

## The Culture of Food and Wine in Italian Society

**UNH Course number:** CUL340FCO

**Subject Areas:** Sociology, Cultural Studies

**Level:** 300

**Prerequisites:** None

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

### Description:

This is largely an experiential course, in which theoretical notions are put into practice in exercises involving the identification and evaluation of wines, and the assessment of the quality and cultural appropriateness of selected food products. On the one hand students are provided with substantial background on the sociological, cultural and historical dimensions of food and wines in one of the world's most historically dense areas. On the other they are allowed the opportunity to taste a highly representative sample of Italian foods and wines in a structured environment in which students put into practice skills and knowledge discussed in readings and lectures.

Food studies are today a growing academic specialty. In this course students are provided with a broad historical background on Italian culinary traditions, going from the classical antique to the modern period. Special attention is devoted to regional difference, one of the hallmark features of Italian cultural tradition. Readings involve historical, anthropological and sociological considerations, as well as the discussion of particular production practices, including market standards, distribution systems, and citizen activist groups such as the Slow Food movement.

Whereas much of the course is held in the classroom, in activities divided between theoretical discussion and practical application, some on site activities are also involved. This is chiefly in relation to food distribution systems in Rome, with at least one visit to a district market. Students are also required to explore independently Italian food practice in structured exercises aimed to broaden their knowledge of the Italian food system, and develop the critical capacity to assess important features of food practice.

For the practical application the course makes use of a professional Italian chef who prepares meals to be appraised and consumed as part of the classroom activities.

### Learning Objectives:

- gain a new awareness of the cultural and social importance of food as a key element in revealing unknown aspects of foreign cultures
- be able to compare different culinary habits
- write critically about food related topics: restaurants and food markets
- report on culinary and wine experiences
- prepare and deliver presentations on specific topics related to food traditions, and so on

- design a menu taking into consideration local food traditions as well as selecting seasonal produce

**Instructional Format:**

This course will meet once a week for 2 hours and 40 minutes. Teaching is divided between lectures, class discussions, student presentations, both individual and in groups. On-site teaching in Rome forms an integral part of this course.

**Forms of Assessment:**

The instructor will use numerous and differentiated forms of assessment to calculate the final grade you receive for this course. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. However, you must complete all grading assessment categories to receive a grade for this course. In addition, your work and behavior in this course must fully conform to the regulations of the [CEA Academic Integrity Policy](#) to which you are subject. Your instructor may also require that you hand in an electronic copy of such work.

Class Participation	10%
Oral Presentations	20%
Food Journal	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	30%

Class Participation (10%): The grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the texts, your ability to interpret different uses of literary language and to express your analysis in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grade, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are also evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect on your grade. The instructor will use the following specific criteria when calculating your class participation grade:

Criteria for Assessing Class Participation	Grade
You make major and original contributions that spark discussion, offering both critical and analytical comments clearly based on readings and research and displaying a working knowledge of theoretical issues.	A+ (9.70–10.00)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings and independent research.	A-/A (9.00–9.69)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B/B+ (8.40–89.90)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	C+/B- (7.70–8.39)

You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C	(7.00–7.69)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject, attending class having manifestly done little if any preparation.	D	(6.00–6.69)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion, a result of frequent absence and complete un-preparedness.	F	(0–5.90)

### **Cell Phones:**

During class time, all mobile phones must be switched off. In case of family emergency, students can keep their phones on (silent mode) after asking for permission before class starts.

### **Laptops:**

Responsible use of laptop computers during class is encouraged, and so when required by your professor you must be prepared to turn them off and/or close them during certain activities.

**Oral Presentation (20%):** The oral presentations are divided in two parts. (1) As a group assignment students will be required to produce at their own homes a meal in one of the Italian regional traditions. Documentation of this will be presented in class, along with the comments of the guests invited to partake in the meal. Sample menus for the meal will be discussed by the midterm. (2) A discussion of a retail location. Groups will be assigned a local market or other retail outlet. They must document the layout of the sales area, the types of products on sale, the types of sales facilities and personnel.

**Food and wine journal (20%):** This is a compilation of structured experiences achieved over the duration of the semester. Activities outside the classroom may also be documented according to criteria discussed in class.

**Midterm exam (20%):** The midterm format is as follows. One section contains an essay prompt for which study questions will be provided prior to the test. Essays are graded based on argument, factual content and effective reference to the reading. Another section concerns the practical details of the f&b experience, where students are expected to identify, compare and contrast, the exact details of the material presented. A third section contains identification questions drawn from the readings.

**Final exam (30%):** The in class part of the Final Exam has the same format as the mid-term. The take home component is instead a 1500 word essay referring to either the white wines, or the reds, or the DOCGs experienced in class. The essay will discuss viticultural and wine making standards, making reference to Nicholas Jolyon biodynamic wines, showing its relevance as an alternative to the wine process discussed in the essay.

Further details about food journal and oral presentations will be provided in class.  
An important aspect of this course is active class discussion and debate.

If you require any special accommodations, please contact your instructor.

### **CEA Attendance Policy**

Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day's class activities. In compliance with NEASC and UNH accreditation requirements, CEA instructors compile regular attendance records for every course and take these records into account when evaluating student participation and performance.

- In this course, a maximum of 1 day of absence due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.
- Your final course grade will drop one full letter grade (e.g. A+ to B+) for missing 2 days of class, regardless of the reason for the absence.
- If your absences exceed two (2) days of class, you will automatically fail this course (e.g., B+ to F; miss three (3) or more days to receive an “F”).

Furthermore, to comply with immigration and financial regulations, you must maintain full-time student status and attend at least 12 hours of class every week. Consequently, the Dean and Program Director will dismiss from all CEA courses, programs, activities and housing any student who fails to maintain full-time status.

### **Sections:**

Students must attend the class section they are registered in and may not switch sections for any reason. Students who turn up in a section of a class they are not registered in will not be able to stay for the lesson and will not be considered present.

### **Arriving Late for Class:**

A student consistently arriving late for class displays an unacceptably deficient degree of participation, and an unacceptable lack of respect for his instructor and his fellow students. Instructors will reflect students’ persistent lateness by deducting percentage points from the total 10% earmarked for Participation as indicated on the syllabus. Please note that missing a significant portion of one of your classes can be considered a full absence at the discretion of the professor. Always communicate to your teacher if you need to leave early due to illness, or if you are late due to serious, unforeseen circumstances.

### **Missing Examinations:**

Students who miss mid-term or final examination at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit a make-up examination without written permission from the Academic Dean. Permission will rarely be granted. It might be granted in the case of instances of serious, documented illness (see the attendance policy for more details), but never for travel.

**Examinations will not be rescheduled under any circumstances, except in cases of genuine emergencies. Such cases should be taken to the Academic Dean in writing. Missing an examination for whatever reason is effectively an absence from class.**

### **Required Readings:**

The required course textbook is available in the CEA Resource Center for short-term loans. Periodical literature, articles, documents, maps, digital images and other sundry materials also required for your class are available in PDF or Word format, are stored in the e-course file assigned to each class, and are located on the CEA shared drive for in-house consultation or copying to your own USB flash-drive. You will be required to use these resources throughout your studies. Direct access to additional resources and databanks are available to you through the online library of the University of New Haven (please consult your handbook). In addition, the Academic Coordinator compiles a bank of detailed information about the libraries located here in the city and accessible to CEA students.

The food and wine journal should be acquired by the first class.

**Required Textbook:**

John Dickie (2008) Delizia! The epic history of Italians and their food (416 pages)  
Nichola Joly (2007) What is Biodynamic wine? The quality, the taste, the terroir (144 pages)  
Brian Sommers (2008) The geography of wine (289 pages)

**Recommended Readings:** The following works are available for consultation at the CEA Resource Center:

Capatti, A. and Montanari, M., Italian Cuisine. A Cultural History, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003 (400 pages)

Cole, John W. and Eric R. Wolf, The Hidden Frontier; Ecology and Ethnicity in an Alpine Valley, New York: Academic Press, 1999 (372 pages)

Counihan Carole M., Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence, Routledge, 2003 (362 pages)

Faas, Patrick, Around the Roman Table. Food and Feasting in Ancient Rome. Chicago: U.C. Press, 2005 (383 pages)

Fernandez-Armesto, F., Food: A History, London: Pan, 2002 (287 pages)

Flandrin, J.F. and Montanari, M. (eds.), Food - A Culinary History, (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld) New York: Columbia University Press, 1999 (640 pages)

Helstosky, Carol, Garlic and Oil, Food and Politics in Italy, Berg (288 pages)

Kiple, K.F. and Ornelas, K.C. (eds.), The Cambridge World History of Food, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 (1958 pages)

Montanari, Massimo, The Culture of Food, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996 (232 pages)

Pitre', Giuseppe, Sicilian Folk Medicine, transl. by Phyllis H. Williams Coronado Press, 1971 (436 pages)

Tak, Herman, South Italian festivals: A Local History of Ritual and Change, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000 (256 pages)

Watson, James, Golden Arches East, Stanford UP, 1997 (280 pages)

**Online Reference & Research Tools:**

<http://wineserver.ucdavis.edu/index.php>  
<http://www.winepros.org/index.htm>  
<http://www.slowfood.com/>  
<http://www.emmeti.it/Cucina/cercaCucina.uk.html>

**Required Supplies/Fees:**

You will need to spend approximately 10 Euros on the food and wine journal.

**The Culture of Food and Wine in Italy  
Course Contents**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Student Assignments</b>
1	<b>Overview of the course. Survey of food and history from antiquity to today.</b>	<b>Lecture &amp; Discussion</b>	Dickie, <i>Delizia</i> , Chs 1 Reader: Faas, <i>Around the Roman Table</i> , Ch 2 (pp.38-87)
2	<b>Food ingredients - visit to open air market</b>	<b>Students document the activities in a Roman open market</b>	Porta Palazzo Market, R.E. Black (Anth of Food, 2005)
3	<b>Introduction to Italian regional culture</b>	<b>Pasta Workshop</b>	Dickie, <i>Delizia</i> , Chs 2,4
4	<b>Food in the Media</b>	<b>Screening of Babette</b>	Dickie, <i>Delizia</i> , Ch 5
5	<b>Food in the Middle Ages and Renaissance</b>	<b>Illustration of Renaissance cuisine.</b>	Dickie, <i>Delizia</i> , Chs 6,7
6	<b>Food production</b>	<b>On site</b>	
7	<b>Northern food and wine</b>	<b>Illustration of Piedmontese cuisine</b>	Dickie, <i>Delizia</i> , Chs 9,10

8	Midterm Examination	Exam - Students submit part one of Food Journal.	Review all course readings
9	Central food and wine	Illustration of Tuscan cuisine	Dickie, Delizia Chs 11,12 Sommers Chs 2,3,4
10	Southern food and wine	Illustration of Sicilian cuisine	Dickie, Delizia Ch 13
11	Urban Horticulture	On site tour of Garbatella	The power of place. Roberta Sonnino (Anth of Food 2007)
12	Modern food practice	Illustration of Modern cuisine	Dickie, Delizia, Ch 17-20
13	Final Discussion and Student Presentations	Oral presentation on regional cuisine and sales venues.	
14	Final Examination	Take home and Part II of the F&W Journal are due	Review all course readings.