Course Description:

Italian food holds a special presence within several foreign cultures, among which the United States. Italy has developed one of the most popular, bio-diverse, and sustainable food systems. This course explores eating, one of the most basic acts of our lives, as represented in different Italian cinematic texts. We are what we eat. Yet we do not realize how this seemingly mundane act is intricately linked to culture, economics, and politics. The knowledge of what is behind food, its history, its culture, its traditions, its diversity, the reason for which that type of food exists, how it was made, by whom it was made, allow us to reconnect with the value of food and with the fact that food can become a primary factor for the improvement of life on the planet.

Course Objectives:

The production and consumption of food shapes our world, our culture, and ultimately our identities. Food becomes a medium that mobilizes the acceptance of difference. Through a variety of Italian films – paying special attention to the representation of Italian food – this course will map the consumption of food in a variety of geo-cultural settings (Italians in Italy, Europe, and in the United States) reflecting on the cultural and social constructions it shapes. In an increasingly globalized and fragmented world, isn’t food perhaps a way to maintain or affirm our differences, identities, roots, and ethnicity? This course also emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to the various aspects of the food system, from its cultural and cinematic representation, to agriculture and food production, to aspects of the culinary arts and consumption. In addition, it provides a theoretical and practical experience from field to table through cooking demonstrations at the kitchen demonstration classroom of the USF Diabetes Center. Students gain an analytical and practical knowledge of the global and local food system. They learn about the Mediterranean Diet gaining insights in sustainable agriculture and culinary arts and cuisine within a liberal arts environment.
Student Learning Outcomes:

The interrelations between the culinary discourse and the more general cultural one, as they relate to the representation of Italian food in film, constitute the backdrop for this course. This course reaches out to all student population, regardless of their majors. It also provides a good balance between practice and theory. Students will not only “close read” a cultural artifact by examining its formal elements and historical context, but also analyze representations of food to see how they reveal major social and political issues. After being guided to do a visual close reading of films (please refer to the handout “How to Do a Visual Close Reading”) that represent the role of Italian cuisine in the international/global gastronomic panorama, students will be able to demonstrate and recognize how our consumption of food and our food wisdom (or lack of food wisdom) shape our culture, our personal and collective identity, and our daily practices. Students completing this course will present and write a well-researched and well-argued analysis of a particular “food” film in order to explore an underlying issue. This is a discussion- and inquiry-based class; therefore, engaged scrutiny of the text is essential and active participation by all students is expected.

Films Screenings and Reserve:

Films will be viewed by students, on their own time, in advance of class discussion. Some brief clips or excerpts will be presented during class to engender discussion. All films will be kept on reserve for consultation during the semester. It is your responsibility to view the film before Mondays. Required articles from other sources will be made available over the semester via the Canvas site.

Films:

Tucci, Stanley, dir. Big Night (USA 1996, 1h 49’)
Steno, dir. Un americano a Roma (An American in Rome, Italy, 1954, 1h 34’)
Scorsese, Martin, dir. Italianamerican (USA, 1974, 49’)
Miniero, Luca, dir. Benvenuti al Sud (Welcome to the South, Italy, 2010, 1h 41’)
Borrelli, Ilaria, dir. Come le formiche (Wine and Kisses, Italy, 2007, 1h 25’)
De Angelis, Edoardo, dir. Mozzarella Stories (Italy, 2011, 1h 35’)
Murphy, Ryan, dir. Eat Pray Love (USA, 2010, 1h 73’)
Miniero, Luca, dir. Benvenuti al Nord (Welcome to the North, Italy, 2012, 1h 50’)
Di Gregorio, Gianni, dir. Pranzo di Ferragosto (Mid-August Lunch, Italy, 2008, 1h 15’)
Cupellini, Claudio, dir. Lezioni di cioccolato (Chocolate Lessons, Italy, 2007, 1h 47’)
Nettelbeck, Sandra, dir. Mostly Martha (Bella Martha, Germany, 2001, 1h 49’)
Pasolini, Pier Paolo, dir. La ricotta (Ricotta Cheese, Italy, 1963, 35’)
Guadagnino, Luca, dir. Io sono l’amore (I Am Love, Italy, 2010, 1h 60’)
Ozpetek, Ferzan, dir. La finestra di fronte (Facing Windows, Italy, 2002, 1h 46’)
Cirasola, Nico, dir. Focaccia Blues (Italy, 2009, 1h 18’)
Rusca, Marco, dir. Food (Italy, 2012)
La Trecchia, Patrizia, TED Talk, “A War on Food Waste and the Mediterranean Diet,”
http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/A-War-on-Food-Waste-Dr-Patrizia

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Films and Readings:**

Soechtig, Stephanie, dir. *Fed Up* (USA 2014, 1hr 32’)
Jacobson, Kristi and Lori Silverbush, dir. *A Place at the Table* (USA 2012, 1h 24’)
Cross, Joe and Kurt Engfehr, dir. *Fat Sick and Nearly Dead* (USA 2010, 1h 37’)
Colquhoun, James, Laurentine Ten Bosch, and Carlo Ledesma, *Hungry for Change* (Australia 2012, 1h 29’)
Colquhoun, James, and Carlo Ledesma, *Food Matters* (Australia 2008, 1h 20’)
Linklater, Richard, dir. *Fast Food Nation* (USA 2006, 1h 56’)
Kenner, Robert, dir. *Food, Inc.* (USA 2008, 1h 34’)
Fulkerson, Lee, dir. *Forks Over Knives* (USA 2011, 1h 30’)
McLeod, Sandy, dir. *Hungry* (USA 2013)
Bates, Robert, dir. *Ingredients* (USA 2009, 1h 13’)

**Course Requirements:**

The success of this class and what you learn will be based on your participation, attention, and intellectual curiosity. You will be exposed to a large variety of visual texts – during the course I will provide some supplemental readings – therefore, attendance is required barring documented emergencies or illness. We will spend our time in class thinking together about the ‘fictive’ realities produced by these visual texts, never separating the aesthetic and the cultural form. I will act as a guide into the complex context of Italian food and society, introducing the texts and their socio-historical context with mini-lectures and mini-interventions.

**Participation** in class discussion is crucial. All members of class are expected to participate in the discussions, presentations, and debates. In each session, the scheduled topic will be contextualized, presented, and assessed from an aesthetic, cultural, and social point of view. A healthy debate is an informed one, and I expect you to watch all the films actively and critically, in advance of the class sessions. If you do not watch the films you will not be able to participate in class debates, and your grade – as well as the class – will suffer.
In order to put you in an active role, while watching the films on your own time, you will be taking notes, which you will post on the Discussion Board on Canvas that will be organized as our ongoing blog or journal.

- Tell us what you think about food.
- Make connections with your environment, a current event, and your personal experience.
- Discuss the issues the work raises for your life or the lives of those you know.
- Exercise your critical skills.
- Challenge your assumptions.
- Think outside your sphere of habits and rituals.
- Be introspective.
- Reconsider your unconscious relationship to the arts and perhaps the world at large.
- Be passionate.

Writing is thinking. It invites surprises. When writing a journal, you will often discover things you did not know you thought or felt. The deepest insights often come after ten or fifteen minutes when writers initially feel they have run out of things to say. Writers should generate a lot of ideas to allow them to keep only the best ones for the finished draft. If you happen to produce a piece of writing that you would like to keep private instead of posting it publicly on the blog, you can do so and send it to me.

Presentations: Each of you will be responsible in turns for opening the discussion on one film by giving 3 fifteen-minute (15 minutes max) presentations integrated with your own critical interpretation. Since I act as a respondent to your presentations, I wish to provide the most accurate and exhaustive response. You will send your presentation handout/power point/paper to me at patrizia@usf.edu and also post it in the designated area of the Discussion Board, 24 hours before our class meeting when your presentation is scheduled. This will allow myself, and the rest of the class, to prepare questions and comments in advance so we can have a more meaningful discussion. Please note that no make-up presentations will be given. Make sure you make a note of the time you select in your calendar and that you diligently prepare for that day.

- Presenting does not mean simply reading your notes, but speaking to the class in a way that is both informed and engaging.
- Do not just summarize the work, but try to use or go beyond what is in the text.
- You should think with the story – adding your personal experience – as well as think about the story – comparing or adding it to other class readings, concepts, or ideas.
- Please keep Power Point presentations to a minimum and use them only to show images. Do not read your presentation from the screen.
- There is something very powerful in having the opportunity to stand in front of an audience. Use this opportunity to tell us something new. 😊
- You may use TED talks www.ted.com as examples of successful presentations.

Given the way in which class time is structured, when you are responsible for presenting on a film, your presentation will provide a reflection on a certain film already viewed and, in same cases, discussed after the screening. Your observations, and the handout you will distribute or post on Canvas (with your name, title, and date of your presentation), will be an assessment of the way in which the film has been received and interpreted, what you think has been left unanswered, or instead, copiously addressed.
The presentation will also give you an opportunity to assess your ability to ‘read’ visual images and to analyze the significance of other’s people responses.

We live in a world where everything happens on screen. How do visual images document and comment on cultural events? Please refer to the guidelines outlined in the handout “How to Do a Visual Close Reading.” Points will be awarded to the depth and thoroughness of your analysis, and to the complexity of the question you raise and how you argue your response. Please refer to the criteria outlined in the handout “Oral and Written Assessment Rubric.”

In order for students to successfully complete this course, the following requirements must be met:

- Regular attendance and active participation in class
- Viewing of all films in advance of class discussion – actively and critically with notes – that will converge in the mandatory postings on the Discussion Board on Canvas
- 3 oral presentations (approximately 15 minutes) on a film
- 2 in-class exams (multiple choice, short answers, and essay questions)

**Grading Scale:** A+ = 100-98; A = 97-92; A- = 91-90; B+ = 89-88; B = 87-82; B- = 81-80; C+ = 79-78; C = 77-72; C- = 71-70; D+ = 69-68; D = 67-62; D- = 61-60; F = below 60.

**Grading Policy:**

Your grade will represent my appraisal of your performance and effort in the class. Presentations and participation grades in this class will NOT be assigned until the end of the semester. Grades make you feel that the work is finished, when you are in fact in mid-process. You are competitively graded. Hence you are competing with each other for grades in this class. Grades will be allotted as follows:

A “B”-range grade means that you have participated in the class by commenting on the films as appropriate, that you have worked collaboratively with your peers, and that you have effectively shared your work informally in the course of the semester or more formally during class presentations. It should be evident to me that you have worked to on your discussion board posts and class interventions.

For an “A”-range grade you should have fulfilled all of the requirements for a “B,” but managed to distinguish yourself with writing (discussion board) and participation that shows particular insight, creativity, or risk-taking with the material and an excellent command of written and spoken English.

Anything lower than a “B” will mean that you have not seen the films and that you have not put particular effort in the class, in terms of improving your discussion board posts and participating in a way that is an asset to class discussion and workshops with your peers. A poor attendance record will also earn you lower than a B.

Participation…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………20%
Discussion Board……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..20%
Presentations…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………20%
Exam I……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………20%
Exam II………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….20%
University Policies:

Class attendance is required. The first week is drop-add week. I do not count absences. I begin taking roll that counts the second week. You are allowed (2) unexcused absences per semester; each additional unexcused absence results in two points being deducted from your final grade. If students fail to attend (5) classes without a legitimate excuse, they will receive a failing grade for the course, regardless of other work submitted. You must provide appropriate documentation for excused absences for medical emergencies or unavoidable athletic or work events. Please tell me by the second class meeting if you are going to miss a class due to a religious observance.

If you miss a class, you are responsible to contact a classmate to get crucial information, including due dates and class notes.

No make-up presentations will be given. Make sure you make a note of the time you select in your calendar and that you diligently prepare for that day. If there is an emergency, let me know immediately.

No make-up exams will be given. If there is a conflict of time with the exam schedule, let me know immediately.

Class conduct: Please come to class on time and remain throughout the period: late arrival and leaving the room during class (except in the case of a serious emergency) are disruptive to the concentration of the instructor and your fellow students. Please turn off cell phones. If you bring laptops or iPads to class, please use them only for taking notes. Keep distractions to a minimum.

Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious holiday must provide notice of the date(s) to me, in writing, by the second class meeting. For information regarding religious holidays, please see http://www.ugs.usf.edu/policy/ReligiousDays.pdf

Any student with a legitimately diagnosed learning disability is encouraged to consult with me privately during the first weeks of class to discuss accommodations. If accommodations are needed, a letter from the office of Student Disability Services (SVC 1133) http://www.sds.usf.edu will be required. Please inform me if there is a need for alternate format for documents or a note taker.

I expect you to be honest and to produce work of which you, your classmates, and I can all be proud. Plagiarism will teach you nothing of value, and you will be accountable for it to your fellow students, as well as to me. Please see the University’s Undergraduate Catalog regarding the policies on student conduct, academic dishonesty and integrity at http://www.ugs.usf.edu/policy/AcademicIntegrityOfStudents.pdf. Dishonesty will result in an “FF” for the course.

No previous knowledge of Italian gastronomy, history, culture, or of the Italian language is necessary, therefore students of other disciplines are welcome to take this course.

Notes or tapes for purposes of sale are not permitted.

Reminder: The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; schedule changes are likely to be necessary and will be implemented as a result of students’ needs and classroom interaction. If you opt out of email notifications via Canvas, you are still responsible for any announcement and notification I send out.

Rules of scholarly discourse:

Listen when others speak. When discussing complex issues about which some may have passionate feelings, we must be intellectually open to perspectives that may conflict with our presuppositions. It is more useful to explain why you think/feel/believe something, rather than to challenge another’s thoughts/feelings/beliefs. It
is essential that we treat each other’s opinions and comments with courtesy and respect, even when they diverge from our own. We must avoid personalizing our attacks to invalidate others’ positions. Rather, we must develop a culture of civil argumentation, wherein all positions have the right to be defended and/or challenged in intellectually reasoned ways. Everyone must accept this standard of scholarly discourse in order to stay in this class – a standard that applies to all inquiry at the university.

**Email correspondence policy:**
Finally, as you know, faculty-student communication is an essential part of the university experience. Just as students in my courses are learning about cultural issues and critical thinking, they are also learning to communicate in a professional manner with colleagues and faculty: a vital skill in any career or profession. In today’s world, professionalism is expected not only in face-to-face communication, but also in electronic correspondence. A professional email should be addressed properly for the recipient, such as “Dear Dr. La Trecchia” or “Dear Professor La Trecchia.” I thank you in advance for ensuring that your future faculty-directed email correspondence abides by these general guidelines.

### Course Schedule:

#### Week 1
Aug. 25: **INTRODUCTION**

August 27: **ITALIAN FOOD VERSUS AMERICAN FOOD?**

**Film Discussion:** Tucci, Stanley, dir. *Big Night* (USA, 1996, 1h 49’)
**Excerpt:** Steno, dir. *Un americano a Roma* (*An American in Rome*, Italy, 1954, 1h 34’)
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zwl3z2jifjl9y4h/AADi0ljarJvmd47Qy3bO7V_2Ta?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zwl3z2jifjl9y4h/AADi0ljarJvmd47Qy3bO7V_2Ta?dl=0)
**Discussion Board:** Due by September 3 at 4pm

#### Week 2
Sept 1: **Labor Day Holiday**

Sept. 3: **THE TOMATO SAUCE**

**Film Discussion:** Scorsese, Martin, dir. *Italianamerican* (USA, 1974, 49’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by September 8 at 4pm

#### Week 3
Sept. 8-10: **SOUTHERN ITALIAN FOOD**

**Film Discussion:** Miniero, Luca, dir. *Benvenuti al Sud* (*Welcome to the South*, Italy, 2010, 1h 41’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by September 15 at 4pm
Week 4
Sept. 15-17: **NORTHERN ITALIAN FOOD**

**Film Discussion:** Miniero, Luca, dir. *Benvenuti al Nord* (*Welcome to the North*, Italy, 2012, 1h 50’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by September 22 at 4pm

Week 5
Sept. 22-24: **MOZZARELLA DOP AND NEAPOLITAN PIZZA**

**Film Discussion:** De Angelis, Edoardo, dir. *Mozzarella Stories* (Italy, 2011, 1h 35’)
**Excerpt:** Murphy, Ryan, dir. *Eat Pray Love* (USA, 2010, 1h 73’)
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bObjXY24Ei4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bObjXY24Ei4)
**Discussion Board:** Due by September 29 at 4pm

Week 6
Sept. 29-October 1: **ITALIAN PASTRIES & MEMORY…**

**Film Discussion:** Ozpetek, Ferzan, dir. *La finestra di fronte* (*Facing Windows*, Italy, 2002, 1h 46’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by October 6 at 4pm

Week 7
October 6: **Exam I**

October 8: **ITALIAN WINE**

**Film Discussion:** Borrelli, Ilaria, dir. *Come le formiche* (*Wine and Kisses*, Italy, 2007, 1h 25’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by October 13 at 4pm

Week 8
Oct. 13-15: **FOOD, LOVE, AND FRIENDSHIP**

**Film Discussion:** Di Gregorio, Gianni, dir. *Pranzo di Ferragosto* (*Mid-August Lunch*, Italy, 2008, 1h 15’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by October 20 at 4pm
** Cooking demonstration at the kitchen demonstration classroom of the USF Diabetes Center arranged and led by Dr. La Trecchia

**Please note that on October 16 at 7:30 pm there will be a special screening of the film Fed Up at the Tampa Theater with my introduction and a Q&A: [https://world.timeout.com/events/24891576](https://world.timeout.com/events/24891576)

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**Week 9**
Oct. 20-22: **CHOCOLATE**

**Film Discussion:** Cupellini, Claudio, dir. Lezioni di cioccolato (*Chocolate Lessons*, Italy, 2007, 1h 47’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by October 27 at 4pm

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**Week 10**
Oct. 27-29: **THE MIGRATION OF ITALIAN FOOD**

**Film Discussion:** Nettelbeck, Sandra, dir. Mostly Martha (*Bella Martha*, Germany, 2001, 1h 49’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by November 3 at 4pm

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**Week 11**
Nov. 3-5: **HUNGER AND DISGUST**

**Film Discussion:** Pasolini, Pier Paolo, dir. La ricotta (*Ricotta Cheese*, Italy, 1963, 35’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by November 10 at 4pm

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**Week 12**
Nov. 10-12: **FOOD AND SEXUALITY**

**Film Discussion:** Guadagnino, Luca, dir. Io sono l’amore (*I Am Love*, Italy, 2010, 1h 60’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by November 17 at 4pm

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**Week 13**
Nov. 17-19: **ITALIAN FOCACCIA AGAINST MCDONALD’S**

**Film Discussion:** Cirasola, Nico, dir. Focaccia Blues (Italy, 2009, 1h 18’)
**Discussion Board:** Due by November 24 at 4pm

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**Week 14**

**Nov. 24:**

**GLOBAL FOOD WASTE**

**Film Discussion:** Rusca, Marco, dir. *Food* (Italy, 2012)
La Trecchia, Patrizia, TED Talk, “A War on Food Waste and the Mediterranean Diet,”
http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/A-War-on-Food-Waste-Dr-Patrizia
La Trecchia, Patrizia, Hunger Relief Forum,
La Trecchia, Patrizia, “The Value of Food for Our Planet,” 5th International Forum on Food and Nutrition,

**Discussion Board:** Due by November 26 at 4pm

**Nov. 26:**

**Exam II**

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**Week 15**

**Dec. 1-3:**

**Fieldwork Assignment**

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**USF Italian Program**

https://www.facebook.com/usfitalianprogram
http://twitter.com/USFITITALIANPRGM

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**USF Italian Culture Club:**
You are all invited and encouraged to participate in our USF Italian Cultural Club. The members have many exciting activities planned for every semester. The dates and times of the meetings will be announced throughout the semester. There will be food. There will be an end of the semester picnic, coffee and pastry meetings and pizza parties. To join one of the most popular students’ organizations at USF, the Italian Culture Club, contact the president Sofia Lippi at slippi@mail.usf.edu. You may also join the group on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/27499937438/

**If you are majoring or minoring in Italian, please let us know:**
Declare your major! http://www.cas.usf.edu/declare/
Declare your minor! http://languages.usf.edu/undergraduate/