

History and Culture of Food in Italy

Instructor: Peter Fischer, Ted Metcalfe

Credits: 3

Contact hrs/wk: 3

Prerequisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will examine the relationship between food, culture and identity in Italy through a variety of readings, discussions, outdoor activities and tasting experiences. We will trace the historical evolution of Italian food culture in a world history perspective focusing on the many global influences which over the centuries have shaped the use of different food products, preparation methods, consumption patterns, i.e. the Italian approach towards food, as well as on the many ways in which Italy itself has become a dynamic factor in the process of culinary globalization. We will look at food in its social and cultural context through a multi-disciplinary approach — history, anthropology, sociology, and geography. A major focus will be on understanding the extraordinary significance of food in the definition of “Italianness” from an Italian, as well as from an international (i.e. American) perspective.

Lectures and class discussions will be supplemented by special food workshops in which we will explore the history, culture and taste of selected Italian food products: bread, wine, and olive oil. We will visit food markets in Florence, and go on a fieldtrip to the Tuscan countryside.

COURSE METHOD

The course will be taught through a combination of formal lectures (incl. power point presentations) class discussions, student presentations, tastings and outdoor activities designed to engage students with local community in Florence. The structure of the course will follow a chronological order and methods of analysis will be predominantly historical in nature.

OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

By the end of this course you should be able: to understand the relevance of an interdisciplinary approach studying food; to be familiar with the historical and social construction of taste; to develop an understanding of food as a most fundamental cultural aspect of Italian society and to have enhanced your academic skills of critical analysis, literature reviews and oral presentation.

ASSESSMENT

10% Class Attendance

30% Paper Project

25% Mid-Term Exam

35% Final Exam

GRADING

Course grades are based on **midterm and final exams**, and the **paper project**; **attendance and class participation** as well as **pop-quizzes** are also considered.

Grading will be done on a percentage basis: A 93-100; A- 90-92,9; B+ 87-89,9; B 83-86,9; B- 80-82,9; C+ 77-79,9; C 73-76,9; C- 70-72,9; D+ 67-69,9; D 63-66,9; D- 60-62,9; F 59,9 and below.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements include regular class attendance, class participation, required readings and pop quizzes, paper project, a mid-term exam and a final exam.

Class Attendance, Class Participation, Required Readings and Pop Quizzes (10%)

Attendance is mandatory. For engaged discussions we will need your active attention and participation. **Students are allowed two unjustified absences. To be excused for any additional absence, you must show a doctor's note (that is, not just a prescription or a form attesting that you went to see a doctor). Each unexcused absence after the previous two will diminish the final grade by a third of a letter grade (e.g. from A- to B+).** If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining the class notes. Being late to class will also affect your grade. Two tardies (10 minutes late to class) equal one unexcused absence. **Class Participation:** I expect that you will be committed to giving a professional effort in this class. Participation means active engagement in the course: being consistently prepared for class (having really read that day's assignments), asking questions, responding to questions, offering your own insights and opinions, attentive listening to others. I begin by assuming a C for each student's class participation grade and move from there.

The **Required Readings** are an integral part of this course and should not be considered supplemental. Reading assignments should be done for the class day they are assigned. Unannounced **Pop-Quizzes** covering reading assignments may be given periodically throughout the semester; these quizzes cannot be made up unless the instructor was notified in advance of the absence.

Individual Paper Project (30%)

Each student is expected to write a paper of about 8-10 pages. Topics must be selected in agreement with me. The topics are determined by the available reading, and guidance will be given throughout.

You may choose to pursue further a topic that we are exploring in class, or examine another area of academic interest, which is related to the subject of this course. I urge to discuss project ideas with me early on. This is to help you get thinking about your project early enough to do a good job. Time passes by quickly (particularly in Florence!). I will not accept any paper without the approved paper outline (see below) attached! Late papers will receive a drop in grade.

Basic Resources. Conduct a thorough search. Basic resources are available at the Institute's library. You may also explore the Internet and look through magazines, newspapers, and archives. Journal articles are one of the primary sources of new theories and research findings. As an abroad student you should also use the on-line library facilities of your home university to get access to important databases such as JSTOR. I will expect at least 4 scholarly references (books, scholarly articles) from 4 different authors. All information is helpful. See me for ideas and talk to anyone who might be of help. I will not accept a topic that you have used/are using for another class.

Paper Outline. The outline of your paper project should contain: the title of your paper; the bibliographic references, and a short abstract. The paper outline should be a short, single-spaced, 1-2 paragraph statement of the goals and conclusions of your paper. It should allow the reader to grasp immediately what the paper seeks to communicate in terms of questions, evidence, methods, or interpretations. The more detailed and specific your outline, the easier writing your paper will be. Please note: I will not accept any paper without the approved outline attached.

Mid-Term Exam (25%)

An exam covering all topics presented until the mid-term exam. The exam will take approximately 120 minutes to complete and will constitute 25% of the final grade.

Final Exam (35%)

An exam covering all topics presented after the mid-term exam. The exam will take approximately 120 minutes to complete and it will constitute 35% of the final grade. This is the only time the exam will be given. Students who plan to depart prior to the exam should not take this course.

Review Sessions

Thorough review sessions are held in indicated sessions prior to both the midterm and the final exam. A written study guide will be made available for students.

Academic Misconduct

All forms of cheating i.e. copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes and plagiarism, i.e. presenting, as one's own, the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation (paper, written tests, etc.) without proper acknowledgment will not be accepted. This includes also insufficient or incomplete acknowledgement, or failure to acknowledge a source that has been paraphrased. The Institute believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. I have and I will fail students for plagiarism. I also report them to the Director for appropriate action. If you have concerns with any aspect of the course, please feel free to discuss them with me. If you ever feel that I have treated you in less than a respectful manner, please raise the issue with me.

CLASSROOM POLICY

All students are expected to follow the uniform policy of the International Studies Institute. They are expected to develop the appropriate respect for the historical premises, which the school occupies and they are **not permitted to eat, drink or chew gum in class**. There will be no breaks during class. You should not leave the classroom except without special permission. Extended departures are unacceptable and will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade.

Use of technology in the classroom: Please note that **mobile phones must be turned off** before the beginning of each class. Use of a mobile phone during class (such as texting) is grounds for considering you absent from class that day. Also **personal computers may not be used** for taking notes during class lectures and discussions.

Please note: I will conduct this class in an atmosphere of mutual respect. I encourage your active participation in class discussions. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect, you will not be permitted to participate further.

DISABILITY-RELATED ACCOMMODATION

Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs and the Student Dean and follow their instructions for obtaining accommodations.

COURSE MATERIAL

All reading and viewing assignments will be made available electronically on Google Drive.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1

Jan 13 (Mon): What Will This Course Be About? Introduction to Course Organization and to Course Program

Jan 15 (Wed): Making Sense of Food

Required readings:

Rozin, P. (1999), 9-30; Sobal (1998), 853-863

Week 2

Jan 20 (Mon): Making Sense of Italians and Food

Required readings:

Capatti/Montanari, xiii-5; Dusselier (2009)

Jan 22 (Wed): WALKING TOUR: Exploration of the Florentine Food System Part 1: Visit to the Central Market and tastings of typical Florentine (street) foods

Suggested readings:

Black, R., (2012), 13-17; Wright, C., Markets

Week 3

Jan 27 (Mon): WORKSHOP – How to Design a Successful Paper Project – Formal Requirements, Research Areas and Assessment Criteria

Required Readings:

TBA

Jan 29 (Wed): ‘Did Cooking Make Us Human?’ - The Control of Fire and the Debate About the Benefits of a ‘Paleo Diet’

Required readings:

Boyd Eaton, 130-137; Stahl, 137-141; Hamm (2005), 1-12; Nestle, M. (2015)

Week 4

Feb 3 (Mon): ‘The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race?’ - The Neolithic Revolution

Required readings:

Tauger 1-14; Diamond (1987) 64-66

Feb 5 (Wed): Bread, Wine and Olive Oil as a Marker of Civilization in the Ancient World (includes Bread Tasting Workshop)

Required readings:

Montanari (1999) 69-78; Dalby, 209-214; Pinkard, S. 3-13

Week 5

Feb 10 (Mon): Food as a Source of Sin and Salvation - The Christian Food Model and Early Medieval Food Culture

Required Readings:

Montanari (1999), 165-167; Montanari (1996), 15-26; Capatti/Montanari, 69-74

Feb 12 (Wed): Tastes of Paradise - The Arabs and Their Influence on European Food Culture + REVIEW FOR MIDTERM EXAM

Required Readings:

Rosenberger, 207-223; Schivelbusch, pp. 3-14; Davidson, 744-746

Week 6

Feb 17 (Mon): The Renaissance Banquet and the Codification of Modern Table Manners

Required Readings:

Santich, 176-179; Castiglione, 66-68; Visser, 586-592;
NOTE: PAPER OUTLINES MUST BE GIVEN IN BY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17
Feb 19 (Wed): REVIEW FOR MIDTERM EXAM + RETURN OUTLINES + CLASS DISCUSSION

Week 7

Feb 24-27 (Mon-Thu): MID-TERM EXAM WEEK (no other classes)

Week 8

MID-TERM BREAK (Feb 28 – March 8)

Week 9

Mar 9 (Mon): The History and Culture of Wine in Italy and the Tuscan Wine Revolution

Required Readings:

Phillips, 551-557; Charters, 557-561; Sonkin (2008)

Mar 11 (Wed): How Wine is Made, Classified, Tasted and Paired With Food

Required Readings:

Robinson, J., 769-771; Youtube Clips

► **Mar 13 (Fri): EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIP TO THE CHIANTI (Section 2&4)**

Please note: This field day-trip is of fundamental importance (mandatory!) for our class and counts as a regular class appointment. Program and details to be announced.

Week 10

Mar 16 (Mon): The Age of European Colonialism and the Columbian Exchange

Required Readings:

Crosby, A., 45-58; Long-Solis, 436-439

Mar 18 (Wed): The Hot Beverage Revolution

Required Readings:

Huetz de Lemps, 383-393; The Economist, 46-48

Week 11

Mar 23 (Mon): The French “Taste” Revolution in the 17th Century and Different Concepts of Taste

Required Readings:

Pinkard, A. (2009), 60-78; Bourdieu, P. (1984) 1-7

Mar 25 (Wed): Food and Industrialization – The Emergence of the Western Diet

Required Readings:

Flandrin (1999), 435-441; Pollan, 1-11

Week 12

Mar 30 (Mon): Orti Dipinti (Exploration of a Sustainable Community Garden in Florence; includes tastings)

Required Readings:

TBA

Apr 1 (Wed): The Importance of Food for Italian Immigrants in the United States

Required Readings:

Diner, 48-83; Del Giudice (2000), 245-248

NOTE: PAPERS MUST BE HANDED IN BY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 LATEST!

Week 13

Apr 6 (Mon): The Codification of Italian National Identity in the 19th and 20th Century and the Particular Importance of Pasta

Required Readings:

Camporesi, 113-152 and 200-207

Apr 8 (Wed): WALKING TOUR - Exploration of the Florentine Food System, Part 2: Visit to the Historical Sant Ambrogio Market and Tasting of Typical Florentine Food

Required Viewings:

Opera at S.Ambrogio Market in Florence

Week 14

Apr 13 (Mon): NO CLASS (EASTER MONDAY)

Apr 15 (Wed): Good, Clean and Fair - The (Italian) Slow Food Movement

Required Readings:

Andrew, G., 165-182; Laudan, R, (2010)

Week 15

Apr 20 (Mon): WORKSHOP: Honey – The Food of the Gods

Required Readings and Viewings:

<https://www.apidologie.org/articles/apido/pdf/2004/06/MHS05.pdf>

Apr 22 (Wed): Is There a Mediterranean Diet? A Critical Historical Reconstruction of a Quite Confounding Debate + REVIEW

Required Readings:

Nestle, 1193-1203; Schersten (2011), The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

Week 16

Apr 27-30 (Mon-Thu): FINAL EXAM WEEK