

Litr 268R: Italian Cultural History: Food & Wine

John Felice Rome Center

Spring 2023

Mondays & Wednesdays | 5.15-6.30pm

Instructor: Elisa Ascione, PhD

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Tastings fee: \$100

All dates are subject to change based on availability at off-site locations

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the history of food and wine in Italy as a gateway to understanding Italian culture. By examining the factors that have shaped Italian food and taste, the variations in eating habits of different socio-economic classes, and the essential role played by food in constructing Italian identities, we will shed light on fundamental patterns in Italian history and society.

Through a mix of discussions, readings, primary source analyses, workshops, and excursions, we will investigate Italian food and culture from antiquity to the present. We will explore how food traditions and local foods are maintained and transformed over time and space, how culinary knowledge is used to mark cultural belonging and differences, studying food as a site of cultural transmission but also of dissent and resistance. Topics include nation and gender, alternative food systems, and food justice in Italy. After the completion of this course, students will have developed a critical understanding of food history, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Italian culture and society, and a framework for analyzing Italian cultural history.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view regarding culinary history
- Gather and interpret information from first-hand sources and scholarly material
- Work with non-traditional historical texts
- Develop a more sophisticated understanding of Italian history through the country's gastronomy
- Identify how food and drink has shaped Italy today

Required Text / Materials

There are no required texts for this course; all required readings will be on Sakai.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
- For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absences will be permitted. Unexcused

absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the "approved limit".

The collective health of the JFRC is everyone's responsibility. DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.

Assessment Components

- Participation (15%)
- Oral group presentation: edible histories (20%)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Research paper (25%)
- Final Exam (20%)

Class Participation (15%)

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. **Laptops and phones are not allowed in class.** Students who are by nature more reluctant to offer their input will not be penalized; however they are encouraged to participate fully in other aspects of the class.

Oral group presentation: edible histories (20%)

Students will be divided into groups and will be assigned one of two presentation days. Groups can choose a topic/book from the following series (check availability at LUC library), or they can propose a topic, which must be approved by the instructor in advance.

<http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/results.asp?sf1=series%5Fexact&st1=EDIBLE&ds=Edible&sort=sort%5Ftitle&m=1>

I expect: a 20-minute presentation which includes 1) a brief activity/a few questions to involve the class 2) a theoretical introduction in which you explain the relevance of your topic 3) an historical outline of your case-study 4) an evaluation of its current social and cultural impacts 5) counter arguments (if applicable) 6) a clear conclusion 7) two questions to elicit class discussion 8) a bibliography with five scholarly references (peer-reviewed books and articles) 9) slides with no more than five words. You should not read your presentation from a written text but rehearse it in advance.

Grades will be given for the entire group and will be based on preparedness, organization of presentation, understanding of the material, critical thinking skills, coherent/cohesive presentation, information from diverse sources to create an original argument.

Research paper (25%)

The RP is an individual research carried out by the student on an original topic on food, culture, and history, in Italy, or abroad.

- It can include material studied for class, but it cannot simply be a repetition of lectures and/or class material. It must contain original research and readings.
- Previous titles have been: 'Parmigiano Reggiano: From Boccaccio to Global markets', 'Food Rituals and Food Festivals in Sicilian-American Communities', 'Recipe Books through the Ages', 'Food, Gender, and Media: deconstructing Netflix Chef's Table'

- The final text must be five to six pages, 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing. If including pictures, students should consider extra space.
- The paper should have a title, an introductory paragraph summarizing the paper's main arguments and findings, a description of sources/material, an informed discussion, and a clear conclusion.
- A bibliography should be included at the end of the document following a standard reference format of their choice.
- The final paper must contain **at least five scholarly references** (peer-reviewed articles and books) in the bibliography.

Mid Term and Final Exam (20%)

These exams consist of multiple choice and short answers, bringing together the various concepts/topics you have studied. 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. After authorization, late work will incur a 3% percent deduction for every day work is late.

As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reasons; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

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.

Office Hours: I will be available both before and after class. Alternative times can be arranged but it is always best to make an appointment. We can also be in touch via email if you have difficulties or queries.

Course Schedule

Friday Class Days. February 24

Friday Field Class: Markets, Heritage, and Migrations. March 17

We will explore markets in Rome and study their changing roles and functions in the city. Markets are trading spaces where people buy and sell mostly food, though not exclusively. They are key places for observing social activity as public spaces where people meet, chat, convey information and where local social relationships are kept alive.

WEEK 1

Monday, January 16: Introduction to the Study of the History and Culture of Food and Wine

Wednesday, January 18: Bio-Cultural Perspectives on Food and Nutrition

Fischler, C. (1988) 'Food, Self and identity', *Social Science Information*, n. 27, pp. 275-292.

Scrivani, G. (2008) 'On the Ideology of Nutritionism', *Gastronomica*, n. 8(1), pp. 39-48.

WEEK 2

Monday, January 23: The Food in Ancient Rome

Kaufman, C., K. (2006) 'Ancient Rome', in *Cooking in Ancient Civilizations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, pp. 121-131.

Corbier, M. (1999) 'The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 128-140.

Wednesday, January 25: Medieval Food

Montanari, M. (1999) 'Romans, Barbarians, Christians & Production Structures and Food Systems in the Early Middle Ages', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds), Sonnenfeld, A. (tran.) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 165-177.

WEEK 3

Monday, January 30: The Invention of Pasta.

Dickie, J. (2008) 'Palermo, 1154: Pasta and the Planisphere', in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 13-30

Wednesday, February 1, Renaissance Food: The Humoral Theory and the Great Chain of Being

Grieco, A., J. (1999) 'Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds), Sonnenfeld, A. (tran.) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 302-312.

Dickie, J. (2008) 'Rome, 1549-50: Bread and Water for Their Eminences', in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 106-134.

WEEK 4

Monday, February 6 The Columbian Exchange

Montanari, M. (1996) *The Culture of Food* (The Making of Europe). Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 98-107, 133-140.

Wednesday, February 8 The spread of the tomato and renewal of alimentary identities

Gentilcore, D. (2009) 'Taste and the tomato in Italy: a transatlantic history', *Food and History*, 7(1), pp. 125–139.

Montanari, M. (2013) 'Preservation and Renewal of Alimentary Identities', in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 33-40.

WEEK 5

Monday, February 13. Cultures of Drinking

Black, R. E. (2013) 'Vino Naturale: Tensions between Nature and Technology in the Glass', in Black, R. E. and Ulin, R. C. *Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass*, London and New York: Bloomsbury, pp. 279-294.

Wednesday, February 15. Wine and Sustainability in Italy

Ascione, E., Belsky, J., Nelsen, M., Barbato, M. (2020) "Cultivating Activism through *Terroir*: An Anthropology of Sustainable Winemakers in Umbria, Italy" pp.277-295 in *Food, Culture & Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 23, Issue 3

WEEK 6

Monday, February 20. La Mezzadria (sharecropping). Food, class and hunger.

Diner, H.R. (2001) 'Black Bread, Hard Bread. Food, Class and Hunger in Italy', in *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish foodways in the age of migration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 21–47.

Nowak, Z. (2011) 'Looking Back to the Future: Historical Polycultures in Central Italy', *Agroforestry News*, 19(4), pp. 20–26.

Wednesday, February 22. Cucina Povera and the Heritagization of "Tradition"

Nowak, Z. (2013) 'Italian Stuffed vs. Maghreb Wrapped: Perugia's Torta al Testa Against the Kebab', in McWilliams, M. (ed.) *Wrapped and Stuffed Foods: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2012*. Totnes: Prospect Books (Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery), pp. 101–107.

Montanari, M. (2017) 'And at Last, the Farmers Win', in Naccarato, P., Nowak, Z., and Eckert, E.K. (eds) *Representing Italy Through Food*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 17–32.

Friday, February 24, Bread: History and Anthropology

Counihan, Carole M. (1999) "Bread as World. Food Habits and Social Relations in Modernizing Sardinia". In *The Anthropology of Food and Body*. New York: Routledge, pp.25-42.

WEEK 7

Monday, February 27: Exam Review

Wednesday, March 1: Mid-Term Exam

Spring Break: March 3-12

WEEK 8

Monday, March 13: Class Moved to Friday Excursion

Wednesday, March 15: Group-work preparation for presentations

Friday, March 17: FIELD STUDY- Testaccio & Esquilino Markets

Black, R. (2012) *Porta Palazzo. The Anthropology of an Italian Market*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 141-168

WEEK 9

Monday, March 20 The Risorgimento and Food: Unity Through a Cookbook

Dickie, J. (2008) "Florence, 1891: Pellegrino Artusi" in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 178-193, 211-232.

Wednesday, March 22 Presentations

WEEK 10

Monday, March 27 Presentations

Wednesday, March 29: Research paper session

WEEK 11

Monday, April 3: Food and the Nation under Fascism

Dickie, J. (2008) 'Milan, 1936', in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 256-268.

Garvin, D. (2015) 'Taylorist Breastfeeding in Rationalist Clinics: Constructing Industrial Motherhood in Fascist Italy', *Critical Inquiry*, 41(3), pp. 655–674.

Wednesday, April 5: Migrations and diasporas: Italian cuisines around the world

Levenstein, H. (2002) 'The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930', in Counihan, C. (ed.) *Food in the USA: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 75–90.

Albala, K. (2018) 'Italianità in America: The Cultural Politics of Representing "Authentic" Italian Cuisine in the US', in Naccarato, P., Nowak, Z., and Eckert, E.K. (eds) *Representing Italy Through Food*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 205–218.

WEEK 12

Easter Recess, April 7-10

Wednesday, April 12: Post-war Economic Boom

Montanari, M. (2013) 'The "Italian Miracle": Between Modernity and Tradition', in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 59-64.

WEEK 13**Monday, April 17 Italian Food Activism and Political Food**

Browse <https://www.slowfood.com/>

Siniscalchi, V. (2014) 'Slow Food Activism between Politics and Economy', in Siniscalchi, V. and Counihan, C. (eds) *Food Activism: Agency, Democracy and Economy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, pp. 225–242.

Laudan, R. (2004) "Slow Food, The French Terroir Strategy, and Culinary Modernism", *Food, Culture and Society*, 7(2), pp. 133-144.

Wednesday April 19: Final Exam Review**WEEK 14: FINAL EXAM**