HS/CU 245 THE ITALIAN WINE INDUSTRY AND ITS EVOLUTION IN TUSCANY
IES Abroad Siena

DESCRIPTION: Italy is a country with an age-old tradition of wine-drinking that can be traced back millennia. In Renaissance society, for example, the act of drinking wine was a marker for higher social class and inspired artists, thinkers, writers and poets, and was also used for medical and healthcare applications.

At the time of Italian unification in 1861, wine consumption was widespread throughout the country across all social ranks. However, there was no market in the modern sense, nor any internationally-known regional appellations as there are today.

Bettino Ricasoli, a baron from Florence, was the first person to build a highly successful brand that would become known as “Chianti”. After his influence, an Italian wine industry arose in the wake of specific regional brand names and distinctive tastes that characterize today’s wine market in Italy and around the world.

This course aims to cover the economic and cultural underpinnings of today’s Italian wine industry with a particular focus on the case of Tuscany. The course will explore specific features of Italian winemaking (characterized by small-scale and geographically very diverse businesses) and will analyze the change in consumer preferences over time, where values linked to Italy’s identity prevail, especially the value of wine as integral part of the country’s material culture.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures (including PowerPoint projections, CD-ROMs and other visual materials)
- Seminar discussions
- Moodle application
- Field studies and guided tours to wineries and museums

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Class participation (10%);
- 3 Moodle activities 15% - 5% each)
- 2 writing assignments (20% - 10% each)
- Mid-term exam in the form of essay style short answers (25%)
- Final exam in the form of short answer questions (30%).

Writing assignments will consist of the development of 2 short paper projects:
- analysis of contemporary wine consumer attitudes and behaviors by linking them to two/three of the following aspects: gender, age, social status, subjective identities, religion, cultural background (the paper should be at least 5 pages long and should be uploaded on Moodle)
- analysis of the differences between the Italian and the American wine market by considering two/three following aspects: territoriality and regional identity, local legislation, general market trends, consumer demand, cultural background (the paper should be at least 5 pages long and should be uploaded on Moodle)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Describe major changes in wine consumption behaviors, consumer preferences & values, and the “vocabulary of wine” from the Renaissance to today in western culture.
- Explain economic, social and historical issues related to wine production, consumption and modern marketing strategies.
- Evaluate the importance of the regional wine appellation in contemporary Italy and the transformation of Italian wine industry across the centuries.
**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 field-studies are required. More than TWO absences will result in a lowering of your grade by two percentage points for every absence.

**GRADING SCALE:** A (100-93), A- (92.9-90), B+ (89.9-87), B (86.9-83), B- (82.9-80), C+ (79.9-77), C (76.9-73), C- (72.9-70), D+ (69.9-67), D (66.9-63), F (62.9 and below).

**CONTENT:**

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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Assignments</th>
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| Weeks 1 & 2: | **Wine consumption in Renaissance society between symbolic values and the everyday life.** | **Moodle activity: Wine Consumption In The Past and In The Present:** Students are asked to answer questions related to the wine consumption and how to choose the “right” wine in the past and current society.  
**Writing assignment (on Moodle):** Students are asked to write a paper project which will consist of an analysis of contemporary wine consumer attitudes and behaviors by linking them to two/three of the following aspects: gender, age, social status, subjective identities, religion, cultural background (the paper should be at least 5 pages long, must be uploaded on Moodle and will be presented and discussed in class). |
|      | • Italian Renaissance and Baroque painters between the wine-related sacred narratives and the return of mythological subjects. **Readings:** Varriano, J. “Wine: a cultural history”, pp. 143-188. | |
|      | • The role played by wine in Renaissance medicine and pharmacology: the case of Italy. **Readings:** Varriano, J. “Wine: a cultural history”, pp. 127-130; Albala, K. “To your health: Wine as Food and Medicine in Sixteenth-Century Italy”, in *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*, pp. 11-25. | |
|      | • The historical vocabulary of wine, how people have talked about the characteristics of wine through the centuries and why the “taste-words” have constituted sensory indices of qualities and powers across the centuries. **Readings:** Grieco, A.J. “Medieval and Renaissance Wines: Taste, Dietary Theory, and How to Choose the “Right” Wine (14th–16th Centuries)” in *Mediaevalia: an interdisciplinary journal of medieval studies worldwide* (30#1, 2009), pp.15-42; Shapin, S. “Tastes of wine: towards a cultural history”, in *Rivista di Estetica*, pp. 49-95. | |
| Weeks 3 & 4: | **First golden age of wine industry: the spreading of wine production in the European society of XVII and XVIII century** | **Moodle activity: Wine Crossword Puzzle:** Students are asked to create a Wine Crossword puzzle using the definition of 10 words related to the past classes (they may also use “The Oxford
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<th>Weeks 5 &amp; 6:</th>
<th>The phylloxera plague: crises, expansion and the renewal of the European viticulture in the XIX and XX centuries.</th>
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<td>Wine industry in post-unification Italy, the birth of the &quot;Italian Formula&quot; and the emergence of a wine geography. <strong>Readings:</strong> Bastianich, J., Lynch D., “Vino Italiano. The regional wines of Italy”, pp. 5-20.</td>
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| Midterm Exam |

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<th>Weeks 7 &amp; 8:</th>
<th>Regional Identity and Value Creation in the Italian Wine Industry: the case of Tuscany</th>
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<td><strong>Moodle activity: Sudoku:</strong> Students must resolve the Sudoku puzzle by answering the questions. Every correct answer will result in a number on the grid.</td>
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|  | **Writing assignment (on Moodle):** Students are asked to write a paper project which will consist of an analysis of the differences between the Italian...
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<th>Weeks 9 &amp; 10:</th>
<th>In the realm of modern globalization: winemakers, wineries and the evolution of the Italian wine industry</th>
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<td>• The new system of Italian wine: from sustainability to the redefinition of the wine industry in the global market. <strong>Readings:</strong> Filiputti, W. “Modern history of Italian Wine”, pp. 194-227, pp. 346-363, pp. 16-27.</td>
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COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Students will tour a local restaurant where they will learn about wine production in Tuscany and will experience a wine tasting.
- In Montalcino and Pienza students will visit a wine production site and will evaluate the differences between the city and the countryside in terms of wine quality and customer demands.
- In Chianti area students will visit a winery that produces the so-called Chianti Colli Senesi and will take a walk in the vineyards and in the cellar to see the main steps of wine production from the plant to the bottle.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Unwine, Tim, “Wine and the vine: an historical geography of Viticulture and the wine trade”, Routledge; 1 edition (June 20, 20

RECOMMENDED READINGS: