



## CWFS 350: Writing / Italian / Food Course Syllabus

Summer Semester 2017

**Instructor:** Teresa Cutler-Broyles

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Class Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:15am – 2:45pm

**Office Hours:** one day/week after class

**Lab/Site-visits Fee:** 70 €

**Type of Course:** Lecture, Writing, Excursions

### Course Description

This class combines the history and customs of food, olive oil, and wine in Perugia and the surrounding region with food writing and a bit of travel. We will start by exploring a small portion of the history of Italian food and wine, but with a specific focus on Perugia and the wider Umbrian area. Each week will consist of a different concentration / combination of historical moment and type of food, such as the question of pizza, the origin of the aperitivo, the arrival of coffee in Italy and its subsequent growth in popularity, and more. In conjunction with the aforementioned, the class will include excursions: visits to restaurants, cheese makers, vineyards and olive groves, and so on in Perugia and nearby cities and towns. The purpose is to become educated, informed, and discerning food writers.

The writing portion of the class will focus on: the elements of good writing; the crafting of an effective and compelling article; techniques and special skills specific to writing about food; and approaches to publication in online and print venues.

### Two-Part Final Project

The course will include a final project divided into 2 parts:

Part 1) A professional-level written piece that students can send out for publication if desired. Students will choose a particular place and a connected food, and their projects will engage with the readings, the chosen food or drink (or combination), the intended audience, and the style of writing chosen. This final project will show an understanding of all of the above, and will be written with an eye for publication, whether or not students intend to publish.

Part 2) A blog that will have been kept for the entire five weeks online.

### Course Objectives

This course will ask students to:

- Develop writing skills on a number of levels to include: basic grammar, syntax, punctuation, tense and voice, style, reader engagement, the hook, and the conclusion; focusing written work to a particular market;
- Develop skills in magazine and article analysis;
- Read, critically explore, and write about aspects of Italian history;
- Learn new ways to visit historical sites that are informed by historical knowledge and others' insights, and that generate questions as well as appreciation; and
- Demonstrate how history and tradition inform many of today's Italian customs, food production, consumption, and expectations.

### Course Requirements

Course grades are based on the reading and writing portions of the class, class participation, and the final project.

## Weekly Points

100 points total possible in each class period:

- 40 - Outside written reading responses
- 30 - In-class and session written assignments
- 30 - Class participation

## Final Assessment grades will be based on:

- 30% Class points - participation, reading responses, in-class projects
- 30% All written assignments
- 40% Final project

## Final Grading Rubric

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80 - 82%	
C+	77%-79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Unsatisfactory
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59 % or less	Fail (no credit)

**Attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed **one “free” absence** during the summer semester, which they do not need to justify in any way. Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the student’s grade by one level (e.g., B+ becomes a B). If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during the office hour. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has three or more absences automatically fails the class.

Times and dates for exams, quizzes, and other evaluated in-class assignments cannot be changed. Except in the case of a certified, serious illness or other emergency, they will not be rescheduled. There will be no make-up assignments for missed exams.

Each class lasts for 3.5 hours with two 15-minute breaks. Extended departures are unacceptable and will negatively affect students’ class participation grade.

If students plan to travel between classes, they should be sure to plan enough time to get assignments finished, and to attend the required excursions. Students’ grades and the experience at the Umbra Institute depends on this.

Please Note: Presence during mandatory field trips and excursions is especially important for student performance in this class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower students’ final grade by one grade level (e.g., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

**Class Participation:** Class participation grades are not automatic. They are based on oral contributions to the collective learning experience of the class. Participation means active engagement in the course: being

consistently prepared for class (having carefully read that day's assignments), asking questions, responding to questions, offering insights and opinions, and attentive listening to others. Students who are, by nature, more reluctant to offer their input will not be penalized; they will have the opportunity to comment via email or via informal written work about issues brought up in the class, thus showing active and engaged participation.

**Required Readings:** 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.

***All work must be completed to pass this course.*** Back up your work or send it to yourself via email occasionally while writing.

**Written Assignments:** Writing will occur both in-class and outside. The professor will provide questions, or suggest particular ways to think about, understand, critically question or otherwise engage with the reading.

**Academic Misconduct:** This includes 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 (e.g., papers, presentations, written tests, etc.) without proper acknowledgment. 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. The professor will report students who cheat to the Director for appropriate action, and will not hesitate to fail students for plagiarism. If any student has concerns with any aspect of the course, please feel free to discuss them with the professor.

**Classroom Policy:** All students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute. They are expected to develop the appropriate respect for the historical premises which the school occupies and other than official tastings, they are not permitted to eat, drink, or chew gum in class. *Students must arrive on time to avoid interruption and make the best use of class time.*

Please note that cell phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class. Use of a cell phone during class (such as texting) may be grounds for considering a student absent from class that day. Similarly, computers may be used for taking notes during class lectures and discussions; however, surfing the net, browsing Facebook, etc. may lead to being counted as absent from class that day.

### **Textbooks**

- Four books will need to be purchased; on Amazon, the total for e-versions is less than \$40.
- All other readings will be provided online, and can be purchased as a reader in Perugia upon arrival, if desired.
- Additional reading assignments, both optional and required, may be made available by the instructor.

### **Office Hours**

Additionally, special appointments may be scheduled directly with me. I can be reached via email or on our Facebook group.

## Course Schedule

### WEEK 1 / May 22-26

#### Tuesday, May 23

**Required Readings:** To be done before first class

- Sebellin-Ross. II. Restaurant Critic → Journalistic Ethics / locations 641-822
- Jacob 1-5
- Gutkind 44-55

**Lecture:**

We will discuss Sebellin-Ross and food writing in general, how it differs—and how it is the same—as other kinds of food writing. Techniques of creative non-fiction will be addressed. Discussion will include the different styles of food writing, and students will begin to think about which they would like to try. In class, we will log in to particular how-to sites (provided in bibliography), go over techniques, and begin to write.

***In-class assignment:*** Students will sample food (provided) and do some short writing about it using sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

#### Thursday, May 25

**Required Readings:**

- A - Jacob 8-19
- B - Dickie 1-10
- C - Gutkind 3-13

**Write short synopses of these selections,** taking note of the history component in particular. You will share this with the class.

Revise in-class written assignments from Day 1.

**Lecture:**

Discussion on the different kinds of food writing, from cookbooks to reviews, to blogs to travel-related food writing. Students will present their synopses and analyses of the readings and discuss in class. Students will also read and critique their revised food writing. In-class writing assignment about food and history.

**Weekend Assignment:**

- Jacob 75-81 writing food blog info
- **Read** Sebellin-Ross IV. Food Blogger / Locations 1300-1483
- **Start reading** *A Fork in the Road*, Ed. Oseland. This will be a session-long assignment. You will read one essay of your choice/come to class prepared to discuss.
- Start your own food blog

**Saturday, May 27: Mandatory Field Trip: Terre Margaritelli Cantine Aperte**

### WEEK 2 / May 29-June 2

#### Tuesday, May 30

**Required Readings:**

- A - Jacob 145-165
- B - Parasecoli 7-27,
- C - Parasecoli 251-276

**Write short synopses of selections to share with class**

**Lecture:**

We will share the synopses of the assigned readings, determine points to focus on for students' specific interests and learning objectives. Discussion will include how and why writing about food is different than other kinds of writing. We will look at food blogs and discuss why students chose their favorites – essentially this will be an analysis of the writing – why it appeals, what it addresses, how it affects the reader – as a way of learning writing techniques that work, and those that do not.

We will begin discussing the organization and planning of a food piece.

**Part two of the class:** Restaurant visit, note-taking, using Sebillin-Ross and Gutkind as guides.

**Homework:** 1) Write a short piece about the restaurant using some of the concepts we've been discussing in class 2) Post in your food blog

**Thursday, June 1****Required Readings:**

- A - Montanari, Ch 1, Ch 5
- B - Dickie 13-28
- C - Nowak, "Torta Vs. Kebab"

**Write short synopses of selections to share...**

(A visit from the author today, or TBD)

**Lecture:**

You will share their writing, and discussion will center around how your work reflects and/or diverges from techniques and concepts discussed so far. We will begin looking at markets, discussing audience and how to focus articles, and continue to discuss the integration of history and food writing. We will discuss how writing about food, history, and culture is done, and why it is important. Discussions will also focus on the cultural aspects of particular types of food, and we will begin talking about food and its importance in both cultural and personal identity. You will continue your writing projects in class.

**Weekend Assignments:**

- Continue reading Oseland / Come prepared to discuss another piece with your peers
- Continue food blog
- Begin search for a website or publication you might want to publish in

**WEEK 3 / JUNE 5-9****Tuesday, June 6****Required Reading:**

- A - Montanari Ch 6
- B - Ch 7
- C - Parasecoli 53-62

**Write short synopses of selections to share**

**Lecture:**

Students will read each other's synopses, and will discuss the articles themselves using newly learned techniques of writing in general, as well as new knowledge about food writing. Discussion will continue with issues of food and identity and food and travel. 'Food rules' will be introduced for Italian traditions, and the discussion will include how and in what ways they vary from region to region. We will begin analyzing food writing markets – audience, style, approach to subject, and point of view.

**Thursday, June 8****Required Readings:**

- A/B/C - Parasecoli 103-117

**Write short synopses of selection to share**

**Lecture:**

Class will meet at a restaurant / establishment, and will write about the food using techniques you have learned so far in the readings, class writing and critiques. We will return to class where we will read and critique the writing and do an online search and analysis of publications. We will discuss the importance of research in food writing: knowing the history of the place, the owners, the way it participates in culture and tradition – or breaks from it, controversies or family stories related to the restaurant or the food, and more. Each of you will choose the publication you may send your work to.

**Weekend Assignment:**

- Continue reading Oseland – Come prepared to discuss your chosen piece in class
- Continue writing blog

You will choose which place, food, and historical connection you intend to do for your final project.

**WEEK 4 / June 12-16**

**Tuesday, June 13**

**Required Readings:**

- A - Dickie 183-195
- B & C - Montanari Ch 10

**Write short synopses of selection to share**

**Lecture:**

Each of you will present your final project idea / one paragraph and discuss final project with peers. Outlines will be created and concerns will be addressed. In-restaurant assessment of food, atmosphere, wait-staff, location, etc. will be conducted at a surprise restaurant visit. We will have a discussion of the concept of **identity** as it relates to food.

**Homework:**

- Food blog

**Thursday, June 15**

**Required Readings:**

- A & C - Parasecoli 203-222
- B - Montanari Ch 9

**Write short synopses of selections to share**

- Choose a favorite article/essay from Oseland
  - Write informal page on why, using terminology learned in class

**Lecture:**

Discussion and analyses of selected pieces from Oseland. How do they fit the criteria set by our standards – creative non-fiction techniques, writing-about-food techniques? Why are they chosen as ‘the best of?’ How and in what ways do they differ from each other? What are the relative merits of each type of writing? Discussion of culture and food, and the connection between the two. In-class creation of criteria to look for in food or restaurant.

**Part two of the class:** Visit to restaurant with this in mind – note-taking and writing. Discussion about final projects. Students will choose place, style, and historical period.

**Homework:**

- Continue blog
- Work on first draft of final project

## WEEK 5 / June 19-23

### Tuesday, June 20

#### **Bring a draft of your final paper to class**

Discussion will focus on students' concerns with their projects. Reading and critiquing/peer review of projects will be our main focus.

### Thursday, June 22

Meet at restaurant. Present final papers. Discuss the food and wine we are being served, using all the new tools of analyses and observation, and knowledge of history.

### TBD

#### **Creative Writing Readings**

**Location TBA**

Done!

## Course Bibliography

### **Books:**

(Highlighted books must be purchased / Selections from others in Reader)

- Caws, Mary Ann - *The Modern Art Cookbook*. Reaktion Books (October 2013)
- Dickie, John. *Delizija! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. Atria Books (October 2010)
- Finkelstein, Joanne - *Fashioning Appetite: Restaurants and the Making of Modern Identity*. Columbia University Press (May 2014)
- Grimwood, Jonathan - *The Last Banquet*. Europa Editions (November 2014)
- Gustafson, Ellen - *We the Eaters: If we change dinner we can change the world*. Rodale Books (May 2014)
- Gutkind, Lee. *You Can't Make This Stuff Up: The Complete Guide to Writing Creative Nonfiction—from Memoir to Literary Journalism and Everything in Between*. Da Capo Lifelong Books (August 2012)
- Hughes, Holly. *Best Food Writing 2015*
- Oseland, Holly (Ed.). *Best Food Writing 2014*. Da Capo Lifelong Books; 2014 edition (October 2014)
- Jacob, Dianne. *Will Write for Food: The Complete Guide to Writing Cookbooks, Blogs, Reviews, Memoir, and More*. Da Capo Lifelong Books; Second Edition (July 2010)

- Lonely Planet. *A Fork In The Road: Tales of Food, Pleasure and Discovery On The Road*. Lonely Planet; 1 edition (November 2013)
- Mikulak, Michael - *The Politics of the Pantry*. Mcgill Queens Univ Pr (August 2013)
- Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest: And Other Stories About Food and Culture*. Columbia University Press (December 2012)
- Nowak, Zachary. "Italian Stuffed vs. Maghreb Wrapped: Perugia's Torta al Testa Against the Kebab." (2012)
- Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy*. Reaktion Books (May 2014)
- Sebellin-Ross, S.J. *How to Write about Food: How to Become a Published Restaurant Critic, Food Journalist, Cookbook Author, and Food Blogger*. (Amazon, 2012)

**Websites:**

[www.writing-world.com/freelance/foodfeatures.shtml](http://www.writing-world.com/freelance/foodfeatures.shtml)

[www.tetw.org/Food](http://www.tetw.org/Food)

[www.huffingtonpost.com/news/food-writing/](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/food-writing/)

[www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/12/how-to-write-a-year-in-advice-fromfranzen-king-hosseini-and-more/282445/](http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/12/how-to-write-a-year-in-advice-fromfranzen-king-hosseini-and-more/282445/)

**Food Blogs:**

[asweetandsavorylife.com/](http://asweetandsavorylife.com/)

[cookieandkate.com/how-to-start-a-food-blog/](http://cookieandkate.com/how-to-start-a-food-blog/)

**(Best of)**

[saveur.com/content/best-food-blog-awards-2014-winners](http://saveur.com/content/best-food-blog-awards-2014-winners)

[huffingtonpost.com/news/best-food-blogs/](http://huffingtonpost.com/news/best-food-blogs/)