



## **CIEE Global Institute - Rome**

<b>Course name:</b>	Food, Nutrition and Culture
<b>Course number:</b>	FSCI 3001 ROIT
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Rome Open Campus (Health Sciences Track)
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2019

### **Course Description**

This course analyzes the relationship between food, nutrition and health. A key idea analyzed in the course is that food is culturally defined: what is considered a food in Culture A is not necessarily a food in culture B. Key topics explained in the course include human nutrition, main classes of nutrients. The basics and benefits of nutritious diets are analyzed, and the Mediterranean and Italian diets are used as case studies. Concepts such as RDA (recommended dietary allowances), recommended DRI (dietary reference intake), and food pyramids are presented. Food security, nutrition and health challenges are addressed in the light of the new global issues: the use of GMOs, the increase of Fast Foods and the rise of Slow Food in responses to the homogenization of taste. The course also analyzes the contemporary dietary transitions and the globalization of foodways presenting cases of under nutrition and over nutrition, in their social, bio-cultural and psychological aspects.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the strong relationship between food, nutrition and culture
- Develop a deepened understanding of the Mediterranean diet and its patrimonialization process
- Demonstrate an appropriate use of specific vocabulary in the field of nutrition and food studies
- Develop the ability to write critically about European and Italian food cultures
- Demonstrate a clear knowledge of the main theoretical approaches to food and nutrition studies
- Understand the interdisciplinary nature of food studies
- Develop informed knowledge around the notions of Mediterranean diet, balanced diet, RDA, DRI, food pyramid, sustainable food.

### **Course Prerequisites**

No specific pre-requisites are needed for this course.

### **Methods of Instruction**

This course will combine lectures, class debates, experimental activities, film screenings, articles reviews and onsite classes.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

Written Assignments:	10%
Research Paper:	20%
Menu Design:	5%
Group Presentation:	20%
Final Exam:	25%
Class participation:	20%



## **Course Requirements**

### **Written Assignments**

Students will be asked to write short essays on the topics covered in class. Rubrics will be used to assess each assignment.

### **Research paper**

Students will be asked to write a research paper focused on one of the main Italian food products by invoking main issues addressed during the course, including historical, nutritional, productive, cultural, social and environmental values. Professor will provide extensive and precise guidelines.

### **Menu Design**

Students will be asked to create a weekly menu for young adults (18-21 years old) by applying principles of the Mediterranean diet. Concepts, theoretical approaches and social aspects discussed in class should be also evoked. Professor will provide guidelines and menu samples.

### **Group Presentation**

Integrating a role-play approach with reflexive thinking of the site visits, lectures and texts from the course, students will discuss in small groups main issues and contemporary challenges related to food, and present their conclusion to the class. Topics and format will be discussed and agreed with the professor during the second week of classes.

### **Final Exam**

Students will take a final exam at the end of the course. The exam (multiple choice test and short essays) will include all topics analyzed in class. Rubrics will be used to assess each assignment.

### **Participation**

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen



delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements.
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; <b>written warning</b>
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 language classes	Automatic <b>course failure</b> , and possible expulsion

### Weekly Schedule

#### **Week 1 Introduction: We are what we eat**

Class 1:1 This class will present the syllabus, with emphasis on assessment methods and course requirements. It will then introduce the concepts of food, nutrition and culture with a particular emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects related to human eating. We will unveil some unwritten food rules and etiquette in order to prove that change in traditions and identity has always occurred.

Readings:  
Gibbons (2007); Scego (2005); Gabaccia (1998); Severgnini (2007); Goodman, Durour & Pelto (2000)

#### **Week 2 Past and present of Italian foodways**

Class 2:1 **Italian/European food history and geography**  
This class will present a concise journey through the history of Italian and European foodways from pre-history to the present day. The specificity of local cuisine and habits; the growth of national culinary traditions; the dialogue between higher and lower classes' diet and between northern and southern cuisine will be discussed, with a particular emphasis on the Italian case.

Readings: Capatti & Montanari (2003); Standage (2005)

Class 2:2 **Food production and eating culture in Italy**



Productive processes (namely, political and cultural) of the main contemporary Italian foodscape, products and dishes, including seasonality and quality turn including certifications (DOP, IGP, DOC, etc.) will be illustrated and discussed, with a particular emphasis on wine.

### **Due date for submission of Short essay 1**

Readings: Goodman, Durour & Pelto (2000); Fonte & Cucco (2015)

## **Week 3 Nutrition and the Mediterranean Diet**

Class 3:1

### **Human Evolution and Nutritional Needs**

Nutrients per category will be analyzed in order to discuss and establish the basis of a healthy diet and the evolution of the humankind. Digestion and assimilation of nutrients will also be addressed in relation to the role of fire and cuisine in the human development.

Readings:

Nestle (2013); Phull (2015); Moyer-Nocchi (2015)

Class 3:2

### **Principles, benefits and components**

In 2013, the Mediterranean diet was included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: the elements of the nutritional recommendation will be analyzed and discussed together with the patrimonialization process. The history of the Mediterranean diet will also be outlined through Ancel Keys researches and the American influence on the process of appropriation of the Mediterranean Diet as an Italian identity marker.

Readings:

Anderson (2005); Venturini (2016); Laudan (2017)

Class 3:3

**Onsite class at Eataly**, food market and restaurant for the promotion of the Mediterranean diet and the associated social rituals: students will be introduced to Italian food, Mediterranean diet, and the associated social rituals.

### **Due date for submission of Short essay 2**

## **Week 4 Dietary regimes in space and time**

Class 4:1

### **The food we need**

The history, recommendations and validity of the RDA (recommended dietary allowances) and the recommended DRI (dietary reference intake) will be discussed and compared. Food pyramids will be analyzed through the application of nutritional principles and measures. Different dietary regimes will be analyzed and compared.

Readings:

Counihan (1999); Pollan (2006); Walker Bynum (2008)



Class 4:2

**Health challenges**

Dietary transitions and globalization of foodways will be analyzed presenting cases of under nutrition and over nutrition, in their social, bio-cultural and psychological aspects. The practice of fasting among women of the Medieval Europe will be compared to contemporary Italian and American eating practices relating the body and its intake in a social perspective.

Readings:

Parasecoli (2007); Rozin (1999); Teti (1995)

Class 4:3

**Onsite class: Mercato Esquilino and Cold Palace Fassi.** A visit to two cornerstones of food business in Rome will highlight the influences of history and globalization on foodways.

**Week 5**

**Contemporary challenges**

Class 5:1

**Societal and environmental challenges**

Food security, nutrition and sustainability will be addressed and discussed in the light of the new global challenges: the use of GMOs, the increase of Fast Foods and the local responses to the homogenization of taste. History, principles and practices of the international Slow Food Movement, will be presented, in the framework of alternative markets.

Readings:

Leitch (1999); Clap (1999)

Class 5:2

**Big Night: the cultural context of food**

By analyzing scenes from the 1996 American film Big Night, students will discuss the representation of Italian food culture through the media, while contrasting and comparing personal perceptions before and after studying abroad. Rituals and symbolic value of specific foods and national dishes will be discussed through the analysis of specific experiences

Readings:

Sage (2011)

Class 5:3

**Onsite class at Mercato di Campagna Amica Tiburtino:** students will visit a farmers market where an expert from Coldiretti (the Italian farmers' association) will explain sustainability policies and initiatives. The cooperation between consumers and local producers in supporting a healthy and sustainable diet will be discussed.

**Due date for submission of Research Paper**

**Week 6**

**Final week**

Class 6:1

Group Presentations, debate and conclusions



### **Due date for submission of Menu Desing**

Class 6:2

**Cooking class at Punto di cottura** ([www.puntodicottura.it](http://www.puntodicottura.it): students will learn how to prepare homemade pasta, a basic of the Mediterranean diet in Italy, and have lunch together.

Class 6:3

Final Exam

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

### **Course Materials**

#### **Readings**

Capatti, Alberto and Montanari, Massimo. *Italian cuisine: a cultural history*. Columbia University Press, 2003. Print.

Goodman, Alan H., Dufour, Darna L. and Pelto Gretel H. (Eds.) *Nutritional Anthropology: biocultural perspectives on food and nutrition*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 2000. Print.

Nestle, M. (2013). *Food politics: How the food industry influences nutrition and health* (Vol. 3). Univ of California Press.

#### Additional readings (handouts)

E. D. Anderson, *Everyone eats*, introduction (p. 1-9) (From: E.N. Anderson, *Everyone eats, understanding food and culture*, NY UP, 2005)

Tom Standage, *A History of the world in 6 glasses*, chapter part 2, "Wine"

K. Moyer-Nocchi, *Chewing the Fat*, "La cosidetta 'Dieta Mediterranea' – The So-called 'Mediterranean Diet'", pp 287-294

Walker Bynum, *Fast, Feast and Flesh: the religious significance of Food to Medieval women* in C. Counihan and P. Van Esterik (eds.), *Food and Culture*, Routledge 2008, pp. 121-140

J. Clap, *The political economy of food aid in an Era of Agricultural Biotechnology*, in C. Counihan *The anthropology of food and body*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 539-553

C. Counihan, What does it mean to be fat, thin and female, in C. Counihan *The anthropology of food and body*, Routledge, 1999, pp.76-91

C. Counihan, Food rules in the United States, in C. Counihan *The anthropology of food and body*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 113-128

"Slow food" Movement; selected articles

D. Gabaccia, *We are what we eat: ethnic food and the making of americans*, Harvard University Press (a selection)

Leitch, Alison. "Slow Food and the politics of "virtuous globalization"." *Food and Culture*. Routledge, 2012. 423-439.



S. Phull, *The mediterranean diet: socio-cultural relevance for contemporary health promotion*, in *The Open Public Health Journal*, 2015, 8: 35-41

P. Rozin, C. Fischler et al., *Attitudes to food and the role of food in life in the U.S.A., Japan, Flemish Belgium and France: possible implications for the diet-health debate*, in *Appetite*, p.163-180, 1999

Severgnini. *La Bella Figura. A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*, "The restaurant: one way of sitting in judgment" (pp. 21-31) 2007

V. Teti, Food and Fatness in Calabria, in I. De Garine and N. Pollock (eds.) *Social aspects of obesity*, Taylor and Francis, 1995, pp. 3-30

T. Venturini, *Our daily bread. Eataty and the reinvention of the Supermarket*, in Conference of economic de-growth for economical sustainability and social equity publication, pp.1-6, 2008

Parasecoli, Fabio. "Bootylicious: Food and the female body in contemporary Black Pop Culture." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35.1/2 (2007): 110-125.

Fonte, M., & Cucco, I. (2015). 14. The political economy of alternative agriculture in Italy. *Handbook of the international political economy of agriculture and food*, 264.

Sage, Colin. *Environment and food*. Routledge, 2011.

Further reading materials will be assigned on a week-by-week basis.

#### **Online Resources**

Canvas

#### **Media Resources**

Tucci, Stanley and Scott, Campbell (Directors). *Big Night* [Motion picture]. Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, 1996.