GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: HIST 390 – History of Food in the Mediterranean

Credits: 3 Credits

Instructor: Dr. Guido Gualandi, PhD

Spring Semester 2016 – Meeting Times Wednesday 3.35 – 6.30 pm – Room TBA

OFFICE HOURS

by appointment (email: guido@guidogualandi.com, gualandi@gonzaga.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Can history teach us what and how to eat? How do Italians eat and why? Dieticians and doctors have failed answering this questions for centuries, does anybody think they can do it now? This course is an excursus on humans and their food and trough it, through the history answers will surface. Industrial food processes and modern agriculture have gone too far and lost the main point which is to produce healthy food for the humans. Agro businesses want to lower their costs and keep or increase production while maintaining or increasing their profits, and the food processing industry is focused on saving on costs to lower prices while keeping their margins steady or higher. In none of those cases consumer health is at the top of the list. On the Cultural side the course will focus on the Greco Roman classical period, and the Mediterranean.

COURSE METHOD

The course will be taught through a combination of formal lectures, class discussions, student presentations, tastings and out-door activities designed to engage students with the local community such as a culinary walking tour in Florence as well as field trip to food facilities in the Tuscan countryside.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learn the History of food in the Mediterranean, been able to discern quality of wine and olive oil and other Italian products.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements include regular class attendance, class participation, required readings, paper project, a mid-term exam and a final exam.

Attendance is mandatory. For spirited discussion we will need your active attention and participation. Absences will have an effect on your final grade.

Class Participation: mandatory, 20% of the grade

The Required Readings are an integral part of this course.

Paper Project (20%)
Basic Resources and Bibliography. Conduct a thorough search. Some basic resources are available at our library. You must also explore the Internet and look through magazines, newspapers, and archives. Journal articles are one of the primary sources of new theories and research findings. Get access to important databases such as JSTOR.

Mid-Term Exam (30%)
Final Exam (30%)

Academic Misconduct

This includes 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, as one's own, the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation (paper, written tests, etc.) without proper acknowledgment. This includes also insufficient or incomplete acknowledgement, or failure to acknowledge a source that has been paraphrased.

CLASSROOM POLICY

Use of technology in the classroom. Please note that mobile phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class.

ABSENCE POLICY ON LECTURES AND EXAMS

Following university policy, more than four absences will result in automatic half-grade reduction for each additional absence. More than six absences will result in an F for the course. There will be no written make up tests without a medical certificate.

REQUIRED READING

A culinary History of Food, Edited by JL Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, Columbia University Press, 1999 or reading copies available at the library.

2) Additional ‘Required Readings’ will be made available by the instructor.

Lectures and seminars

Week 1

What will this course be about? Historical Perspectives on the Study of Food. Introduction to course material.

Week 2

Prehistoric Societies and Food

Seminar: the Italian meal experience, introduction

Week 3

Palaeolithic and Mesopotamia: first food systems

Seminar: the Italian meal experience, appetizers
Week 4
Early Medieval Food Culture, the Arabs, food and religion
Seminar: the Italian meal experience, Pasta
(Fri): Field Trip

Week 5
The Renaissance Banquet, the role of Florence in Europe
The Age of European Colonialism and the Columbian Exchange
Seminar: the Italian meal experience, secondi piatti

Week 6 / 7
class discussion REVIEW, MID-TERM EXAM WEEK

Week 8
The French “Taste” Revolution in the 17th Century: The Rejection of Artificial Cuisine

Week 9
History of wine and overview of Italian wines, Wine Appreciation (wine tasting)

Week 10
Food and Industrialization
Seminar: the Italian meal experience, Desserts

Week 11
The ‘Mediterranean Diet’ and modern Italian cuisine
Slow Food vs. Fast Food

Week 12
Class Discussion + REVIEW

Week 13
FINAL EXAM WEEK