

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Siena

Course Code / Title: (ITTR3680/WGS3680) Foodscapes in Women's Writing, Culture and Society

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Italian Studies / Women's and Gender Studies, Literary Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

This course explores how Italian women writers have represented food in their short stories, novels and autobiographies in dialogue with the culture and society from late nineteenth century to the present. Looking at how cooking and serving meals to others while denying themselves the pleasure of eating are depicted in Italian women's writing helps us understand the role food and food-related-activities have played, and still play, in women's lives.

Objectives

Through this course, students gain:

- An understanding of the symbolic meaning of food in narrative through close readings
- Knowledge about how food intersects with Italian women's socio-cultural history and the feminist movement
- Insight into the issues of gender, identity, and politics of the body and how they relate to food in narrative.

Course Requirements

Participation and Preparation: As outlined in the CET Attendance Policy, attendance and active participation in all course activities is an essential part of the learning process. This includes not only partaking in discussion during class time, but also arriving to class prepared, having read all assigned materials.

Quizzes: Four in-class time quizzes; each quiz is worth 5% of the final mark. Quizzes include short answers, such as commenting extracts from novels/short stories/theoretical texts (approx. 2000 words in total, 500 each quiz), and multiple choices.

Presentation: Students select a passage where food is at the center of Italian women's writing and contextualize it in relation to the author's narrative production as well as to its sociocultural background. Approaching the selected text(s) from the critical perspective of comparative literature is welcome. Students also have the option of analyzing any film scene(s) advertisement(s) and

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other forms of cultural expressions where food is represented in relation to womanhood and frame them employing the theoretical approaches discussed in class.

Short Midterm Paper: Students complete a short midterm (approx. 1,500 words in total) based on the material studied in the first part of the course.

Final Paper: Students write a paper on a topic of their choice (approx. 2,500 words) that pertains to the themes and theories discussed in class.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation and Preparation: 15%
- Four Quizzes: 20%
- Presentation: 15%
- Short Midterm Paper: 20%
- Final Paper: 30%

Readings

Women, Food and Gender

Calamita, Francesca. "Voracious Dolls and Competent Chefs: Negotiating Femininity and Masculinity in Italian Food Advertisements of the 1990s-2010s." *Gender/Sexuality/Italy* 1, (May 2014): 1-13.

Counihan, M. Carol. *Around the Tuscan table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

Fursland, Annie. "Eve was Framed: Food and Sex and Women's Shame." In *Fed up and Hungry*, edited by Marilyn Lawrence, 15- 26. London: The Women Press, 1986.

Moyer-Nocchi, Karima. *Chewing the Fat: An Oral History of Italian Foodways from Fascismo to La Dolce Vita*. Perrysburg: Medea, 2015).

Orbach, Susie. *Hunger Strike: The Anorectic's Struggle as a Metaphor of our age*. New York: Norton & Company, 1986.

Willson, Perry, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Italian Women's Writing

DeSalvo, Louise. *Vertigo: A Memoir*. New York: Dutton, 1996.

Ginzburg, Natalia, "La madre [The Mother]." In *The Complete Short Stories of Natalia Ginzburg*, translated by Paul Lewis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Serao, Matilde, "La virtù di Checchina [Checchina's Virtue]." In *Writing to Delight: Italian Short Stories by Nineteenth Century Women Writers*, translated by Tom Kelso and edited by Antonia Arslan and Gabriella Romani, 19-57. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Sereni, Clara. *Casalinghitudine*. Translated by Giovanna Miceli and Susan Briziarelli. SUNY: 2005.

Scego, Igiaba, "Salsicce" [Sausages] in *Pecore Nere [Black Sheep]*. Roma/Bari: Laterza, 2005.

Literary Criticism

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- Calamita, Francesca. "Tastefulness: Fashion, Food, Lust and Domesticity in Matilde Serao's 'La virtù di Checchina' (1884)". *Altrelettere* (2015): 1-22.
- Giorgio, Adalgisa. "Natalia Ginzburg's 'La madre': exposing patriarchy's erasure of the mother." *The Modern Language Review* 88, no. 4 (1993): 864-880.
- Goeller, Allison D., "The Hungry Self. The politics of Food in Italian American Women's Writing." *Prose Studies. History, Theory, Criticism* 27, no. 3 (2005): 235-247.
- Menzio, Giuliana. "Food and Subjectivity in Clara Sereni's *Casalinghitudine*." *Italica* 71, no. 2 (1994): 217-227.
- Wood, Sharon, *Italian Women's Writing (1860-1994)*. London: The Athlone Press, 1995.

Additional Resources

Costanzo, Saverio. *The Solitude of Prime Numbers*. Italian Film Series, 2010.

Outline of Course Content

- Topic 1 – Introduction to women, food and writing
- *Around the Tuscan table* by Carol Counihan
 - Food production and reproduction
 - Feeding others
- Topic 2 – Late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century
- Italian women at the turn of the century
 - First-wave feminism
 - *Checchina's Virtue* by Matilde Serao's
- Topic 3 – Fascist period
- Duties for the nation under fascist dictatorship
 - *Chewing the Fat* by Karima Moyer-Nocchi
- Topic 4 – From the post-war age to the 1960s
- New social and economic roles
 - Women's politics and the Cold War
 - *The Mother* by Natalia Ginzburg
- Topic 5 – From the second wave of feminism to the 1990s
- Italian female writers in the 1970s-1980s
 - *Keeping House* by Clara Sereni
- Topic 6 – The age of Berlusconi
- The age of materialism
 - Present day Italian and Italian American women's writing
 - *Anorexia* by Louise DeSalvo

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Topic 7 – Food, women, and eating disorders on screen

- Advertisements
- *The Solitude of Prime Numbers* by Saverio Costanzo
- *Salsicce* by Igiaba Scego