



**JOHN FELICE
ROME CENTER**

QUIN 399 Special Topics: The Business of "Made in Italy": Heritage, Design, and Sustainability

John Felice Rome Center

Spring 27

Mondays | 6:45-9:15pm

Prof. Lindo

Email: tlindo@luc.edu

Office Hours: Before class or via Zoom by appointment on Fridays

*"Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world."
— Pope Francis, Laudato Si'*

Course Description

"Made in Italy" is a globally recognized label renowned for its quality, creativity, craftsmanship and cultural heritage. It is an amalgamation of traditional industries known in Italian as the 4As: *Abbigliamento* (fashion, including jewelry and eyewear), *Arredamento* (furniture), *Auto* (automotive), and *Agroalimentare* (food and beverage, including wine), and other industry powerhouses such as manufacturing, tourism, yachting and overall design. In these sectors and more, "Made in Italy" has become synonymous with luxury, exclusivity and lifestyle.

This course, open to students from a variety of academic majors and minors, critically assesses the business strategies and cultural narratives behind the "Made in Italy" brand's many products and services, exploring how Italian businesses balance heritage preservation with contemporary market demands. Students will examine how heritage and design intersect contemporary challenges including labor rights, environmental justice, and inclusive entrepreneurship. Through open dialogue with experts, case study reviews, supply chain analyses, and observation of global market trends, the course investigates the development and impact of Italian brands, highlighting both their competitive advantages and how sustainability concerns are reshaping traditional business models.

By engaging with topics such as ethical production, supply chain transparency, the role of cooperatives and B-Corps in Italy's evolving business landscape, and the integration of circular economy principles, students will gain a deeper understanding of how "Made in Italy" businesses navigate the tension between tradition and innovation while addressing social and environmental responsibility.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Understand the historical and cultural foundations of "Made in Italy"
- Identify the key industries and success factors behind Italian excellence
- Analyze business models, marketing strategies, and brand positioning
- Evaluate how Italian businesses balance heritage, profitability, and sustainability in their operations and supply chains
- Critically assess challenges such as counterfeiting, sustainability, and globalization
- Apply strategic thinking to real-world business cases and projects

Required Text / Materials

1. Carcano, L., & Lojacono, G. (2019). *Made in Italy Industries: Managerial issues and best practices*. EGEA spa (textbook)
2. Longo, M., Mura, M., & Bonoli, A. (2005). Corporate social responsibility and corporate performance: The case of Italian SMEs. *Corporate Governance*, 5(4), 28-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/14720700510616578>
3. De Chiara, A., & Minguzzi, A. (2019). Success factors in SMEs' internationalization processes: An Italian investigation. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 40(2), 144-153.
4. Ünal, E., Urbinati, A., & Chiaroni, D. (2019). Managerial practices for designing circular economy business models: The case of an Italian SME in the office supply industry. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 30(3), 561-589.

Class Format/Modality

Each class session during the semester will cover an entire unit of the Made in Italy phenomenon. Class sessions will also often include hands-on activities and guest speakers who are experts in their fields and will expose us to a variety of experiences from the highest levels of the Italian government to the highest level of Italian corporations. Professor lectures and guest speakers will offer insights into national and global initiatives, programs, challenges, opportunities and current affairs that affect the Made in Italy brand, from scandals to successes to weaknesses to strengths.

Course Policies, Requirements and Grading Criteria

- Students are expected to attend all class sessions (**see full attendance policy below**), complete assigned readings before class, submit assignments on time per the due date in Sakai (**see full late assignment policy below**) and actively participate in class discussions and group work.
- Late submissions of assignments will generally not be accepted unless prior arrangements are agreed upon with the professor. This is because students will share

their work in the class sessions they are due, which will be difficult to make up once that session is complete.

- If I do accept late work, it will be for extenuating circumstances, and may be subject to a grade penalty. You should notify me immediately of any extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your work on time. Any late work accepted will be submitted to me directly via Sakai for a grade and will not be presented in class.
- Course extra credit options might be available on a project basis, proposed by the student.
- Please note that each assignment will have specific writing and content expectations guidelines. Please see SAKAI for detailed instructions and rubrics.
- Please make sure you **subscribe to the Announcement items on the course homepage**. I will post course information, success tips, and/or other pertinent items.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

Once-a-week classes:

- After 1 absence, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 3 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Assessment Components

- Class Participation & Discussion: 20%
- Case Study Analyses (individual): 25%
- Group Project & Presentation: 35%
- Final Reflection Paper: 20%

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 Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable at the the Rome Center and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: <https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/>. You are responsible to comply with the LUC University Catalog.

Late or Missed Assignments & Exam Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. ***As per the John Felice Rome Center's 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 reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.***

Housekeeping

Email Etiquette: Please read and rigorously apply the 10 elements listed in the following blog post from Medium.com: ["How to Email Your Professor."](#) There is one additional element you must include: a clear, concise, specific, relevant subject line. Note that these elements refer to initial emails, only. Email chains (from email 2 in the conversation, onward) should be treated as ongoing discussions and formatted as such. Here, your common sense will aid you. Emails that do not apply these 10+1 elements and a healthy dose of common sense may not receive a reply.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) requiring academic accommodations should contact the Academic Affairs office at the John Felice Rome Center during the first week of classes.

Statement on Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

Week 1 – Introduction to Made in Italy

- Origins, meaning, and global perception of "Made in Italy"
- The "country of origin effect" and the foreign image of Italy and Made in Italy
- Ministry of Business and Made in Italy: National branding, cultural heritage & internationalization
- Overview: How sustainability is reshaping "Made in Italy" reputation

Week 2 – The Italian Fashion System

- The value creation process and its application to Made in Italy
- SPEAKER: Brand stretching and diversification – Armani and Bulgari company cases
- Fast fashion vs. slow fashion: The Italian approach
- Case study: Brunello Cucinelli's ethical production model

"Sustainability is not an option, it's an obligation. Italian excellence must evolve to meet the expectations of conscious consumers while preserving our heritage of quality and craftsmanship."

— Brunello Cucinelli, *Italian Entrepreneur* (2023)

Week 3 – Food, Wine & Agribusiness

- Italian gastronomy as global soft power
- Italian families in the food and wine business: Creating family corporate storytelling
- Sustainable agriculture: Organic certification and regenerative practices
- Labor in Italian agriculture: Migrant workers and ethical sourcing challenges

Week 4 – Design, Furniture & Lifestyle

- Artisanship and heritage brands: Business cultures in Italy
- Case studies: Alessi, Poltrona Frau, Kartell
- SPEAKER: Head of Global Marketing and Communications, Poltrona Frau
- Material innovation: Circular design and recycled materials (Kartell examples)
- Corporate social responsibility and corporate performance: The case of Italian SMEs

Week 5 – Luxury & Craftsmanship

- The global luxury market: Basics of marketing and customer value
- Differences between mass marketing and luxury marketing
- SPEAKER: NEWU Luxury and Fashion Accounts Manager

- The "sustainable luxury" paradox
- Heritage brands and sustainability communication: Maintaining exclusivity while addressing environmental concerns

Week 6 – Tourism & Experience Economy

- Branding Italy as a cultural and lifestyle destination
- Experiential travel and social media marketing
- SPEAKER: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFE), Directorate General of Economic Internationalization
- Overtourism challenges: Venice, Florence, and coastal regions
- Sustainable tourism models: *Agriturismo* and slow travel

Week 7 – Global Markets & Distribution

- Internationalization strategies of Italian companies
- Trade fairs, e-commerce, and export channels
- SPEAKER: Italian MFE, Directorate General for the Promotion of Italy Abroad
- Supply chain transparency requirements in EU and global markets
- Ethical sourcing and certification for international trade

Week 8 – Challenges to Made in Italy

- Counterfeiting and "Italian sounding" products
- Competition from emerging markets
- SPEAKER: Italian Trade Association
- "Greenwashing" and false sustainability claims
- Labor exploitation in global supply chains

Week 9 – Innovation & Sustainability

- Circular economy and sustainable fashion/food systems
- Managerial practices for designing circular economy business models: Italian SMEs
- B-Corps and benefit corporations in Italy
- Social cooperatives: Alternative business models in fashion and food sectors

Week 10 – Case Study Workshop

- Group analysis of an Italian brand's business model
- Required analysis components: competitive strategy, market positioning, and sustainability/social impact assessment

Week 11 – Student Presentations

- Group project presentations
- Evaluation criteria: Business strategy, brand analysis, and integration of sustainability considerations

Week 12 – Future of Made in Italy

- The next generation of entrepreneurs and global trends
- Gen Z consumer expectations for ethical production
- EU regulations shaping the future of Italian business (Green Deal, supply chain legislation)
- Reimagining "Made in Italy" for the 21st century