



CU270: CULTURE AND CUISINE OF ITALY

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

This course gives students the opportunity to approach one of the most important and world-renowned aspects of Italian culture: *la cucina italiana*. Our classroom sessions will be punctuated with hands-on cooking classes at *Eataly*, which will offer a practical understanding of local cuisine and food culture. Students will be asked to discuss Italian recipes, cultural differences in cooking, and in the approach to food. We will also discuss historical and cultural reasons behind the development of different cuisines, ingredients, and cooking practices throughout the country.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: 150€

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The course offers insights into Italian culture related to food and cooking habits. Italy has great food, and a greater (perhaps too great) storytelling about it. We will cover ingredients, food-related topics, and interesting stories about Italian cuisine. There will be in-class discussions, students' presentations, hands-on lessons, and a full understanding of how cuisine intertwined with Italy's history and culture.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

Regular attendance and active participation in class will be fundamental for grade assessment. Students will be asked to complete exercises, read and comment on texts, and do research work for in-class presentations on the topics covered in class.

- **Class Engagement - 25%**
- **Oral Exam - 25%**
- **Midterm Exam - 25%**
- **Final Exam – 25%**

Class Engagement: Active and thoughtful participation in class that demonstrates the student's preparedness for class and engagement with the culture. It will be evaluated according to a rubric available on the course Moodle page.

The oral exam is a group presentation about a food-related topic assigned by the instructor. It will be evaluated according to a rubric available on the course Moodle page.

The midterm exam is a written exam consisting of both closed- and open answers questions. It covers the contents of the first half of the course.

The final exam is an analytical paper asking students to discuss one of the topics introduced in class. It will be evaluated according to a rubric available on the course Moodle page.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- Describe Italian cooking traditions and Italian habits related to food, eating, and food preparation;
- Outline key issues and values affecting food traditions and the food economy in Italy
- Discuss food culture in Italy supported by historical and social-economic context.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, the IES Abroad Milan attendance policy allows for the following number of absences, which are intended to be used for physical and mental health reasons:

- THREE (3) absences in each Italian language course,
- **TWO (2) absences in each Area Studies course,**
- ONE (1) absence in each seminar course or course meeting 1 day a week,
- ZERO (0) absences in each course of individual music instruction.

Every absence beyond this allowance will automatically result in a penalty of 2 percentage points off the final grade. SEVEN (7) absences will result in a failing grade in Italian language and Area Studies courses. FOUR (4) absences will result in a failing grade in seminar or 1-day-a-week courses. Failure to attend a scheduled exam, test, quiz, or presentation will automatically result in an F grade on that assessment.

ACADEMIC INTERGITY:

Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Code of Academic Integrity. All work submitted by a student for academic credit should constitute the student's own original work. Any work submitted for academic credit may be subject to review by a textual similarity detection service for the detection of plagiarism and AI usage.

CONTENT: This breakdown may be subject to changes. **The cooking lessons will take place at EATALY Smeraldo, Piazza 25 Aprile, 10. We will meet there.**

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1 <i>Session 1</i>	What is Italian cuisine? • Italian cuisine in US people’s minds • Italian cuisine outside Italy: is it fake?	• Draft a map of all the Italian words related to food that you already know. Write down a list of Italian dishes you are familiar with. • 10 "Italian" Dishes that Aren't Actually Italian... OR ARE THEY? (video)
<i>Session 2</i>	Food certifications: can typicality be stated? • Is “Made in Italy” actually made in Italy? • Who needs “Made in Italy”?	• “Report”, May 10 2015 episode (video) • Focaccia di Recco IGP: product guidelines • Raw Materials for Valtellina Bresaola, Valtellina Bresaola Consortium website (reading) • Giovanni Ceccarelli, Alberto Grandi, Stefano Magagnoli, “The “Taste” of Typicality”, chapters 1,3,4 (reading)

Week 2 <i>Session 1</i>	Grocery shopping in Italy - Grocery shopping in the US vs in Italy: supermarkets, delis, local markets - Introduction to EATALY	Eataly Manifesto (reading) - Giuseppe Caprotti, <i>Le ossa dei Caprotti (The Caprotti's Bones)</i>, extracts (reading) Go to a local market and experience the environment
<i>Session 2</i>	Italy, land of good wine? - When did Italian wine become renowned? - Is "the farmer's wine" better than fancy wine? - The economy of wine	Poison Plonk: A deadly wine scandal in Italy, "Time" article, April 7 1986 (reading) Stefano Ponte, <i>Bursting the bubble? The hidden costs and visible conflicts behind the Prosecco wine 'miracle'</i> (reading) - Giovanni Ceccarelli, Alberto Grandi, <i>A "made in Italy" made by English : How Marsala Wine Became an Italian Typical Product</i> (reading)
Week 3 <i>Session 1</i>	COOKING CLASS + WINE TASTING @ Eataly Smeraldo - Wine tasting - Food pairing	
<i>Session 2</i>	A country of 1000 cheeses - Italian cheeses: regional types and characteristics - Parmigiano Reggiano and Grana Padano VS Parmesan - Italian Sounding	- Alberto Grandi, <i>"Denominazione di Origine Inventata"</i> (Invented Designation of Origin), chapter 5 (reading) Italy's toxic waste crisis, the Mafia - and the scandal of Europe's mozzarella, "The Independent" article, March 22nd 2008 (reading)
Week 4 <i>Session 1</i>	ORAL EXAM	
<i>Session 2</i>	The wonderful adventure of pasta - From the Etruscans to modern time - Richness and poverty, home-production and industry: pasta's infinite faces - Fresh pasta and dry pasta: why so many shapes?	The Twisted History of Pasta, "National Geographic" article (reading) - Kantha Shelke, <i>Pasta and Noodles, a Global history</i> - Chapter I (reading)

Week 5 <i>Session 1</i>	COOKING CLASS • @ Eataly • Origin and ingredients • Cooking techniques and tools • Guided tasting	
<i>Session 2</i>	Pizza and street food • Pizza Margherita between history and legend • Why and how did pizza become so famous? • (Italian) street food: a fast but slow food	• Zachary Nowak, <i>Folklore, Fakelore, History: Invented Tradition and the Origins of the Pizza Margherita</i>, pp. 103-107, 109-117 (reading) • Marina Calloni, <i>Street Food on the Move: A Socio-philosophical approach</i> (reading)
Week 6 <i>Session 1</i>	MIDTERM EXAM	
<i>Session 2</i>	Fake and real Italian sauces • Alfredo, Marinara, Spaghetti & the Italian American cuisine • Techniques and regional variations • Pasta and sauce pairing	• What to eat in Italy? Top 59 Italian Sauces, "Taste Atlas" article (reading) • How to Pair Pasta with Sauce, "Eataly" article (reading) • Luca Cesari, "Carbonara: history, origins and anecdotes of a legendary recipe" (reading)
Week 7 <i>Session 1</i>	COOKING CLASS • @ Eataly • Origin and ingredients • Cooking techniques and tools • Guided tasting	
<i>Session 2</i>	American Food In Europe • The impact of the Columbian Exchange on Italian cuisine • How many things in Italian cuisine are actually Italian?	• David Gentilcore, <i>The Impact Of New World Plants, 1500–1800: The americas In Italy</i> (reading)

Week 8 <i>Session 1</i>	Our daily bread • Sacrality of bread • Why so many shapes • The color of bread as a social symbol • Differences between wheats from North to South	• “Pane e Nutella”, Nutella marketing campaign (browsing) • Vito Teti, <i>Il colore del cibo</i> (The color of food), selected pages (reading) • Susan R. Friedland, <i>Food and Morality</i>, (pp.57-67) (reading)
<i>Session 2</i>	La cucina povera: an italian uniqueness • Can “<i>cucina povera</i>” be translated as “poor cuisine”? • Did Italian peasants eat better than modern-day Italians? • Is “<i>cucina povera</i>” actually a thing? • Oil, lard and butter: differences and uses	• Chef’s Table episode: Bo Songvisava (video) • “La cucina povera: the poor cuisine of Tuscany”, “Italy Segreta” article (critical reading) • Italy minister Lollobrigida claims ‘the poor eat better than the rich’, “Wanted in Rome” article, August 25 2023 (reading)
Week 9 <i>Session 1</i>	COOKING CLASS • @ Eataly • Origin and ingredients • Cooking techniques and tools • Guided tasting	
<i>Session 2</i>	The Mediterranean Diet and sustainable food in Italy • Is Italian food more sustainable compared to other countries? • “Seasonality” a crucial word • Mediterranean diet vs obesity in Italy • Food for a longer life: Sardinian Blue Zone	• Eating seasonal food is important, but why? (reading) • The Sardinian Blue Zone: home to the world’s longest living people (reading) • Elisabetta Moro, <i>The Mediterranean Diet from Ancel Keys to the UNESCO Cultural Heritage. A Pattern of Sustainable Development between Myth and Reality</i> (reading)
Week 10 <i>Session 1</i>	“Espresso: what else?” • Espresso: the only way? • History of coffee in Italy: from Pope Clemente 7th to Luigi Lavazza and Alfonso Bialetti • The Italian Breakfast: is Cappuccino after midday (so) wrong?	• “Alfonso Bialetti” and “Luigi Lavazza”, podcast episodes by Luca Cottini on Italian Innovators (listening)

Session 2	Italian Sweets and Desserts - The desserts of the Italian ancestors - The History of Tiramisu: A Regional Dispute - Best Italian desserts and pastries	The Real Story of Tiramisù (That Will Upset Many Italians) (watching) Italy's Best Traditional and Regional Desserts, "Great Italian Chefs" article (reading) Accademia del Tiramisù website (browsing)
Week 11 Session 1	COOKING CLASS @ Eataly - Origin and ingredients - Cooking techniques and tools - Guided tasting	
Session 2	Final Review	

REQUIRED READINGS AND VIDEOS:

- [10 "Italian" Dishes that Aren't Actually Italian... OR ARE THEY?](#) (video)
- "Report", May 10 2015 episode (video)
- Focaccia di Recco IGP: product guidelines
- [Raw Materials for Valtellina Bresaola](#), Valtellina Bresaola Consortium website (reading)
- Giovanni Ceccarelli, Alberto Grandi, Stefano Magagnoli, *"The "Taste" of Typicality", chapters 1,3,4*
- [Eataly Manifesto](#)
- Giuseppe Caprotti, *Le ossa dei Caprotti (The Caprotti's Bones)*, extracts
- [Poison Plonk: A deadly wine scandal in Italy](#), "Time" article, April 7 1986
- Stefano Ponte, *Bursting the bubble? The hidden costs and visible conflicts behind the Prosecco wine 'miracle'*
- Giovanni Ceccarelli, Alberto Grandi, *A "made in Italy" made by English : How Marsala Wine Became an Italian Typical Product*
- Alberto Grandi, *"Denominazione di Origine Inventata" (Invented Designation of Origin)*, chapter 5
- [Italy's toxic waste crisis, the Mafia - and the scandal of Europe's mozzarella](#), "The Independent" article, March 22nd 2008
- [The Twisted History of Pasta](#), "National Geographic" article
- Kantha Shelke, *Pasta and Noodles, a Global history* - Chapter I
- Zachary Nowak, *Folklore, Fakelore, History: Invented Tradition and the Origins of the Pizza Margherita*, pp. 103-107, 109-117
- Marina Calloni, *Street Food on the Move: A Socio-philosophical approach*
- [What to eat in Italy? Top 59 Italian Sauces](#), "Taste Atlas" article
- [How to Pair Pasta with Sauce](#), "Eataly" article
- Luca Cesari, ["Carbonara: history, origins and anecdotes of a legendary recipe"](#)
- David Gentilcore, *The Impact Of New World Plants, 1500–1800: The americas In Italy*
- Vito Teti, *Il colore del cibo (The color of food)*, selected pages
- Susan R. Friedland, *Food and Morality*, (pp.57-67)
- Chef's Table episode: Bo Songvisava (video)
- ["La cucina povera: the poor cuisine of Tuscany"](#), "Italy Segreta" article
- [Italy minister Lollobrigida claims 'the poor eat better than the rich'](#), "Wanted in Rome" article, August 25 2023
- [Eating seasonal food is important, but why?](#)
- [The Sardinian Blue Zone: home to the world's longest living people](#)
- Elisabetta Moro, *The Mediterranean Diet from Ancel Keys to the UNESCO Cultural Heritage. A Pattern of Sustainable Development between Myth and Reality*

- “Alfonso Bialetti” and “Luigi Lavazza”, podcast episodes by Luca Cottini on Italian Innovators (listening)
- [The Real Story of Tiramisù \(That Will Upset Many Italians\)](#) (watching)
- [Italy’s Best Traditional and Regional Desserts](#), “Great Italian Chefs” article