



UMBRA INSTITUTE
CWFS 350: Writing Italian Food
Course Syllabus
Summer Session 2022

Instructor: Teresa Cutler-Broyles, MA, PDCERT

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00-12:30

Office Hours: Tuesdays after class or by appointment

Email: terra@unm.edu

Course Type: Standard Course

Lab Fee: 90 €

Course Description

This class combines the history and customs of food, olive oil, and wine in Perugia and the surrounding region with food writing and a bit of travel. The class will start by exploring a small portion of the history of Italian food and wine, but with a specific focus on Perugia and the wider Umbrian area. Each week will consist of a different concentration/combination of historical moment and type of food, such as the origin of pasta, the tradition of the aperitivo, the arrival of coffee in Italy along with its subsequent growth in popularity, the slow food and natural food movements, and more. In conjunction with the aforementioned, the class will include visits to restaurants, vineyards, and local gardens in Perugia as well as nearby cities and towns. The purpose of the course is to become educated, informed, and discerning food writers.

The writing portion of the class will focus on: the elements of good writing; the crafting of an effective and compelling article; techniques and special skills specific to writing about food; and approaches to publication in online and print venues.

Course Objectives

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

- develop writing skills on a number of levels, including basic grammar, syntax, punctuation, tense and voice, style, reader engagement, the hook, and the conclusion while focusing written work on a particular market;
- develop skills in magazine and article analysis;
- read, critically explore, and write about aspects of Italian history;
- learn new ways to visit historical sites that are informed by historical knowledge and others' insights and that generate questions as well as appreciation; and
- demonstrate how history and tradition inform many of today's Italian customs, food production, consumption, and expectations.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
Develop Writing Skills	Daily and weekly writing assignments, critiques
Develop Interview Skills	Set up, conduct, and write an interview
Develop Analytic Skills	Read and analyse food writing, cultural assumptions, food meanings, and more.
Understand the connection between food and culture	Readings from a variety of authors, angles and lenses, and class discussions
Understand more about Italy and Italian food practices	Readings, class discussions, visits to gardens, vineyards, restaurants
	Assessment method

Course Materials

Readings

Required readings are an integral part of this course and should not be considered supplemental. Reading assignments should be done before the class day they are assigned and will be discussed in class.

Two books will need to be purchased. All are available as e-books through Amazon. Total cost less than \$25:

- [Killingsworth, Silvia \(Ed\) *Best American Food Writing* \(2021\)](#)
- [Sebellin-Ross, S.J. *How to Write about Food: How to Become a Published Restaurant Critic, Food Journalist, Cookbook Author, and Food Blogger* \(2012\)](#)

You can find the remainder of the readings on the Moodle Course page for our class.

Films

The Big Night, Campbell Scott, Samuel Goldwyn Company, 1996 (provided by instructor)

The Trip to Italy, Michael Winterbottom, BBC, 2014 (provided by instructor)

Babette's Feast, Gabriel Axel, Nordisk Film, 1987 (provided by instructor)

Like Water for Chocolate, Alfonso Arau, Miramax, 1992 (provided by instructor)

Assessment

Class Points: Participation, Reading Responses, In-Class Writing	20%
Final Project Part 1: Blog	20%
Final Project Part 2: Interview	30%
Final Project Part 3: Written Piece	30%

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

Grades are based on students' participation in discussions of the readings, weekly written assignments, blog posts, and acquisition and utilization of writing techniques, terms and historical information, and application of all of the above in the final paper. Writing will occur both in-class and outside. The professor will provide questions, or suggest particular ways to think about, understand, critically question or otherwise engage with the reading.

Class points (20%)

Class points consist of 100 points total per class period:

40 points: Written assignments to share in class. Each will vary depending on weekly discussion, and details and prompts will be provided. These will be informal written outside of or during class and will be shared via reading aloud followed by class discussion.

30 points: In-class participation: arriving on time, active listening, asking questions, coming prepared, being respectful, proactive during group work.

30 points: Knowledge of class materials. Students will read the assigned material before class and will demonstrate their grasp of these readings via in-class use of terminology, referring to the readings with specific examples to support their ideas, offering extrapolations and related ideas.

Three-Part Final Project (20% / 30% / 30%)

The course will include a final project divided into three parts:

- 1) A blog that will have been kept for the entire five weeks online. At least eight entries total.
- 2) An interview of a gardener at Orto Sole (or other TBD), written according to guidelines as a professional piece.
- 3) A professional-level written article that students can send out for publication if desired. Students will choose a place and a connected food, and their projects will engage with the readings, the chosen food or drink (or combination), the intended audience, and the style of writing chosen. This final project will show an understanding of all the above, and will be written with an eye for publication, regardless whether students intend to publish.

All work must be completed to pass this course. Students should back up their work or send it to themselves via email occasionally while writing.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed one "free" absence during the summer semester, which they do not need to justify. Each additional absence, unless it is for a very serious reason, will lower students' final grade by one grade level (e.g., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). It also the policy of the Institute that any student who has three or more absences automatically fails the class.

If students miss a class, it is their responsibility to find out what they missed or what work they must catch up on from the teacher or from colleagues.

Absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and Umbra 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

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 turned off before the beginning of each class. **Computers and other electronic devices** cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments
All reading assignments must be completed before class

WEEK 1

Tue.,
May 24

What is Food Writing and Why is it Important?

Readings (to be done before arrival):

Sebillin-Ross, S.J. *How to Write about Food*: (2012). locations 641-822, and “IV. Food Blogger,” Locations 1300-1483.

Jacob, Dianne. *Will Write for Food: The Complete Guide to Writing Cookbooks, Blogs, Reviews, Memoir, and More*. Da Capo Lifelong Books; Second Edition (July 2010), pp. 1-5.

Gutkind, Lee, *You Can't Make This Stuff Up: The Complete Guide to Writing Creative Nonfiction-from Memoir to Literary Journalism and Everything in Between*. Da Capo Lifelong Books (August 2012), pp. 44-55.

In-class assignment:

We will sample food and do some short writing about it using sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Groups will be created for the readings.

Part two of class: Restaurant visit, note-taking, using Sebillin-Ross and Gutkind as guides.

Thu.,
May 26

Why We Write What We Eat.

Readings

A - Jacob, Dianne. *Will Write for Food* (July 2010). pp. 8-19.

B - Dickie, John. *Delizial: The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. Atria Books (October 2010). pp. 1-10.

C - Gutkind, Lee, *You Can't Make This Stuff Up*, Da Capo Lifelong Books (August 2012), pp. 3-13. Write short synopses of these selections, taking note of the history component. You will share this with the class.

Part two of class: Visit Orto Sole, a local community garden. You will meet a few of the people who work there and will be introduced to the garden's reason for existence, its history, and its ethos. Start thinking about who you would like to interview.

Weekend All weekend work must be done by the following Tuesday's class

Readings

- Jacob, Dianne. *Will Write for Food* (July 2010). pp. 75-81.

- Killingsworth, Silvia (Ed) *Best American Food Writing 2021* (October 2021). Choose and read one essay. Be ready to discuss with the class. You will tell us which story you read, why you chose that one (title, subject, random), what was it about, what you liked about it, what worked, style of writing, what you would like to emulate, how author was able to hook your interest, etc.

Start your food blog. This must be started with at least one post by June 4. Come to class prepared to discuss.

WEEK 2

Tue.,
May 31

Food Myths/Food Traditions/Invented History.

Readings

A - Jacob, Dianne. *Will Write for Food*. (July 2010). pp. 145-165.

B - Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy*. Reaktion Books (May 2014), pp. 7-27,

C - Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente*. (May 2014), pp. 251-276.

- Write short synopses of selections to share with class.

Discuss the story you read in *Best American Food Writing 2021*. Tell us which story you read, why you chose that one (title, subject, random), what was it about, what you liked about it, what worked, style of writing, what you would like to emulate, how author was able to hook your interest, etc.

Part two of class: Restaurant visit, note-taking, and using Sebillin-Ross and Gutkind as guides.

Thu.,
June 2

Food as Community/Distinguishing Flavors/Your Sweet is my Sour.

Readings

A - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest: And Other Stories About Food and Culture*. Columbia University Press (December 2012). Ch 1, Ch 5.

B - Dickie, John. *Delizia!* (October 2010). pp. 13-28.

C - Nowak, Zachary, "Italian Stuffed vs. Maghreb Wrapped: Perugia's Torta al Testa Against the Kebab." Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery (2012).

- Write short synopses of selections to share with class.

Film: *The Big Night*, Campbell Scott, 1996.

Saturday
June 4

Field Trip! Mandatory

Post on your blog before the next Tuesday class.

Weekend

Continue reading *Best American Food Writing 2021*. Be prepared to discuss an essay with your peers.

Decide who you will interview and start writing up questions.

WEEK 3

Tue.,
June 7

Food as Health/Food as Pleasure.

Readings

A - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest* (December 2012), Chapter 6.

B - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest* (December 2012), Chapter 7.

C - Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente* (May 2014), pp. 53-62.

- Write short synopses of selections to share with class.

Discuss the story you read in *Best American Food Writing 2021*. Tell us which story you read, why you chose that one (title, subject, random), what was it about, what you liked about it, what worked, style of writing, what you would like to emulate, how author was able to hook your interest, etc.

Tell class who you will be interviewing and what you will ask them.

Thu.,
June 9

Beauty and Food/Food as Divider.

Readings

A/B/C - Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente* (May 2014), pp. 103-120.

Review Nowak, Zack, "Torta Vs. Kebab" (2012).

Write short synopses of selection to share.

Part two of class: Food-related adventure in town/walk to San Pietro/dolce e caffè /writing.

Weekend

Read selection from Di Maio, Dina. *Authentic Italian: The Real Story of Italy's Food and Its People*, Dina Di Maio, March, 2018.

Continue reading Killingsworth, Silvia (Ed) *Best American Food Writing 2021*. Be prepared to discuss an essay with your peers.

Post in your food blog.

Contact and set date, if not already done, for your interview.

Choose subject – food, place, and historical connections you plan to research and write about for your final project. We will discuss in Tuesday's class. Final paper due date Friday, June 24.

WEEK 4

Tue.,
June 14

Potential change of time. I will announce in class previous week.

Food as Identity/Methods of Eating/We Are What We Eat?

Readings

A - Dickie, John. *Delizia!* Atria Books (October 2010). pp. 183-195.

B - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest* (December 2012), Chapter 10.

C - Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest* (December 2012), Chapter 9.

- Write short synopses of selections to share with class.

Share your final project decision.

In-class restaurant visit where we will discuss our favorite essays from the book. Writing assignment at restaurant.

Thu.,
June 16

Markets/ Shopping/ Slow Food/ Why it Matters.

Readings

All – Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente* (May 2014), pp. 203-222.

Write short synopses of selections to share.

Part two of class: Visit to local market, supermarket, restaurant, bar or gelateria.

Weekend Continue your food blog.

WEEK 5

Tue.,
June 21

Bring a draft of your final paper to class

Discussion will focus on your concerns with your project.

Reading and critiquing/peer review of projects will be our main focus.

Discussion of which essays in the *Best American Food Writing 2021* have been most helpful, which have taught you about writing about food, and how you will be incorporating those new techniques.

Film: TBD by vote

Thu.,
June 23

Meet at restaurant. Present final papers.

Discuss the food and wine we are served using all the new tools of analyses, observation, and knowledge of history.

Fri
June 24

Final Papers Due

Final Interviews Due

Bibliography

Consisting of books used in the class and others you should check out

- Caws, Mary Ann. *The Modern Art Cookbook*. Reaktion Books (October 2013).
- Dickie, John. *Delizial! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. Atria Books (October 2010).
- Di Maio, Dina. *Authentic Italian: The Real Story of Italy's Food and Its People*. Dina Di Maio (March, 2018)
- Eckert, Elgin and Nowak, Zachary. "In Cibo Veritas: Food preparation and consumption in Ozpetek's 'queer' films" in *Representing Italy Through Food* (2018).
- Finkelstein, Joanne. *Fashioning Appetite: Restaurants and the Making of Modern Identity*. Columbia University Press (May 2014).
- Gustafson, Ellen. *We the Eaters: If we change dinner we can change the world*. Rodale Books (May 2014).
- Gutkind, Lee. *You Can't Make This Stuff Up: The Complete Guide to Writing Creative Nonfiction—from Memoir to Literary Journalism and Everything in Between*. Da Capo Lifelong Books (August 2012).
- Jacob, Dianne. *Will Write for Food: The Complete Guide to Writing Cookbooks, Blogs, Reviews, Memoir, and More*. Da Capo Lifelong Books; Second Edition (July 2010).
- Killingsworth, Silvia (Ed) *Best American Food Writing 2021* (October 2021).
- Mikulak, Michael. *The Politics of the Pantry*. McGill Queens University Press (August 2013).
- Montanari, Massimo. *Let the Meatballs Rest: And Other Stories About Food and Culture*. Columbia University Press (December 2012).
- Nowak, Zachary. "Italian Stuffed vs. Maghreb Wrapped: Perugia's Torta al Testa Against the Kebab." Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery (2012).
- Nowak, Zachary. "Petits Propos Culinaires 96: Essays and notes on food, cookery and cookery books." Prospect Books,, (2012).
- Parasecoli, Fabio. *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy*. Reaktion Books (May 2014).
- Parasecoli, Fabio. *Feasting Our Eyes: Food Film sand Cultural Identity in the United States*. Columbia
- Parasecoli, Fabio. *Global Brooklyn: Designing food experiences in world cities*. Bloomsbury Academic (January 2021).
- Sebellin-Ross, S.J. *How to Write about Food: How to Become a Published Restaurant Critic, Food Journalist, Cookbook Author, and Food Blogger*. (Amazon, 2012).