



Litr 268R: Italian Cultural History: Food & Wine
John Felice Rome Center
Summer Fusion Experience 2023: Rome & Abruzzo

Instructor: Elizabeth Simari

Monday-Thursday

9:30-11:30

Email: esimari@luc.edu

+39 327 36 66 211

Practicum/Site visits fee: \$100

* ALL DATES AND ONSITE CLASSES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO COVID SAFETY PROTOCOLS, ETC.

The John Felice Rome Center of Loyola University Chicago welcomes you to Italy for a unique adventure this summer. Summer 2023 marks the sixth year of this Fusion program, in which students dive into photography and the culinary past and present of Italy. In five weeks you will learn everything you have always wanted to know about the city of Rome, as well as one of Italy's most beautiful regions: Abruzzo. Together we will explore the history, the culture, the customs, food systems and the cuisine of the city and countryside of Italy, and you are invited to explore and to see it all through a different lens – in the literal sense of the word. This “Fusion Experience” brings culture and digital photography together in one package. You will learn to observe and to record both the past and the present, and to appreciate the widest variety of flavors and tastes, to grasp culture and nature, and to understand how it has formed a city, a country, and its peoples throughout the centuries – until the present day!

After two and a half weeks in **Rome**, at the campus of the John Felice Rome Center, you will transfer to the breathtakingly beautiful region of **Abruzzo**. From there you will explore this spectacular part of Italy, learning about many aspects of life in the countryside, which is so rich in history and traditions, especially when it comes to food and wine.

Course Description

Perhaps the best way to learn about the Italian people is to examine the history of the country's gastronomy and its food and cooking traditions. By learning about urban and rural food systems, we will gain a greater understanding of Italian history and culture.

Food is a key for understanding the past and Italy is especially interesting in this respect since modern Italian identity is based, in large part, on food. And many Italian products, grown in the countryside, have been used by chefs and *nonnas* alike to compose dishes in the city. By learning about these individual products we can gain insight into Italian culture and history.

While in Rome students will get a chance to look at how the past has shaped what the people of Italy (and more specifically of Romans) eat today. And, because Rome has a number of neighborhoods each distinct in their own culinary traditions, we will spend our time in the Eternal City examining the local food culture, in addition to examining urban foodways and how they are connected and disconnected from the countryside.

When we travel to Abruzzo – in addition to exploring (and witnessing first-hand) Italian products themselves (cheese, chocolate, wine, etc) – we will examine the specific traditions and history of the region's food and compare them to those we saw in Rome. This context will allow us to examine two different local food cultures, both urban and rural.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view regarding food systems and culture and history
- Develop a more sophisticated understanding of Italian history through the country's gastronomy, especially that of urban and rural Italy
- Identify how food and drink has shaped Italy today
- Understand the importance of knowing where what we eat comes from and how it is made

Required Text / Materials

There are no required texts for this course; all required readings will be on Sakai. It is a good idea to download them before leaving for Abruzzo as the internet is limited there.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student. Any lateness or leaving class early will impact the final course grade.

Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Absence due to sickness or injury needs to be corroborated by a doctor's note. Students arriving late to class twice will be credited with one absence in accordance with the JFRC's Attendance policy. Three (3) absences will result in an automatic failure, "F". Travel does not constitute a reason to miss class.

COVID and Campus Health

The JFRC will conduct all activity according to policies and best practices as prescribed by the Italian Ministries of Health and Education and in consultation with the Loyola University Chicago main campus. At present masking, social distancing and periodic testing are required to keep our campus and community safe. A complete set of COVID policies, taking into consideration the most up-to-date mandates and recommendations, will be provided at the start of the semester. These policies will be subject to change as the situation warrants. Please note that due to social distancing requirements, JFRC class capacities are rigid. Therefore special requests for extra seats, overrides or unofficial auditing will not be permitted.

The collective health of the JFRC is everyone's responsibility. Do not attend class if you are ill.

Assessment Components

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| ● Participation | 20% |
| ● Photo Essays | 20% |
| ● Roman Neighborhood Presentation | 20% |
| ● Wine Presentation | 20% |
| ● Final Exam | 20% |

Class Participation (20%)

For spirited discussion, we will need your active attention and participation. Class participation grades are not automatic. They are based on oral contributions to the collective learning experience of the class. Participation means active engagement in the course: being consistently prepared for class (having carefully read that day's assignments), asking questions, responding to questions, offering your own insights and opinions, and attentive listening to others. Students who are by nature more reluctant

to offer their input will not be penalized; however they are encouraged to participate fully in blog writing and other written assignments, outside of discussions.

Photos Essays (20%)

All students are required to write two photo essays throughout the summer session. These essays are intended to provide an opportunity for students to record information and observations (Be specific!) and integrate class readings, discussions, as well as their own personal experiences throughout the summer. More information will follow.

Roman Neighborhood Presentation (20%)

For the first presentation – which will account for 20% of your grade – students will be divided into three groups and will be assigned a neighborhood in Rome for one of two presentation days (---). Students will act as guides, leading the rest of the class around the neighborhood and illustrating the food history and food culture of the area.

- a. Presentations should last **30-45 minutes**. A timer will ring at the 45 minute mark and students will be asked to conclude immediately at that point.
- b. Presentation topics are as follows: (1) the Jewish Quarter or Ghetto, (2) Esquilino, both the new and old markets (3) Trastevere.
- c. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor beforehand in order to discuss their presentations and to receive the necessary readings, which will serve as the starting point for their presentations.

Abruzzo Wine and Viticulture Presentation (20%)

Following a visit to a winery and a wine practicum by Prof. Simari, students will be asked to give a 10-minute presentation on one wine from Abruzzo. This presentation will account for 20% of your final grade.

- a. Presentations should last 10-15 minutes. A timer will ring at the 15 minute mark and students will be asked to conclude immediately at that point.
- b. Groups of students will be assigned one bottle of wine from among the three most important wines of Abruzzo: Trebbiano, Cerasuolo or Montepulciano, and asked to speak about the history of the grape and the wine, the producer etc.
- c. Each group will be assigned to present their bottle of wine during one of our dinners in Abruzzo. After the presentation we will taste the wine as a class.

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam is the final step in the sequential learning process the course involves. In this exam you will bring together the various concepts/topics we have studied. The exam will take approximately 120 minutes to complete and is closed book/closed note. It will constitute 20% of the final grade. This is the only time the exam will be given. No alternative exam dates will be offered.

Grading

- 94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-



77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Review Sessions: We will review for the final exam. Students will be divided into groups and give a short five minute review of one of the topics to be covered in the exam. Your performance in these reviews will count in your participation grade. Students are expected to provide a summary/synopsis of what we discussed in class and not read their notes verbatim.

Office Hours: While we are on campus, I will be available both before and after class. Alternative times can be arranged but it is always best to make an appointment. Otherwise you will always be able to find me at all times when we are at the agriturismo in Abruzzo. We can also be in touch via email if you have difficulties or queries.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1

Monday, May 22: Introduction to the Study of Food & Contemporary Italian Food Culture

Required Readings: Dickie: 1-10, 13-16 Parasecoli 257-276

Tuesday, May 23: Visit to Trionfale Market and Supermarket: Field notes

Required viewing: Ted Talk by Carolyn Steel entitled "How food shapes our cities"

Wednesday, May 24: The Food of Rome from Ancient to Modern Times

Tour of Testaccio Neighborhood by Prof. Simari and Eataly

Required readings: "Extravirginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil" by Tom Mueller (ebook located on LUC libraries website) page 36-41



Thursday, May 25: Market tour and food photography with Alice Adams'

WEEK 2

Monday, May 29: Visit to urban garden in Rome

Required readings: TBD

Tuesday, May 30: No Class

Wednesday, May 31: Student presentations (Esquilino Market and Mercato Centrale)

Thursday, June 1: Student presentations (Trastevere & Ghetto)

Write Photo Essay: – How would you define the food of Rome? (800-1000 words): Due Thursday, June 8 at 9am

**Monday, June 5: First in person class with Prof. Denlinger
No Food and Wine class June 5-7**

Pre-departure meeting on June 6

**Thursday, June 8: Departure for La Porta dei Parchi
(Anversa degli Abruzzi, Abruzzo)**

***During our time in Abruzzo class time will consist of a morning or afternoon activity, sometimes followed by a debriefing session to discuss how the reading and your hands-on experience fit together. Our schedule will be fluid and is subject to changes, we ask for complete cooperation.**

On arrival: After settling in at Porta dei Parchi will participate in a Pasta Cooking Class

Friday, June 9: Cheese-making demonstration and tour of farm at Porta dei Parchi & Sheep-milking

Because cheese is the ultimate “cultural” food product, today we will stay onsite to discover how it is made at Porta dei Parchi. In addition to the production process, we will discuss the microbiology of cheese as well as its cultural context in contemporary Italy.

Required readings: Firebaugh 359-364

Evening film: “Cooked: Earth” by Michael Pollan

Saturday, June 10: Vineyard and Wine cellar at Casa Vinicola Pietrantoni



During our visit to the winery, we will taste and discuss the indigenous varieties from the area and continue our discussion of the sensory analysis of wine. We will also discuss how wine is a fermented product, like many others: cheese, oil, bread, chocolate etc.

Required Reading: Johnson on Winemaking

Optional: Parasecoli 258-259, Bastianich 275-281

*Before lunch, I will hold a wine tasting in order to prepare for our visit to the vineyard.

Sunday, June 11: Discussion with Nunzio & Photo tour of Gola del Sagittario with Prof. Denlinger

Evening film: On Slow Food

WEEK 2

Monday, June 12: Chocolate Factory & Confettificio at William Di Carlo Factory

Both confetti, traditionally eaten at rites of passage (births and weddings) and chocolate have been in Italy since the Renaissance. However, while chocolate was brought to Europe from the New World, confetti originated from the Old Continent from traditions surrounding fertility and renewal. Today we will look at how these sweet treats are made and the history behind each confection while touring a traditional candy factory.

Required Readings: Riley 138

Optional reading: "How chocolate became sweet" in *Let the Meatballs Rest* by Massimo Montanari (ebook on LUC library website)

***Following our trip to the confettificio we will make a stop in the town of Sulmona and have a picnic lunch**

Tuesday, June 13: Shepherding at Porta dei Parchi

Ever heard of transhumance? It's a phenomenon that is specific to Abruzzo whereby sheep migrate to different areas of the mountain depending on the season. Today we are going to act as shepherds for the day and hike into the mountains with sheep to learn about this phenomenon which has been occurring in the Abruzzo for hundreds of years. We will also take up our discussion again about the differences between the food of the city and of the countryside.

Required Reading: Montanari "At last the farmers win"

Write: Essay on Slow Food (800-1,000 words). Due June 19th at noon

*Wine presentations @ dinner

Wednesday, June 14: Abruzzo cooking class

Required reading: Freson 167-168

Today students will enter the kitchen and help the kitchen staff prepare a traditional Abruzzese meal. Students will be split into two groups. One group will participate during this time, the other on Friday morning.

Searching for Truffles- This afternoon we will discover the incredible world of truffles. Accompanied by the staff of Porta dei Parchi (and their dogs!) we will watch how and when truffles are collected and the dogs are trained.

Optional Reading: Nowak

Thursday, June 15: Visit to Lake Scanno & picnic (No class activities)

*Wine presentations @ dinner

Friday, June 16: Abruzzo cooking class

Reading: Freson 167-168

Saturday, June 17: Olive Grove and Mill at Della Valle Oliveto

Through the centuries olive oil has been essential to the Italian diet. During our visit to the olive grove, we will witness how this nectar of the ancient Romans is made. Just like wine, different oils have different properties and uses. The reading will help us explore olive oil's ancient roots and its modern history.

Required Readings: : *"Extravirginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil"* by Tom Mueller (ebook located on LUC libraries website) page 15-35, 137-139

*Wine presentations @ dinner

Sunday, June 18: Free day University activities

Monday, June 19: Morning Departure for Rome

Tuesday, June 20: Review Session 9:30-11:30 am

Wednesday, June 21: STUDY DAY

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, JUNE 22

Due at 9 am: Photo Essay on the 'country food' of Abruzzo

Course Bibliography

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