

ADV 4930: Italian Culture

Summer 2023

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Class hours: TBA

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Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office before we leave for Italy. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is important at the University of Florida. All students are expected to practice the University of Florida Honor Code: "We the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." For all work submitted for credit, including homework, in-class assignments and examinations, the following pledge is implied, "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Course Description:

This course is designed as a broad overview of the field of Italian culture. Over the next few weeks we'll be reading the literature in this rather broad and unique field so that you will begin to understand:

- "American culture" What is it? Is there an American culture? What do Italians think about our culture?
- The culture of Italy
- Behaviors of Italians
- The pop culture of Italy
- The international marketplace
- Economy of Italy
- Regulatory and political environment
- Media of Italy

This course is designed around a lecture/discussion format. In other words, this will be a highly interactive class and is based on cooperative learning. For each week, the most relevant readings have been assigned. However, I encourage you to step outside of these readings and acquaint yourself with other readings about the rich culture of Italy!

Class Operating Policies

1-Assignments will be due on the dates indicated in the syllabus. No late papers or assignments will be accepted – no exceptions.

2-Your attendance is mandatory for each class – as is the case with all classes in this program (program policy), one full letter grade is deducted for each miss!

3-Being late (more than 5 minutes late – program policy) means one half letter grade deduction

4-Prepare ahead of time for class.

5-Participate!

6-If you have a cell phone on the trip, turn it off in class unless there is an emergency.

7-Some assignments can be conducted in groups. Your participation is very important for these, especially because, in this case, not only will you have to attend class with your team members, but you'll be living VERY close to them, traveling together and spending long hours on planes, boats and buses. So it's doubly important that you are a strong team member. Work as hard as you can to earn respect from your team! You will be conducting peer evaluations at the end of the final assignment.

Required Readings:

1-*Living in Italy* by Stef Smulders (2016). This book, while very detailed, will give you a good glimpse into many aspects of Italian life – from a foreigner's perspective. Available on Amazon and other sites.

Assignments

**Weekly Readings/Discussion Questions*

Each class is discussion format, so please be ready to talk about the issues of the day for the class.

For the class meeting when we are discussing the assigned book, please identify at least two important, thoughtful and detailed questions or discussion points from the book that will serve as class discussion questions – these are in addition to the discussion questions I have provided in the syllabus. These questions might be those that you wouldn't want your classmates to miss, things that interested you in the book or those about which you would like to hear the thoughts of your classmates. Please bring your questions to class and be ready to turn them in at the beginning of class (these can be neatly hand written).

***Trust Paper** Due 5/19 (must do alone) 3-5 typed pages

Trust has been studied extensively across diverse fields such as: cultural studies, social science, psychology, business, economics and political science; but it's still not well understood. Trust is particularly important when we are abroad, because American students, in general, are a very trusting group. And people (not just Americans or students) overall, use some very "untrustworthy" methods to assess trust, like faces, attractiveness, assessments of altruism, emotions, etc. So, in short, we end up giving

trust to the wrong people. And, on a broader scope, we sometimes use the premise that “the more similar the cultures are, the more you will use your same evaluation criteria and trust people more in a more similar culture.” The purpose of this paper is for you to examine trust on a number of levels: on a cultural level and on a personal level. Understanding the assumptions we make about trust as Americans and as humans will hopefully help you assess your future decisions about who and why we trust.

So, think of a time when you trusted someone that you shouldn't have trusted. This might be very tough to re-examine. But you'll be writing a paper about this instance. Here are the steps and the questions to answer:

1. What is trust? How do you know when or how to trust someone? In other words, what cues have you used in the past?
2. On a cultural level: as Americans are we trusting? Are we trustworthy? Why do you believe this?
3. What cues have you used to decide someone is not trustworthy?
4. Now the incident. Describe the person and the incident.
 1. What cues were present to make you think you could trust this person?
 2. What were your own motivations to trust this person? In other words, why were you ready to trust this person?
 3. Did you think this person had your best interests at heart? Did you feel strongly this person could be trusted? Why or why not?
 4. What trust-like behaviors did they exhibit?
 5. What things that you saw did you choose to ignore?
 6. Did you ever detect selfish objectives on the part of this person?
 7. Did others warn you about this person's trustworthiness?
 8. Let's talk about your perceptions of "trust" in Italy.

We will be discussed this in class. I'm going to ask for volunteers to discuss your "incident," so be sure it's something you are willing to share. Or, let me know you are NOT willing to share this incident to your classmates.

Observation Diary of Italian Culture Due 5/29 and it's lots of fun and you'll learn a ton! (this can be done in pairs; no more than 2 students in a group) Must include hard copy of observation diary.

You can begin to learn much about the culture of the country through a semiotic (the study of signs and symbols) look at common activities, landmarks and buildings, among other things. Think of this project as a scavenger hunt of sorts. Sit in an unobtrusive place and start watching, taking pictures and notes. Look for the things listed below BUT not just these. Look through your own eyes initially. AND take note about the differences between men and women and older versus younger people, etc. for all categories.

A couple of rules: First, try to suspend your culture and don't judge what you see, just take note of it. Second, take notes of things that strike you *before* you start answering the questions listed. In other words, look *into* the setting and really see it from *your* perspective before you answer my questions. Then, write down things that indicate what you are seeing. Finally, think about and answer the questions and add whatever else strikes you.

Pick 4 of the following options to observe for your diary:

a-Piazzas: how do people greet and leave one another? Prolonged? Do they shake? Look comfortable? What seems to be going on there? Is it social? Do people seem to be conducting business? Are they quiet?

b-Rules of the road:

- on the road (stoplights, pedestrian crosswalks, speed limits, headlight flashing)
- trains (some suggest that many talk and few listen – does that seem to be the case?)
- cars - look at some parked cars, are they basic models?); what about the ads for cars – do they communicate power? Sleekness? Utility? Looks? Something else?
- What about cell phone use on trains, in airports, on the road?

c-Media: look at ads, watch TV, look at magazines. What strikes you?

d-Grocery Stores-Choose an upscale and a working class grocery store in Italy (Note: by working class I don't mean the little corner convenience stores, go to a larger grocery store to make comparisons)

Shopping area itself: Layout – what is its function? Is it for the quick shopper, or is it designed to keep people there for the maximum time? What's the noise volume? Voice volume? How is the lighting? Is it inviting? Lines? How are people acting standing in lines?

Shoppers: Are they there for the purpose of seeing and being seen? Meeting and being met? Are they walking fast? Is this an interactive or solitary activity? How are people dressed? Do they smile at one another? At you? Are they mostly female? Are they browsing or is this a purposeful place to shop? Is this age or gender specific? Do they make eye contact with clerks? What about the clerks. How about standing in lines? What do these observations tell you about Italian culture? What is being bought by shoppers?

e-Clubs/Bars/Restaurants/Cafes- (note: this is **NOT** a participant observation assignment, merely observational. Also **DO NOT GO ALONE!!!**) The nightclubs/bars/restaurants in many countries truly reflect their dominant culture. One popular culture book notes: "The primary function of *all* drinking places, in *all* cultures, is the facilitation of social bonding, and *all* drinking places tend to be

socially integrative environments.” But I am asking you to observe there, not drink there. In fact, for this assignment, you are strictly prohibited from drinking. (If you would prefer not to go into a club, choose a restaurant instead, and proceed with the assignment). But pick a club/restaurant in a traditional and SAFE neighborhood

Club/restaurant itself: What is the décor? Flooring? Lighting? Sound level? Is there music? Live? What is the volume? Is it at a level designed for entertaining or talking? Are people singing? Are families there? What about the seating? Does it suggest function or looks? Do people rearrange the chairs? What do these observations tell you about the culture? What about the servers? Friendly? What about the rest rooms? Where is the light switch? Flushing mechanism? Are they as the books suggests? Are these thing as you expected?

f-Clothing/department/shoe stores -how do people shop? How do they handle the merchandise (or not)? What are the attitudes of the salespeople? How do they treat you? Are teenagers a fixture in certain areas like our malls?

With this assignment please turn in the notes and drawings of the layouts of the locations. Describe what you’ve seen and their apparent cultural meanings to you.

(I understand that this is just a glimpse at “the culture” of Italy, and in no way encompasses the entire country or even the regions we will be visiting.)

If you opt to do this assignment in pairs, you will need to submit a peer review (form included below) assessing your partner’s attitude, participation, contributions, quality and amount of work and the like. Students not contributing their fair share will have project and peer evaluation points deducted.

Grading Criteria for All Class Work

These criteria will be used, among others, in determining your grade on assignments (criteria not presented in any particular order):

- Quality of writing, editing
- Content
- Quality, scope, currency and appropriateness of research
- Integration and synthesis of knowledge learned
- Focus and organization
- Clarity in relating knowledge learned about the culture as reflected in the ads
- Your participation in the final assignment as reflected by peer evaluations

Grading Policies

Particip/Discussion and discussion questions (book, culture, interviews)	40
Trust paper	20
Geert Hofstede discussion	10
Final project/presentations and peer review	30

EVALUATION-

Note: On a separate sheet please type comments justifying your evaluations. Be sure to indicate how each member can improve his/her performance.

Member Evaluations

Your Name: _____

Team Member

1: _____

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

- 1. Commitment to our common purpose:
- 2. Efforts in accomplishing group tasks:
- 3. Willingness to work:
- 4. Work products:
- 5. Attitude, friendliness, and respectfulness:

Agency Member 2: _____

Excellent Good Fair Poor Unacceptable

- 1. Commitment to our common purpose:
- 2. Efforts in accomplishing group tasks:
- 3. Willingness to work:
- 4. Work products:

5. Attitude, friendliness, and respectfulness:

(don't evaluate yourself please)