SYLLABUS
CROSSCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS/
CROSSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN SERVICE LEARNING
Instructor: Dott. Silvia Minucci
Seminar Contact Hrs: 20
Service Learning Placement Hrs: Varies
Language of Instruction: English
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 Sienese 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.

- Four observation/interpretation papers and one observational/ethnographic exercise (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.

Five meetings with Italian students at the Language Lab at the Università di Siena: You have the opportunity to talk with Italian students about topics dealt with in class.

Three meetings at AHA facilities with high school students.

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

Weekly Topics

Week 1:  **Non-Verbal Communication**
Overview of course organization and expectations. Introduction to some of the subtleties of Italian interpersonal style. 

*Service Learning Students: There will be an additional orientation session on planning and preparing for the Service Learning project and placement.*

**ICC Readings:**
Althen Gary, “Chapter 2: The communicative style of Americans” (pp. 42-51) in *American Ways*
Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Physical Distance and Contact” (pp. 80/107) in *The Italian Way*
Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “The Languages of Italian” (pp. 40-49) in *Cultural Shock!*
Hall Edward T., “Chapter 1: The Voices of Times” (pp.1-19) in *The Silent Language*
Stewart Edward C., Bennett Janet M. “Chapter 3: Language and Nonverbal Behavior” (pp 56-60) in *American Cultural Pattern – A Cross-Cultural Perspective*


Week 2:  **Community and Mobility**
How is community created and maintained in Siena? Visit to a *contrada*, followed by discussion and questions. Learn how *contrada* membership shapes social interactions and opportunities for Sienese
people, lifestage by lifestage. (Short video on the Palio). What role do the contrada play in community organization and services?

**Visit to the Porcupine (Istrice) contrada.**

**ICC Readings:**
Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Il Bar” (p.5); “Il Campanilismo” (p16); “Il Palio” (p.77); “La Piazza: The Center of Daily Life” (80) in *The Italian Way.*
Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “Campanilismo” (p.7) in *Cultural Shock!*
Stewart Edward C., Bennett Janet M., Chapter 4: Form of Activity (pp 61-87); “Perception of the Self” (pp.129-136) in *American Cultural Pattern – A Cross-Cultural Perspective.*

**Service Learning:** Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships” (pp. 17-32), and “Becoming Community” (pp. 33-44) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service Learning Across the Disciplines.*

**Week 3: 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?
- Paper is due at the start of class.

**ICC Readings:**
Althen Gary, “Chapter 12: Male-Female Relationships” (pp.173-186) in *American Ways*
Barzini Luigi, “Chapter Eleven: The Power of the Family” (pp. 190-203) in *The Italians.*
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!*
Stewart Edward C., Bennett Janet M., “Chapter 4: Perception of the Self” (pp.142-147) in *American Cultural Pattern – A Cross-Cultural Perspective.*

**Service Learning:** Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “Creating Cultural Connections” (pp. 67-82) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service Learning Across the Disciplines.*

**Week 4: Cultural Shock**
Video showing of *Cold Water,* followed by discussion. 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?
- Grocery Store Ethnography Exercise is due at the start of class.

**ICC Readings:**
Bennett. Janet M. “Transition Shock: Putting Culture Shock in Perspectives” (pp. 215-223) in *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication.*
Kohls, L. Robert “Culture shock: Occupational hazard of overseas living” (pp. 63-68) in *Survival Kit for overseas living.*
Storti, Craig, “The Regular Life” in *The Art of Crossing Cultures* (pp. 99-103).

**Service Learning:** Cress, Christine, Collier, Peter, Reitenauer, Vicki, “Reflections in Action” (pp. 83-98), and “Failure with the Best of Intentions” (pp. 99-112) in *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service Learning Across the Disciplines.*

**Week 5: 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.?

• Paper is due at start of class

ICC Readings:
Althen Gary, Althen Gary, “Preface”, (pp. xxvi-xxvii); “Chapter 6: Family Life” (pp. 85-99) in American Ways.
Zanobini Folco, “The First Thing Is the Family” (pp.6-10; 13-16) in What Do You Think of Italy?
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!

Week 6: **Social Status, Values and Display**
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?

• Paper is due at the start of class

ICC Readings:
Althen Gary, “Equality” (pp. 14-17) in American Ways
Barzini Luigi, “How to Succeed” (pp. 226-230; 232-233) in The Italians
Bennett. Janet M. Social Relationships (pp. 160-162) in Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication
Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Professional and Civil Titles” (pp.83-84); “Gallantry” (pp.41-42); “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!
Stewart Edward C., Bennett Janet M. “Chapter 5: Form of Social Relations” (pp.89-100) in American Cultural Pattern – A Cross-Cultural Perspective.

Week 7: **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? Our guest speaker today can help answer these questions and all the others that you have on this complex topic.

• Paper is due at the start of class

ICC Readings:
Zanobini Folco, “Believers or Disbelievers”, “Common Morality” (pp.36-47) in What Do You Think of Italy?
Althen Gary, “Chapter 8: Religion” (pp. 119-127) in American Ways
Costantino Marco, Gambella Lawrence, “Religion” (pp.86-87) in The Italian Way.
Falassi Alessandro, Raymond Flower, “Houses of Worship” in Cultural Shock! (p. 149).

Week 8: **The “Iron Baron”, Chianti, a wine for eternity**
“Contemporary history of the Chianti Classico began in the 1800s, when Bettino Ricasoli (the Iron Baron), who we might call the “father” of modern Chianti, codified the recipe for Chianti production. In 1847 he defined the traditional method of Tuscan wine-making and established the proportions of the grapes comprising Chianti: this wine receives most of its perfume and a certain vigorous sensation from Sangiovese; from Canaiolo it draws agreeability to temper any initial harshness; Malvasia, which is rarely used in wines to be aged, tends to reduce the prominence of the two preceding varieties, adds flavor and makes this wine lighter and easier to consume daily at table.”
Visit to **CASTELLO DI BROLIO** and wine tasting at **FATTORIA di BROLIO** (Half day excursion).

What role does social consumption of wine play in organizational/business life?

**Watch a video on the Bottini (underground tunnels) and visit to the Fonte delle Monache.**

“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”.

**Week 9: 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?

Video showing of *One Hundred Steps*, followed by discussion.

**ICC Readings:**

Barzini Luigi, “Sicily and the Mafia” (pp. 252-275) in *The Italians*.

Zanobini Folco, “The Observance of the Low” (pp. 44-58); “The Non-Political Italian “Us” and “Them” (pp. 62-71) in *What Do You Think of Italy?*

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

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

**Service Learning:**


**Week 10: Some Tentative Conclusions**

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

**Required Reading for Service Learning:**


**Required reading for ICC:**

Handout. Refer to each specific topic for titles.

**Books You Might Find Interesting**

- Abbott, C. *Culture Smart! Italy*, Kperard, Graphic Arts Center Publ., 2004.
• Raelleen D’Agostino Mautner, *Living La Dolce Vita: Bring the Passion, Laughter and Serenity of Italy into Your Daily Life*. Sourcebooks, Inc. 2003