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APCIUS – INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY

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**SCHOOL OF SCHOOL OF FOOD AND WINE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOOD CULTURE / DIETETICS AND NUTRITION / CULINARY ARTS**  
**COURSE TITLE: Food, Health, and Wellness in Italy**  
**COURSE CODE: FWFCHW345 / FWDNHW345 / FWCAHW345**  
**3 semester credits**

## **1. DESCRIPTION**

Italy represents longstanding traditions of food culture, wellness, and nutrition through health-oriented practices. Recent decades have represented a dramatic change in the way we approach health through the lens of food principles. Nutritional facts and information that are constantly updated and the ethics of sustainability have deeply influenced a global awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Italy's approach to seasonality and nutritional balance is characterized by an abundance of fruits and vegetables, healthy fats, and a distinct respect for food. This course will provide students with a complete overview of how food can be the basis of wellness, along with the practice of a positive lifestyle through cultural understanding and integration with the local community. Particular emphasis will be placed, through discussions and direct practice, on seasonality and nutritional principles, whole foods, and freshness, traditional customs, and contemporary innovation. Course topics will also reference the aphorism of "We are what we eat" and how it aligns with the Italian culinary tradition and culture. Students will also complete a survey of the different dietary recommendations that have been researched and developed to examine how the field of dietetics is directly affected by social and cultural implications. Through hands-on experiences and on-site cultural activities, students will experience the fundamentals of wellness-oriented cuisine and lifestyles in Tuscany and Italy. This class includes experiential learning with CEMI.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this course is to:

- Understand the Italian approach to lifestyle and wellbeing with a focus on health and nutrition.
- Learn how to choose the ingredients and all suitable ways to produce tasty, fresh, healthy, and genuine traditional dishes.
- Demonstrate a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of nutrition, learn the importance of seasonality for an effective, balanced, and healthy diet.
- Understand the differences between refined and whole foods.
- Examine food from a point of view that is health-conscious and simultaneously cultural.
- Gain direct experience of preparations rooted in both tradition and nutritional values.
- Deepen knowledge and awareness of how health science principles are highlighted within Italy's specific expression of the Mediterranean diet.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### 4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, and projects. Mediums for instruction used may include but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

Classes will be held at food labs of the Ganzo School Restaurant or Fedora School Pastry Shop, the community engagement projects of Apicius International School of Hospitality. Course results will thus be shared with students and the local community as an ongoing engagement and assessment opportunity.

### 5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

#### TEXTBOOK:

*Wellness Foods A to Z: An Indispensable Guide for Health-Conscious Food Lovers* - Sheldon Margen - The University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

#### FURTHER READINGS

(Books listed below are available in the FUA-AUF library)

*Encyclopedia of Healing Foods* – Michael T. Murray, Joseph and Lara Pizzorno - ATRIA Books

*What to Eat* – Marion Nestle – North Point Press

*Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* – P. Artusi – Random House New York 1996

*The World Encyclopedia of Cooking Ingredients* – C. Ingram – Annes London 2002

*Cheese* – Ganugi G., Romanelli L. – Mc Rae Books 2001

#### LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE

The FUA-AUF library is located in Corso Tintori 21. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. 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/](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.bibliotecadelleoblade.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblade.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](http://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.

Students will be provided with a course kit for materials and activities covered by the lessons.

Please refer to the course booklet for details on classroom and food lab rules.

Should students wish to store materials or equipment, lockers are available with a deposit (given back after returning the key).

## 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

10% Attendance

20% Class Participation and Assignments

20% Midterm Exam, Field Learning project (if applicable), Special/Research Project (if applicable)

25% Final Exam

25% Paper/Project

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 FUA-AUF academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

On the second absence the attendance and participation grade will be impacted. Please note that missing certain field learning activities may count for more than one absence.

On the third absence the instructor may lower the final grade by one letter grade. (Example: Final grade average of 93% or A will become a B).

**The fourth absence constitutes automatic failure of the course. Students with excessive absences will be asked to withdraw with a W (if before the deadline) or leave the course with a**

## WF.

### 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 always the student's responsibility to know how many absences have been incurred. If in doubt, it is essential to communicate any issues to the faculty member.

**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

The Final Paper/Project accounts for 25% of the course grade.

- Format: topic, length, guidelines will be provided in the course website.
- Material for research will be available in the FUA-AUF Library in Corso Tintori 21.

The topic of the final project/paper will be discussed in class with the professor. Some topics may be proposed by the professor and will be available on the course website.

The paper is DUE by lesson 12.

The Final exam accounts for 25% of the final course grade.

For exam time and date consult the course website. The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.

The Final Exam composition will be available on the course website.

**IMPORTANT** - As FUA-AUF is a paperless university, students' paper/projects are to be submitted electronically and printing is not required. For instructions please refer to the course website on MyFUA. Every delay or missing file will negatively impact the final evaluation.

## 12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
<b>Topic</b>	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Overview of the course, basic sanitation requirements - Course mission - Course Booklet and food lab rules.</p> <p>Introduction to Italian food culture, wellness, and lifestyle.</p> <p>Vitamins and minerals: Juicing therapy and its application in the foodservice industry - The benefits of raw vegetables and fruit juices - Nutritional properties of vitamins and minerals in vegetables and fruit - From detoxifying drinks to healthy sorbets.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Understand the way Italians eat - Understand that a good and balanced diet leads to good health – Become familiar with the food lab environment - Learn why vitamins and minerals are fundamental for good health and how to preserve them in fruits and vegetables - Learn to create healthy raw vegetables and fruit juices.</p>
<b>Lab</b>	<p>Production of a variety of vegetable and fruit juices according to the season and market availability.</p>
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>TB - An introduction to wellness foods pp. 8-11 / Eating for optimal health pp. 14-33</p>

Lesson 2	
<b>Topic</b>	<p>Lipids: Healthy fats and oils - Focus on pumpkin seeds oil, avocado oil, grape seeds oil</p> <p>The use of lipids in Italian traditions - Nutritional properties of nuts and seed oils - Vegetal oils: application for dressings and condiments - application of vegetal oils in other fields (i.e. cosmetics): focus on extra virgin olive oil.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Understand the difference between fats and oils - Learn the nutritional properties of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids - Understand how to use saturated fats responsibly - Learn the application of EVOO in cosmetic <a href="#">contexts</a>.</p>
<b>Field-based assignment</b>	<p>Local organic olive oil-based cosmetics</p>
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>TB - Ch. Fats and oils pp. 296-302</p>

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Vegetables and fruits for a healthy diet - Health benefits of phytochemicals Vegetables in the Italian diet - Seasonality for a healthier lifestyle - The role of the private vegetable garden for an Italian family - Nutritional properties of vegetables and fruits: focus on phytochemicals Traditional and contemporary salad ingredients - Suggestions for a creative and healthy approaches to vegetable and fruit salads.
<b>Objectives</b>	Familiarize with the natural calendar cycle of fruits and vegetables - Understand the advantages of seasonal consumption - Learn how to combine different vegetables and fruits in classic Italian and creative salads - Learn how to apply vegetal oils and dressings to salads.
<b>Lab</b>	Production of a variety of seasonal healthy salads according to the market availability.
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Ch. Wellness foods: the basics - Vegetables pp. 92-98 - Fruits pp. 99-103 Reflection assignment topics assigned
<b>Additional readings</b>	The encyclopedia of healing foods - The healing power of vegetables pp. 153-154 / The healing power of fruits pp. 248-249

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	The health benefits of extra virgin olive oil in the Mediterranean Diet History and nutritional background to the healthiest oil available in nature - The use of extra virgin olive oil in Italian culture - Differences among olive oils: the supremacy of extra virgin - Applications of extra virgin olive oil.
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn the origins and history of extra virgin olive oil - nutritional benefits of extra virgin olive oil consumption - Learn the signs of quality of extra virgin - Apply suitable uses of EVOO through direct practice.
<b>Lab</b>	Extra virgin olive oil-based dressings, sauces, salads
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Olives and olive oil pp. 421-424 1-page reflection assignment covering the analysis and assessment of the topics assigned during the previous lesson - DUE
<b>Suggested reading</b>	G. Ganugi - L. Romanelli - Olive Oil pp. 14-20

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Italian Fresh Cheeses – Fermented dairy products Nutritional properties in cheese as a source of proteins and energy - Focus on light cheese production and applications - Fermentation in dairy products: Definition, production process, and benefits - Application of fermented dairy products in the Mediterranean diet.
<b>Objectives</b>	Learn firsthand the basic cheese production process - Understand the importance of cheese production in the Mediterranean economy since ancient times - Learn the nutritional properties of light cheeses and of fermented dairy products - Practice the process of home-made yogurts
<b>Lab</b>	Homemade light cheese & yogurt production
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Cheese pp. 223-232 / Yogurt pp. 598-601
<b>Additional readings</b>	The encyclopedia of healing foods - Yogurt pp. 589-593

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Mediterranean nuts and seeds: nutritional facts The diffusion of nuts and seeds in the Mediterranean and Italy throughout the centuries - Natural source of proteins, fibers, minerals and heart-healthy fats - Application of nuts and seeds – Nutritional properties in nuts and seeds oils and their application in dressings, marinades, and pastry creations - Focus on cold-extracted sesame oil, walnuts oil, flaxseed oil, and hempseed oil
<b>Objectives</b>	Familiarize with the role of nuts and seeds in the Italian diet - Understand the use and preservation of nuts and seeds - Understand the role of nuts with a focus on the vegetarian and vegan diet – Learn about the use of nuts and seeds in salads, breads, and desserts - Understand the difference between chemically extracted and pressed nut and seed oils - Learn how to utilize nut and seed oils as dressings
<b>Lab</b>	Cold-extracted nut and seed oil tasting and specific applications
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Wellness foods: the basics - Legumes, nuts and seeds p. 104 / Almonds pp. 156-157 / Nuts pp. 412-417 / Flaxseeds pp. 322-323
<b>Additional readings</b>	The encyclopedia of healing foods - Ch. The healing power of nuts, seeds and oils pp. 402-408

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
Midterm Exam	

<b>Lesson 8</b>
Academic Break

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Elixir of life: antioxidants and natural sources Food as the primary source of a healthy lifestyle - Nutritional properties of polyphenols and flavonoids - Where to find them - Application of traditional Italian ingredients and contemporary health foods - Focus on chia seeds, goji, aloe vera: health benefits and targeted applications.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the importance of the antioxidant intake sourced from food items – Familiarize with the nutritional properties of chia, goji, and aloe vera - Compare the nutritional facts of these ingredients with more common forms of produce.
<b>Field-based assignment</b>	Local organic shops as a source of health-oriented ingredients
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Eating for optimal health pp. 34-39 / Seeds pp. 523-525
<b>Additional readings</b>	The encyclopedia of healing foods - Accessory nutrients and phytochemicals pp. 136-149

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Healthy sweeteners: sugars alternatives The responsible use of sugar in the Mediterranean diet - Negative health effects of excessive refined sugar intake - Sweetening via natural alternatives - Focus on honey and its application in the Italian diet - Overview of sugar alternatives: stevia, agave syrup, maple syrup, whole & non-refined sugars, cereal malt syrup – Nutritional properties of sugar alternatives and practical applications.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the responsible use of sugar - Understand the importance of honey in Italian food traditions - Familiarize with the digestive process of sugar - Analyze the implications of excessive saccharose intake - Learn the characteristics of sugar alternatives available on the market – Gain confidence with the use of healthy sweeteners
<b>Lab</b>	Application of natural sweeteners in fruit salads and light desserts
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Sweeteners pp. 560-564 Reflection assignment topics assigned
<b>Additional readings</b>	The encyclopedia of healing foods - Honey pp.648-654 / Maple syrup pp. 655-657



<b>Lesson 11</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<p>Whole grains and wheat alternatives</p> <p>The supremacy of wheat and the potential health issues - The use of wheat alternatives in Italy - Nutritional properties of whole grains - The advantages of a whole-grain diet - Application of whole and semi-whole flour for healthy Italian pastas and breads - Alternative cereals for bread production: rye, buckwheat, farro.</p> <p>Comparative overview of grains through Italian sandwich categories, i.e. traditional and contemporary.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Understand the nutritional values of grains and their importance for healthy living - Identify the differences between refined and whole grains - Understand the advantages of a diet based on alternative grains varieties - Practice the use of alternative flours for breads.</p>
<b>Lab</b>	Tasting of pasta made with ancient wheat varieties
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>TB - Grains pp.105 - 110 / Flour, non-wheat &amp; wheat pp. 324-331 / Wheat pp. 592-596</p> <p>1-page reflection assignment covering the analysis and assessment of the topics assigned during the previous lesson.</p>

<b>Lesson 12</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<p>Light and healthy - Focus alternative ingredients in vegetable and fruit soups</p> <p>Application of vegetables and fruits to soups to be served room temperature or cold: a healthy and refreshing alternative for a quick snack or an alternative healthy dessert.</p> <p>Focus on sweet and semi-sweet soups - Tips on preparation and service - Application of alternative sweeteners - Cold soups in contemporary interpretation and plating: shooters and small cups</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Understand contemporary cold soup production - Understand how to use professional blenders and juicers - Learn the tricks to preserve colors when producing soups to be served cold - Understand how to produce fruit soups - Understand contemporary presentation styles - Practice alternative sweeteners applications</p>
<b>Lab</b>	Production of a variety of cold soups - Application of different production techniques according to the ingredients.
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Cooking glossary pp. 608-613 / Herbs and spices pp. 614-623

<b>Lesson 13</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Dehydration processes - sun-dried vegetables and fruits in the Mediterranean tradition Health benefits of dehydrated foods - Sun-dried vegetables and fruit in the Italian diet: preservation and nutritional purposes - Dehydration processes with a practical focus on vegetables and fruit - Application of nuts, seeds, and alternative sweeteners to nutrition-oriented preparations.
<b>Objectives</b>	Examine the role of dried and dehydrated vegetables and fruit in Italian culture - Understand the health benefits of dehydrated foods - Practice dehydration methods using seasonal fruits and vegetables.
<b>Lab</b>	Dehydrated fruits and vegetables tasting - Application of dehydrated food to salads and snacks
<b>Assignments</b>	TB - Apricots pp. 164-165 / Cranberries pp. 266-267 / Dates pp.271-272 / Prunes pp. 492-493 / Raisins pp. 502-503

<b>Lesson 14</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	Health and wellness across the centuries - Case study: medicine and cosmetics from Renaissance Florence to the present day The role of monastic orders in the development of “herbal medicine” and the passing down of fundamental traditions - How these traditions still survive today - Chemical composition and benefits of herbal products.
<b>Objectives</b>	Understand the role of monastic workshops in the development of medicine and cosmetics across centuries - Analyze the practices of Florentine apothecaries - Examine the role of herbs in social, medical, and religious contexts - Contextualize through a specific case study the diverse nutritional properties addressed throughout the term.
<b>Field-based assignment</b>	Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella
<b>Assignments</b>	Visit the website <a href="http://www.smnovella.it">www.smnovella.it</a> and prepare research notes in preparation for the field learning activity.

<b>Lesson 15</b>	
FINAL EXAM	