



HS/SO/CU 250: HISTORY AND CULTURE OF FOOD IN ITALY AND TUSCANY

IES Abroad Siena

DESCRIPTION:

Beginning with contemporary Italian and Tuscan gastronomy, this course examines the history of Italian cuisine and the economics and sociology of food in Tuscany, with an emphasis on the city of Siena. The analysis will begin with the ancient Etruscan and Roman periods, then move through the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and finish with comparisons to the early modern and contemporary periods. Special emphasis will be also given to relevant historical events, such as the discovery of America in 1492. All course content will be discussed in connection with socio-cultural and gender connotations, and we will consider history and culture as reflected in alimentary traditions, rituals, philosophies, and the visual arts.

The course will further take into consideration the development of contemporary Tuscan and Sienese cuisine and their association with traditional beverages. The course includes field study visits to restaurants, food shops, cooking schools, butchers', vineyards, cheese-producing dairies, gelato makers, *enoteche*, wineries, and other similar institutions. Some classes include units on pasta-making, Italian cooking, and cheese tastings.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures, seminar discussions, oral presentations, 3 cooking demonstrations, and guided visits to various institutions. Slideshow presentations and readings will be available on Moodle.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Active class participation and discussion: 15%
- Moodle assignments: 25%
- Oral in-class presentations: 30%
- Final exam: 30%

COURSE ELEMENT:

- **Active class participation and class discussion:** Students are expected to complete all readings for each class and actively engage in discussions related thereto, engage with local producers during guided visits, and participate in cooking classes.
- **Moodle assignments:** There will be 3 online assignments (posted on and submitted through Moodle) that will assess students' understanding of course-related trips and themes of the previous lessons.
- **Research presentations:** Students will research an aspect of the course and present their findings to the class with an oral presentation and slideshow. Presentation guidelines will be posted on Moodle together with a grading framework.
- **Final exam:** In-class written exam with multiple-choice questions and short essays (2 hours).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- Analyze aspects of the history and culture of Italy and Tuscany as reflected in their cuisine and gastronomic traditions;
- Analyze, describe, and compare the art and the context of Tuscan and Sienese foods in their past and present socio-cultural connotations.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Successful progress of the program depends on the full cooperation of both students and faculty members; regular attendance and active participation in class are essential parts of the learning process. Attendance at and participation in all class meetings and course related trips are required. IES Abroad Siena allows a maximum of TWO excused

absences per semester. Each further (unjustified) absence will automatically result in a penalty of two points off (2/100) of the final grade. SEVEN absences per course (including the 2 excused absences) will result in a failing grade for that course. Furthermore, an absence on the date of scheduled tests, presentations, or quizzes does not entitle the student to recover/reschedule such tests. Failure to attend the midterm and/or final exam will result in an F grade on that paper/exam.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction - How the Mediterranean basin connected people and foods. - The cultivation of olive trees and grain as a common heritage in the Mediterranean area. - The structure of a typical Italian meal.	- CAPATTI, <i>Italian cuisine</i>, pp. 1-27 - CAPATTI, <i>Italian cuisine</i>, pp. 129-157 - Moodle assignment
Week 2	Conserving, cooking, using foods - The social role of salt, bread, and fresh seasonal foods. - The basic foods and their presence today. <i>Antipasti</i>: the Italian tradition.	- LOCATELLI, <i>Made in Italy</i>, pp. 193-209 - CAPATTI, <i>Italian cuisine</i>, pp. 280-285 - Moodle assignment
Week 3	The traditional Italian first course (<i>primo</i>) - Pasta and its history. - The medieval and Renaissance eras - The importance of meat (<i>chianina</i>), pork (<i>salsicce</i>, <i>prosciutto</i>), wild boar (<i>cinghiale</i>), game, small animals (i.e., rabbit and chicken).	- LOCATELLI, <i>Made in Italy</i>, pp. 401-421; pp. 223-235 - MONTANARI, <i>Food is culture</i>, pp. 237-247 - FREEDMAN, <i>Food. The history of taste</i>, pp. 249-279
Week 4	“Strange” foods from other countries - The knowledge and use of tomato (<i>pappa al pomodoro</i>) - the many variations of pasta (<i>pici</i>, <i>tagliatelle</i>, etc.) - ice cream (<i>gelato</i>).	- LOCATELLI, <i>Made in Italy</i>, pp. 210-213; pp. 215-221 - Moodle assignment
Week 5	The healing power of food - spices and sweets: the triumph of <i>panforte</i>, <i>ricciarelli</i>, <i>panpepato</i> - seasonal festive sweets, like the <i>pan co’ santi</i> and the <i>schacciata di Pasqua</i>	FREEDMAN, <i>Food. The history of taste</i>, pp. 445-477
Week 6	Historical Legacy - What remains of these ten centuries of history today? - Socio-cultural perspectives of the historical legacy in contemporary Sieneese cuisine - Comparing Tuscan and Italian contexts. - Review of course contents.	ROOT, <i>The food of Italy</i>, pp. 29-75; pp. 79-116

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 7	Final Presentations and Exams	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

Course-related trips allow students to receive the maximum advantage from the local context (a perfectly preserved medieval social entity), applying the conceptual cognitive aspects of their academic learning to the intra-personal level in order to develop skills of inter-personal and inter-cultural competence. Please note that the week number of the course-related trips is subject to change depending on the institution's opening hours and the overall IES calendar.

REQUIRED READINGS:

All the required chapters/excerpts (in English) are available on the course's Moodle site in PDF format. The instructor is happy to suggest additional readings (both in English and Italian).

- Black, Maggie. *The Medieval Cookbook*. London: The British Museum Press, 1996.
- Capatti, Alberto and Massimo Montanari. *Italian Cuisine. A Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Freedman, Paul. *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Freedman, Paul ed. *Food. The History of Taste*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007.
- Locatelli, Giorgio. *Made in Italy Food and Stories*. London: Fourth Estate, 2000.
- Montanari, Massimo. *Food is Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Root, Waverley. *The Food in Italy*. New York: Vintage Books 1992
- Tannahill, Reay. *Food in History*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1988.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Fioroni, S. *A Family Farm in Tuscany. Recipes and Stories from Fattoria Poggio Alloro*. Fredericksburg: Shearer Publishing, 2012.
- Scarpaleggia, G. *I love Toscana. Colours, taste and flavours*. Food Editore, 2012.