and geographical origins.
- Recognize the differences between various qualities of dry pasta, linking them to raw materials, production techniques, and culinary performance.
- Acquire knowledge of the main features of local meats and their role in traditional and contemporary Italian cuisine.
- Develop technical skills to produce home-style preserved foods using safe and authentic methods.
- Create artisanal chocolate preparations, including Easter eggs and molded confections, applying tempering and molding techniques.
- Critically analyze the relationship between product quality, terroir, and Italian food identity through producer encounters and tastings.

3. REQUIREMENTS

Open to food and wine studies, hospitality, nutrition and dietetics, and health majors.

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):

Roden, Claudia. **The Food of Italy Region** by Region, Vintage 1999.

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

FURTHER READINGS

Food Design in Italy: Product Development and Communication - Alberto Bassi - Electa

The Landscapes of Italian Food: Local Development and Healthy Practices - Gregory Smith, Gilda Berruti - Routledge Focus

Top 100 Food Plants - Ernest Small - NRC-CNRC

Complete Italian Food - Carluccio - Quadrille Publishing

The Art of the Chocolatier - Edwald Notter - Wiley

Italian Cheese: a Guide to its Discovery and Appreciation - Piumatti-Surrusca-Sardo - Slow Food

The Slow Food Dictionary to Italian Regional Cooking - Slow Food editore

Treasures of the Italian Table - B. Anderson - William Morrow & Company Inc.

Carlo Petrini - Slow Food Nation: Why our Food should be Good, Clean and Fair - Rizzoli Ex Libris

Carlo Petrini - Terra Madre - Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, Vermont

G. Ganugi L. Romanelli - Olive Oil - McRae Florence 2002

Gillian Riley - The Oxford Companion to Italian Food - Oxford University Press

P. Artusi - Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well - Random House New York

C. Ingram - The World Encyclopedia - Cooking ingredients - Annes London

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

No additional course materials are necessary.

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

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)

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

9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

Special Project: accounts for 20% of the final course grade.

The Special Project is due by Lesson 6 and must be submitted on the course portal.

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

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.

Students are required to provide an 800 words essay on the “The evolution of gastronomy and food: analysis of quality food production and marketing in Italy”.

The Final Project is due by Lesson 9 and must be submitted on the course portal.

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: Reaction essay on *Slow Food Story* documentary.

Students are asked to write a 400 words short essay discussing the peculiar origins and development of one of the most important sustainability movements of the last 50 years. Due by Lesson 3.

Assignment #2: Survey of Italian Specialty Cheeses

Students will provide a presentation of one Italian cheese from outside Tuscany available at the Central Market. The presentation must include the production process, the main characteristics of the cheese, its flavor profile, and the suitable application in the kitchen. Due by Lesson 7.

Assignment #3: Reaction paper on the visit at Taste! Food Fair

Students are asked to comment the experience at the event and write a 600 words presentation of one of the exhibitors. Students are asked to gather preliminary information about the company and, when on site, interview the staff to collect additional information about the company, production process, production philosophy, and marketing strategies. Due by Lesson 10.

Further details are provided in the course portal.

10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Slow Food Presidi History and aims of Slow Food movement - Overview of the Italian and worldwide Presidi - The reasons for a choice - Analysis of “unusual” Presidi Documentary: Slow Food Story
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain the origins and objectives of the Slow Food movement.Interpret the underlying motivations guiding Slow Food’s philosophy and choices.Evaluate the strategies and initiatives implemented by Slow Food to achieve its goals.Differentiate Italian <i>Presidi</i> products from DOP and IGP certifications, recognizing their respective purposes and characteristics.
Readings/ Assignments	Carlo Petrini - Slow Food Nation: why our food should be good, clean and fair - Introduction https://www.fondazionslowfood.com/en/slow-food-presidia/ https://www.fondazionslowfood.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/presidi_manuale_ENG.pdf Assignment #1 topic assigned: Reaction paper on Slow Food Story. Due by Lesson 3. Assignment #3 topic assigned: Reaction paper on the visit at Taste! Food Fair. Due by Lesson 10.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>Preserved food workshop & tasting - Focus on Classical Italian Preserves</p> <p>Definition of preserved foods – Overview of common preservation methods, with emphasis on canning, pickling, and fruit preserves – Principles of fermentation and pickling – Sugar-based preserves and pectin gels – Canning techniques: safety and sanitation – Sterilization of finished products using pressure cookers and steam ovens.</p> <p>Tasting session: traditional mostarde, confetture, preserves, sott'oli, sott'aceti, vegetable marmalades, and mosto cotto/sapa.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the main principles and chemistry of food preservation, including fermentation and sugar-based methods. Apply preservation techniques such as pickling, sugar preserves, and the production of Italian mostarda. Demonstrate proper sanitation practices to ensure safe and high-quality preserved foods
Lab	Preserved lemons - Fruit and vegetables preserves - Fermented vegetables - <i>Sott'olii, sott'aceti, Italian Mostarda</i>
Readings/ Assignments	On food and cooking. The science and lore of the kitchen - Harold McGee pp 291-299 - See additional material on the course portal.

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Chocolate Workshop</p> <p>Origins and diffusion of cocoa in Europe - Chocolate production, structure and flavor - Chocolate in Italy</p> <p>Chocolate tempering - Use of molds for chocolate shaping - Ganache production for pralines - Pralines production</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the history of cocoa and its global diffusion. Explain the chocolate production process and the chemistry underlying its structure and flavor. Apply chocolate in both traditional and contemporary culinary preparations. Demonstrate proper tempering techniques and understand their purpose. Use molds effectively to produce pralines and select appropriate ganache fillings. Create artisanal chocolate products, including Easter eggs and basic decorative elements.
Lab	Chocolate ganache - Pralines - Molded shapes
Readings/ Assignments	<p>The art of the chocolatier - Edwald Notter pp. 6-11 / 108-115 / 176-180 / 242-243</p> <p>Assignment #1 DUE</p> <p>Assignment #2 topic assigned: Survey of Italian Specialty Cheeses. Due by Lesson 7.</p>

Lesson 4	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Food marketing: Food and Wine Festivals & Events</p> <p>The role of food and food industry in today's society - Italian food festivals and events - Analysis of food marketing strategies and trends - Branding, strategy and packaging design</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the sector of high-quality food products and its business dimensions. • Identify and work with Italian specialty ingredients with confidence. • Evaluate how ingredient selection influences both the quality of a dish and its market value. • Differentiate genuine product quality from strategies driven primarily by marketing. • Assess the role of food festivals as media events in promoting gastronomy and culture.
Visit	<p>Visit to one of the most important Italian food event: <i>Taste!</i> food fair</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to taste the best of Italian specialties and directly interact with producers</p>
Readings/ Assignments	<p>http://www.pittimagine.com/corporate/fairs/taste.html</p> <p>http://www.identitagolose.com</p> <p>http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/27283/1/PubSub5047_Taylor.pdf</p>

Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Italian Specialty Meats and Cured meat production - Local breeds and sustainable farming</p> <p>Returning to the roots: free-range local breeds, organic farming practices, and ethical animal husbandry - Ethical considerations in meat consumption - Local breeds in the context of contemporary culinary trends - Comparative analysis of meat quality from farmed versus ranch-raised animals - The impact of large-scale food distribution on traditional consumption habits and the efforts of contemporary gastronomy to recover them - The interplay of tradition and modern technology in the artisanal production of cured meats.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the most renowned Italian livestock breeds and their characteristics. • Recognize the variety of anatomical cuts and determine their appropriate culinary uses. • Assess quality indicators and distinguish naturally raised animals from those intensively farmed. • Analyze the application of advanced techniques in the production of artisanal cured meats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the complete production process of premium Italian salumi.
Visit	Visit to a local farmer & butcher lab - Tour of the cured meats production site with tasting
Readings/ Assignments	<p>https://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2014/07/29/slow-meat-transform-industry</p> <p>https://www.slowfood.com/sloweurope/wp-content/uploads/ING_sondaggio_benessere.pdf</p> <p>See additional material on the course website</p>

Lesson 6	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Cheese Tasting & Production</p> <p>Historical origins and core production processes of cheese – Safety and hygiene practices – Sustainable cheese production, emphasizing animal welfare as a foundation for high-quality products – Tasting of Italian specialty cheeses sourced from local organic producers.</p> <p>Tasting sessions will be preceded by a detailed overview of production methods, including molding and aging techniques.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain practical confidence in cheese production techniques. • Identify and evaluate key indicators of cheese quality. • Understand the significance of sustainable practices in cheese production. • Assess animal welfare and its impact on product quality. • Appreciate the importance of preserving traditional cheese-making methods as part of cultural heritage.
Visit	Visit to a local producer of cheese - Tour of the production site and aging cellars - Cheese and wine tasting
Readings/ Assignments	<p>Italian Cheese: a guide to its discovery and appreciation - Slow Food ed.</p> <p>Cheese - G. Ganugi, L. Romanelli - McRae</p> <p>SPECIAL PROJECT DUE</p>

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class

Lecture	<p>Tuscan Extra Virgin Olive Oil - From the <i>press</i> to the <i>extraction</i></p> <p>Contemporary production methods and sustainability in extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) – Adapting harvest and processing techniques to individual olive varieties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The quality of mono-cultivar EVOO production – Comparative tasting of industrial VS artisanal EVOOs – Identifying quality indicators through organoleptic evaluation of extra virgin olive oil.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the benefits of contemporary olive oil extraction methods. • Identify quality indicators of mono-cultivar extra virgin olive oils (EVOO). • Compare and evaluate superior-quality EVOOs through sensory analysis. • Determine appropriate food pairings for different types of EVOO.
Visit	Visit to a local producer of Extra virgin olive oil - Tour of the production site and professional guided tasting
Readings/ Assignments	<p>http://olive-central.co.za/olive-oil-production-traditional-vs-modern/ https://phys.org/news/2015-05-olive-oil.html https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271688744_Extra_Virgin_Olive_Oil_and_Slow_Food</p> <p>See additional material on the course website Assignment #2 DUE</p>

Lesson 8	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Handcrafted Pasta Production - The Artisan “pastificio”</p> <p>The art of artisanal durum wheat pasta production – Regional traditions from Gragnano, Liguria, Puglia, and Tuscany that shaped the craft of dry pasta – From grain selection to extrusion, emphasizing the role of low-temperature processing – Structural differences between industrial and artisanal dry pasta – Nutritional and health considerations.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate between industrial and artisanal pasta in terms of production methods, structure, and quality. • Identify and evaluate key indicators of high-quality handcrafted pasta. • Understand the complete artisanal production process, including the techniques and factors that contribute to superior pasta quality.
Visit	Visit to a local producer of handcrafted pasta - Tour of the production site
Readings/ Assignments	<p>http://pastafabbri.it/en/ http://www.setaro.it/en/index.html https://www.pastacocco.com/la-pasta-cocco/ http://pastamorelli.it/en/artisan-pasta.php</p> <p>See additional material on the course website</p>

Lesson 9

Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Monks, Apothecaries and Distillation</p> <p>The evolution of distillation and maceration: from prescriptions to mixology - Focus on <i>Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella</i> - Origins and glorious history of one of the world's oldest and most famous pharmaceutical workshops</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the origins of digestive liqueurs Explore the role of monastic workshops in the development of distillation techniques Visit and experience one of Florence's most renowned historical workshops Learn the history of the Officina and its cultural significance Examine the alchemical principles once applied in pharmacy Study the traditional production methods of Florentine liqueurs and distillates.
Visit	Visit of the Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella
Readings/Assignments	<p>http://www.smnovella.com/timeline http://hekint.org/2017/01/30/the-florentine-renaissance-apothecary/ https://www.eater.com/2015/3/20/8157777/the-rise-of-the-apothecary-cocktail</p> <p>See additional material on the course website FINAL PROJECT DUE</p>

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class
Lecture	<p>Italian Traditional Liqueurs, Distillates and Fortified Wines</p> <p>Definition and classification – Processes of infusion, maceration, and distillation – In-depth study of Italian digestives and amari and their culinary applications – Focus on vermouth and bitter liqueurs: from 19th-century Italy to their worldwide diffusion – Marsala wine as a distinguished yet often underestimated Italian product – Exploration of specialty amari.</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the historical origins of liqueurs, their early purposes in medicine, ritual, and gastronomy, and their evolution into contemporary beverages. Demonstrate knowledge of distillation techniques and infusion processes used in the production of alcoholic beverages. Identify the various raw materials that can serve as the basis of a distillate and apply methods of classification according to origin, process, and product type. Gain familiarity with the traditions, characteristics, and cultural significance of Italian liqueurs, amari, and fortified wines, recognizing their role in both historical and modern gastronomy.
Visit	Liqueurs, distillates and fortified wines tasting

Readings/ Assignments	<p>https://winefolly.com/deep-dive/marsala-wine/ https://winefolly.com/deep-dive/what-is-vermouth/ https://www.campariacademy.com/en-au/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2023/01/FINAL- -AMARI-CLUB-BOOKLET.pdf https://www.diffordsguide.com/encyclopedia/979/bws/grappas-origins-and-history http://www.amarolucano.it/en</p> <p>See additional material on the course website</p> <p>Assignment #3 DUE</p>
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Lesson 11	
Meet	In class
Lecture	FINAL EXAM