



KIIS Italy Program, Summer 2023

IDST 350 Topics: Regional Italian Cuisine and Culture

Instructor: Dr. Chrol

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

Our idea of Italy was in large part created by Italians working abroad, having nostalgia for a past that never existed. The fascinating thing is that this very nostalgia helped create some aspects of modern Italian national culture. However, Italy is a hyper-local country, and for the last 3,000 years of recorded history has resisted being unified into a single "Italy".

In this class we are going to investigate the regional differences of the four locations we visit in two ways. First, we will do a deep dive into what makes the food of each place different. We won't *just* be eating a lot of great food, we will consider environmental, political, historical and social factors. Second, we'll look at tourist accounts from different eras, namely the ancient world, the Grand Tour, and US servicemen during WWII, and compare them with what we see. You will explore our cities in time and space, unpacking what makes each place unique but also what you bring to the table.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

The primary goals of the course are two. First, you are going to learn about the environmental, political, historical and social factors that make the food culture of each of the places we visit distinct. Second, you will hone your intersubjective understanding by reading travel accounts from different time periods.

Specifically you will:

- Read primary and secondary materials relevant to the development of the food cultures of the four locations we will visit, as well as travel accounts of those locations. You will learn historical, political, and scientific data through reading.
- Investigate in teams a specific aspect of the foodways, culture or cuisine in our three cities
- Analyze the above to construct two mental models. In the first, what makes the cuisine in each of the places we visit distinct. In the second, how tourism and travel reflects the expectations of the traveler and not necessarily what the traveler sees.
- Write your analyses in Reflections and Investigations
- Develop your ability to express your ideas through writing and through class discussion.
- Enhance your skills at close reading of texts, art, and locations

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

There are two main sets of topics that we will cover in each of the locations of our trip: food and tourism.

As for food: There are many diverse inputs that create local food culture, and Italy has more than most places. If you think of any commercial or movie that touches on Italian food, you may picture a large family boisterously enjoying a large meal with many bottles of wine. A century ago this image would have been completely alien to any Italian in Italy, as evidenced by government scientists' reports that were concerned the average worker could not afford enough calories to thrive and be productive. Food was scarce. Nonetheless, Italians who left the country to work started to create the image we are familiar with and through their consumption of food exports in turn shape Italy's foodways through industrialization. This is one example of the historical perspective we can take on food culture in Italy. Italy has recently been on the forefront of rejecting modern food practices, starting the locavore and slow food movements. In addition to thinking on the large scale about how food works in Italy, we will also consider how the specifics of a location helped develop their cuisine. For example, the length of protein strains in different types of wheat determines the length of pasta that can be made, and what foods go with which type of pasta varies. Politics, industry, religion and local history will also work into our analyses.

As for travel: Horace once wrote that a traveler can change the sky above their head but not the contents of their heart. When we read travel accounts of the different places we travel to we will pay attention to the ways the tourist is attempting to impose their point of view on each place. We will consider how different the experiences were of a Roman or Greek who passes through the same countryside as we; why creating an idea of an idealized Rome was so important to aristocrats on the Grand Tour; how cultures clashed as African-American GIs fought their way up the peninsula during WWII.

By learning about the specificities of the Italian neighborhoods and by doing the cultural analysis of the tourist readings you will gain insight on what opinions and attitudes you bring to the table, both metaphorically and literally.

5. Required Readings and Materials:

We will be reading selections from primary and secondary sources. Some examples of primary source material are Martial and Lucan's poems on travel, Grand Tour accounts, and the journals of African American servicemen invading Italy in World War II. Some examples of secondary sources are regional histories, works on food and politics, and mildly technical explanations of food chemistry.

All our readings will be open source, creative commons, out of copyright or fair use. In the Google Classroom you will receive PDFs of all our texts, and all those PDFs will be excerpted from online sources. Since we can't trust our internet while traveling, please download the pdfs to your device before leaving the US.

Your assignments will preferably be submitted through Google Classroom, though if you need to hand-write your assignments that is available to you.

6. Graded Assignments:

You will be graded on 4 Reflections, 3 Investigations, and Participation.

- Reflections will require you to read one of the tour accounts and compare it with what you experience in that location. There will be a reflection for each of our four stops on the trip.
- Investigations will require you and one-two of your classmates to fill out a worksheet about some aspect of food culture in the three big cities we visit. You will need to speak to locals, so a little digging, and report back your findings
- Class Participation will be graded on your willingness to participate. You don't need to be "right" (spoiler alert: I don't care what you think just how you think), merely be willing to engage with the discussion of the day. If you haven't done the readings, you won't be a good discussant, so be sure to read, think, and respond authentically.

The Reflections and Investigations will be worth 10% each, and Participation is worth 30%

The grading scale is:

- A = 90-100
- B= 80-89
- C= 70-79
- D= 60-69
- F= below 59.4

7. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result

in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

8. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

9. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu).

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eeo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.