



## **ENG 325 / FSST 325: From Literature to Social Media: Reading and Writing Italian Food**

### **Course Syllabus *Spring 2020***

**Instructor:** Elgin K. Eckert, Ph.D.

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45 hours

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Lab Fee:** TBD

#### **Course Description**

This creative writing/literature course focuses on one important aspect (present in both fiction and non-fiction writing): the expression and description of sensory experiences through words. Part of the course will, through close readings and analysis of selected texts from Italian literature, look at how food and drink have been used in fiction to heighten the mimetic experience by adding realism, serving as a vehicle for plot development, or being used as symbol and/or metaphor. The other half of the course will investigate non-fictional food writings such as food memories/autobiographies/biographies, food travel, food adventure, narrative cookbooks, and investigative food writing. Examining literature as well as non-fictional food writings, students will discover that the art of writing about food and drink involves not only an interest in the gustatory experience, but also an ability to translate sensory experiences into words.

Students in this course will find their own voices in the form of fiction and non-fiction creative writing assignments for different audiences, including children. They will demonstrate an understanding of literary devices, figures of speech and sound patterns through actual use in writing. This course will stress close reading of selected texts and stimulate creativity and critical expressive thought in an academic environment.

#### **Course Objectives**

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

1. *list* examples of modern and contemporary Italian literature that contain the expression and description of sensory experiences through words.
2. *provide* examples of the connections between creativity, structure, and discipline;
3. *recognize* how food and drink have been used in fiction to heighten the mimetic experience by adding realism, serving as a vehicle for plot development, or being used as symbol and/or metaphor.
4. *analyze* how various Italian authors have translated sensory experiences into words in non-fictional food writings such as food memories/autobiographies/biographies, food travel, food adventure, narrative cookbooks;
5. *assess* how literary devices, figures of speech and sound patterns translate sensory experiences into words.

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

6. *create* several short pieces of original fiction and non-fiction writing for different audiences (including children) that translate sensory experiences into words;
7. *communicate* their experience “translating food” critically and confidently, in both writing and orally, using twenty-first-century tools as potential preparation for a career in journalism or professional writing.

### Course Materials

1. **Textbook:** Stoeger, Melissa Brackney. *Food lit: a Readers Guide to Epicurean Nonfiction*. Libraries Unlimited, 2013. (on reserve at the Umbra Library)
2. **Novel:** Suzanne Carreiro. *The Dog Who Ate the Truffle: A Memoir of Stories and Recipes from Umbria*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010.
3. A **course reader** of selected narrative and scholarly texts. Course reader available at local copy shop. See “Umbra Institute Course Materials - Textbooks and Readers” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.
4. Each student will be required to purchase **one additional books** (paperback editions) for final student presentations.

### Assessment

Preparation and Participation	10%
4 Creative Writing Assignments	40%
Service Learning Project	15%
Midterm Discussion	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Take Home Final Exam	5%
Final Presentation	10%

### Grading

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)

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

## **Course Requirements**

Grades are based on:

*Preparation and Participation (10%)*—Takes into account: preparation for and participation in class discussion and during the Field Trips.

*4 Creative Writing Assignments (40%)*—These assignments will be handed out in class on the days indicated. The first version is due on the days indicated on the syllabus, when they will be read aloud in class and peer-reviewed/critiqued. The final version of the Creative Writing Assignment is to be e-mailed to the instructor within 3 days after the peer review/critique in class.

*Midterm Discussions (10%)*—Students take turns leading a class discussion of a novel.

*Midterm Exam (10%)*—Students will take a short, traditional written exam about selections of literature and literary theory studied in the course up to that point.

*Take Home Final Exam (5% each)*—Students will complete an open-book final exam applying literary theory to a reading selection.

*Final Student Presentation (10% each)*—Each student will present one fiction or non-fiction book chosen from the suggestions in the textbook.

## Attendance Policy

Class attendance and participation in all course activities is mandatory. Because this is a one-credit course with limited class meetings, students are allowed one “free” absence, which do not need to be justified. It is the students’ responsibility to save this absence in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen circumstances that may prevent students from being in class or attending a required activity). Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students’ grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

If students miss class or a required class activity, they are responsible for obtaining notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class. Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in. Presence during mandatory course activities is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a required activity, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and the Academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students’ final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

## Academic Integrity

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 the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

## Classroom Policy

Please refrain from computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices during class time or during course activities. Active class participation is part of students’ final grades. Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies.

## Service Learning Project Description

In this course, you will transform your experience during a field trip into a children’s story on food in both English and Italian. You will then share your creative piece and create activities for 3-6 year old school children during a class lesson hosted by the “Il Castello Rotondo” Pre-School.

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

Field Trip

Day trip in the Umbrian countryside as the basis for the Service Learning Project. Missing this field trip will lower your course grade by one letter grade (i.e., B to B-) and will adversely affect your ability to complete the Service Learning Project.

**Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments**

**WEEK 1**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the course</li> <li>• The use of food in narrative: realism, plot development and symbolism/metaphor</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food in Cinematic Narrative</li> <li>• Screening of Ferzan Ozpetek’s film <i>Le fate ignoranti</i></li> </ul>

**WEEK 2**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Ferzan Ozpetek’s <i>Le fate ignoranti</i></li> <li>• Food as Symbolism</li> <li>• Discussion of food symbolism in Milena Milani’s short story</li> </ul> <p><b>Creative Writing Assignment 1 handed out</b></p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Milena Milani <i>Ice Cream</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food as Symbolism (cont.)</li> <li>• Discussion of food symbolism in Elena Ferrante’s novel <i>Days of Abandonment</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u> Elena Ferrante <i>Days of Abandonment</i> Chapters 1 and 2</p>

**WEEK 3**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiction and Non-Fiction Food Writing: Beyond Standard Literature</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u> Stoeger, Melissa Brackney. <i>Food lit: a Readers Guide to Epicurean Nonfiction</i>. Libraries Unlimited, 2013.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose one book to present at the end of the semester</li> </ul>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creative Writing Assignment 1 due</b></li> <li>• In Class Creative Writing Workshop</li> </ul>

#### WEEK 4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread: an Italian Staple</li> <li>• A short overview of the History of Bread in Italy</li> <li>• Discussion of reading Selection from Alessandro Manzoni</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u> Alessandro Manzoni <i>The Bread Revolt in Milan</i> (from <i>The Betrothed</i>, chapter XII) Elsa Morante <i>La storia</i> (selection)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Food Writing</li> <li>• <b>Tasting Lesson:</b> Different Breads of Italy</li> <li>• Dante Alighieri: Cacciaguida’s warning</li> </ul> <p><b>Creative Writing Assignment 2 handed out</b></p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Dante Alighieri <i>Paradiso XVII</i> (handout in class) Nowak, Zachary, and Ivana Di Biase. “Identity in Perugia: The Half-Invention of Tradition and Anticlerical Bread.” <i>Journal of Italian Studies</i> 33 (2010-2011): 37-56.</p>

#### FIELD TRIP

#### WEEK 5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Literature</li> <li>• Brainstorming for Children’s story</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u> Tom Furniss. <i>Histories of Childhood and Literary Competence: Teaching Children’s Literature in the University</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread in Literature</li> <li>• Discussion of Reading Selections</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u> Carlo Collodi: Selections from <i>Pinocchio</i> Louise De Salvo <i>Cutting the Bread</i></p>

#### WEEK 6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social differences at the table</li> <li>• “rich food” versus “poor food”</li> </ul>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

	<p><u>Reading:</u>          Giovanni Boccaccio <i>Decameron</i> V,9 (Federigho degli Alberighi), <i>Decameron</i> VI,4 (Chicchibio)          Elena Ferrante <i>My brilliant friend</i> (chapters 60-62)          Margaret Mazzantini <i>Don't move</i> (selection)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creative Writing Assignment 2 due</b></li> <li>• In Class Creative Writing Workshop</li> </ul>

**WEEK 7**

	<p><b>Written Midterm Exam</b></p>
	<p><b>Midterm Student Discussion of novel</b></p> <p><u>Reading:</u>          Suzanne Carreiro. <i>The Dog Who Ate the Truffle: A Memoir of Stories and Recipes from Umbria.</i></p>

**SEMESTER BREAK (OCTOBER 22-26)**

**WEEK 8**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Class Creative Writing Workshop on Children's Story</li> </ul>
	<p>Italian Holiday, Umbra closed</p>

**WEEK 9**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening of Film <i>Sideways</i></li> <li>• Wine in Literature and Opera</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u>          Cecco Angiolieri <i>Tutto quest'anno ch'è, mi son frustato</i>          Dante Alighieri <i>Purgatory XXIV</i>          Dorothy Bryant <i>Dizzy Spells</i></p> <p><b>Creative Writing Assignment 3 handed out</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening of Film <i>Sideways</i></li> <li>• Discussion of Reading Selection</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u>          Taber, George M. <i>In Search of Bacchus: Wanderings in the Wonderful World of Wine Tourism.</i>          Chapter 10</p>

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

### WEEK 10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Class Creative Writing Workshop on Children's Story</li> </ul> <p><b>Children's Story Due</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Class Performance Workshop on Children's Story</li> </ul>

### Field Trip: Presentation of Story at School

### WEEK 11

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative Recipes/Recipes in Narrative</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading:</u>  Pellegrino Artusi <i>Selections</i>  Clara Sereni <i>Keeping House</i>  Andrea Camilleri <i>Montalbano's Rice Fritters</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Creative Writing Assignment 3 due</b></li> <li>In Class Creative Writing Workshop</li> </ul>

### WEEK 12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memories and Food in Literature</li> <li>Mealtime in Literature</li> <li>Conflicts</li> </ul> <p><b>Creative Writing Assignment 4 handed out</b></p> <p><u>Reading:</u>  Vittorini, Elio. <i>Conversations in Sicily</i> (selection)  Tomasi di Lampedusa, Giuseppe. <i>Dinner at Donnafugata</i> from <i>The Leopard</i></p>
	<p><b>Student Presentation of New Media Food Writing/Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Blogs</li> <li>YouTube</li> <li>Instagram</li> <li>Pinterest</li> </ul>

Syllabi available for download from the Umbra Institute website only with the purpose of informing students and advisers about course content. **All rights are reserved.**

### WEEK 13

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigative Food Writing</li><li>• Food Myths</li></ul> <p><u>Reading:</u> Nowak, Zachary. "Folklore, Fakelore, History: The Origins of the Pizza Margherita" in <i>Food, Culture &amp; Society</i> 17 (1), March 2014: 103-124.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Creative Writing Assignment 4 due</b></li><li>• In-Class Creative Writing Workshop</li></ul>

### WEEK OF FINAL EXAMS AND SPECIAL ACADEMIC EVENTS

	<p><b>Take Home Final Exam due</b> <b>Final Student Presentations</b></p>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------