

## **Food Cultures and Sustainability Project** IDST-3000 (3 credits)

### **Italy: Food Cultures and Sustainability**

*This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.*

#### **Course Description**

This course runs parallel to the Bioregions and Food Cultures in Italy seminar throughout the duration of the program. This project will offer students the opportunity to engage on a deeper level with one of the topics covered in the seminar to develop their academic skills and begin to develop professional soft skills. Each student conducts an in-depth exploration of food cultures and sustainability approaches in Italy to produce an original final creative project and presents their results to the class and to local partners.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Given the practical nature of this course, the learning outcomes below are articulated around achievable and measurable skills. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Sustainability Outcomes:
  - Analyze and compare local examples of sustainable approaches with global ones
  - Evaluate sustainability principles while developing personal and professional values
  - Articulate and describe the cultural aspects of sustainability
- Intercultural Learning Outcomes:
  - Analyze cultural perspectives on sustainability, differentiating similarities and differences
  - Assess and apply different intercultural communication styles in various contexts
  - Reflect on and articulate new insights into your own personal cultural identity
- Language/Culture Learning Outcomes:
  - Demonstrate basic oral communication skills in Italian that are measurable (“I can say...” vs. “I cannot say...”)
  - Develop a sophisticated and nuanced appreciation for Italian culture, its products, people, and environment

#### **Language of Instruction**

This course is taught in English with instruction in basic Italian.

## Instructional Methods

- In-class meetings: students will meet in class with the course instructor, explore topics relevant to the theme of Food Cultures and Sustainability, conduct group/peer discussion, plan for/coordinate their out-of-class work.
- Language instruction: students will acquire basic structures of the Italian language that will actively sustain their experience abroad and facilitate their intercultural learning.
- Field visits: this will include activities/visits/meetings designed to help students observe/apply content learned in the classroom in a field experience away from the classroom.

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Evaluation is based on successful completion of each component of the individual research project. Everyone in the course will work on a project, but the length will vary\* dependent on whether you have other submissions you will create. The final project will consist of several parts and will take place during the program. Details and instructions will be posted on the class website.

Homework	35%
Active Participation and Class Discussion	10%
Project Outline + Introduction Report	20%
Final Project: Presentation + Report	35%

1. Homework (35%): readings, worksheets and specific tasks will be assigned from one class to the next and reviewed in class. Students will also maintain a reflective journal throughout the program documenting observations, interactions, learning, and questions related to their final project topic.
2. Active Participation & Class Discussion (10%): Students' active participation in class activities and discussion will enhance their learning experience and demonstrate that they have achieved specific learning goals for each class meeting.
3. Project Outline and Introduction Report (20%): Students will submit a project outline, research question, and summary of the project (3 pages/1500words) including 6 sources, with at least 4 readings not from the course syllabus.
4. Final Project: Presentation + Report (35%): The final version will comprise an oral and a written component. The oral component will be in the form of a presentation to be given in a community event with local organizations organized during the last week of the program. The written component will present a sophisticated argument or position and provide critical, original insights into the topic explored.

*\*You can submit: an alternate final project (MEDIA PROJECT – blog, digital storytelling, podcast – OR Infographic, storymap, community report, or poster etc. + a shorter literature reflection paper OR a final research project (longer research paper of about 5-6 pages.)*

## **Final Project**

This Final Project is thought of both as an end product/outcome that students will produce at the culmination of this six-week program in Bologna, and also as a process. Students will begin “working” on the final project from week 1 in the program and all the moving parts of this class will contribute to enriching and expanding students’ ability to understand, discuss and contextualize the discourse of food studies and sustainability.

There are four phases to this project. The phases outlined below are to be thought of not as consequential steps, but rather as add-ons, components of a larger project that add on to the work completed and to the knowledge acquired and that guide students towards achieving the ultimate goal.

### Phase 1:

Students will begin developing their final project plan, using ideas discussed in class with their instructor and peers. Students will have the opportunity to conduct research and develop a detailed plan of work before submitting their project outline.

Week 3: students will submit a project outline, research question, and summary of the project (3 pages/1500words) including 6 sources, with at least 4 readings not from the course syllabus.

Project Outline + Introduction Report = 20% of final grade

### Phase 2:

Starting in Week 4, students will begin meeting regularly with the instructor to discuss the progress of their final project and to plan for next steps.

### Phase 3:

In Week 5, students will submit a first draft of the project (include both written and oral parts). Written part: students will produce 6-8 pages/3500-5000 words (inclusive of what has already been written before) to present/explain their research project in a narrative form. They will include a complete bibliography of at least 10 sources (including the ones already listed in the project outline from Week 3).

Oral part: students will submit 1-2 pages to explain how they intend to present their final project to their peers, framing their responses to several questions: How has my understanding of food studies and sustainability grown? What practical skills have I developed as a result of being in this program? etc.

### Phase 4:

In Week 6, students will spend significant time out of class completing their project and, in the end, they will participate in an event with local organizations and present their projects to the

whole community. Students will submit the written portion of the final project by the end of this week.

### Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

### Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections, and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

### Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

### **Program Expectations**

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

## SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Accessibility Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

## Course Schedule

*\*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

### Week 1

The goals of this first week are to acquire detailed information about the structure of the course/project all its moving parts, to reflect on oneself and on one's social identity, as well as to explore the concept of "culture" and to begin reflecting on how it impacts our ability to communicate and function in a context different from our own.

*Sessions may include:*

- Intro to course/projects
- Individual introduction + positionality statement
- Introduction to the concept of "culture"

*Required Readings:*

On Positionality

Holmes, Andrew Gary Darwin. "[Researcher Positionality – A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research – A New Researcher Guide.](#)" Shanlax International Journal of Education, vol. 8, no. 4, 2020, pp. 1-10.

On Cultural Interpretation:

Hall, E.T. and Hall, M.R. (1995) *Understanding Cultural Differences*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, ME. *Excerpts*.

*Recommended Readings:*

Suggested readings on models of cultural interpretation:

[Geert Hofstede](#) (The Economist)

[In Asia, Power Gets in the Way](#) (Harvard Business Review)

[If Greece Embraces Uncertainty, Innovation Will Follow](#) (Harvard Business Review)

[What Paddington tells us about German v British manners](#) (BBC)

Gudykunst, W.B., Ting-Toomey, S. and Chua, E. (1988) *Culture and Interpersonal Communication*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.

Hall, Edward T. 1990. *The Hidden Dimension*. Repr. New York, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday.

On Positionality:

The Neuron. [How to Write a Positionality Statement: A Step-by-Step Guide.](#)

**Week 2**

Students will work on building a concrete project proposal. Guidelines and relevant bibliography on what is a research project and how to write a project proposal will be provided during class. Students will receive introductory guidelines about public speaking in order to build an effective presentation to be given to local partners. *Sessions may include:*

- How to write a final project proposal
- Public speaking: guidelines and practice.

*Out-of-Class Work:*

- Complete first draft of project proposal

*Required Readings:*

On how to write a project proposal:

Hart, Chris. (1998). *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Imagination*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. *Excerpts*

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage publications. *Excerpts*.

On public speaking:

Griffin, Michael A. 2015. *Public Speaking Basics*. Revised edition. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

**Week 3**

Students will receive information about how to build a research poster and will submit the first draft of the final project this week.

*Assignments:*

Final Project / Journal: Students will submit a first draft of the outline of the project (including 6 sources, with at least 4 readings not from the course syllabus). Students will begin compiling a journal based on the observation, interactions, learning and questions around their final project topic.

*Required readings:*

On reflective journal:

Bassot, B. (2013). *The Reflective Journal*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Thompson, S. & Thompson, N. (2008). *The critically reflective practitioner*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

On what makes a good poster:

<https://undergradresearch.stanford.edu/share/surps-asurps/make-good-poster>

**Week 4**

*Sessions may include:*

- Sustainability, sustainable actions and practices, and UN SDGs
- Individual meetings with instructor to discuss projects

### *Out-of-Class Work:*

#### *Assignments:*

Final Project / Journal: Students will meet with instructor to discuss the first draft of the outline and to plan for next steps / Students will continue compiling a journal based on the observation, interactions, learning and questions related to their final project.

### **Week 5**

What is peer learning? This week students will learn and practice the benefits of peer discussion both as a learning approach and as a practical tool. Students will engage in a peer-discussion activity. Students will present their chosen topic of research to the rest of the class, and, through Q&A, they will be able to think critically about the project and incorporate peers' feedback into their work. By the end of this week, students will submit the first draft of the final project.

#### *Assignments*

Final Project / Journal: Students will submit a first draft of the project (include both written and oral parts) / Students will continue compiling a journal based on the observation, interactions, learning and questions related to their final project.

#### *Required Readings*

Al-Ghazali, Fawzi. "Peer feedback for peer learning and sharing." *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives* 12, no. 1 (June 1, 2015): 46–61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18538/lthe.v12.n1.179>.

Riese, Hanne, Akylina Samara, and Sølvi Lillejord. "Peer relations in peer learning." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 25, no. 5 (August 2012): 601–24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.605078>.

### **Week 6**

The last week on the program will be dedicated to finalizing research projects, both written and oral. Students will first practice their presentations in class and will use/apply what learned from public speaking lessons and incorporate peer feedback. Students will spend significant time out of class to complete their project. Students will submit the written portion of the final project by the end of this week. The final test for the Italian language instruction meetings will take place this week.

#### *Sessions may include:*

- Practice presentations for final project with feedback from faculty and peers

#### *Assignments:*

- Final student presentations.
- Italian Instruction: General review + final oral test.