



SAS – School of Arts and Sciences

SCHOOL OF LIFE STUDIES AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF ITALIAN CULTURAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

COURSE TITLE: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES: AWARENESS, EXPOSURE, AND ENGAGEMENT

COURSE CODE: LSSOCP310; ISISCP310; PSCSCP310

6 semester credits

1. DESCRIPTION

The aim of this course is to study Italian culture through action and participation, and to build awareness from the perspective of active engagement beyond mere observation. The course concept is intended to give students a better understanding of contemporary Italian society and culture – politics, economy, social environment, traditions – and compare their current expressions with historical contexts by using hands-on and interactive participation in cultural integration programs that involve the local community. An important element of this course is the Italian language component, which acts as a bridge to Italian culture based on communication skills. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to apply their basic knowledge of Italian language to fulfill course requirements. The course is designed to expand the student's global perspective through constant reflection and constructive criticism in order to incorporate intercultural knowledge into a richly articulated awareness of the self-intended as the individual, as the individual within a community, and the individual within a culture.

The course comprises a multitude of visits and activities that seek to provide a comprehensive overview of the Italian culture in its real-life applications. In order to fulfil this experiential component of the course, students will engage regularly with activities related to journalism, conversation, volunteering, field learning, and social gatherings, for a total of 90 hours.

The course focuses on cognitive development, cultural awareness, and intercultural and interpersonal communication by integrating and placing the student in direct contact with local culture.

2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to provide a well-rounded cultural perspective of Florence and Italy through progressive and directed evaluation and analysis of the host culture and the experience abroad. The experiential coursework and interaction with locals during course activities aims to provide students with a deepened understanding and reflective attitude toward their environment abroad. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize and demonstrate awareness of common customs, traditions and ideologies that pertain to the host culture.
- Identify and formulate knowledgeable opinions about prevalent social, historical, economic and political issues in contemporary Italian society.
- Communicate basic information to a speaker of the Italian language.
- Knowledgeably discuss current events in Italy.

- Apply knowledge acquired in class to real-life social structured and unstructured environments engaging in activities and conversation with members of the host culture.
- Productively overcome challenges and obstacles in the process of acculturation.
- Demonstrate progression of cultural integration and acceptance in experiential learning and understanding through reflective journal analysis.
- Analyze, report, and evaluate the acculturative experience as it pertains to their individual challenges and success.

3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course. This course includes 90 hours of field learning and community engagement.

4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, targeted and reflective class discussions, and visits within the local community. The visits in Florence are divided between City Walks and Connecting Culture meetings, which engages students in first-hand experience within the community by visiting or inviting locals and/or guest speakers to events centered around cultural awareness and enrichment.

A new aspect of the Italian condition will be addressed and critically analyzed during each lesson, followed by practical application via a reflective assignment. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, guest lectures, and on-site visits.

Lessons will be structured as follows: At the start of each class, a student will present a current event and facilitate a short analysis and discussion, after which, the instructor will introduce the topic for the lesson. Assigned readings and site visits will be discussed as a class and/or in groups and students will partake in in-class activities where applicable. At the end of each lesson the instructor will provide the weekly journal assignment topic, which will typically be of reflective or investigative nature. Students are expected to complete all pertinent assignments prior to the start of the following lesson.

Throughout the duration of the course students will have an opportunity to gauge and raise their level of cultural awareness via several meetings and discussions with locals, field learning activities, as well as through weekly reflective journal assignments and an assigned paper project in which the student will investigate a specific aspect of the host culture as it pertains to his or her experience in Florence.

During each visit/activity students will be given a focus sheet to be completed so as to optimize engagement and awareness. The sheet will include objectives for each activity, areas of focus and interpretive questions to be answered.

This class includes field learning hours. Field learning is a method of educating through first-hand experience. Skills, knowledge, and experience are acquired outside of the traditional academic classroom setting and may include field activities, field research, and service learning projects. The field learning experience is cultural and because it is intended to be wide-reaching, field-related content is not limited to the course subject but seeks to supplement and enrich academic topics. Students will have the opportunity to integrate theory and practice while experiencing Italian culture, art, and community within the Italian territory.

Faculty will lead students in experiencing Italian culture through guided projects and field experiences as planned for the course. Field learning will be developed through classroom preparation, follow up projects, and guided learning outcomes. Field learning will provide students with the opportunity to develop skills and appreciate the multifold components of Italian Culture through direct experience. Field education will advance student learning as a relationship-centered process.

5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

Alessi, Arianna. 2021. "Italian Lessons: Gestures," *Italy Segreta*. [Here](#).
CILD. *Italian Citizenship*. [Here](#).

Coluzzi, Paolo. 2009. "Endangered Minority and Regional Languages ('dialects') in Italy," *Modern Italy*, 14:1 39-54.

Dama, Francesco. 2022. "A Brief History of Homosexuality in Italy From Ancient Rome to Today," *Italy Segreta*. [Here](#).

Fina, Stefan; Heider, Bastian & Prota, Francesco. 2020. "Unequal Italy: Regional Socio-economic Disparities in Italy," *Foundation for European Progressive Studies*.

Korkut, Perihan; Dolmaci, Mustafa & Karaca, Burcu. 2018. "A Study on Communication Breakdowns: Sources of Misunderstanding in a Cross-Cultural Setting," *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 18 / 78: 139-158.

Matera, Camilla; Stefanile, Cristina & Brown, Rupert. 2012. "Host Culture Adoption or Intercultural Contact? Comparing Different Acculturation Conceptualizations and Their Effects on Host Members' Attitudes Towards Immigrants," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 36: 459-471.

Mauro, Max. 2017. "Football fandom in Italy and beyond," *Soccer & Society*. 19: 1-3.

Minardi, Enrico & Desogus, Paolo. 2020. *The Last Forty Years of Italian Popular Culture*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Pirandello, Luigi. 1926. *One, No One, One Thousand*. Excerpt available [here](#).

Speak, Clare. 2020. "Ten Maps that Explain Italy's North-South Divide," *The Local*. [Here](#).

Wedin, A. 2020. "Negotiating Identities Through Multilingual Writing: Local School Policy That Opens Up Spaces For Students' Diverse Languages," *Linguistics and Education*. 55: 1-8.

LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed. Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/

BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it

THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: www.britishinstitute.it/en

6. FIELD LEARNING

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

7. COURSE MATERIALS

No additional course materials are necessary.

8. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM

| 3 lecture crs | 3 FL/Community Outreach crs |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10% Attendance | 10% Attendance |
| 10% Participation | 15% Participation |
| 20% Midterm Exam | 25% Assignments |
| 30% Final Exam | 25% Field Learning Project |
| 20% Reflection Journal | 25% Final Paper/Project |
| 10% Presentation | |

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C- =70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

Absences are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.

- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your

instructor!

Participation: Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

3 LECTURE CRS

The **Reflection Journal** accounts for 20% of the 3 lecture crs section. Students are required to submit a weekly Journal including self-analysis, reactions to events and new discoveries, activities, noting of cultural particularities and challenges, reflections on surroundings, difficulties encountered, people and experiences from the local community. The Reflection Journal aims at further stimulating students' connection with the territory and thus expects students to engage in field learning and ethnographic assessments both in class and independently, providing tangible examples of concepts discussed in class within the local context.

The **Presentation** accounts for 10% of the 3 lecture crs section. At the start of the course students will select a date to present a current event to the class. At the start of each lesson one student will describe the event to the class, providing any background or relative information necessary to convey the importance of the event in Italian society. A brief class discussion will follow addressing questions such as: *What are the potential consequences of the event? How do the events transpired affect you as a temporary resident of Italy? Is the issue controversial? Given what we have discussed in class, what opinion do you think the typical college-aged Italian resident has on this topic? How might their views differ from yours and why?* Students will be graded both on their presentation and participation in the discussion of other student's articles.

The **Midterm** and **Final** exams account for 20% and 30% of the 3 lecture crs section, respectively. For exam time and date refer to course website. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**

Format:

- Part I: short-answer questions (10 questions in total). Students must answer with concise explanations, main ideas, key words, and/or names. Questions in this section may also include basic Italian language skills and terms covered in class. Each correct answer will be given 5 points, summing up to 50 points.
- Part II: 10 two essay questions; each correct and complete answer will be marked 15 points, summing up to 30 points.
- Part III: Case analysis. Students will be presented with a cultural scenario and will be asked to provide an interpretation of the events based on the knowledge and experience acquired during class discussions and activities. A complete answer will be awarded 20 points.

The Final Exam is cumulative

3 FL/COMMUNITY OUTREACH CRS

Assignments account for 25% of the 3 FL/Community Outreach crs section. According to the activity, students are required to complete the following projects.

- **City Walks.** Students will engage in a weekly exercise by assembling a PowerPoint presentation of the city walks. Students will present the walk by describing the path of the walk, the main

points of interest, and the cultural relevance of the sites visited. Each presentation should include between 6 and 9 slides.

- Chat Pal and Italian Family Club. **Reflection Journal.** Students are responsible for a weekly writing exercise based on their experiences within the local community. The Journal consists of weekly entries of 200/250 words based on the hands-on experience within the local community and the topics covered in class.
- Community Outreach Program. **Weekly report.** Students engaged in a community outreach program are responsible for a weekly report about their activities within the local community. Students will engage in a writing exercise including the following information:
 - Introduction to the community outreach experience
 - Details about the organization, the role, the duration of the involvement, the context in which they were serving
 - The initial expectations about the experience
 - Roles and responsibilities covered, and challenges faced during the experience, personal contribute to the local community
 - Personal growth

The **Final FL Group Project** accounts for 25% of the 3 FL/Community Outreach crs section. It consists of a report that students complete during the FL experience, providing a cultural description of the region by combining on-site exploration with the instructor and individual exploration during free time.

The **Final Paper/Project** accounts for 25% of the final course grade. It consists of a paper describing both the activities carried out with the Student Life Department and the activities carried out during the field learning. Students of a 2000-word paper in which they describe how field learning activities have increased their understanding of the host culture.

12. LESSONS

| Lesson 1 | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Definitions and approaches to identify and cultural awareness. |
| Objectives | Identify and compare various meanings and attitudes to culture and cultural awareness. Recognize the nature of identity and the processes of identity negotiations. Become familiar with the concept of intercultural training. |
| Language Component | Introductions, greetings, common questions. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Wedin, <i>Negotiating Identities Through Multilingual Writing: Local School Policy That Opens Up Spaces for Students' Diverse Languages</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 1. |

| Lesson 2 | |
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| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Contact with a new host culture. In-depth analysis of <i>One, No One, One Thousand</i> by Luigi Pirandello. |
| Objectives | Gain knowledge about acceptance, integration, and the importance of engagement. Recognize how identity is negotiated abroad according to different status, motivation of travel, and local traditions. |

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| | Identify how Pirandello has discussed the theme of culture, identity, and self-analysis. |
| Language Component | Terms for daily interactions. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Pirandello, <i>One, No One, One Thousand</i> . Read: Matera, et al. <i>Host Culture Adoption or Intercultural Contact? Comparing Different Acculturation Conceptualizations and Their Effects on Host Members' Attitudes Towards Immigrants</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 2. |

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| Lesson 3 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Miscommunication and challenges in understanding each other. |
| Objectives | Identify different strategies for intercultural communication, understanding and being understood. Recognize the significance of social customs and expectations, appropriate behaviors. Understand the challenges and stages of reducing miscommunication with the host cultures. |
| Language Component | Polite forms. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Korkut, Dolmaci, and Karaka, <i>A Study on Communication Breakdowns: Sources of Misunderstanding in a Cross-Cultural Setting</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 3. |

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| Lesson 4 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | The socio-economic conformation of Italy. |
| Objectives | Gain knowledge about Italian socioeconomic, professional, and familial patterns. Understand the key characteristics of Italian-hood with relations to the fragmented and cohesive items that the latter retains. Gain knowledge about the Italian education system. |
| Language Component | Expressing interests, likes and dislikes. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Fina et al, <i>Unequal Italy: Regional Socio-Economic Disparities in Italy</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 4. |

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| Lesson 5 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Regional peculiarities: the role of linguistics. |
| Objectives | Gain knowledge about the origins of Standard Italian. Identify the main differences between Standard and Regional Italian, with a focus on dialects. Recognize the ties between linguistic identity and regional culture. |
| Language Component | Common regional expressions, proverbs, and colloquialisms. Analysis of accents and spoken regional characteristics. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Coluzzi, <i>Endangered Minority and Regional Languages ("dialects") in Italy</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 5. |

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| Lesson 6 | |
| Meet | In class |

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| Lecture | Gestures and proverbs in the Italian language. |
| Objectives | Identify the role of gesticulation in Italian dialogue. Identify how Italian understand space and how urban layouts are structured accordingly. Recognize how the use of proverbs in conversation retains sociological factors and historical depth. |
| Language Component | Gestures and inquiries from meet and greet interaction. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Alessi, <i>Italian Lessons: Gestures</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 6. |

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| Lesson 7 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | MIDTERM EXAM |

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| Lesson 8 | |
| NA | ACADEMIC BREAK |

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| Lesson 9 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Popular cultural references. |
| Objectives | Identify an array of significant Italian popular culture references, namely music, movies, books, sports. Understand how TV has contributed to the formation of a modern Italian identity. |
| Language Component | Genres and hobbies. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Minardi & Desogus, Preface from <i>The Last Forty Years of Italian Popular Culture</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 7. |

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| Lesson 10 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | The North-South Divide. |
| Objectives | Gain knowledge about life, culture, customs, and traditions of different Italies. Identify the origin and implication of the Southern Question. Understand the different socio-economic patterns of the South and North Italy with relations to history and present-day conditions. |
| Language Component | Employment and surroundings. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Speak, <i>Ten Maps that Explain Italy's North-South Divide</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 8. |

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| Lesson 11 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Emerging communities: the LGBTIQ+ world. |
| Objectives | Gain knowledge about LGBTIQ+ communities, movement, history, and struggle for rights in Italy. Identify the impact of religious influence in achieving LGBTIQ+ rights. Explore current LGBTIQ+ movement and resources within the local community. |
| Language Component | Government, opinions, and rights. |

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| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Dama, <i>A Brief History of Homosexuality in Italy From Ancient Rome to Today</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 9. |
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| Lesson 12 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Italian holiday traditions and popular games. |
| Objectives | Identify the role, origin, and significance of key Italian holiday traditions. Gain knowledge about typically Italian card games such as “Sette e Mezzo” and “Scopa”. Recognize the importance of games as a mirror of sociological implications. |
| Language Component | Entertainment, games, card deck, suits, and instructions. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: Mauro, <i>Football Fandom in Italy and Beyond</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 10. |

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| Lesson 13 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Being or becoming a citizen in Italy: the roles of blood, soil, and school. |
| Objectives | Identify the roles of immigrants, migrant communities, and first-generation Italians with references to socio-economic factors. Identify the main religious groups in Italy. Understand how Italian citizenship is awarded and the challenges behind the process. |
| Language Component | Nations and religions. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Read: <i>Italian Citizenship</i> . Reflection Journal, entry 11. |

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| Lesson 14 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | Will the future of Italy be futuristic? |
| Objectives | Identify the main challenges Italy is facing. Understand how Italy is responding to AI in various sectors. |
| Language Component | Final recap. |
| Readings/ Assignments | Explore and analyze the website of <i>The Italian Institute for the Future</i> . Submit Reflection Journal, with entry 12. |

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| Lesson 15 | |
| Meet | In class |
| Lecture | FINAL EXAM |