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SOFS 350: The Culture of Wine: Italy and Beyond Course Syllabus

Summer Semester 2017

Instructor: John C. Hartsock, Ph.D.

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisite: none

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-6:30 p.m.

Classroom: Aula 2

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays after class and by appointment.

Lab fee: 150 euros

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is wine? We know it is much more than a beverage: It is a culture, and it is a way of life, especially in Italy. Students in this course will learn the etiquette of wine, how to taste it, how to pair it with food, how it is made, its intriguing and paradoxical history, and how it is an intrinsic part of Italian—and other—cultures. The region of Umbria, where Perugia is located, is known for some of the most outstanding wines in Italy. The course also includes field trips to some of Umbria's best wineries, often small mama-and-papa operations, where students can cultivate their wine tasting skills and learn to celebrate another culture. No knowledge of Italian necessary.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop a knowledge of and techniques for wine tasting
- To develop a knowledge of how wine is made
- To develop a knowledge of wine history and culture
- To learn to appreciate the importance of wine and food as central to understanding Italian cooking

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we will first learn about the proper etiquette of wine and wine tastings. Then, we will explore its important place in culture. Part of the class involves visiting wineries in Umbria.

1. We will visit with a sommelier who will instruct us in tasting wine and specifically Umbrian wines.
2. We will participate in *Cantine Aperte*, during which Italian wineries open for one weekend in May, by visiting the Montefalco wine district.
3. In June, we will do a food and wine tasting.
4. Also in June we will visit one more winery where you can demonstrate your expertise at tasting!

For each field trip students will write a minimum one-page response paper. Can be handwritten or typed.

While students are introduced to wine tasting, we understand that each individual learns about the subtleties of tasting at their own pace. Some may do so very quickly. For others it may take longer. Therefore, you are not expected to be experts at wine tasting by the end of the course. Instead, you will be introduced to it. However, you are expected to learn the culture of wine.

PLEASE NOTE: The drinking age in Italy is 18 years old. When learning the culture of wine, one must of course taste wine. However, students are expected to act responsibly in doing so. Irresponsible behavior, such as public drunkenness, could result in dismissal from the course.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

20% Class Participation

20% Quizzes on readings

30% Mid-Term on basic wine terms

30% Final exam on wine history, culture, etiquette, and wine and food tasting.

Response Papers: Response papers are pass/fail; if you fail, you can rewrite it. Any response paper not successfully completed will result in the lowering of your final grade by one full grade. All papers must be submitted as Word documents attached to email which you will send to the instructor's email address.

Required Readings: Reading assignments should be done for the class day they are assigned.

Class Participation : The criteria for class participation is based on the following:

A: Regularly initiates and engages in relevant discussion of the material being studied, but does not dominate the discussion to the exclusion of others. Behaves in a respectful manner towards other opinions even if not in agreement.

B: Regularly engages in relevant discussion of material being studied, but does not dominate the discussion to the exclusion of others. Behaves in a respectful manner towards other opinions even if not in agreement.

C: Occasionally engages in discussion relevant to the material being studied. Behaves in a respectful manner towards other opinions even if not in agreement.

D: Rarely engages in discussion relevant to the material. Behaves in a respectful manner towards other opinions even if not in agreement.

E: Never engages in discussion relevant to the material.

Note that class participation is not based on perfect attendance. Again, it based on participating in class.

GRADING

The instructor follows the Umbra Institute Standard Grading System, Attendance Policy, and Participation requirements.

Grading Scale: Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

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%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Attendance Policy

Students are allowed one “free” absence during the summer session, which they do not need to justify. Each additional absence beyond the “free” absence, unless it is for a very serious reason, will lower the student’s final grade by one grade level (e.g., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). It also the policy of the Institute that any student who has 3 or more absences automatically fails the class. Since note-taking is required, if you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students.

Please Note: Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important for student performance in this class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and 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).

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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation: Speaking up in class is highly encouraged. Please feel free to ask questions. It is also expected that you actively listen to your classmates, pay attention, and participate in the class by reading assignments, doing homework, and contributing to the overall class environment. We all have something to learn from each other! Everyone will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss all the assignments. Read ahead: don’t expect to learn everything from the instructor’s lectures.

Response Papers: Response papers to site visits are a *minimum* one page. There is no maximum length.

Quizzes on Readings: These are designed to assure that you do the **mandatory** readings. You will be quizzed on all readings. At the end of the term your grades will be totaled, and divided by the number of quizzes you’ve taken.

Mid-Term Exam (30%)

The mid-term exam covers all topics presented in the first half of the course. It will be closed-book and closed-notes and will consist of essay questions. A review guide will be distributed to students before the exam.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will cover all material from the course. It will be closed-book and closed-notes and will consist of essay questions. A review guide will be distributed to students before the exam.

Course Materials

- Course Reader (usually costs no more than 15 Euros)
- John C. Hartsock, *Seasons of a Finger Lakes Winery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011). ISBN: 978-0-8014-4881-2. Available from www.amazon.com, and from the publisher, www.cornellpress.cornell.edu

Important Note: Purchase this before you leave the U.S. It is also available on Kindle from Amazon.

Transfer Credit Possibilities

This is an accredited course. Credits are transferable through several institutions.

If you are enrolled in a State University of New York institution, the course is transferred through SUNY Fredonia as elective credits. If you are a SUNY Cortland student, the course also fulfills LAS (Liberal Arts and Sciences) credit. Although the course is listed by the Umbra Institute as a sociology and food studies course, recognition may depend on the home institutions of the students.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Readings in your course reader are in alphabetical order by publication name (sometimes abbreviated) and article name. **ALWAYS** bring your reader to class. Sometimes if we are unable to discuss a reading in one class, we will do our best to discuss it in another.

Week 1

Tuesday, May 23:

- Response paper on sommelier visit due beginning of class.
- Introduction to the course; review syllabus.
- Visit to sommelier.

Thursday, May 25:

- Required readings: *Decanter*: “Essence of Umbria”, CNT: “Why Montefalco is Italy’s Best ‘New’ Wine Region.”
- Discuss sommelier visit and readings.

Saturday, May 27:

- *Cantina Aperte*: Day-long field trip to Montefalco wine region. Lunch on your own in Montefalco.

Week 2

Tuesday, May 30:

- Response paper to *Cantine Aperte* due.
- Discuss *Cantine Aperte*.
- Required readings: “Pioneers of Priorat,” *Gourmet*: “Pinot Noir: A Love Story.”

Thursday, June 1:

- Required readings: WE: “Discovering Umbria”; “Poop,” “*Gourmet*: Cinderella’s Bottle.”
- Wine history lecture.

Week 3

Tuesday, June 6:

- Lecture: Wine history.
- Read *Seasons of a Finger Lakes Winery*.
- Discuss similarities and differences between Italian and American wine cultures.

Thursday, June 8:

- **Mid-Term exam first half of class.**
- Required reading second half of class: WE: “Mastering the Art of Wine and Food Pairings.”

Week 4

Monday, June 12: Osteria a Priori wine and food tasting. 7 p.m. Meet at 6:45 p.m. by the fountain.

Tuesday, June 13: Half class; discuss Osteria a Priori experience.

Thursday, June 15: Field trip to Cantina Roccafiore. Supper on your own afterward in Todi.

Week 5

Tuesday, June 20: Required readings: GC: “Wine Women of Loire”; “Palmento.”

Thursday, June 22: Review for final exam. Final wine tasting in class.

Friday, June 23: Final exam.

Please Note: Since contingencies may arise which we cannot foresee, this syllabus is subject to change with reasonable notice.