

Florence Semester program – Institute at Palazzo Rucellai

HUM 306: The History & Culture of Food: A Comparative Analysis

Credits: 3

Instructor: TBA

Schedule: TBA

Prerequisite: None

Site visit fees: TBA

Course Description:

In this course we will examine the history and culture of food in Italy and in the US in a comparative perspective drawing particular attention to the differences but also connections between both. We will first explore the evolution of Italian food culture in time and space focusing on the many foreign influences which over the centuries have shaped the use of different food products, preparation methods, consumption patterns, i.e. the Italian approach towards food. In the second part the focus will be on a reconstruction of American food history to draw attention to specific aspects of American food culture such as the role of food reform movements and food lobbies, the creation of the Mediterranean diet as well as the emergence of a “new” food culture in the United States. Finally the emergence of a specific Italo-American food culture from the beginning of the 20th cent. will be studied.

Course descriptions may be subject to occasional, minor modifications at the discretion of the instructor.

Textbooks:

Readings include, but are not limited to, selections from the following:

Kiple, K.F. and Ornelas, K.C. (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000

Fernandez-Armesto, F., *Food: A History*, London: Macmillan, 2001

Flandrin, J.F. and Montanari, M. (eds.), *Food - A Culinary History*, (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld) New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Petrini, C. (ed.), *Slow Food: Collected Thoughts on Taste, Tradition, and the Honest Pleasure of Food*, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, Vermont, 2001

Schlosser, E., *Fast Food Nation - The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*, Houghton: Mifflin, 2001

Gabaccia, D.R., *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998

Other suggested texts:

Counihan, C. and Van Esterik, P. (eds.), *Food and Culture – A Reader*, New York and London: Routledge 1997

Levenstein, H.A., *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992  
Visser, M., *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners*, Grove Weidenfeld/HarperCollins, 1991  
Pillsbury, R., *No Foreign Food: The American Diet in Time and Place*, Boulder (CO): Westview Press, 1998

During orientation at the Institute, students will receive a list of textbooks they are required to purchase. Students should not purchase any texts before orientation.