

Made in Italy – Marketing the Italian Style *NEW!*

Summer Quarter, Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Francesca Passeri

Course Description

The course examines the notion of “Made in Italy” as an intangible asset and traces its evolution in time, starting from its creation in Florence in the 1950s up to the current global success of Tuscany-based icons such as Vespa, Gucci, Ferragamo, and Chianti. The main aim is to explore the appeal of “Made in Italy” as a global brand and the marketing of “Italian Style” throughout the world. To this purpose, students analyze important Italian companies in specific sectors – fashion, food, wine, leather, design and art – and discuss their innovative branding practices. The focus is on key Italian cultural products, their significance and symbolism, as well as the concept of “Country Branding” within the industrial, leisure, lifestyle, food, and fashion industries. An array of educational tools – lectures, class discussions, fieldtrips and visits to food and fashion retailers, corporate museums, design studios – allows students to acquire an in-depth knowledge of trendsetting communication strategies and gain first-hand experience with some iconic products commonly associated with the idea of “Italianness”, from concept to consumption.

Entrepreneurship - The Italian Way *NEW!*

Summer Quarter, Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Clive Woollard

This course provides an in-depth study of the creative chaos of Italian entrepreneurship. From the Medici, who made a fortune and lost it again within a century, to Ferrari, the consummate entrepreneur; from Armani, Ferragamo, and Gucci to Luxottica and Del Vecchio's sunglasses empire, students investigate the essence of Italian entrepreneurship. In addition, this course scrutinizes examples of family businesses, in which each new generation exhibits entrepreneurship (FIAT, Ferrero etc.), as well as instances of entrepreneurial endeavors that were not successful (e.g. Parmalat). The world of entrepreneurship is evaluated from the perspectives of management, finance, and marketing as well as incorporating sociological skills required to understand these enterprises. The course uses a large array of texts and academic sources that the students assess via real life case studies. Students visit a wide range of entrepreneurial contexts and have the opportunity to interview first hand a number of entrepreneurs and those that support entrepreneurship. Students also critically evaluate major issues such as globalization, sustainability, and ethics, which affect entrepreneurs today.

Genius and Innovation in Italian Renaissance Art

Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Cecilia Martelli

Course Description

The course explores the great renewal of the arts in Florence and Tuscany between the end of the Middle Ages and the advent of the new era of the Renaissance, thanks to the 'genius' and the deep innovations promoted jointly by painters, sculptors and architects. The renovation started in painting by Giotto in the 14th century induces Renaissance artists to a new and deep attention to the human figure, which has become the center of the world, and to a scientific interest in the representation of space and perspective. The rediscovery of Greek and Roman classical culture determines the new language of Renaissance architecture, founded in Florence by Brunelleschi, while sculptors such as Ghiberti, Donatello and Verrocchio and painters such as Masaccio, Beato Angelico and Botticelli renew the face of Florence, on commission of the Medici family and the city institutions. In the late Renaissance, a new wave of innovation is particularly affected by Leonardo da Vinci's interest in science and nature, Michelangelo's passion for human anatomy, the fascination of Raphael with the classical world, until Giorgio Vasari transforms the city at the request of the Medici, who have now become the Dukes.

Unity in Diversity: The Making of Italian Identity Through Food

Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Peter Fischer

Course Description

This course explores the unique significance of food for the definition of “Italian-ness”. Pasta, pizza and cappuccino have become some of the most recognizable signs for Italian identity and they contribute to the creation of a coherent, unified image of Italy. To fully understand the evolution of this fascinating relationship between “Italian-ness” and food, a cornucopia of historical, cross-cultural and theoretical views is offered, drawing from history, anthropology, sociology, as well as from geography. The course will trace the historical evolution of Italian food culture in the geographical and cultural context of the Mediterranean from the times of the classical civilizations until today. Topics will include: Food as a Marker of Cultural Identity in the Classical Mediterranean World, Food as a Source of Sin and of Salvation, the Importance of Food for the Definition of Identity among Italian Immigrants in the United States as well as the Making of Italians after National Unification and the Particular Role of Food.

Lectures and class discussions will be supplemented by special food workshops in which we will explore the history, culture and taste of some Italian key products such as bread, wine and olive oil. We will visit food markets in Florence, and go on a fieldtrip to the Tuscan countryside. This course is designed for undergraduate students of history, anthropology, sociology and geography and students generally interested in food studies.

Cities, Environment, and Sustainability: A Tuscan Experience *NEW!*

Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Peter Fischer

Course Description

This course has three main components. First, it will provide a coherent analytical framework for understanding some of the key ideas and issues informing the debate about the environment and about sustainability today. It will examine the principles and practices of sustainable development in the context of urban development. More than half of the world's population are already living in cities and by the middle of this century that figure will rise to more than 65 percent. With rapid urbanization, cities face environmental, economic and social challenges that pose threats to sustainability of urban development.

Second, this course will investigate upon the historical conditions for the contemporary debate about sustainability, reviewing the evolution of different approaches towards the environment from the earliest farming societies to present (post-) industrial societies. Adopting a 'Big History' approach will help students to see the overall picture, seeking out common themes and patterns that can help to better address the multiplicity of socio-economic and environmental issues that we are facing today.

The third and major part of this course will look at Tuscany and at Florence in particular, on the basis of the fruitful concept of 'Urban Metabolisms' to focus attention on the interdependence between cities and their environments. Tuscan cities such as Florence and Siena have become models of sustainable urban and rural development as well as of landscape preservation. The historically close relationship between 'città and contado' (city and countryside), together with the deep-rooted Tuscan sense of proportion and harmony, space and time, respect for nature along with cutting edge technology, all shape and enrich contemporary sustainability research and debate, and hold invaluable lessons for all of us.

A variety of key thematic issues and sustainability challenges will be explored in the context of Tuscan urban environments, including water, food and waste management, sustainable urban and rural tourism, energy and urban transport issues, as well as sustainable waste management. A variety of outdoor activities will offer unique opportunities for students to engage with local community.

Florence Overexposed: Photography, Cinema, and Urban Development *NEW!*

Summer Quarter, Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Donata Panizza

Course Description

What is the relationship between a city's structure and the way it is represented? This course will answer this question by analysing Florence's urban history and its visual representation in paintings, frescoes, maps, photographs, and films from the 14th century to today. As the city has been in turn the site of a proud communal society, the main centre of the Medici and then Lorraine rule, the capital of newly unified Italy and the repository of national and international cultural and ethical (and touristic) values, we will examine how Florence has been both shaped by and represented according to different political and cultural agendas, and how the city's structure and its representation have constantly affected each other. Special emphasis will be put on the emergence of photography and cinema and the radical visual and conceptual shift that these media have produced in the city's image. Some of the issues this course will examine are: the role of linear perspective as a scientific and political tool for representing, conceptualizing, and controlling urban space; the ways in which the city has been reconfigured and portrayed by foreigners from the 17th century on; and photography's and cinema's potential for addressing compelling urban issues such as the contrast between memory and urban modernization, the elusive relationship of past preservation and mass tourism, and the enmeshment of notions of tourism and surveillance.

Fashion and Media in Italy *NEW!*

Summer Quarter, Fall Semester, Winter Quarter, Spring Semester

Professor Isabella Martini

Course Description

This course will train students to write and communicate about fashion, with a specific focus on Italy. On the one hand, students will learn the fundamentals of the historical evolution of fashion communication in the Italian media. The course will analyze events, campaigns, exhibitions, fashion shows, public relations activities, press days, customer management, and other fashion-related events to understand the communication strategies of the fashion industry for advertising and promotion purposes. The controversial impact of new technologies (social media, influencers, FOMO – the Fear Of Missing Out, and the increasing desire to disconnect) will also be discussed, along with a critical reflection on ethical matters concerning the role of fashion as a major influential presence in the media.

On the other hand, students will learn how fashion communication works, by acquiring and practicing communication skills in fashion communication projects. Students will understand hands-on how the fashion communication process develops, experimenting first-hand how to create fashion communication items (articles, blog entry, social media posts, etc.) and projects. Students will understand their potential as fashion communicators, and they will learn the basics to create a media campaign for the fashion industry, choosing the most suitable media outlets and sketching promotional projects. A critical analysis of how fashion language has evolved, from nineteenth-century fashion magazines to today's blogs and influencers, will also help students acquire the fundamentals of how to communicate fashion.

Bread, Wine & Olive Oil: A Culinary History of Italy *NEW!*

Summer Quarter ONLY

Professor Guido Gualandi

Course Description

This course examines the evolution and cultural significance of three staple foods of Italian cuisine, bread, wine, and olive oil, from their ancient roots in the Mediterranean to their role in the enogastronomic traditions of Tuscany. The course traces the origins of these products in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome, and their changing symbolic and cultural meaning across time, from ancient Roman and early Christian civilizations to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Students discuss their contribution to the definition of an Italian national identity and their place in today's food culture. For the study of bread and pasta in modern Italy, students look at the industrialization of wheat growing and of bread and pasta-making techniques, countered by the recent revival of heritage grains, especially in Tuscany. The analysis of Italian wine culture addresses the industrialization of wine production in Italy and the natural wine movement, with a specific focus on wine production in Tuscany. Finally, olive oil is studied from a symbolic, agricultural, and dietary perspective.

Comparative tastings of ancient and modern grain breads, of conventional and natural wine, as well as of traditional Tuscan organic olive oil and commercial oil, are part of the class. Field trips to mills, farms, and food sites complement the class contents.