



FSST/HIST/SOC 349 The History and Culture of Food in Italy

Course Syllabus Summer Session I 2023

Instructor: Clelia Viecegli, PhD

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:15 am - 12:45 pm

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30 pm - 2:50 pm or by appointment (FSE Office, First Floor)

Email: cviecegli@umbra.org

Course Type: Standard course

Lab Fee: \$85

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, primary source analyses, workshops, a guest lecture 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.

This course very intentionally engages with Italian food in the present. Topics include nation and gender, the foodways of recent immigrants to Italy, alternative food systems and food justice in Italy, and climate change's effect on Italian cuisine. During the co-curricular activities, students will be actively engaged in the preparation and tasting of ancient Roman and traditional Umbrian food.

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:

- *identify* some changes in how Italians have eaten over the last three millennia (Weekly Quiz, Course Journal, Midterm Exam, Final Exam);
- *summarize* connections between Umbria's culinary past and larger themes in Italian and world history, with particular attention to the implications of race, gender & sexuality, religious faith, and class (Course Journal, Midterm Exam, Final Exam);
- *distinguish* between primary and secondary sources (Weekly Quiz, Course Journal, Final Exam);
- *analyze* different kinds of primary sources—texts, objects, and images—for their meaning (Final Exam);
- *integrate* primary and secondary sources on the environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors in Italian food history into an argument (Midterm Exam, Final Exam)

Course Materials

Readings

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Assessment

Attendance	10%
Moodle Quizzes	20%
Course Journal	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

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 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)

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 (10%)

Attendance is an important part of this course. You have one “sick day,” per Institute policy. As long as you are at all the other meetings, you will receive the full 100% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Quizzes (20%)

Students will be assigned two short quizzes every week, each of which will be due before class time and will not be reopened. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the average grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author’s argument and research methods used. The technical questions will help students learn the class’s policies and administrative procedures.

Course Journal (20%)

Students should use a physical notebook, which they will use as a personal space through which to 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 and graded twice throughout the semester, i.e. in the middle of Week 3 and at the end of the course (Week 5). Each of these checks is worth 10% of your grade, for a total of 20%.

Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm exam will cover all topics presented in the first half of the course and will consist of short-answer questions. The exam will take approximately 90 minutes to complete and is closed book/closed notes.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will cover all topics presented in the second half of the course and will consist of short-answer questions and a menu analysis. The exam will take approximately 90 minutes to complete and is closed book/closed notes.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

If students submit work after the deadline, they will incur a 10% grade deduction for each day the assignment is late. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance & Lateness Policy

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. All students are allowed 1 “sick day” (i.e. unexcused absences), which do not need to be justified. It is the student’s responsibility to

keep it in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 1 absence will affect your final grade by 2% per absence. Excessive unexcused absences (4 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. Three late arrivals to or early departures from class will count as an unexcused absence. Being more than 30 minutes late (or leaving class more than 30 minutes early) counts as an absence. 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. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will be considered the equivalent of two unexcused absences. As such, absence from the co-curricular field trip will lower students' final grade in that course by 4% (the equivalent of two unexcused absences).

Additional absences relating to illness may be approved by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided. 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.

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, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

I as an instructor and as a person am dependent on both my computer and my telephone. That said: An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are two exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation related to your vision; 2) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

Introduction to the course, Roman & Medieval Food (753 BCE – 1300 CE)

Meeting 1: Course Introduction and Roman Food

Readings for this meeting:

Corbier, M. (1999) 'The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 128–140.

Co-curricular activity:

Preparation of Apicius' aromatic salt at Orto Sole (Umbra's didactic garden)

Meeting 2: Medieval Food

Readings for this meeting:

Montanari, M. (2012) 'Introduction: When European (Food) Culture Was Born', in Montanari, M. (ed.) *A Cultural History of Food in the Medieval Age*. London ; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 1–8.

Montanari, M. (1999) 'Romans, Barbarians, Christians & Production Structures and Food Systems in the Early Middle Ages', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds), Sonnenfeld, A. (tran.) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 165–177.

Co-curricular activity:

Guided tour of Perugia's historical traces of Medieval food

WEEK 2

Renaissance and Early Modern Food (1300 – 1800)

Meeting 1: Diets and Banquets during the Renaissance

Readings for this meeting:

Grieco, A., J. (1999) 'Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds), Sonnenfeld, A. (tran.) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 302–312.

Co-curricular activity:

In-class tasting of local typical bread, cold cuts and cheese from Umbria region

Meeting 2: The Columbian "Exchange"

Readings for this meeting:

Archer, K. L. (2011) 'Columbian Exchange', in *Encyclopedia of American Environmental History*. New York: Facts On File, pp. 301-303.

Gentilcore, D. (2009) 'Taste and the tomato in Italy: a transatlantic history', *Food and History*, 7(1), pp. 125–139.

Co-curricular activity:

Guided chocolate tasting at Turan Café

WEEK 3

“Traditional” Peasant Fare and the Industrialization of Food (1800 – 1900)

Meeting 1: *How poor is Cucina povera (peasant fare)?*

Readings for this meeting:

Nowak, Z. (2013) ‘Italian Stuffed vs. Maghreb Wrapped: Perugia’s Torta al Testo Against the Kebab’, in McWilliams, M. (ed.) *Wrapped and Stuffed Foods: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2012*. Totnes: Prospect Books (Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery), pp. 101–107.

Co-curricular activity:

Tasting of “traditional” Perugia’s *torta al testo* from Testone

Assignments:

In-class midterm exam.

Submit your course journal entries for the first check through Moodle (due on June 7th).

Meeting 2: *The Industrial (Food) Revolution and the Culinary Unification of Italy*

Readings for this meeting:

Capatti, A. and Montanari, M. (2003) ‘Appert in Italy’, in *Italian cuisine: a cultural history*. Translated by A. O’Healy. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 252-258.

Montanari, M. (2013) ‘The Artusian Synthesis’ and ‘The Numbers of Italians Increase’, in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 47-57.

Co-curricular activity:

Visit to a local *gelateria* and ice-cream tasting

WEEK 4

Fascism, Diasporic Italian Cuisines, and the Post-war Economic Boom (1870s – 1970s)

Meeting 1: *Food during Fascism and the Futuristic Cuisine*

Readings for this meeting:

Dickie, J. (2008) ‘Milan, 1936’, in *Delizial!: The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 256-268.

Co-curricular activity:

In-class tasting of Italian and regional specialty foods

Meeting 2: *Italian Migration to the USA and Post-war Economic Boom*

Readings for this meeting:

Levenstein, H. (2002) ‘The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930’, in Counihan, C. (ed.) *Food in the USA: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, selected excerpts.

Montanari, M. (2013) ‘“The Italian Miracle”: Between Modernity and Tradition’, in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 59-64.

WEEK 5

Food Activism and Contemporary Italian Cuisine (1980s – 2022)

Meeting 1: Food Activism and Current Trends

Readings for this meeting:

Browse <https://www.slowfood.com/> (in particular “About Us” and “Our Network” sections)

Parasecoli, F. (2021) ‘Eating on the go in Italy: between cibo di strada and street food’, *Food, Culture & Society*, 24(1), pp. 112–126. doi:[10.1080/15528014.2020.1859901](https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2020.1859901).

Co-curricular activity:

Dinner at Maramao Pane e Vin restaurant

Meeting 2: Contemporary Italian Cuisine

Readings for this meeting:

Montanari, M. (2013) ‘Epilogue: In Search of Home Cooking’, in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 73-84.

Assignments:

In-class final exam.

Submit your course journal entries for the second check through Moodle (due on June 22nd).