

SYLLABUS

CROSSCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS/ CROSSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN SERVICE LEARNING

Instructor: Silvia Minucci

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 2

Hours*: 20

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*: 60

Level: 300

Siena, Italy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Living in Siena offers you two important learning experiences. The first (more obvious) one concerns Italian life and culture, specifically as it is lived out around you in Siena day by day. What is important to people here? What patterns are woven into their lives? What about their history, their hopes, their daily dilemmas? The second learning opportunity involves coming to understand the cultural baggage that you have (inevitably) brought with you to Siena and the implicit assumptions that you use in understanding Siennese life. The juncture of these two learning experiences for students living and studying in Siena, and for students enrolling in a Service Learning placement in Siena is the focus of this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course has been designed to develop skills in observing cultural life, interpreting the meaning of interactions, and challenging your own interpretations. Students should reach a level of integration and understanding of the host culture, their home culture, and of themselves. Cross-Cultural adaptation is, in fact, a continuing process that involves the evolution of insight, knowledge, and emotional skills. Meeting local people (university students and community members - for students enrolling in a Service Learning placement in Siena) gives our students the opportunity not only to learn how the locals behave in different situations but also to be able to understand why. This is why students should avoid making definitive, prejudicial judgments that may stem from their own cultural responses, but rather stay open-minded and receptive to different ideas, concepts, and behavior. Both the American students and the Italian students/Italian community members should deepen their understanding of different cultures, realizing that everything can be perceived from different perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

Most of the topics dealt with in class are introduced with some historical background that explain cultural transformation from generation to generation. Reporting personal stories and showing photographs, we discuss changes in Italy, comparing them to those in American culture. Written assignments focus on a particular weekly topic are also used as the basis for in-class discussions. Other class activities include films, local fieldtrips, small group tasks, short cultural skits, guest speakers, opportunities to meet Italian students, and cultural interpretation by the instructor. For students conducting service project, special assignments have been designed to help guide and contextualize your reflection of your service learning activities.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

- Attendance and active participation (30%).
Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Promptness is essential.

Active participation in activities and discussions. You are expected to engage with the topic of each session and contribute to discussions and assigned tasks. Suggested readings provide important background information keyed to each weekly topic.

Students enrolled in Service Learning: 10% of the participation grade will be comprised of an evaluative assessment from the community organization reviewing your attendance and involvement. The remaining 20% will be determined from the above listed activities.

- Observation/interpretation papers, observational/ethnographic exercise and Journal (50%). Each paper focuses on one small incident that you have personally observed and is due *at the start of class* on the day assigned. Detailed instructions will be provided in a separate handout for the content and format of these papers, including specific instructions for Service Learning students. Follow these guidelines carefully.

Late papers will be penalized.

ICC: Final Presentation (20%).

Service Learning: Portfolio and Presentation (20%)

As part of the portfolio, students will compile the project proposal, reflection papers, personal resume, and generally demonstrate knowledge gained in this course and throughout the service learning placement.

Meetings with Italian students at the *Università di Siena*: You have the opportunity to talk with Italian students about topics dealt with in class.

Service Learning: Designing, participating and reflecting on a service learning project within a community organization or group.

Weekly Topics:

- **Introduction & Cultural Competence**

Overview of course organization and expectations.

ICC Readings:

Paige M. R., Cohen A.; Kappler B.; Chi J.; Lassegard J.P., “Strategies for Social Relations” (pp. 77-90); “Adjusting” (pp. 91-106) in *Maximizing Study Abroad* – Second Edition University of Minnesota, 2014.

- **Non-Verbal Communication**

Introduction to some of the subtleties of Italian interpersonal style.

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Physical Distance and Contact” (pp. 80) in *The Italian Way*

Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “The Languages of Italians” (pp. 40-49) in *Cultural Shock!*

Hall Edward T., “Chapter 1: The Voices of Times” (pp.1-19) in *The Silent Language*

Paige M. R., Cohen A.; Kappler B.; Chi J.; Lassegard J.P., “Strategies for Developing Intercultural Competence” (pp. 107-118); “Strategies for Keeping a Journal” (pp. 119-124); “Strategies for Intercultural Communication” (pp.125-132); “Non Verbal Communication”(pp.133-142) in *Maximizing Study Abroad* – Second Edition University of Minnesota, 2014.

- **Service Learning Session: (OPTIONAL)**

Orientation session on planning and preparing for the Service Learning project and placement.

Service Learning: Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “What is Service Learning?” (pp. 7-16); “Creating Cultural Connections” (pp. 67-82) and “Reflections in Action” (pp. 83-95) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities*.

- **Community and Mobility**

How is community created and maintained in Siena? Learn how *contrada* membership shapes social interactions and opportunities for Siennese people, lifestage by lifestage. (Short video on the *Palio*). What role does the *contrada* play in community organization and services?

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Il Bar” (pp.5,6); “Il Campanilismo” (pp.16, 17); “Il Palio” (pp.77 - 79); “La Piazza: The Center of Daily Life” (pp. 80, 81) in *The Italian Way*.

Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “Campanilismo” (p.7) in *Cultural Shock!*

“Our little Paris” from *The Passeggiata and Popular Culture* (pp. 14 -19)

ARTICLE: Personal Space – Why Italians Seem Require Less of it.

Service Learning: Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships” (pp. 17-31), “Becoming Community” (pp. 33-42) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities*.

- **Visit to the hidden corners in Siena**
- **Visit to the Istrice (Porcupine) Contrada Museum.**

- **Religion**

What does it mean to have a “national religion,” both personally and politically? What role does Catholicism play in Italian life? What role does religion or religious organizations play in community organization and groups?

A tour of Saint Dominic Basilica will be held by Father Alf Father Alfred today can help answer these questions and all the others that you have on this complex topic.

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Religion” (pp.86-87) in *The Italian Way*.

Krause L. Elizabeth, “Catholics and Communism” (pp.81-83) in *A crisis of Births: Population Politics and Family-Making Italy*.

“Catholic Culture” in *Italian Cultural Studies (article)*.

- **Social Status, Values and Display & Intercultural Business Communication**

How is social ranking demonstrated and maintained? How are certain classes of people or certain individuals able to prevail in some situations? What are the important symbols of social status in Siena? Are these different in the rest of Italy?

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Professional and Civil Titles” (pp.83-84); “Gallantry” (pp.41-42-43); “La Raccomandazione” (pp. 85-86) in *The Italian Way*.

Falassi A., Raymond F., “Dress Code” (pp.73-74); “Visiting Cards” (pp.81-82) in *Cultural Shock!*

Racism, Italy and Mario Balotelli (Article) (pp.1-16)

Krause L. Elizabeth, “Population Politics, Cultural Struggles” (pp.1-11), “Displaying Class, Consuming” (pp.68-79) in *A crisis of Births: Population Politics and Family-Making Italy*.

Krause L. Elizabeth, “Chapter 7: Demographic Alarms, Racial Reverberations” (pp.161-183) in *A crisis of Births: Population Politics and Family-Making Italy*.

- **Cultural Shock**

What is known about culture shock? Why do some people seem immune while others really suffer? What’s been your own experience so far? How does the experience of being a student differ from working with an organization on a service learning project?

ICC Readings:

Storti, Craig, “Country Shock” (pp. 1-23); “Culture Shock” (pp. 25-45 in *The Art of Crossing Cultures* (pp. 99-103).

Service Learning: Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “Failure with the Best of Intentions” (pp. 99-109) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities*.

- **Watch a video on the *Bottini* (underground tunnels).** “There is a hidden underground town beneath Siena. 25 km of tunnels lie below the city and its surroundings. In the Thirteenth Century, the underground tunnels (known as *bottini*) were dug from the tufa to collect rainwater to supply public fountains. These tunnels were used as aqueducts until the First World War”.

- **Gender and Sexuality**

What are the general expectations for men and women in Italy? What about sexuality? Are behaviors and expectations changing? What differences are there with the U.S.? How are these gender roles manifested in the workplace?

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “The Latin Lover” (pp.110-111); “Women” (pp. 112-113); “Work” (pp.113-114) in *The Italian Way*

Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “The Italian Lover” (pp.82-83) in *Cultural Shock!*

Tobias Jones, “Chapter 5: The means of Seduction” (pp. 136-152) in *The Dark Heart of Italy*

ARTICLES: How a bill to fight homophobia has polarised Italy and sparked a culture war.

Sexuality and power in contemporary Italy.

The Asterisk for Gender Neutrality

- **Visit to the Museo della Resistenza Senese - Stanze della Memoria**

It’s a museum dedicated to the Siena resistance to Nazi occupation during the Second World War.

- **Family and Discipline**

What does “family” mean to Italians? What are Italian children taught? How are they encouraged to “behave properly”? Disciplined if they don’t? What role does family play in the work place? What are the labor laws around family leave, etc.?

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Family and Friends” (pp.36-38) in *The Italian Way*.

Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “Home Life and Attitudes” (pp. 68-71) in *Cultural Shock!*

Krause L. Elizabeth, “Population Politics, Cultural Struggles” (pp.1-10) in *A crisis of Births: Population Politics and Family-Making Italy*, Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.

Coppolaro Annalisa, “The Italians and their families: A love-hate relationship” (pp 9-20) in *How to live like an Italian: A user’s guide to La Dolce Vita*.

- **Powerful Relationships**

What relationships are central to Italian life? What are the traditional power institutions of Italy, and how is power displayed and maintained? What rewards does it offer, at all levels? How have students experienced this in their service learning placements?

ICC Readings:

Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Politicians” (pp.81-83) in *The Italian Way*.

Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “The Mafia” (pp. 83-84) in *Cultural Shock!*

Schneider Jane C. & Peter T., “Interpreting the Mafia - Contested meaning” (The Genesis of the Mafia) (pp. 39-43); “The Cultural Production of Violence” (pp.81-102) in *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo*.

Service Learning: Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “Expanding Horizons” (pp. 113-121) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities*.

- **Some Tentative Conclusions**

What insights have you gained during your sojourn in Siena? Class discussion will process observations and experiences.

- **ICC & SL: Final Presentation**

Storti, C., “The Stages of Reentry” (pp.53-72) in *The Art of Coming Home*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1997

Reading for Service Learning: Cress, Christine M., Collier, Peter J., Reitenauer, Vicki L, *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing. 2013.

Reading for ICC and SL: On Canvas (Refer to each specific topic for titles)

Books You Might Find Interesting

- Abbott, C. Culture Smart! Italy, Kperard, Graphic Arts Center Publ., 2004.
- Althen, G. *American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2003.
- Barzini Luigi, *The Italians*. Athenaeum, New York. 1977.
- Bennett, M. J., ed. *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1998.
- Brislin, R. W., Cushner K. Cherrie C., Yong M. *Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications Inc. 1986.
- Costantino M., Gambella L., *The Italian Way - Aspects of Behavior, Attitudes, and Customs of the Italians*. Passport Books 1996.
- Edward C. Stewart, Milton J. Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns- A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Intercultural Press, Inc. 1991.
- Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, *Cultural Shock! Italy*. Kuperard, 1999.
- Fisher, Glen (1997) *Mindsets – The Role of Culture and Perception in International Relations*. Yarmouth ME. Intercultural Press.
- Fowler, S. M., and M. G. Mumford, eds. *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methods* Vol. 1. Yarmouth ME: Intercultural Press, 1995.
- Fowler, S. M., and M. G. Mumford, eds. *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methods*. Vol. 2. Yarmouth ME: Intercultural Press, 1999.
- Hall, E. T. *Beyond Culture*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1981.
- Hall, E. T. *The Hidden Dimension*. Anchor Books. 1990.
- Hall, E. T. *The Silent Language*. Anchor Books. 1990.
- Hofstede, J., P. B. Pedersen, and G. H. Hofstede. *Exploring Culture: Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2002.
- Kohls, L. R., and J. M. Knight. *Developing Intercultural Awareness: A Cross-Cultural Training Handbook*. 2nd ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994.
- Kohls, L.R., *Survival Kit for overseas living*. 4th ed. Yarmouth, ME: The Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Krause L. Elizabeth, *A crisis of Births: Population Politics and Family-Making Italy*, Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.
- Paige M. R., Cohen A.; Kappler B.; Chi J.; Lassegard J.P., *Maximizing Study Abroad – Second Edition* University of Minnesota, 2014.
- Raeleen D’Agostino Mautner, *Living La Dolce Vita: Bring the Passion, Laughter and Serenity of Italy into Your Daily Life*. Sourcebooks, Inc. 2003
- Reid I., *Strolling around Siena*, Amazon Italia Logistica S.r.l. Torrazza Piemonte (TO), Italy, 2018
- Savicki V., *Developing Intercultural Competence and Transformation*, Stylus Publishing, 2008
- Seelye N. H., *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*. Intercultural Press. 1996.
- Serino Vinicio, *Siena e l’acqua, storia e immagini della città e delle sue fonti*, nuova immagine editrice, 1998.
- Stewart, E. C., and M. J. Bennett. *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1991.
- Storti, C. *Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1999.
- Storti, C., *The Art of Coming Home*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1997
- Storti, C. *The Art of Crossing Cultures*. 2nd ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Storti, C., *Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Difference*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1994.
- Summerfield, E. and Lee Sandra, *Seeing the Big Picture – A Cinema Approach to Understanding Cultures in America*. The University of Michigan, 2006.
- Summerfield, E., *Survival Kit for Multicultural Living*. Intercultural Press. Inc. 1997.
- Vande Berg, M., Paige R.M.; Lou K., *Student Learning Abroad – What Our Students Are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It*. Stylus Publishing, 2012.
- Zanobini Folco., *What Do You Think of Italy?* Bulgarini Ed., 2000.
- Zollo M., Aust D., *World Cultures: Italy*, Teach Yourself, 2004

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Generative AI Course Policy

Students may not use GenAI tools in this course to produce course materials or assignments in whole or in part. All work you submit for this course toward completion of course requirements must be your own original work done specifically for this course and without substantive assistance from others, including GenAI. Work you've completed for previous courses or are developing for other courses this term also should not be submitted for this course.

Accessible Education

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Pregnancy Modifications. Pregnant and parenting students are eligible for academic and work modifications related to pregnancy, childbirth, loss of pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, lactation, and related medical conditions. To request pregnancy-related modifications, students should complete the [Request for Pregnancy Modifications form](#) on the OICRC website. OICRC coordinates academic and other modifications for pregnant and parenting students to ensure students can continue to access their education and university programs and activities.