

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: Pre-College at CET Florence: Italian Food, Art, and Society

Course Title: Introduction to Contemporary Italy: Food, Art, and Society

Course Code: ITLS 125

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline/Suggested Cross Listings: Italian Studies/ History, Art History, Architecture, Political Science

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

This course examines Italy through the perspective of its food, art, and socio-political systems, each of which is central to national identity. Classroom study is enhanced by excursions and site visits. Students further research and synthesize course themes to develop a final project that they present to the rest of the class.

Objectives

Students gain an in-depth understanding of Italian culture through in-class lectures, experiential learning, and site visits focused on Italian food, art, society and politics. Activities, assignments, and visits using Florence as a classroom invite students to use their own reflections and reactions to deepen their connection to the historical and contemporary roots of the city.

By the end of this course, students are expected to be able to:

- understand the multifaceted sides of modern and contemporary Italian society, going beyond the classic stereotypes, grasp the distinguishing features of its political system and realize that most of what happens in present-day Italy is the result of decisions made one hundred years ago, and acquire the intellectual tools for critically analyzing a complex society and an unstable political system;
- be fluent in major Italian food customs, understand fundamental characteristics and elements of Italian cuisine, and have a deeper understanding of Italy through its food and foodways;
- understand the significance of the Renaissance as it relates to the history of art and culture, recognize works by key artists and architects of the Renaissance and discuss their importance in the context of the city and beyond, and how they relate to Florence in the 21st century;
- consolidate their experience through creative expression and critical reasoning;
- approach a new culture with an enhanced ability to observe, reflect and appreciate its difference from one's own..

Course Requirements

Participation. Students are graded on the basis of their contributions to class discussion, questions and involvement during in-class and outside activities, verbal interaction about Italian culture with their teachers, and engagement and cooperation with their classmates.

Readings. Students are responsible for completing approximately 20-30 pages of reading per class, to be completed during study hours each evening. They should come to class prepared to discuss and answer questions about the assigned reading.

Onsite Activity Assignments: Students complete an assignment for each of the outside activities indicated on the syllabus. These worksheets and exercises train students to identify and report on important content from visits, to make connections to course themes, and to think and respond creatively.

Weekly Journal: Throughout the course, students are required to keep a reflective intercultural journal, submitting an entry of 3-4 pages each week on their experiences in Italy. Entry due dates are designated on the syllabus. Topics and criteria for each journal entry are given to students in advance. Journal-writing directives include documentation of cultural "moments" and experiential/experimental learning, critical reflection, and hypotheses for future cultural exploration. This assignment is designed to encourage students to critically reflect on their feelings and reactions to the theoretical material from class discussions or assigned readings, to apply concepts they have learned in class to their daily experiences in Italy, and to give students a space to discuss and examine their own evolution over this course.

Final Projects: The purpose of this assignment is to learn further about the host culture, and to synthesize and reflect upon concepts from the course. Students carry out an individual project focusing on Italian Food, Art and/or Culture, culminating in a presentation at the end of the term. The projects and presentations are carried out according to specific guidelines and criteria assigned at the beginning of the course, and consist of both research and creative components.

Methods of Evaluation

On site activity assignments (7x5%):	35%
Participation:	15%
Weekly Journal (4x5%):	20%
Final Project work (2x15%):	30%

Primary Texts

Harper, Douglas and Faccioli, Patrizia. *The Italian Way: Food and Social Life*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Turner, A. Richard. *Renaissance Florence: the Invention of a New Art*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Supplementary Texts

Belasco, Warren. 2008. *Food: The Key Concepts*. Oxford: Berg, 2008.

Counihan, Carole M. *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2004.

Davidson, Alan. *The Oxford Companion to Food*. Tom Jaine (ed.), Oxford University Press, 1999.

Del Conte, Anna. *Gastronomy of Italy*. London U.K, Bantam Press, 1987

Riley, Gillian. *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Parasecoli, Fabio. *Food Culture in Italy*. Westport, Conn. & London: Greenwood Press, 2004

Partridge, Loren. *Art of Renaissance Florence*.

Piras, Caudia. *Culinaria Italy*. H.F.Ullmann, 2013.

Tartuferi, Angelo. *Michelangelo*. Florence: Scala, 2014

Welch, Evelyn. *Art in Renaissance Italy, 1350-1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

White, Michael. *Leonardo: the First Scientist*. London: Abacus, 2001.

Zöllner, Frank. *Leonardo.1452-1519*. Cologne: Taschen, 2005

Additional digital articles and websites

Outline of Course Content

TOPIC 1 – Calcio Storico, the Palio of Siena and the Joust of the Bear in Pistoia.

TOPIC 2 – Italy: 1 Country; 20 Different Cultures

The historical origin of the multicultural Italian society; Italian “Regionalism” and the division between the North and the South.

TOPIC 3 – The Italian Political System: A Historical Overview

The First Republic (1944-1992): Catholic vs. Communist; The Second Republic (1992-2013): Berlusconiism vs. Anti-Berlusconiism.

TOPIC 4 – The Italian Society and the Catholic Church: The Long Path to Secularization

The Catholic Hierarchies Influence on the Italian Society; The concept of the family and the role of the women; The “civil right wave” in the 1970s: Divorce and the Abortion Referendum.

TOPIC 5 – Italy in the 21st century: Economic Downturn, Migration Crisis and Populism

The economic crisis and its social and political impact; the increase of the migration flows and social resentment; the strengthening of the euro-skeptical stances; the rise and consolidation of populist political parties.

TOPIC 6 – Italian Food and Culture

Italian geography, campanilismo and regional cuisine, Food and wine consumption and customs, Italian meal structure; division of home labor, social interaction and community, key food products, their place at the table and use in Italian cuisine.

TOPIC 7 – Renaissance Florence: Life and Space

The geographic, economic and political factors that lead to the growth of the Renaissance in Florence; the revisiting of antiquity and development of new techniques and styles in art and architecture; how the changing relationship between art, architecture and civic life led to new urban plans and new forms of art; evidence of these changes in Florence.

TOPIC 8 – The Medici Family

How the Medici family rose to power through banking and textile trade systems in Europe; how they used patronage of the arts to secure political power and influence; the shift from bankers and merchants to popes, cardinals and Grand Dukes; the major artworks, buildings and monuments commissioned by the Medici; the changing styles in portraiture and the messages portraits convey.

TOPIC 9 – Michelangelo and the Changing Role of the Artist

The apprentice and maestro system in the Renaissance; the guild system; the relationship between artist and patron in the Renaissance; Michelangelo’s training, his relationship to the Medici, his major works and their significance; Michelangelo as evidence of the changing role of the artist beginning in the Renaissance, from skilled laborer to creative genius.

TOPIC 10 – Leonardo Da Vinci and the “Renaissance Man”

The concept of the "Renaissance Man"; important Renaissance Men and their achievements (Leon Battista Alberti, Filippo Brunelleschi, Giorgio Vasari, Leonardo Da Vinci); linear perspective and the role of mathematics and science in the arts; Da Vinci's early life and training; Da Vinci's work in engineering and science; Da Vinci's major artworks.