

Italy and Food

Professor Danielle Callegari
dmc329@berkeley.edu



The idea of Italy is inextricably tied to great food and Italians are known the world over for their excellent cooking and love of eating, rooted in a recognizable gastronomic canon and iconic exports: chianti, pizza, gelato. Yet, what precisely makes food so important to “Italianità”? To understand why Italian consciousness within and beyond the peninsula roots itself in gastronomy, our course will train a serious critical lens on the world of Italian food, re-constructing Italian history and culture as we de-construct the Italian meal, trying to find within it the seeds of an imagined community and a political reality. Our goal will be to answer questions such as: what makes a national identity and what makes a national cuisine?; how is food wielded as a tool of political power?; what makes food important to Italy and Italians specifically, when compared with other European nations and ethnic identities?; how has Italian cuisine changed from the birth of the Italian vernacular in the late Middle Ages to the unification of the Italian nation state in 1861 to today? To answer these questions we will investigate sources ranging from the lineage of Italian cookbooks, to textual and visual representations of Italian food and eating, to models of ancient and modern dining spaces and rituals, and more.

Preparation & Expectations:

Students should be prepared to read, listen to or watch approximately 6-7 selections from primary and critical sources each week. In addition to preparing all required materials in advance of lecture and participating enthusiastically in class, students will take a written, in-class exam at the conclusion of each unit of study. Each student will also select a food item or technology to research individually during the course of the semester, which will result in a final product that includes a 5-minute oral presentation scheduled during the last class meetings.

Grading Breakdown:

Attendance and participation 20%

Quizzes 40%

Research Week: Foundation Assignments 10%

Food Research Assignment 30%

Required Texts:

Capatti, Alberto and Massimo Montanari. *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History*. Translated by Aine O’Healy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. [Paperback and e-book versions available; ISBN-10: 0231122322, ISBN-13: 978-0231122320; referred to below as IC]

All further texts and materials will be provided in digital format.

Office Hours and Meetings:

Dr. Callegari will be available for office hours on Fridays from 4-5:00pm in her office in 6317 Dwinelle Hall, and by appointment. She is always readily available via email for questions, concerns, and any and all information related to the course or Italian studies.

Course Schedule:

I. Introduction

17 January: *Food as Culture*

Introduction to our course: sources, ideas, expectations

19 January: *What is food? What is Italy?*

- Listen to BBC Radio 4 “Food” *In Our Time: History* (12/27/01); read “Italy: A mental and physical space,” in IC, 1-34.

II. Ancient Italy & Food

22 January: *Italian Food before Italy*

The Roman Republic and Empire and their relationships with Italian identity and food culture

- Read Roy Strong, “Convivium: When in Rome. . .” in *Feast: A History of Grand Eating* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), 3-23.

24 January: *Stability through Sustenance*

The success of Rome on the basis of good provisioning and reliable food sources

- Read Paul Erdkamp, “The Food Supply of the Capital” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 262-78.

26 January: *The Roman Table*

An introduction to the social hierarchy of food and dining practice, starting in antiquity

- Read Shelby Brown, “Reclining and Dining (and Drinking) in Ancient Rome” *the iris: blogging behind the scenes at the Getty* (8/10/2012) and Petronius, “Trimalchio’s Dinner” in *Satyricon*, trans. Sarah Ruden (New York: Hackett, 2000).

29 January: *The Last Great Gourmand*

Apicius: the man, the food, the text, the legacy

- Read selections from Apicius, *De re coquinaria* [The Art of Cooking].

31 January: Ancient Italy Quiz

III. Medieval Italy & Food

2 February: *A Christian Diet*

Feasts, fasts and food for both body and soul

- Read “The Pleasure of Meat” and “Eating ‘Lean’ food” in IC, 63-73.

5 February: *Bread & Taxes*

Food and political stability in the free Italian communes

- Read Katherine L. Jansen, trans. “Giovanni Villani on Food Shortages and Famine in Central Italy,” in *Medieval Italy: Texts in Translation*, eds. Katherine L. Jansen, et. al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 20-24.



7 February: *The Social Hierarchy of Food and Dining Practice*

The Great Chain of Being at the medieval table

- Read Allen Grieco, “The Social Politics of Pre-Linnaean Botanical Classification,” *I Tatti Studies* 4 (1991): 131-49.



9 February: *Liber de coquina*

The first vernacular cookbooks and the changing practices of preparing and consuming food

- Read Terence Scully, “Medieval Dining” in *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* (Suffolk: Boydell, 1995), 101-136.

12 February: Medieval Italy Quiz

IV. Renaissance Italy & Food

14 February: *Conspicuous Consumption*

The Italian Renaissance court: manners, ostentation, power

- Read Ken Albaladejo, “Setting the Stage—Setting the Table” in *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 1-26.

****15 February: Special Class Meeting on Thursday at 5pm in Dwinelle Hall for talk on the history of pasta with Professor Ken Albala (replaces class 16 February)**

19 February: President's Day

21 February: Otherness 1: New Worlds

Divisions not only religious but also dietary, how the rest of the world eats and drinks

- Read Amerigo Vespucci, "Letter to Lorenzo Pietro de' Medici" in *Mundus novus*, trans. George Tyler Northrup (1916).



23 February: Otherness 2: Communion or Cannibalism

The encounter with the New World and its new ingredients and cooking techniques

- Read Peter Hulme, "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene" in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, eds. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-38.

26 February: The Cheese and the Worms

The Counter-Reformation, the Eucharist, and using food to understand God

- Read selections from Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

28 February: The Celebrity Chef

Great Renaissance court chefs and the development of a celebrity chef culture

Read Luigi Ballerini, "Introduction" in Maestro Martino, *L'arte coquinaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 1-30.

2 March: Renaissance Italy Quiz

V. Modern Italy & Food

5 March: United in Eating

Regional cuisine and the difficulty of uniting the peninsula as expressed by dietary difference

- Read "Toward the Development of a National Taste" in IC, 115-20.

7 March: The Leopard and the Timballo

Bridging the distance between the tables of the rich and poor

- Read Emanuela Scarpellini, "The Luxury of the Aristocracy (Or the Building of the Unitary State, 1861-1880)" in *Food and Foodways in Italy from 1861 to the Present*, trans. Noor Giovanni Mazar (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 1-26.

9 March: *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*

Pellegrino Artusi and the effort to unite Italy through the cookbook

- Read selections from Pellegrino Artusi, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, trans. Murtha Baca and Stephen Sartarelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

12 March: *The Futurist Cookbook*

The avant-garde takes down traditional food

- Read F.T. Marinetti e Fillia, “The Manifesto of Futurist Cooking” *Gazzetta del Popolo* (12/28/30); “Down with pasta!” in IC, 293-97.

VI. Fascist Italy & Food

14 March: *Fascist Food*

The politics of food under fascism

- Read selections from F.T. Marinetti, *La cucina futurista* and Karen Pinkus, “The Fascist Body as Producer and Consumer [‘Consumption: Sugar, Stimulants’ & ‘Grains’]” in *Bodily Regimes: Italian Advertising Under Fascism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 88-98.

16 March: Modern/Fascist Italy Quiz

****19-23 March: Research Week: Complete Final Project Preparatory Assignments**

26-30 March: Spring Break

VII. Contemporary Italy & Food

2 April: *Italian Food Advertising*

Major Italian brands and making Italian food the world’s favorite

- Watch selection of advertisements (Martini, Caffé Vergnano, Barilla, etc.) and read Lisa Jucca, “Barilla Defies Crisis with New Italian Investment” *Reuters Market News* (10/7/12).

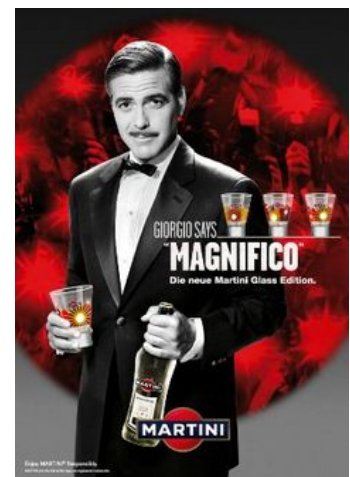
4 April: *Haute Cuisine alla Italiana*

Translating Italian history and culture into a cuisine that communicates with today’s eaters

- Watch Massimo Bottura’s Google Talk, “Never Trust a Skinny Italian Chef.”

6 April: *Globalization and Italian Food Tradition*

Junk food, fast food, new food, bad food: is Italian food at risk in the globalized world?



- Read Jeannie Marshall, "The Death of Italian Cuisine?" *Slate* (1/27/14) and (in response to Marshall) Fabio Paresecoli, "Italian Food in Crisis? Italians, Their Food and the Foreign Press" *Huffington Post: The Blog* (4/2/14).

9 April: *Food and Mafia 1: Mozzarella di Bufala dioxide*

The mafia and its exploitation of the contemporary Italian food economy

- Watch "Agromafia" *60 Minutes* (1/3/16)

11 April: *Food and Mafia 2: No Pizzo*

Waging a food fight with the mafia

- Read/listen to "The Pizza Connection: Fighting the Mafia Through Food" *Hidden Kitchens: The Kitchen Sisters* (5/6/14).

13 April: *Chianti DOC 1*

The vast and complicated Italian wine market and its role in Italian identity, at home

- Read Hugh Johnson, "Risorgimento" in *The Story of Wine* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 412-23.

16 April: *Chianti DOC 2*

The vast and complicated Italian wine market and its role in Italian identity, abroad

- Watch *Barolo Boys* (Paolo Casalis and Tiziano Gaia, 2014) (via Kanopy).

18 April: Contemporary Italy Quiz

20 April: *Final Presentations and Discussion*

23 April: *Final Presentations and Discussion*

25 April: *Final Presentations and Discussion*

27 April: *Final Presentations and Discussion*