

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: HIST 390 – History and Culture of Food in Italy
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Dr. Peter Fischer, PhD



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Spring Semester 2011 – Meeting Times Monday and Wednesday 5.15 – 6.45 pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday and Wednesday 4.45-5.15 pm or by appointment (email: pfischer@libero.it)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will examine the relationship between food and culture in Italy through a variety of readings, discussions, out-door activities and tasting experiences. We will look at food in its social and cultural context from a multi-disciplinary perspective — history, anthropology, sociology, and geography. The course will trace the historical evolution of Italian cuisine in time and space focusing on the many global influences which over the centuries have shaped the use of different food products, preparation methods, consumption patterns, i.e. the Italian approach towards food. Food practices will be used as a window for viewing culture as a whole, much as one might study painting or literature.

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 the Tuscan countryside.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- understand the relevance of an interdisciplinary approach studying food;
- be familiar with the historical and social construction of taste;
- develop an understanding of food as a most fundamental cultural aspect of Italian society and

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the module students will:

- have deepened their understanding of the topic area;
- have acquired new perspectives on approaching food as an academic subject;
- be able to describe and discuss their newly acquired knowledge and understanding;
- have developed their research, writing, and discussion skills, and extended their capacity for critical analysis and reflection;
- have developed the confidence to explore ideas individually and in groups.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

Class Attendance, Class Participation, Required Readings and Pop Quizzes (10%)

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: I expect that you will be committed to giving a professional effort in this class. Participation means active engagement in the course: being consistently prepared for class (having really read that day's assignments); asking questions, responding to questions; offering your own insights and opinions; attentive listening to others. I begin by assuming a C for each student's class participation grade and move from there.

The Required Readings are an integral part of this course and should not be considered supplemental. Reading assignments should be done for the class day they are assigned.

Unannounced Pop-Quizzes covering reading assignments may be given periodically throughout the semester; these quizzes cannot be made up unless the instructor was notified in advance of the absence.

Paper Project (30%)

Each student is expected to write a paper of about 10-12 pages. Topics must be selected in agreement with me. The topics are determined by the available reading, and guidance will be given throughout.

You may choose to pursue further a topic that we are exploring in class, or examine another area of academic interest which is related to the subject of this course. I urge to discuss project ideas with me early on. This is to help you get thinking about your project early enough to do a good job. Time passes by quickly (particularly in Florence!). I will not accept any paper without the approved paper outline (see below) attached! Late papers will receive a drop in grade.

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.

I will expect at least 4 scholarly references (books, scholarly articles, printed and/or online). See me for ideas and talk to anyone who might be of help. I will not accept a topic that you have used/are using for another class.

Paper Outline. The outline of your paper project should contain:

- the title of your paper;
- the bibliographic references, and
- a short abstract.

The paper outline should be a short, single-spaced, 1-2 paragraph statement of the goals and conclusions of your paper. It should allow the reader to grasp immediately what the paper seeks to communicate in terms of questions, evidence, methods, or interpretations. The more detailed and specific your outline, the easier writing your paper will be. The approved outline must be attached to the proper paper.

Mid-Term Exam (25%)

An exam covering all topics presented until the mid-term exam. It will consist of a series of multiple choice and short answer questions. The exam will take approximately 90 minutes to complete. It will constitute 25% of the final grade.

Final Exam (35%)

The final exam is the final step in the sequential learning process the course involves. In this exam you bring together the various concepts/topics we have studied. The exam will take approximately 90 minutes to complete. It will constitute 35% of the final grade. This is the only time the exam will be given. Students who plan to depart prior to the exam should not take this course. You must pass the final exam to pass the course.

Review Sessions

Thorough review sessions are held in indicated sessions prior to both the midterm and final exams. A written study guide will be made available for students.

ASSESSMENT

10% Class Attendance, Class Participation and Pop-Quizzes
30% Paper Project
25% Mid-Term Exam
35% Final Exam

GRADING

Grading will be done on a percentage basis: (A 92.5-100) (A- 90.0-92.4) (B+ 87.5-89.9) (B 82.5-87.4) (B- 80.0-82.4) (C+ 77.5-79.9) (C 72.5-77.4) (C- 70.0-72.4) (D+ 67.5-69.9) (D 60.0-67.4) (F 0-59.9)

ASSESSMENT

10% Class Attendance and Participation

30% Paper Project

25% Mid-Term Exam

35% Final Exam

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. If you have concerns with any aspect of the course, please feel free to discuss them with me. If you ever feel that I have treated you in less than a respectful manner, please raise the issue with me.

CLASSROOM POLICY

Use of technology in the classroom. Please note that mobile phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class. Use of a mobile phone during class (such as texting) may be grounds for considering you absent from class that day. Similarly, computers may be used for taking notes during class lectures and discussions; however, surfing the net, browsing facebook, etc. may lead to your being counted as absent from class that day.

OFFICIAL COURSE TEXTS

A course reader compiling a variety of scholarly contributions from the humanities will be made available. Readings to be done each week will be assigned from the Reading Packet.

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

- 1) Reading material contained in course reader. A bound copy will be made available.
- 2) Additional 'Required Readings' will be made available by the instructor.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS*

Week 1

Jan 10 (Mon): What will this course be about? Historical and Systems Perspectives on the Study of Food. Introduction to course material.

Suggested readings:

Belasco, 2-23

Jan 12 (Wed): Why Food is Fundamental, Fun, Frightening, and Far-Reaching

Required readings:

Counihan (2000), 1513-1523; Paul Rozin (1999)

Week 2

Jan 17 (Mon): Excursion: Exploration of the Florentine Food System (culinary walking tour)

Jan 19 (Wed): Workshop (Student Paper Projects)

Week 3

Jan 24 (Mon): Prehistoric Societies and Food – The Neolithic Revolution and the Omnivore's Dilemma

Required readings:

Boyd Eaton, 130-137; Stahl, 137-141

Jan 26 (Wed): Food Systems and Models of Civilization in the Classical World – The Definition of Cultural Identity through Food and the Ideal of Moderation

Required Readings:

Montanari (1999) 69-78; Dalby, 209-214

NOTE: PAPER OUTLINES MUST BE GIVEN IN BY JAN 26 (WED)

Week 4

Jan 31 (Mon): Food as a Source of Sin and of Salvation: The Christian Food Model and Early Medieval Food Culture: You Eat What You Are

Required Readings:

Montanari (1999), 165-167; Montanari (1996), 15-26; Capatti/Montanari, 69-74

Feb 2 (Wed): The Arabs and Their Influence on European Food Culture - The Triumph of Spices

Required Readings:

Rosenberger, 207-223; Schivelbusch, pp. 3-14; Davidson, 744-746

Week 5

Feb 7 (Mon): The Renaissance Banquet and the Introduction of Modern Table Manners

Required Readings:

Grieco, 302-313; Santich, 176-179; Visser, 586-592

Feb 9 (Wed): The Age of European Colonialism and the Columbian Exchange

Required Readings:

Long-Solis, 436-439; Flandrin (1999), 349-359

Week 6

Feb 14 (Mon): Class Discussion

Feb 16 (Wed): REVIEW

Week 7

Feb 21-24 (Mon-Thu): MID-TERM EXAM WEEK

Week 8

Feb 28 (Mon): The Hot Beverage Revolution - The Internet in a Cup of Coffee

Required Readings:

Huetz de Lempis, 383-393; The Economist, 46-48

March 2 (Wed): The French “Taste” Revolution in the 17th Century: The Rejection of Artificial Cuisine

Required Readings:

Flandrin (1999), 362-373; Flandrin (1999), 418-432

NOTE: PAPERS MUST BE HANDED IN BY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2 LATEST!

Week 9

March 7 (Mon): Food and Industrialization – The Emergence of a Global Food System and the Return of the Omnivore’s Dilemma

Required Readings:

Flandrin (1999), 435-441; Montanari (1996), 152-171; Pollan, 1-11 (note: not in the reader: to be distributed by the instructor)

March 9 (Wed): The Critique of Industrial Agriculture and the Development of Alternatives: Organic Farming and Sustainable Agriculture

Required Readings:

Ikerd (2001)

Week 10

March 11-20 (Fri-Sun): SPRING BREAK

Week 11

March 21 (Mon): no class (because of Friday activity)

March 23 (Wed): Wine as a Marker of Civilization

Required Readings:

Phillips, 551-557; Charters, 557-561

► March 25 (Fri): Field Trip

This field day-trip is of fundamental importance (mandatory!) for our class. Please schedule your obligations in time so you can participate. Program and details to be announced.

Week 12

March 28 (Mon): Italian Mass Immigration to the United States and the Creation of an “Italian-American” Cuisine

Required Readings:

Diner, 48-83; Del Giudice (2000), 245-248

March 30 (Wed): Big Night (movie) and Class Discussion

Week 13

April 4 (Mon): Italian Food Culture – A Universal Model? The American ‘Discovery’ of the ‘Mediterranean Diet’ (includes tasting of freshly pressed olive oil)

Required Readings:

Nestle, 1193-1203; *The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid*

April 6 (Wed): Slow Food vs. Fast Food - The Italian Revolt Against the Americanization and Globalization of Food Systems

Required Readings:

Counihan (2004), 35-56; Del Giudice (2003), 289-290

Week 14

April 11 (Mon): Food and Cinema: The Representation of Italian Food Culture in Italian and in American Movies (illustrated with selected film clips)

April 13 (Wed): Class Discussion + REVIEW

Week 15

April 14-20 (Thu-Wed): FINAL EXAM WEEK

*Note: We will stick to this schedule as closely as possible, but please be advised that this calendar is subject to some minor modification. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to get in touch with a class member or me to find out the following week's material and activities.