



CU 270 – ITALIAN CONVERSATION: CULTURE AND CUISINE OF ITALY

IES Abroad Rome

DESCRIPTION:

This course gives students the opportunity to approach one of the most important and world-renowned aspects of Italian culture: *la cucina italiana*. Classes will alternate between hands-on cooking classes at the IES Center in Rome, like pasta and gnocchi making with an understanding of local cuisine, practical tastings, and outdoor food experiences.

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, not to mention the importance of regional food and culinary habits.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: \$120

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

This course will offer insights into Italian culture related to food and cooking habits. Italy has great food, outstanding ingredients, amazing wine, centuries of art and history, and the ability to always make the most with what they have. We will cover ingredients, kitchen tools, words related to preparing meals, food-related topics, idiomatic forms and expressions, and more. There will be in-class discussions, students' presentations, course-related trips, and hands-on lessons, tastings, and a full understanding of how with a pinch of creativity and a strong sense of survival, Italians have turned simple things into products of great value.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

1. Course participation - 15%
2. Midterm exam - 25%
3. Final exam - 25%
4. Final essay - 10%
5. Oral presentation - 15%
6. Video - 10%

Midterm and Final Exams

Multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions.

Final Essay

The final essay is a paper on any subject related to Italian cuisine: students are expected to discuss their topic showing familiarity with it. The paper has to be submitted as typed text, with 400 words.

Oral Presentation

Students will present on a personal research project that they conduct throughout the semester on a specific topic that particularly interests them according to the teacher's directions.

Video

The video assignment is a group project that will be explained in class by the professor.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- Illustrate the main Italian cooking methods and the appropriate terminology of food and food preparations;
- Describe Italian cooking traditions and Italian habits related to food, eating, and food preparation;
- Recognize the Italian regions along with information on typical foods, main food preparations from the different areas of Italy, and their historical origins;
- Discuss information on food culture in Italy by reading selected newspaper articles.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is mandatory for all IES classes, including field studies and academic daytrips. Absences are excused only by presenting a medical certificate to the Academic Coordinator.

- 2 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every unjustified absence.
- 4 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade in case of an unjustified absence on a scheduled Course-Related Academic Day Trip.

If a student is absent from school for more than 3 consecutive days, the student will be able to access the IES Rome Center and resume classes only by exhibiting a medical certificate to Center staff. Before issuing such medical certificates, physicians may ask for a negative Covid-19 test result.

Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to absences can only be rescheduled in case of documented medical or family emergencies. IES will only consider emergency cases and will strictly adhere to this policy.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction to the course2. The history of Italian cuisine: understanding Italian food culture, habits, and regional food concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected chapters from Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009• Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Recipes and stories: understanding food shopping tradition, seasonal produce, local foods, habits, and importance of a local food market (DOP, IGP)4. Tour of the Mercato Trionfale (the largest covered market in Europe)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 162, 248, 277-278• Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Le Paste6. Pasta making class, hands-on lesson: pasta making class with 3 different basic pasta doughs. Use of each, regional use, and sauce pairing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 372-380• Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. The Italian Lifestyle: Aperitivo and Antipasto rituals8. Roman street food tour: walking tour with selected stops for local Roman street food tastings. Understanding of history of food tasted, quality, use, and purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 15-18• Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 5	9. The history of gnocchi (different kinds/regional differences) 10. Hands-on gnocchi making class: gnocchi making class with different basic gnocchi doughs. Use of each, regional use, and sauce pairing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 15-18 Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 6	11. Review 12. Midterm exam 13. Day trip to local Pecorino farm	
Week 7	14. The slow food movement 15. Oral presentation: "Create your own recipe"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 501-503 Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 8	16. Wine: making and importance 17. Importance of food & wine pairing with practical tastings and experiments (aromas, using all 5 senses in food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 582-585 Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 9	18. How Italians eat: from coffee to olive oil 19. Coffee & cappuccino outdoor tasting experiences: outdoor visit to local specialty coffee shop for a full understanding of quality, differences, latte art, cappuccino, and how Italians drink coffee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gillian Riley's Oxford Companion to Italian Food, 2009, pp. 135-137, 348-350 Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 10	20. Guest lecture: Pastry chef, Italian desserts 21. Spring break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 11	22. Spring break 23. Video assignment due: video assignment will be on an ingredient or food of your choice. All aspects must be touched (history, quality, characteristics). General discussion on student projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected articles and videos posted on Moodle
Week 12	24. Review, final essay due: the final essay is a paper on any subject related to Italian cuisine. Students are expected to discuss their topic showing familiarity with it. The paper has to be submitted as typed text, with 400 words. 25. Final Exam	



COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Mercato Trionfale
- Rome Center for Roman street food tour
- Local Pecorino farm (academic daytrip)
- Prati area for coffee and cappuccino tasting

REQUIRED READINGS:

- *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*. Gillian Riley, OUP Usa, 2009
- Articles and materials posted on Moodle

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy*, Fabio Parasecoli, Reaktion Books, 2014
- *La Cucina: The Regional Cooking of Italy*, Rizzoli, 2009