



## FSST/ENV/SUST 300 Experiencing Sustainable Italian Foodways

### Course Syllabus

### Spring Semester 2026

**Instructor:** Clelia Viecelli, PhD

**Credits:** 1

**Contact Hours:** 15

**Prerequisites:** none

**Class Meeting Days & Time:** Refer to definitive schedule in Moodle

**Office Hours:** by appointment or via Zoom

**Email: Course Type:** FSE program core-course

**Course Fee:** included in FSE program fee

#### **Course Description**

In this mandatory one-credit course, students in the Food, Sustainability & Environmental Studies (FSE) engage in a series of experiential learning activities designed to complement their coursework and in line with the UN Development Goals framework. 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 opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities through which key topics and concepts are related to practical and applied situations; to engage in community-based learning and similar field experiences that connect classroom learning to real world problem-solving.

#### ***Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures***

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this 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.
- *assess* how various community and institutional projects they have seen this semester can promote food sovereignty, social justice, and ecological awareness.

## Course Materials

### Readings

The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

### Assessment

Attendance	50%
Reflection Journal	50%

### Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. 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)

**Please note:** decimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

### Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria:

#### *Attendance (50%)*

Attendance is mandatory. There are no make-ups offered for attendance. We will meet up for five workshops, the Truffle Hunting field trip as well as the meetings related to the Capstone. For full credit on attendance, students have to participate in four out of five workshops, the Truffle Hunting field trip, the Capstone, and both briefings related to the Capstone trip. Students are expected to come to meetings punctually, and prepared to contribute to these discussions.

#### *Reflection Journal (50%)*

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 graded twice during the semester, before the semester break (Week 6) and at the end of the semester (Week 12). If a student misses a meeting, they are still

supposed to submit the relevant journal for that meeting. A full list of entries and more information about submitting journals will be provided on Moodle.

### Attendance & Lateness Policy

Class attendance (in person) is mandatory. All students are allowed 1 unexcused absence, which does not need to be justified. Because this is a one-credit course with limited class meetings, each additional unexcused absence will affect your final grade by 10%. The breakdown for Attendance is as follows:

- 15% Workshops (at least 4 of 5)
- 10% Truffle Hunting field trip
- 20% Capstone field trip
- 5% Capstone Briefing & Debriefing

Presence during the field trips is especially important. Missing the Capstone field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff promptly, will be considered the equivalent of two unexcused absences. As such, absence from the Capstone will lower students' final grade in that course by 20%. Likewise, missing the Truffle Hunting field trip will be considered the equivalent of one unexcused absence. As such, absence from this field trip will lower students' final grade in that course by 10%.

Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 3% off the final grade. Excessive absences (3 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness includes: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

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.

### **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.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

### **Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

### **U.N. Sustainable Development Goals**

This course contributes to the achievement of one or more goals of U. N. Agenda for Sustainable Development:



## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### **Week 1**

Welcome Dinner Wednesday, Jan. 21

Meet in Aula Magna at 5:45pm

- Benvenuto (the group division will be communicated here)
- Syllabus Review

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

### **Week 2**

Aperitivo Lecture & Tasting

Group 1: Monday, Jan. 26. Meet in the Umbra courtyard at 5:35pm.

Group 2: Wednesday, Jan. 28. Meet in the Umbra courtyard at 5:35pm.

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

Black, Rachel. "Amaro: A Boozy, Bitter History of Digestivi from the Pharmacy to the Bar," 1-10, 2010.

### **Week 3**

Creativity for Sustainability Monday, Feb. 2

Group 1: Meet in the Library at 5:45pm.

Group 2: Meet in the Library at 7:15pm.

Art and Creativity: Essential Components of Sustainability - Sustainable Earth. (2023, April 21). Retrieved November 27, 2025, from <https://sustainable-earth.org/art-and-creativity/>

### **Week 4**

Extra-virgin Olive Oil Lecture & Tasting Monday, Feb. 9

Group 1: Meet in Aula Magna at 5:45pm.

Group 2: Meet in Aula Magna at 7:15pm.

Riley, "Olive & Olive Oil," In *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 347-350.

### **Week 5**

Birà Food Coop onsite visit Monday, Feb. 16

Meet at the fountain at 5:35pm.

Fonte, M., & Cucco, I. (2017). Cooperatives and alternative food networks in Italy. The long road towards a social economy in agriculture. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 53, 291-302.

**[Semester Break]**

**Week 7** Truffle Hunting Field Trip  
Group 1: Friday, Mar. 13. Meet at the fountain in Piazza IV Novembre at 8:30 am.  
Group 2: Saturday, Mar. 14. Meet at the fountain in Piazza IV Novembre at 8:30 am.

Riley, “Truffle,” In *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 533-34.  
Nowak, Zachary. *Truffle: A Global History*. Reaktion Books, 2015. Read pages 132-136.

**Week 9** Sustainable Fashion Workshop Monday, Mar. 23  
Group 1: Meet in Aula Magna at 5:45pm.  
Group 2: Meet in Aula Magna at 7:15pm.

Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H. et al. (2020) ‘The environmental price of fast fashion.’ *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment* 1, 189–200 .

**Week 10** Honey Lecture & Tasting Monday, Mar. 30  
Group 1: Meet in Aula Magna at 5:45pm.  
Group 2: Meet in Aula Magna at 7:15pm.

Riley, Gillian. “Honey” In *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*, 250–252. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

**Week 11** Capstone Field Trip to Emilia Romagna: Thursday-Saturday, Apr. 9-11

**Important Note:** You will receive the itinerary at the beginning of the week.

Pre-departure briefing Wednesday, Apr. 8  
Meet in Aula Magna at 5:45pm.

Fieldtrip debriefing Monday, Apr. 13  
Meet in Aula Magna at 5:45pm.

Riley, “Balsamic Vinegar,” 35-37.

Riley, “Parma Ham,” 361.

Riley, “Parmesan,” 361-65.

Riley, “DOC, DOP, IGP, SGT,” 160-161.

West, H.G. (2013) ‘Appellations and indications of origin, terroir, and the social construction and contestation of place-named foods’, in A. Murcott, W.J. Belasco, and P. Jackson (eds) *The handbook of food research*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 209–228.

**Week 12** Final Dinner Wednesday, Apr. 15  
Details TBA