



Litr 268R: Italian Cultural History: Food & Wine

John Felice Rome Center

Fall 2024

Tuesdays & Thursdays | 5.15-6.30pm

Office hours: Thursdays 4.00-5.00pm

Instructor: Elisa Ascione, PhD

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Tastings fee: \$100

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

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the history of food and wine in Italy as a gateway to understanding Italian culture. By examining the factors that have shaped Italian food and taste, the variations in eating habits of different socio-economic classes, and the essential role played by food in constructing Italian identities, we will shed light on fundamental patterns in Italian history and society.

Through a mix of discussions, readings, primary source analyses, workshops, and excursions, we will investigate Italian food and culture from antiquity to the present. We will explore how food traditions and local foods are maintained and transformed over time and space, how culinary knowledge is used to mark cultural belonging and differences, studying food as a site of cultural transmission but also of dissent and resistance. Topics include food as cultural heritage, food and migration, the mediterranean diet and sustainable diets. After the completion of this course, students will have developed a critical understanding of food history, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Italian culture and society, and a framework for analyzing Italian cultural 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.

Sakai:

All course materials will be located on Sakai which can be accessed at <https://sakai.luc.edu>

Sakai is a web-based learning management system. You will be able to access it from any computer connected to the internet. Instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at:

<http://www.luc.edu/itrs/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml>

Course content, including syllabi, reading material etc. will be available online. Students should check Sakai often for announcements, assignments, and other course content.

Student Support Resources:

- ITS Service Desk: helpdesk@luc.edu
- Library Subject Specialists: <http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists>
- Student Accessibility Center: sac@luc.edu
- Writing Center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/>

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

*This course meets twice a week, thus a total of **two unexcused absences** will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”.*

Academic Integrity:

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.

1. Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Student 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:

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/>

Assessment Components

- Class Participation (10%)
- Midterm Exam (30%)
- Food as Heritage: A Personal Recipe Essay (15%)
- Trionfale Market Project (15%)
- Final Exam (30%)

Class Participation (10%)

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 responding to others. **Laptops and phones are not allowed in class.**

Food as Heritage: A Personal Recipe Essay (15%) — Interview a family member and ask them for a recipe that is important for them and/or for your family. Alternatively, find a recipe that's important for you. Tell the story of this recipe, reflecting on the meaning that it has for you or your family, and how this relates to your cultural background. Reflect on how food and food habits contribute to the development and transmission of cultural practices and knowledge. Bear in mind the following questions as you prepare the interview questionnaire: What does this recipe signify for the person interviewed? What memories are connected to this recipe? What does this recipe tell us about broader cultural themes (family structure, generations, changing history of certain products, etc.). How do food practices contribute to the construction of personal and collective identities?

In the paper include:

- 1) An introduction with a reference to selected topics discussed in class
- 2) A description of the person that you interviewed and why, including a relevant picture from the family member and the recipe
- 3) An analysis of the interview
- 4) Quotes of at least **three** peer-reviewed papers or academic books
- 5) A brief history of the recipe (if available)
- 6) A conclusion
- 7) 5 pages, size 11 font, 1.5 line spacing.

Trionfale Market Project (15%) Join the instructor during a Friday visit and/or visit the Trionfale Market independently in the morning (in pairs). Have a tour and stay at the market for at least one hour. Participate in shopping and eating, ask questions to at least one vendor, take notes, and write up your

observations and insights as soon as possible after the visit¹.

Find somebody from the class to go with you. Bring a pen and notebook or something else to take notes with. While visiting the market, do the following:

1. Observe and describe the general setting of the market.
2. Observe the types of foods: Are they fresh or processed? from how many ethnic traditions? cost? quality? locally produced? imported?
3. Write down the cost of a few items and compare them later with the prices of the same items at a supermarket. Make sure you compare the prices of the same quantities and types of goods.
4. Observe the clientele, vendors, and social interactions. Note their age, race/ ethnicity, gender. Is the population diverse? Do people from diverse groups interact with one another?
5. Experiment with a food you've never tried before! What is it? What did you learn from eating it?
6. Choose one producer that you find interesting and: describe more in depth the food they sell, engage with the seller, ask questions about the history of their business and the food they sell. Take pictures.

Write a paper on your visit and on what you learned and observed, answering the following question "*Describe the ways in which the Trionfale Market promotes a community-building system of food production and consumption.*"

The paper should be three to four pages, 1.5 spaced, in 12-point font. Refer to Rachel Black's *Porta Palazzo* chapter.

Mid Term (30%) and Final Exam (30%)

These exams consist of multiple choice and short answers, bringing together the various concepts/topics you have studied. 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

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. After authorization, late work will incur a 3% percent deduction for every day work is late.

¹ (Adapted from Counihan, Carole. "Ethnography of Farmers' Markets: Studying Culture, Place, and Food Democracy" (2015) in *Teaching Food and Culture*, edited by Candice Lowe Swift and Richard Wilk, Left Coast Press, pp. 113–128.)

As per the JFRC 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 grave reasons; 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 (SAC) (<http://www.luc.edu/sac>) requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Please note: Food and wine tastings are served in very small quantities during class for didactic purposes only. Although students are expected to learn about the history and culture of wine and grapes, they are not expected to participate in any of the tastings for a successful completion of the course. Please let the instructor know in advance if you have any dietary need or food allergy.

Course Schedule

Friday Trionfale Market Optional Visits: The instructor will lead optional Friday visits to the Trionfale market with students. Discuss with the instructor your availability.

Saturday, September 21: Grape Harvest and Winery Visit (9.00am-4.00pm approx. Departure by private bus) This is a mandatory field-class, missing this class will count as one absence.

WEEK 1

Tuesday, September 3: Introduction to the Study of Italian Cultural History: Food and Wine

Thursday, September 5: Bio-Cultural Perspectives on Food and Nutrition

Fischler, C. (1988) 'Food, Self and identity', *Social Science Information*, n. 27, pp. 275-292.

WEEK 2

Tuesday, September 10: The Food in Ancient Rome I

Corbier, M. (1999) 'The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 128–140.

Thursday, September 12: The Food in Ancient Rome II (*lesson ends at 17.50 for Mass of Holy Spirit for those who participate*)

Kaufman, C., K. (2006) 'Ancient Rome', in *Cooking in Ancient Civilizations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, pp. 121–131.

WEEK 3

Tuesday, September 17: Medieval Food

Montanari, M. (2012) 'Introduction: When European (Food) Culture Was Born', in Montanari, M. (ed.) *A Cultural History of Food in the Medieval Age*. London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 1–8.

Montanari, M. (1999) 'Romans, Barbarians, Christians & Production Structures and Food Systems in the

Early Middle Ages', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds), Sonnenfeld, A. (tran.) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 165–177.

Thursday, September 19: Introduction to wine

Robinson, J. (2015) *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, Oxford University Press, selected readings

Saturday, September 21: Grape Harvest and Winery Visit (9.00am-4.00pm approx. Departure by private bus). Bring your notebook and a pen to take notes.

WEEK 4

Tuesday, September 24: No class (make-up time for Saturday field-class).

Thursday, September 26: The History of Wine

<https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/evolution-wine/>

Assignment: post before class a blog entry on Sakai with a reflection on the visit to the winery and be ready to discuss it in class. *The reflection should move beyond simple description of the experience and be an analysis of how the experience contributed to your understanding of course concepts and Italian cultural history. Your engagement will be evaluated as part of your participation grade.*

WEEK 5

Tuesday, October 1: The Invention of Pasta

Dickie, J. (2008) 'Palermo, 1154: Pasta and the Planisphere', in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press, pp. 13-30

Thursday, October 3: Renaissance Food: The Humoral Theory and the Great Chain of Being

Grieco, A., J. (1999) 'Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in Montanari, M. and Flandrin, J.-L. (eds), Sonnenfeld, A. (tran.) *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp. 302–312.

WEEK 6

Tuesday, October 8: Midterm Review

Thursday, October 10: Midterm Exam

Fall Break: October 11-20

WEEK 7

Tuesday, October 22: Bees and Honey Workshop

Patel, V., Natasha P., et al. (2021) «Why Bees Are Critical for Achieving Sustainable Development». *Ambio* 50, fasc. 1: 49–59.

Thursday, October 24: The Columbian Exchange

Brosnan, K.A. (2011) 'Columbian Exchange', in *Encyclopedia of American Environmental History*. New York: Facts On File, pp. 301-303.

Montanari, M. (2013) 'Preservation and Renewal of Alimentary Identities', in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 33-40.

Bring to class a one-page outline of "Food as Heritage: A Personal Recipe Essay"

Friday, October 25: The Ethnographic Study of Markets

Black, R. (2012) *Porta Palazzo: The Anthropology of an Italian Market*. 1st ed. Contemporary Ethnography. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. ix-24

WEEK 8**Tuesday, October 29: Alcohol as Embodied Material Culture**

Dietler, M. (2019) «Alcohol as Embodied Material Culture: Anthropological Reflections on the Deep Entanglement of Humans and Alcohol». In *Alcohol and Humans*, di Michael Dietler, 115–29. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Thursday, October 31: Wine: Understanding Terroir

D'Agata, I. (2019) *Italy's Native Wine Grape Terroirs*, University of California Press, pp. 7-26

Deadline for "Food as Heritage: A Personal Recipe Essay" (upload it in Word on Sakai by 10.00pm)

WEEK 9**Tuesday, November 5: The "Natural Wine" Movement**

Buranyi, S. (2018) "Has Wine Gone Mad?", *The Guardian*, 15 May 2018

Thursday, November 7: Wine and sustainability

Baiano, A. (2021) «An Overview on Sustainability in the Wine Production Chain». *Beverages* 7, n. 1: 15

WEEK 10**Tuesday, November 12: The Risorgimento and Food: Unity Through a Cookbook**

Montanari, M. (2013) 'The Artusian Synthesis', in *Italian Identity in the Kitchen, or Food and the Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 47-52.

Dickie, J. (2008) "Florence, 1891: Pellegrino Artusi" in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Thursday, November 14: Fascist Cuisine

Parasecoli, F. (2014) "The fascist consensus" in *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy*, pp. 166-182, London: Reaktion Books

WEEK 11**Tuesday, November 19: Migrations, diasporic cuisines, "gastro-nationalism":**

Di Giovine, M. A. (2010). "La Vigilia Italo-Americana: Revitalizing the Italian American Family through the Christmas Eve 'Feast of the Seven Fishes'." *Food and Foodways* 18 (4): 181–208.

Thursday, November 21: Food as cultural heritage: The Mediterranean Diet between Myth and Reality

Serra-Majem and Medina (2014) in Preedy, V. R. "The Mediterranean Diet as Intangible and Sustainable Food Culture", e R. R. Watson, (eds.) *The Mediterranean Diet: An Evidence-Based Approach*. Boston, MA: Academic Press, pp.37-57

Moro, E. (2016) "The Mediterranean Diet from Ancel Keys to the UNESCO Cultural Heritage. A Pattern of Sustainable Development between Myth and Reality". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 223, pp. 655–61.

WEEK 12**Tuesday, November 26: Political Food: The Slow Food Movement (I)**

Andrews, G. (2008) *The Slow Food Story: Politics and Pleasure*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 3-28

Bring to class a one-page outline of **"Trionfale Market Project"**

Thanksgiving Break: 28 November – December 1**WEEK 13****Tuesday, December 3: Political Food: The Slow Food Movement (II)**

Laudan, R. (2001) "A Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love New, Fast, Processed Food". *Gastronomica* 1: 36–44.

Thursday, December 5: Final Exam Review.

Deadline for Trionfale Market Project (upload it in Word on Sakai by 10.00pm)

WEEK 14: FINAL EXAM WEEK

December 9-12: TBD