

Litr 268R: Italian Culture: Food & Wine

John Felice Rome Center

Spring 2025

Sala 6

Mondays & Wednesdays | 10:30-11:45pm

Instructor: Elizabeth Simari

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Site visits and tastings fee: \$100

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

Course Description

In order to learn about Italy and Italian culture together we will examine the country's food and food traditions. By looking at its individual products and different time periods throughout history together we will gain a greater understanding of Italian history and culture. During our semester together, we will use the food and wine of Italy as a way to discover the history of the country and the changes from Ancient Rome to modern times. All semester we will work on defining Italian food and map its changes from North to South, East to West, and question whether or not we can even define "Italian food".

We will gain a greater understanding of how Italian food has been shaped by the history of the country and 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. By learning about individual products and how they are made we can gain insight into Italian culture and history. In a number of tasting experiences, power-point based lectures, discussions, films and one field study we will look at Italian food throughout history and then in more recent times: while also giving a strong grounding in contemporary Italian food culture.

Together we will also study the regional cuisines of the country and more specifically the micro cuisines that exist throughout Italy and the connections they share, examining even further the local food culture of the city of Rome and its historical and cultural significance. The semester will also be punctuated by our study of several raw agricultural products and how and why they are transformed into essential components in the Italian diet. Students will have the opportunity to participate directly in the transformation of these products.

By the end of the course the students will have acquired a more sophisticated understanding of food history as an interdisciplinary approach to studying Italian culture and society and as a frame for analyzing important aspects of Italian 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 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.

- After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

Friday Field Study: United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization

This year on Friday, March 20, we will visit the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization. Rome is home to several UN agencies centered on food, including the FAO. In this visit we will listen to the history of this specialized agency which aims at "defeat(ing) hunger and improv(ing) nutrition and food security" and is intimately linked with the history of Italy.

*Failure to attend this activity will count as an absence.

Assessment Components

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|---------------------------|-----|
| ● Participation | 15% |
| ● Regional Presentation | 15% |
| ● Field Notes (2) | 20% |
| ● Market Stall Profile | 15% |
| ● Food Waste Presentation | 15% |
| ● Final Exam | 20% |

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.**

Field Notes (20%, 10% each)

During our time in Rome we will be examining the urban food system of the market (which connects the city to the countryside). Public markets - present in every neighborhood in Rome - are fora for people, food and community. During our time in the Eternal City, we will visit the Trionfale Market together. During this visit you will start working on your field notes assignment and then you will visit another market on your own in Rome to get a taste for other markets in the city. The objective of field notes is to create a written, detailed record to collect data on the system being studied, including the setting, people involved, and information obtained.

Trionfale due: February 16

Esquilino due: March 4

Market Stall Profile (15%)

Following our visit to the Trionfale Market, students are asked to participate in a multi-course research project which aims at mapping the Trionfale market, its stalls and producers. You are asked to write an engaging and informative profile on one stall. Your description should capture both the practical details and the unique character of the vendor's presence. This project aims to create a digital guide and map which will promote the Trionfale Market to English-speaking travelers, students, and tourists.

More details to follow. Profiles are due Wednesday, April 1st at 10:30 am.

Regional Identities in Italian Cuisine Presentation (15%)

Students will be divided into groups of one or two and will be assigned one of two presentation days (**February 9th and 11th**). Students will be assigned a region of Italy and are asked to present a quick snapshot of your region in terms of its terroir, land, food and wine. Please examine the region's terroir by discussing how the region's geography, natural resources and climate have influenced its traditions. Be sure to include at least three of the region's specialities and their origins.

Food Waste Presentation (15%)

Following our visit to the FAO and the film "Bread is Gold", students will be asked to hold short presentations on the issue of the food waste within our community.

Presentations will be held on **Wednesday, April 13th.**

Final Exam (15%)

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 25% 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.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

- Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.
- Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
- Students may not fabricate data.
- Students may not collude. Students may not cheat.
- Students may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures: (https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

Bias Reporting and Title IX

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias. In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be

reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link:
<http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

Notice of Reporting Obligations for Responsible Campus Partners

As an instructor, I am a Responsible Campus Partner (“RCP”) under Loyola’s Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation (available at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to engage fully and authentically with our course material through class discussions and written work, I also want to be transparent that as a RCP, I must notify the Office for Equity & Compliance (“OEC”)/Title IX Coordinator when I have any information about conduct that reasonably may constitute Title IX Sex-Based Discrimination. Title IX SexBased Discrimination includes any of the following conduct, when the conduct was within the University’s education program or activity.

Late or Missed Assignments

All late work will incur a 3% percent deduction. If the assignment is more than 4 days late, every day after will incur a 1% deduction for every day after.

As per the Rome Center 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 a grave reason; 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.

Review Session: 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: I am 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:

Friday, February 6 & Friday, March 20 - make up days



WEEK 1

Monday, January 19: Introduction to the Study of Food

Wednesday, January 21: Modern Italian Food Culture

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

WEEK 2

Monday, January 26: Field Day - Citrus Harvest

Required readings: Attlee 85-96

Wednesday, January 28: The Food of Ancient Rome

Required readings: Corbier 128-140; Steel 16-17

WEEK 3

Monday, February 2: Visit to Trionfale Market

Required readings: Black "Porta Palazzo"

Wednesday, February 4: No Class - Papal Audience

Friday, February 6: Making Orange Marmalade

Required readings: Attlee 85-96, Riley

WEEK 4

Monday, February 9: Regional Identities in Italian Cuisine Presentations

Wednesday, February 11: Regional Identities in Italian Cuisine Presentations



WEEK 5

Monday, February 16: Bread

Required Readings: Franklin 235-241

Trionfale Field Notes Due today

Wednesday, February 18: Slow Food Discussion

Required Readings: Laudan 134-144, Kostituouovich

WEEK 6

Monday, February 23: The Food of Rome and Lazio & Discussion of Market Stall Profile

Required Reading: Zanini De Vita 5-18, 57-59

Wednesday, February 25: From the Middle Ages to the Columbian Exchange

Required short film: "1492- Globalization and Fusion Cuisines" located on *Kanopy* from LUC Library site

WEEK 7

Monday, March 2: The Renaissance

Required Readings: Dickie 65-76; Grieco 307-313

Roman Neighborhood Essays due at 9 am

Wednesday, March 4: Speaker - Sagar Setareh: Foreign food identities in Italy

Esquilino Field Notes Due today

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK (MARCH 6-15)



WEEK 9

Monday, March 16: The Historical and Cultural Context of Wine: Whites

Required Reading: D'Agata 13-26, 279-282

Wednesday, March 18: Historical and Cultural Context of Wine: Reds

Required Reading: D'Agata 353-358, Parasecoli 258-259

Friday, March 20: Italy and food on a global scale: *Visit to the FAO*

WEEK 10

Monday, March 23: The Historical and Cultural Context of Wine - Pairing & Cheese

Required Reading: D'Agata 111-113

Wednesday, March 25: *Bread is Gold* film

WEEK 11

Monday, March 30: The Risorgimento and Food: Unity Through a Cookbook

Required Readings: Dickie 211-232

Wednesday, April 1: Mussolini and Futurist Cuisine

Required Readings: Dickie 270-276

Market Stall Profile due

WEEK 12

Monday, April 6: No Class - Easter Break

Wednesday, April 8: The Invention of Italian-American Cuisine

Required Readings: Levenstein 75-90

WEEK 13

Monday, April 13: Food Waste Presentations

Wednesday, April 15: Italian-American food in Big Night (FILM)

WEEK 14

Monday, April 20: Finish film and final discussion “Does Italian food exist?”

Wednesday, April 22: Final Review + bring your laptops to class to fill out course evaluation

FINAL EXAM: WEEK 15

Course Bibliography

Attlee, Helena. *The Land Where Lemons Grow: The Story of Italy and Its Citrus Fruit*. Great Britain: Penguin Random House, 2015.

Black, Rachel. *Porta Palazzo: The Anthropology of an Italian Market*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Capatti, A., and Massimo Montanari, transl. by Aine O’Healy, *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Corbier, M. “The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome”, in: *Food - A Culinary History*, ed. J.F. Flandrin and M. Montanari (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld), 128-140. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

D’Agata, I. “Native Wine Grapes of Italy”, University of California Press, 2014

Dickie, J., *Delizia: The epic history of the Italians and their food*. London: Sceptre, 2007.

Franklin, P., “Bread”, in: *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, ed. S.H. Katz, Vol. 1, 235-241. New York: Thomas Gale 2003.

Johnson, H., and J. Robinson. *The World Atlas of Wine*. 7th edition. London: Mitchell Beazley, 2013.

Kostiukovich, Elena. *Why Italians Love to Talk about Food*. 1st American ed., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

- Laudan, R. "Slow Food: The French Terroir Strategy, and Culinary Modernism. An Essay Review of Carlo Petrini, trans. William McCuaig. *Slow Food: The Case for Taste* (New York: Columbia University Press). *Food, Culture, and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7. 2. (2004), 133-144.
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- — *Let the Meatballs Rest*. (English edition by Beth Archer Brombert) Columbia University Press, New York: 2009.
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- Riley, G. *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Steel, C. *Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives*. Vintage Books, 2013.
- Zanini De Vita, Oretta. *The Food of Rome and Lazio: History Folklore and Recipes* (English edition by Maureen Fant). Rome: Alphabyte Books, 1994.