Course title: Italy: territory, food, and anthropology
Semester: Spring 2015
Instructor: Gregory O. Smith
Email: gosmith@virgilio.it
Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30-1:30
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 4:00-5:00

Course description:
Italy possesses one of the richest culinary traditions in the world, with roots reaching back to ancient times. An abundant literature on Italian food allows us to explore in detail matters of food culture in a dense array of settings. Part of the course is conducted on site, exposing students to Rome’s rich network of food distribution systems, as well as touring areas in proximity of Rome to discover the close linkage between the territory, its inhabitants, and consumable food products. Topics covered include the cultural ecology of pasta, the historical evolution of spices, the special character of Alpine ecosystems, the moral implications of food consumption, modern food distribution, the globalization of taste, and responses to globalization especially through the Slow Food movement. Throughout the course attention is paid to the role of food practice in contemporary Italian society and culture, with special attention to gender. In order to put principles into practice, the structured experience of food and wines is an integral part of the course.

Course objectives:

- Develop a critical sense of the way food practice is embedded in culture
- Gain an awareness of the rich variety of Italian food traditions
- Explore the relationship between the territory, agriculture, and food practice
- Discover the rich literature concerned with Italian food culture
- Understand the importance of thinking holistically about the role of food in culture and the environment
- Experiment with food research techniques

Grading:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Market paper</td>
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<td>Preparation &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Final examination</td>
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Research Project: In the first half of the course, students will write a short ethnographic study of an assigned Rome neighborhood market (due March 9). This paper will be six- to eight-pages long and will contain a survey of the activities documented in the market, including the types of stalls or shops, the products on sale, the vendors, and the buyers. Notes will also be provided on the neighborhood in which the market is embedded. In the second part of the course, students will prepare another six- to eight-page paper on a regional product or dish (due April 23). If the product is wine, reference to Joly is required. This paper will involve a product or dish which will contribute to a meal student groups will produce at their homes. The groups will be created and the regions assigned at the midterm. This experience will be formalized as a short class presentation at the end of the semester in which groups present to the class the regions, its products and culinary traditions. (April 23).

Food Journal: Students will be instructed concerning a food journal in which they will document food experiences organized within the class and at least two food experiences acquired outside of class. This will be submitted at the midterm test and at the final. The journal is organized in parts which allow the student to engage in the analysis and assessment of these food experiences following guidelines set out in class.
Academic excursion: An academic excursion is organized to Viterbo on February 27. An urban horticulture tour in Rome is scheduled for April 17.

Academic procedure: All in class examinations are individual examinations, and no books or other study materials may be consulted while the examinations are in progress. Research projects must be the original work of the student. Once the examination starts, students will not be allowed to leave the room until they have finished their work.

Attendance Policy: All UC Rome courses operate under an attendance policy created by the UC Faculty Advisory Committee that oversees the program. According to that policy, students are allowed two absences per class, any absences beyond that will result in a -3% point deduction for each subsequent absence from the final raw total for that class. Students who are late to class or leave early will receive an “L” on the attendance sheet. Three “L”s automatically convert to an absence. All students are expected to conduct themselves according to the principles and procedures of academic integrity and are held to the standards outlined in the EAP Academic Conduct policy, available at the following URL and on the UC Rome Study Center website: http://eap.ucop.edu/Documents/forms/1112/Policy_Academic_Conduct.pdf.

Please note that no guests are allowed in any UC Rome course or site visit.

Sources for readings
Bottura, Massimo, Never Trust a Skinny Italian Chef, Phaedon, 2014.


Dickie, John, Delizia! The Epic History of Italians and Their Food, Hodder General Publishing Division 2008 (416 pages)

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

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


Joly, Nicholas What is Biodynamic wine? The Quality, the Taste, the Terroir, Clairview Books, 2007 (144 pages)


Nossiter, Jonathan, Liquid Memory: Why Wine Matters, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009 (262 pages)

Petrini, Carlo, Slow Food Nation, Rizzoli, 2007 (262 pages)

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

Pollan, Michael, In Defense of Food, Penguin, 2008 (242 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)
Course Outline

1  Mon  Session cancelled  Feb 9

Wed  Classical Heritage (Faas, Ch. 2)  
The Roots of European Food and Wine Culture  Feb 11

This session stresses the deep cultural roots of Italian food practice. General concepts like civility and civilization are introduced as background to food culture. The celebration of Arcadian culture is discussed along with a review of classical ideals of excellence in food and agriculture with reference to the works by Lucius Columella.

2  Mon  Italian Cultural Ecology  Feb 16
Pasta (Dickie, Chs. 2,4) 
Counihan: Ch. 1 Food as Voice in Twentieth-Century Florence

This session is devoted to a review of the different Italian ecological systems, linking these to important determinants of Italian regional cuisine. In particular the review focuses on the distinction between Continental and Mediterranean ecosystems, with differences in agricultural products, especially in such staples as rice, corn, soft and hard wheat. The historical roots of pasta are discussed in this connection.

Wed  Italian Herbs and Spices (Dickie, Ch. 5; Capatti and Montanari, Ch. 3)  Feb 18
Classification of Wines (Johnson and Robinson, selections) 
Counihan: Ch. 2 Florentine Cuisine and Culture

Local herbs and imported spices constitute an important feature of Italian cuisine. Here the chief herbs and spices are surveyed, outlining some of the main uses and illustrating their shifting role in Italian food history. The session also introduces the main systems of classifying wines.

3  Mon  Alpine Ecosystem (Cole and Wolf, Ch. 10)  Feb 23
Survey of Italian White Wines (Johnson and Robinson, selections) 
Counihan: Ch. 3 Historical Roots of Florentine Food, Family and Gender

This session explores the cultural ecology of human demographics, showing the importance of agricultural practices as an environmental variable. The session continues with an exploration of white wines, starting with wines from the north of Italy, and surveying chief varieties down to the deep south. The focus is on ampelographic features, as well as production techniques and the associated outcomes.

TUE  White Wine Tasting with Cheeses (Via Mameli) (Johnson and Robinson, selections)  Feb 24 
2-4 pm

This session puts into practice principles explored in the discussion of local territories and techniques of food production. Students are provided with a rating chart which allows them to document in a structured fashion wines and cheese, including such categories as visual appearance, olfactory impact, the experience of the palate, and so forth.

Wed  Cheeses (Grasseni, ‘Re-Inventing Food: Alpine Cheese in the Age of Global Heritage,’ Anthropology of food, 2011)  Feb 25
Italian Feast Days (Tak, Ch. 10) 
Counihan: Ch.4. Florentine Cuisine and Culture

Cheeses are a distinctive expression of the relationship between the territory, animal husbandry, and food practice. Techniques of cheese production are reviewed, along with legal controls and the challenges of maintaining local traditions in a competitive market setting. The embedding of temporal, spatial and cultural practices is also explored.

Friday – Feb 27

Viterbo Excursion. Morning visit to vineyard and winemaking facilities. Lunch at a restaurant with exploration of local products. Afternoon tour of Viterbo.
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| **4** Mon | Food Distribution  
On site: Piazza Vittorio and Eataly  
(Black, 'Porta Palazzo Market,' *Anthropology of Food*, 2005) |
| **4** Wed | Gelato  
(Kelly et al., ‘Sensory characteristics of ice cream’, *Journal of Sensory Studies*, 2009) |
| **5** Mon | Moral Implications of Food Practice (Dickie, Ch. 6,7)  
View Film Babette's Feast  
Counihan: Ch. 5 Food Production, Reproduction and Gender.  
Neighborhood Research Paper Due |
| **5** Wed | Midterm test |
| **6** Mon | Piedmontese Cuisine (Dickie, Chs. 9,10)  
Viticulture: The Territory (Joly, Ch.1)  
Counihan: Ch. 6 Balancing Gender Differences |
| **7** Mon | Cultural Ecology and Food in Central Italy (Silverman, Preface, Chs. 1,2)  
Counihan: Ch. 7 Commensality, Family, and Community |
| **8** Mon | Food as a Commodity (Watson, Introduction; Dickie Chs. 17-20)  
Wine production (Joly, Ch. 4)  
Counihan: Ch. 8 Parents and Children: Feeding and Gender |

This on site experience explores food distribution, comparing Rome’s most important international market with its most impressive modern food venue. The focus is on products, their organization in a retail space, the experience of food shopping, and the regulations that govern their distribution.

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Piedmont represents an example of excellence in Italian cuisine, with strong French influence, yet a clear Italian regional character. The excellence of local products includes Barolo wines, risotto, white truffle, and specialized Italian livestock like the Piedmontese steer. Viticulture is introduced explaining the importance of the territory in selecting an area in which to establish a vineyard.

The test has one essay, a handful of short answer questions on specific topics, and an ID section.

Midterm break. Mar 21-29

The linkage between food production and local community structure is explored in a classic study of a small Umbrian town. Communities, culture and food are seen as deeply intertwined.

The idea of regional cuisine as invented in the Unification of Italy. In a survey of modern cuisine Italy’s most celebrated contemporary chef, Massimo Bottura, is compared with French chef Alain Ducasse and the Spanish chef Ferran Adrià. In the discussion of viticulture attention is paid to vine management, comparing different training and pruning systems, and the management of the vine up to the time of the harvest.
In modern food practice, food is no longer an expression of shared identity, but rather an expression of individual consumer choice. This session explores the rise of modern mass cuisine in the post World War II period, including a survey of fast food venues. Attention is also paid to such imported food traditions as Chinese, Arabic, and Japanese. This session concludes the review of biodynamic agricultural techniques with an examination of their application to wine making.

Wed  Food and Health (Pitrè, Introduction; Pollan, Ch. II.3) Apr 8
Survey of Italian Red Wines (Johnson and Robinson, selections)

This session looks at traditional Italian notions of health as seen in a classic text by an Italian student of folklore. This traditional view is contrasted with modern views. A brief survey of contemporary food dysfunctions in Italy is also provided.

9  Mon  Slow Food Movement (Petrini, Ch. 1; Nossiter, Ch. 10) Apr 13

The Slow Food movement was born in Italy as a response to the deracination of taste. The session provides a discussion of the genesis of the movement and its extension to other spheres, such as the Slow City movement. The session also provides a critique of cult wines.

Sat  Urban Horticulture Tour Apr 20
Red Wine and Olive Oil Tasting (Via Mameli) (Helstosky)
Counihan: Ch. 9 Food and Gender: Toward the Future

Select red wines are explored, as well as dishes involving red wine such Risotto al Barolo. Red wine tasting is documented using the sensory analysis chart already used in other food experiences. Olive oils are also presented, in a discussion of the legislation aiming to protect the different territories in which they are produced.

10  Mon  Session cancelled Apr 20

Wed  Student presentations Apr 23
Counihan: Ch. 10 Conclusion: Molto, Ma Buono?

Students present a slide show in which they document the region assigned at the midterm for this purpose. Students will have prepared a complete meal in this regional tradition using a menu provided in class. The quality of the meal will be assessed by another member of the class who is invited to share in the experience.

Product Paper is due.

Final Exam  10am-1pm Apr 29