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FSST 100: Experiencing Sustainable Italian Foodways

Course Syllabus

Spring 2020

Instructors: Elisa Ascione, Manuel Barbato

Credits: 1

Contact Hours: 15

Prerequisites: None

Course Fee: FSSP Fee

Course Description

In this mandatory one-credit course, students in the Food & Sustainability Studies Program (FSSP) engage in a series of experiential learning activities designed to complement their coursework. Activities and related assignments are designed to give students hands-on experiences through which they can witness ideas being put into practice. The combination of on-the-ground activities combined with critical reflection on their experiences gives students in both the food studies track and the sustainability and environmental studies track opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities through which key topics and concepts are related to practical and applied situations and to engage in community-based learning and similar field experiences that connect classroom learning to real world problem-solving.

The course culminates with Umbra's *La Prova del Cuoco* (the Cook's Test) competition. Throughout the semester, student groups participate in activities designed to prepare them for this competition, in which each group will prepare a sustainable Italian meal. At the end of the course of the semester, members of the Umbra community are invited to enjoy and score these meals. The group that earns the most points is crowned the winner. In preparing for and executing this meal, students delve into the history of Italian food culture; various issues related to food production, distribution and preparation; and the intersections between Italian foodways, sustainability, and the environment.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

- *summarize* how the series of co-curricular course activities supplemented and integrated with their classroom and community-engaged learning;
- *generate* a list of the various human and natural systems (at various scales) and the feedback loops between them, especially in Italy;
- *articulate* how the combination of co-curricular, community-engaged, and classroom experiences could be pursued in graduate work or be put into action in the service of real-world problem solving.
- *compare* the research questions and methodologies across the disciplines represented in their classroom work.

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- *create* a final meal that integrates experiential learning activities with classroom knowledge and use twenty-first-century research and communication tools to communicate the decisions between the choice of dishes.
- *articulate* how various community and institutional projects they have seen this semester can promote food sovereignty, social justice, and ecological awareness.

Course Materials

Readings

Course readings will be made available online.

Assessment

Group preparation of a sustainable Italian meal and an annotated menu	40%
Reflection journal	40%
Active participation in all required course activities	10%
Active participation in class discussions	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)

Course Requirements

Final grades are based on the following:

Group preparation of a sustainable Italian meal and an annotated menu (40%)

The course culminates with Umbra's *La Prova del Cuoco* (the Cook's Test) competition. At the end of the course, student groups will prepare their sustainable Italian meal and the accompanying annotated menu. In doing so, they are required to incorporate what they have learned throughout the semester, using this knowledge to plan and execute their meals. Each meal consists of four elements around which the semester is organized: aperitivo; primo piatto; secondo piatto; dolci e caffè. Each group prepares their meal, accompanied by an annotated menu that introduces each course and explains how

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it reflects what they have learned throughout the semester about Italian food culture and how it intersects with issues of sustainability and the environment. While members of the Umbra community who participate in these meals award points to determine the winning team, the formal grades for this assignment are based on completion of the meal's four courses and the success of their annotated menu in explaining how their approach to designing their menu reflects what they have learned throughout the semester.

Reflection Journal (40%)

Students keep a reflection journal throughout the semester. In some cases, they are given prompts that focus on specific topics and related activities. In other cases, they are asked to reflect on their own experiences and observations and to connect them to course topics. Journals are collected before Spring break and at the end of the semester.

Active participation in all required course activities (10%)

There are several required activities throughout the semester. Attendance is mandatory but merely attending these activities does not guarantee a good grade; rather, students are evaluated based on their active participation in each activity.

Active participation in class discussions (10%)

Active participation in class discussions is an important component of final grades. Students are expected to come to class meetings prepared to contribute to these discussions by completing any assigned readings and reflecting on specific course activities.

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

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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, and Assignments

This course meets each Tuesday at 6:45pm unless otherwise communicated by the instructors or indicated explicitly in this schedule below.

Welcome Dinner. Meet at 7.00 at the Fountain

- Benvenuto
- Review Syllabus
- Group assignments and discussion of *La Prova del Cuoco* (the Cook's Test) competition

Riley, Gillian. "Umbria." In *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*, 549-53. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Culinary Series (Group 1—starters and *primi*). Meet at 6.45pm in the kitchen

Riley, "Antipasto," 16–17.

Riley, "Pasta," 372-74.

Riley, "Meals and Patterns of Eating," 316-17.

Weekend Fieldtrip to Parma, Modena, and FICO Eataly World. Departure time TBA

Colombino, Annalisa. "Becoming Eataly: The Magic of the Mall & the Magic of the Brand." In *Branding the Nation, the Place, the Product*, edited by Ulrich Ermann and Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik, 67–90. Milton: Routledge, 2017.

Riley, "Parma Ham," 361.

Riley, "Parmesan," 361-65.

Aperitivo Workshop. Meet at 6.45 at the Fountain

Riley, Gillian. "Aperitivo." In *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*, 17–18. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Culinary Series (Group 2—starters and *primi*). Meet at 6.45pm in the kitchen

Riley, "Antipasto," 16–17.

Riley, "Pasta," 372-74.

Riley, "Meals and Patterns of Eating," 316-17.

The history of beer in the Mediterranean: the Italian craft revolution. Meet at 6.45 at the fountain.

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Culinary Series (Group 1—*secondo, contorno, e dolce*). Meet at 6.45pm in the kitchen
Riley, “Dolce,” 161-162.
Riley, “Biancomangiare,” 52-53.
Riley, “Tiramisù,” 528-529.

Turn in course journals before 4.00pm (Manuel’s office)

[Semester Break]

Culinary Series (Group 2—*secondo, contorno, e dolce*). Meet at 6.45pm in the kitchen
Riley, “Dolce,” 161-162.
Riley, “Biancomangiare,” 52-53.
Riley, “Tiramisù,” 528-529.
[exams week—hand in journals]

Truffle Hunting Fieldtrip. Departure time TBA
Riley, “Truffle,” 533-34.
Nowak, Zachary. *Truffle: A Global History*. Reaktion Books, 2015. Read pages 132-136.

Caffè ed Amari Workshop. Meet at 6.45pm in the kitchen
Black, Rachel. “Amaro: A Boozy, Bitter History of Digestive from the Pharmacy to the Bar,” 1–10, 2010.

Preparation for *La Prova del Cuoco* (the Cook’s Test). Meet at 6.45 in the kitchen

La Prova del Cuoco (the Cook’s Test) Competition. Meet at 6.45 in the kitchen. Dinner must be served to the judges at 8.00pm.