



## **FSST/HIST/SOC 350 The History and Culture of Food in Italy**

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

**Instructor:** Olivier de Maret, Ph.D.

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** None

**Class Hours:** TBA

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Lab Fee:** 120 €

#### **Course Description**

What can food history teach us about contemporary culture? In this course, we will explore the history of food in Italy as a gateway to understanding present Italian culture. By examining the factors that have shaped Italian food, cuisine, and taste, the variations in eating habits of different socio-economic classes, and the essential role played by food in constructing Italian identities, we will shed light on fundamental patterns in Italian history and society.

This exploration will lead us to consider processes of social and cultural exchange, political and religious influence, and economic and scientific development. Through a mix of discussions, readings, source analyses, workshops, projects, and a field trip we will investigate Italian food and culture from Antiquity to the present. After the completion of this course, students will have acquired a specific set of historical skills as a result of having developed a critical understanding of food history, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Italian culture and society, and a framework for analyzing Italian history.

#### **Community Archiving Project**

As part of this course, you will contribute to one of the Umbra Institute's long-term academic endeavors, the Urban Food Mapping & Community Archiving Project. As we talk about how historians make arguments in narrative form from primary and secondary sources, we will pay close attention to the archives that historians use. Food was for a long time seen as unworthy of historians' attention. By collecting menus from local restaurants—food trucks, fast casual joints, everyday eateries, and Perugia's finest restaurants—you will (in a small way) actively seek to rectify archival silences. The material you collect will then be available both online and in a special archive that Perugia's Augusta

Library has created for us. These materials will become part of Perugia and Umbria’s cultural patrimony and will provide English and Italian primary sources for future food historians.

### Learning Objectives

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

1. *identify* some changes in how Italians have eaten over the last three millennia;
2. *summarize* connections between Umbria’s culinary past and larger themes in Italian and world history, with particular attention to social constructions of identity, class, gender, and race;
3. *distinguish* between primary and secondary sources;
4. *analyze* different kinds of primary sources—texts, objects, and images—for their meaning;
5. *integrate* primary and secondary sources on the environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors in Italian food history into an argument;
6. *generate* a “usable past”: build a community-engaged archive and communicate your research about various aspects of contemporary food systems using twenty-first-century tools while practicing systematic, ethical, and public-facing scholarship.

### Course Materials

Readings—A course reader is available at the local copy shop. See “Umbra Institute Course Materials - Textbooks and Readers” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information. At the end of the document are the complete bibliographical references for the excerpts found in your reader.

### Assessment

Course journal	40%
Midterm exam	30%
Presentation	15%
Essay	15%

### 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 Excellent
A-	90% - 92%	
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)

## Course Requirements

Grades are based on a course journal, a midterm exam, a presentation, and an essay.

*Course Journal (40%)*—Students will be provided with a notebook at the start of the semester, which they will use as a personal space through which to take notes and reflect on course material and ideas. In-class assignments (e.g. summaries of assigned readings, analyses of primary sources, mental maps, reflections, predictive exercises) will be regularly scheduled in the course journals, which will be graded twice during the semester (weeks 7 and 13). Each of these checks is worth 20% of the final grade, for a total of 40%.

*Midterm Exam (30%)*—The midterm exam will cover all topics presented in the first half of the course and will consist of short-answer questions and an essay. The exam will last approximately 90 minutes to complete and is closed book/closed notes.

*Presentation (15%)*—In groups, students will present a source analysis of a menu gathered during the semester, as part of the Community Archiving: The Menu Project. For this, they will need to collect a hard copy of a menu in Perugia, analyze the language used, contextualize it by relating it to course material, and reflect on this overall archiving experience. Their menu will then be preserved as an archival record thus allowing students to take part in a concrete project that will enrich Perugia's history and provide a database for future students and researchers.

*Essay (15%)*—In a final 5-page, double-spaced, essay due on the last day of class, students will use primary and secondary documents (i.e. at least the menu(s) collected for the archiving project and 3 secondary sources from the library and/or the course reader) to build a historical argument that answers the following question: Based on this semester's historical exploration of Italian food culture, can we talk of a unified Italian cuisine today or is it more relevant to talk about the regional cuisines of Italy?

## Attendance Policy

Class attendance and participation in all course activities is **mandatory**. Students are allowed two “free” absences, which do not need to be justified. **It is the students' responsibility to save these absences 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 such as the field trip, 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.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, Exercises, Activities, and Assignments

### WEEK 1 COURSE INTRODUCTION

*Course overview and discussion of food and identity*

After reviewing course policies and assignments, students describe a dish that represents them, which serves to illustrate and introduce course themes.

*Describing and analyzing historical sources and the Community Archiving Project*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Rossetti menu vs Contemporary menu.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Jurafsky, "How to Read a Menu," 2015, pp. 7-20.

Zhen, "Menu Analysis," 2019, pp. 46-47.

Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," 2014, pp. 9–25.

Possible Assessment:

*In course journals:* Think about what different Perugia archives' collecting missions might be. Talk about silences in the archives and how to rectify them.

### WEEK 2 ROMAN FOOD (753 BCE – 476 CE)

*The Romans and their food culture*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Cato (farm management), Galen (food properties), citations and photographs on truffles.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Kaufman, "Ancient Rome," 2006, pp. 121-129.

Possible Assessment:

*In small groups:* examine the quotes about truffles and the photographs and make an argument about truffles in Antiquity.

*Apicius and Roman Cuisine*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Apicius's cookbook.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Kaufman, "Ancient Rome," 2006, pp. 129-131.

Possible Assessment:

*In course journals:* How representative are the recipes in Apicius of what all Romans ate?

*As a predictive exercise in course journals:* What will happen to the Roman triad after the fall of the Roman Empire?

**WEEK 3**  
**MEDIEVAL FOOD (476-1300)**

*New influences on Medieval food culture*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Anthimus (Germanic dietary recommendations), Benedict of Nursia (monastic diets), El-Andalus (Islamic recipes).

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Montanari, "When European (Food) Culture Was Born," 2012, pp. 1-8.

Possible Assessment:

*In small groups:* Conduct a source analysis of each excerpt, relate it to the cooked source for today and create a brief historical narrative that you will present to the class.

*Medieval cooking and recipes*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Giovanni Boccaccio (short story) and Maestro Martina (recipes).

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Redon, Sabban, and Serventi, "The Practice of Cooking," 1998, pp. 16-31.

Possible Assessment:

*As an interleaving exercise in course journals:* Thinking back to your prediction, how did the Roman triad evolve after the fall of the Roman Empire?

Hands-On Workshop (depending on the weather):

Making Apicius's aromatic salts, at Orto Sole community garden.

*Co-Curricular Field Trip: La "Cucina Povera" and Rural Life in Assisi*

Exploring peasant food culture at Agriturismo Malvarina.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Parasecoli, "Now and the Future," 2014, pp. 214-217.

**WEEK 4**

**RENAISSANCE FOOD (1300-1600)**

*Diets and food hierarchies: The humours and the Great Chain of Being*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Platina, Bartolomeo Scappi and Cristoforo Messisbugo (recipes).

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Grieco, "Food and Social Class in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy," 1999, pp. 302-312.

Possible Assessment:

*As a retrieving exercise in course journals:* Sketch what you remember of the Great Chain of Being and how it functions.

*In course journals:* Reflect on food classifications and hierarchies today. What has changed? What has not? Why?

*In-class exercise:* Determine your humoral make-up.

*Renaissance banquets and feasting*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Bartolomeo Scappi (illustrations) and Giovanni Battista Rossetti (menu).

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Dickie, "Rome, 1549-50: Bread and Water for Their Eminences," 2008, pp. 100-113.

Possible Assessment:

*In small groups:* Conduct a source analysis of the banquet menu and count the occurrences of specific foods to get a better idea of popular and less popular foods.

*As a predictive exercise in course journals:* Where were the following ingredients domesticated? Which were available in Italy before 1492?

**WEEK 5**

**THE COLUMBIAN "EXCHANGE" AND EARLY MODERN FOOD (1492-1800)**

*How the arrival of new foods changed Italian cuisine*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from pre- and post-Columbian recipes and from Castelvetro.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Montanari, "Preservation and Renewal of Alimentary Identities," 2013, pp. 33-40.

Possible Assessment:

*In course journals:* Look at Platina and Castelvetro recipes and assess which ingredients are New World ingredients. Make a list of "Italian" foods you have eaten in Perugia that were not possible in their present form before 1492.

*The spread of the tomato and the transformation of tastes in Italy*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from recipes using tomatoes taken from various historical periods that students analyze, identify, and put in chronological order.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Gentilcore, "Taste and the Tomato in Italy," 2009, pp. 125-140.

Possible Assessment:

*As a predictive exercise in course journals:* List three foodstuffs you identify with Italy that have impacted United States food culture. What makes them Italian?

**WEEK 6**

**LA MEZZADRIA (SHARECROPPING) AND "TRADITIONAL" FOOD (1800s-2020)**

*Agricultural systems and peasant food culture*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Lungarotti photos of *coltura promiscua*, descriptions of 19<sup>th</sup> century peasant living conditions.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Counihan, "Historical Roots of Florentine Food, Family, and Gender," 2004, pp. 35-56.

Possible Assessment:

*Individually in course journals then in small groups:* Compare the descriptions in the raw and cooked sources: what image do they depict of peasant life?

*How poor is Cucina povera (Poor Cuisine)?*



Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from a 20<sup>th</sup> century cookbook that promote *Cucina povera*.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Nowak, “Perugian History Wrapped Up in Torta Al Testa. Or Not,” 2013, pp. 101-107 [plus notes].

Possible Assessment:

*In course journal:* List the types of sources used in Nowak’s article by looking at the footnotes.

*In small groups:* Discuss the importance of language in shaping our understanding of the past (and the present).

Hands-On Workshop:

Is artisanal traditional? Chocolate-making in Perugia’s Turan Cafè.

WEEK 7  
MIDTERM EXAM WEEK

*Exam review*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

A selection of excerpts studied previously that students need to identify and put in chronological order.

Students then work in groups to review themes discussed during the first part of the semester.

*Midterm Exam*

**Hand in Course Journal for midterm grading.**

SEMESTER BREAK

WEEK 8  
POLITICAL AND CULINARY UNIFICATION (1815-1915)

*The birth of the Italian nation-state and the Industrial (Food) Revolution*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts dealing with political events that led to unification, Cirio

advertisements.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Capatti & Montanari, "Appert in Italy," 2003, pp. 252-258.

Possible Assessment:

*In small groups:* Conduct a source analysis of each excerpt and create a brief historical narrative of political unification. Report then to the class.

*As a predictive exercise in course journals:* How will unification affect food culture in Italy?

*Pellegrino Artusi's role in culinary unification*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Artusi's cookbook (recipes).

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Montanari, "The Artusian Synthesis" & "The Number of Italians Increases," 2013, pp. 47-57.

Possible Assessment:

*As an interleaving exercise in course journals:* How did political unification affect food culture in Italy?

**WEEK 9**

**FOOD, THE NATION AND WOMEN UNDER FASCISM (1915-45)**

*Modernizing the nation*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Marinetti's *The Futurist Cookbook*, to be compared with Pellegrino Artusi's recipes.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Dickie, "Housewives and Epicures," pp. 256-268.

Possible Assessment:

*In small groups:* Conduct a source analysis of the raw sources and discuss similarities and differences between their overall culinary aims and means to achieve these aims.

*In course journal:* Whose approach has convinced you the most: Artusi's or Marinetti's? Why?

*Women as food producers and consumers*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Excerpts from Moyer-Nocchi, “Renata,” food advertisements.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Garvin, “Producing Consumers: Gendering Italy through Food Advertisements,” 2017, pp. 141-64.

Possible Assessment:

*As a retrieving exercise in course journals:* Compare and contrast food consumption practices described by Renata and Garvin.

**WEEK 10**

**DIASPORIC ITALIAN CUISINES (1870s-2020)**

*Italian migration and food*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Italian menus in New York City restaurants and food advertisements in Brussels at the turn of the twentieth century.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Levenstein, “The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930,” 1985, pp. 75-89.

Possible Assessment:

*As a retrieving exercise in course journals:* What is Levenstein’s thesis in the reading? Has he convinced you?

*Discuss in small groups:* What strategies are being used by migrants to promote Italian food? Which ones are successful? Which ones are not? Why?

*(Im)migrant influences on food in Italy*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Pictures of foreign restaurants and menus in Italy today.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Wong, “Authenticity *All’italiana*: Food Discourses, Diasporas, and the Limits of Cuisine in Contemporary Italy,” 2017, pp. 33–53.

Possible Assessment:

*In small groups:* Compare and contrast contemporary advertising strategies to those discussed on Monday.

*In course journals:* What is authentic Italian food?

**WEEK 11**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS (1945-2020)**

*Post-war politics, economic boom, and changing food habits*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Print and television advertisements for new food products, The Slow Food Manifesto.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Parasecoli, "Now and the Future," 2014, pp. 198-222.

Possible Assessment:

*As an interleaving exercise in course journals:* What is Slow Food's relation to the Futurist cooking project of the 1930s? Would you sign the Manifesto? Why?

*Resisting globalization through alternative food initiatives*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Websites of Italian alternative food initiatives.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Grasseni, "Re-localizing Milk and Cheese," 2014, pp. 34-43.

Possible Assessment:

*In course journals:* How do alternative food initiatives differ from Slow Food's approach and from the American context?

Hands-On Workshop (depending on the weather):

Foraging for wild herbs at Orto Sole community garden.

**WEEK 12**

**GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON COMMUNITY ARCHIVING: THE MENU PROJECT**

*Presentations and discussion of students' projects*

**WEEK 13**

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN CUISINE (2000s-2020)**

*Climate change and agriculture*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Advertisements and testimonies.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Jones and Awokoya, “Are Your Tinned Tomatoes Picked by Slave Labour?”, *The Guardian*, June 20, 2019.

Neslen, “Italy Sees 57% Drop in Olive Harvest as Result of Climate Change, Scientist Says,” *The Guardian*, March 5, 2019.

Possible Assessment:

*In course journal, then in small groups:* How can producers guarantee the quality of products to ethically conscious consumers?

*Home cooking and Italianness in the kitchen*

Raw (Primary) Sources:

Ice cream recipes by Antonio Latini, Pellegrino Artusi and the Silver Spoon.

Cooked (Secondary) Sources:

Montanari, “Epilogue: In Search of Home Cooking,” 2013, pp. 73-84.

Possible Assessment:

*In course journal, then in groups and then as a class:* What is Montanari’s thesis in the reading? Do you agree?

Hands-On Workshop:

Ice cream and gelato: Italianness and global Italian food culture, at Gambrinus Gelateria.

**Essay due.**

**Hand in Course Journal for final grading.**

*The Final Exam and Special Academic Events Calendar will be provided later in the semester.*

### Complete Bibliography

- Capatti, Alberto, and Massimo Montanari. "Appert in Italy." In: Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari. *Italian Cuisine. A Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. 252-258.
- Counihan, Carole. "Historical Roots of Florentine Food, Family, and Gender." In: Carole Counihan. *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*. New York & London: Routledge, 2004. 35-56.
- Dickie, John. "Rome, 1549-50: Bread and Water for Their Eminences" & "Housewives and Epicures." In: John Dickie. *Delizial! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York: Free Press, 2008. 100-113 & 256-68.
- Garvin, Diana. "Producing Consumers: Gendering Italy through Food Advertisements." In: Peter Naccarato, Zachary Nowak, and Elgin K. Eckert. Eds. *Representing Italy Through Food*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. 141-64.
- Gentilcore, David. "Taste and the Tomato in Italy: A Transatlantic History." *Food & History* 7.1 (2009): 125-140.
- Grasseni, Cristina. "Re-localizing Milk and Cheese." *Gastronomica* 14.4 (2014): 34-43.
- Grieco, Allen. "Food and Social Class in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy." In: Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari. Eds. *Food: A Culinary History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. 302-312.
- Jones, Tobias, and Ayo Awokoya. "Are Your Tinned Tomatoes Picked by Slave Labour?" *The Guardian*, June 20, 2019.
- Jurafsky, Dan. "How to Read a Menu." In: Dan Jurafsky. *The Language of Food: A Linguist Reads the Menu*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015. 7-20.
- Kaufman, Cathy. "Ancient Rome." In: Cathy Kaufman. *Cooking in Ancient Civilizations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2006. 121-131.
- Levenstein, Harvey. "The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930." 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1985. In: Carole Counihan. Ed. *Food in the U.S.A.: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2002. 75-90.
- Manoff, Marlene. "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4.1 (2004): 9-25.
- Montanari, Massimo. "When European (Food) Culture Was Born." In: Massimo Montanari. Ed. *A Cultural History of Food in the Middle Ages*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012. 1-8.
- Montanari, Massimo. "Preservation and Renewal of Alimentary Models," "The Artusian Synthesis," "The Number of Italians Increases," & "Epilogue: In Search of Home Cooking." In: Massimo Montanari. *Italian Identity in the Kitchen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013. 33-40, 47-57, 73-84.
- Moyer-Nocchi, Karima. "Renata." In: Karima Moyer-Nocchi. *Chewing the Fat: An Oral History of Italian Foodways from Fascism to Dolce Vita*. Perrysburg: Medea, 2015. 19-33.
- Neslen, Arthur. "Italy Sees 57% Drop in Olive Harvest as Result of Climate Change, Scientist Says." *The Guardian*, March 5, 2019.
- Nowak, Zachary. "Perugian History Wrapped Up in Torta Al Testa. Or Not." In: Mark McWilliams. Ed. *Wrapped and Stuffed Foods: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2012*. Totnes: Prospect Books, 2013. 101-7.

- Parasecoli, Fabio. "Now and the Future." In: Fabio Parasecoli. *Al Dente. A History of Food in Italy*. London: Reaktion Books, 2014. 198-222.
- Redon, Odilon, Françoise Sabban, and Silvano Serventi. "The Practice of Cooking." In: Odilon Redon, Françoise Sabban, and Silvano Serventi. *The Medieval Kitchen. Recipes from France and Italy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. 16-31.
- Wong, Eliza K. "Authenticity *All'italiana*: Food Discourses, Diasporas, and the Limits of Cuisine in Contemporary Italy." In: Peter Naccarato, Zachary Nowak, and Elgin K. Eckert. Eds. *Representing Italy Through Food*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. 33-53.
- Zhen, Willa. *Food Studies: A Hands-On Guide*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

### Further (Suggested) Reading

- Albala, Ken. *Three World Cuisines: Italian, Mexican, Chinese*. Lanham: Altamira Press, 2012.
- de Maret, Olivier. *Of Migrants and Meanings. Italians and Their Food Businesses in Brussels, 1876-1914*. Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2016.
- Flandrin, Jean-Louis, and Massimo Montanari. Eds. *Food: A Culinary History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Gentilcore, David. *Pomodoro! A History of the Tomato in Italy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Helstosky, Carol. *Garlic & Oil: Food and Politics in Italy*. Oxford & New York: Berg, 2004.
- Parasecoli, Fabio. *Food Culture in Italy*. Westport, Conn. & London: Greenwood Press, 2004.
- Parasecoli, Fabio, and Peter Scholliers. Gen. Eds. *A Cultural History of Food*. 6 vols. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- Serventi, Silvano, and Françoise Sabban. *Pasta: The Story of a Universal Food*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.