



SYLLABUS

The Palio and the Contrade of Siena
Instructor: Dr. Giovanni Mazzini, PhD
Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 4

Contact Hours*: 40

Course Level: 100-level

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*: 120

GEO SIENA CENTER, SIENA, ITALY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the importance of the Palio in Sienese history, culture and mentality, with particular attention to the social, folk, intellectual, political, economic and gender implications of this ancient event, that the Sienese of all times considered their rite. It's fundamental that, during their staying in the city of Siena, the students will be able to understand, know and learn the deep meaning of the presence of the Contrade in the city, and the complex historical anthropological world behind the Palio.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Beginning with an introduction to Sienese history, from its Etruscan-Roman origins to the end of the independent age, the course will examine in particular the Sienese society in the medieval and Renaissance years, as one of the richest examples of an Italian city-state. The course will also show how, in medieval and Renaissance times, popular festivals and games were strictly connected to religious festivities and political-military events. After the description of the common sporting practice of horse races all over Italy, the class analyzes how it occurred that, in the city of Siena uniquely, the Contrade were formed and rooted. The analysis will also regard the incredible heritage of medieval traditions and mentality transmitted to the Contrade, as a sort of deposit of a lost cultural world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Acquire a more critical and analytical approach to history in general;
- Analyze the historical, folk and social context of Italy from the Middle Ages to today;
- Investigate the primary sources for the study of history;

- Identify and analyze the history of Italy, Tuscany and Siena, with special regards to its relevance in terms of peoples' identity;
- Analyze the historical and political context of civic traditions;
- Acquire a complete knowledge of the most important and famous popular festival in Italy, and through it a deep interpretation of the most consistent medieval cultural heritage.

GLOBAL LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- **Perspective Taking:** Identify multiple perspectives while maintaining a value preference for own positioning (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical).
- **Cultural Diversity:** Describe the experiences of others historically or in contemporary contexts primarily through one cultural perspective, demonstrating some openness to varied cultures and worldviews.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will employ lectures, seminars, discussions, and field studies that are intended to make the students draw the maximum advantage from the local context, a perfectly preserved Medieval social entity with the occasion of meeting members and leaders of the Contrade, in order to be able to develop skills of inter-personal and inter-cultural competence. The aim of this interdisciplinary course, which combines lectures with field-study activities, is to give to the students the possibility to learn all the main aspects of the most popular Italian (and maybe European) festival, also considering the relevant impact it had and continues to have on Sieneese economy, attracting masses of national and international visitors.

In-class lectures and discussions, guided visits to peculiar sites such as: the oratory and museum of a Contrada, a Contrada stable, a Contrada "Società" (Club), the Basilica of Provenzano, the City Hall, the stables of Palio horses, monuments and historical archives will allow students to take in the course materials and apply it through critical thinking. Cultural experiences like typical dinners in the Contrade will also be incorporated. Lectures include PowerPoint projections and other visual and audio materials.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

- Active class participation and class discussions (10%);
- Research project related to course contents (30%);
- Oral in-class presentations of the research project (30%);
- Final written exam (30%)

The research project will consist of a 10-15 slide Power Point Presentation on a topic related to course contents, chosen by the student or suggested by the instructor. The students will turn in the research project and give their oral presentations during week 3 or 4 (depending on the calendar). The final exam is a comprehensive in-class written test with 15 short essay-style answers, of two hours.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTENT: (please be aware that the sequence and therefore the objects of the content, particularly regarding field-studies, may vary and be modified depending on the season and availability of the different locations to be visited)

Week 1:

Introduction and presentation of the course. Projection of a documentary about the Palio.

General introduction to Siena's History: from the Etruscan-Roman origins to the medieval Golden Age of the city under the Government of the Nine and the loss of independence.

- HOOK, *Siena. A City and its History*.
- JACKSON-NEVOLA, *Beyond the Palio: Urbanism and Ritual in Renaissance Siena*.
- BOWSKY, *A Medieval Italian Commune*, pp. 260-298.

The *Palio* horse races and other traditional festivals in medieval Italy.

Origins, traditions and political meaning of the ancient linear *Palio* horse race. Other typical popular and ritual games in medieval Siena: the *pugna*, the battle with helmets, the hail of stones.

- HEYWOOD, *Palio and Ponte*.
- FALASSI, *A Municipality, a Festival and a City*, pp. 8-11.
- FALASSI, *The contagious Myth: an Exploration of the Mythologies of the Palio*, pp. 63-90.
- CATONI, *Factious harmony*, pp. 225-272.

Week 2:

Historical origins of the Sienese Contrade.

The Contrade in the 16th century: their organization and participation in the Bull Hunt.

The fall of the Sienese Republic: the Contrade survive to the tragedy.

- MAZZINI, *Organization and origins of the Contrade in their Participation in the Bull Hunts*, pp. 305-316.
- ASCHERI, *The Contrade: Their Historical Development and Connection with the Palio*, pp. 19-62.
- FALASSI, *A Municipality, a Festival and a City*, pp. 12-15.
- DUNDES-FALASSI, *La terra in piazza. An interpretation of the Palio of Siena*, pp. 11-16, 19-56.

Week 3:

The 1600s: the invention of the *Palio* in the Piazza del Campo.

The Heraldry of the Contrade: origins and meanings of their symbols and names.

- TURRINI, *Threads of History. Contrade and Palio in the Documentary Sources*, pp. 259-304.
- FALASSI, *A Municipality, a Festival and a City*, pp. 16-19.
- DUNDES-FALASSI, *La terra in piazza. An interpretation of the Palio of Siena*, pp. 57-214.

The cult of the Virgin in the city.

The 1700s: the “Proclamation of Violante” about the Contrade’s boundaries and the rules of the modern *Palio*.

The 1800s: from the Risorgimento to the Societies of Mutual Aid.

- ARGENZIANO, *The Origins and Development of the Iconography of the Madonna in Siena*, pp. 91-110.
- BISOGNI, *La Madonna di Provenzano*, pp.111-128.
- FALASSI, *A Municipality, a Festival and a City*, pp. 20-27.
- HEYWOOD, *Our Lady of August and the Palio of Siena*.
- JAMES, *Siena Early and Late*, pp. 220-237.

Week 4:

Tradition and folk. The *Palio* in song. The *Palio* as a metaphor for the Sieneese worldview.

The 1900s: stories, memories and civic identity. The Contrade today .The *Palio* organization: from the drawing of the Contrade to the Race.

Review of course contents. Final research paper/project submission.

- HENRY, *Gaudenzia: Pride of the Palio*.
- FALASSI, *A Municipality, a Festival and a City*, pp. 28-47.
- SILVERMAN, *On the Uses of History in Anthropology*, pp. 413-436.
- FALASSI, *Siena’s Festival*, pp. 9-88.

Written Final Exam

COURSE READINGS

All the required excerpts (in English) are available in the course packet and on the course’s Canvas site, when applicable. The instructor is happy to suggest additional readings (both in English and Italian). Further sources, including archival ones, as well as documents and translations — when needed — are given to students for reading before or after class.

Texts contained in the course-packet are excerpted from the following books:

- Argenziano, Raffaele. The Origins and Development of the Iconography of the Madonna in Siena, in M.A. Ceppari Ridolfi et al. (eds.),The Palio and its Image. History Culture and Representation of Siena’s Festival. Siena: Nardini Editore, 2001.
- Ascheri, Mario. The Contrade: Their Historical Development and Connection with the Palio, in M.A. Ceppari Ridolfi et al. (eds.),The Palio and its Image. History Culture and Representation of Siena’s Festival. Siena: Nardini Editore, 2001.
- Bisogni, Fabio. La Madonna di Provenzano, in M.A. Ceppari Ridolfi et al. (eds.),The Palio and its Image. History Culture and Representation of Siena’s Festival. Siena: Nardini Editore, 2001.
- Bowsky, William M. A Medieval Italian Commune. Siena under the Nine, 1287-1355. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1981.
- Catoni, Giuliano. Factious harmony, in Falassi, Alessandro and Catoni, Giuliano. Palio. English trans. Milano: Electa, 1983, pp. 225-272.

- Dundes, Alan and Falassi, Alessandro. La terra in piazza. An interpretation of the Palio of Siena. Siena: nuova immagine, 2005.
- Falassi, Alessandro. A Municipality, a Festival and a City in Palio: the colors of Siena. Siena: Arti Grafiche Nencini, 1998, pp. 7-47.
- Falassi, Alessandro. Siena's Festival, in Falassi, Alessandro and Catoni, Giuliano. Palio. English trans. Milano: Electa, 1983, pp. 9-88.
- Falassi, Alessandro. The contagious Myth: an Exploration of the Mythologies of the Palio, in M.A. Ceppari Ridolfi et al. (eds.), The Palio and its Image. History Culture and Representation of Siena's Festival. Siena: Nardini Editore, 2001.
- Falassi, Alessandro and Catoni, Giuliano. Palio. English trans. Milano: Electa, 1983.
- Henry, Marguerite. Gaudenzia: Pride of the Palio. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1960.
- Heywood, William. Our Lady of August and the Palio of Siena. Siena: Enrico Torrini, 1899.
- ---. Palio and Ponte. London: Methuen and Co., 1904.
- Hook, Judith. Siena. A City and its History. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979.
- Jackson, Ph. and Nevola, F. Beyond the Palio: Urbanism and Ritual in Renaissance Siena in Renaissance Studies.
- James, Henry. Siena Early and Late, in Italian Hours. New York: Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 220-237.
- Mazzini, Giovanni. Organization and origins of the Contrade in their Participation in the Bull Hunts, in M.A. Ceppari Ridolfi et al. (eds.), The Palio and its Image. History Culture and Representation of Siena's Festival. Siena: Nardini Editore, 2001.
- Silverman, Sydel. "On the Uses of History in Anthropology: the Palio of Siena". American Ethnologist, 6 (1979), pp. 413-436.
- Turrini, Patrizia. Threads of History. Contrade and Palio in the Documentary Sources, in M.A. Ceppari Ridolfi et al. (eds.), The Palio and its Image. History Culture and Representation of Siena's Festival. Siena: Nardini Editore, 2001.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Civai, Mauro and Toti, Enrico. Palio: The Race of the Soul. English trans. Siena: AL.SA.BA., 2005.

BRIEF BIO of INSTRUCTOR

Giovanni Mazzini earned an honors degree in Medieval History, and a doctoral degree (Ph. D) in Institutions and Archives at the University of Siena. He is a lecturer and a consultant in several academic conferences, events, seminars, congresses, exhibitions on Medieval and Renaissance History; published books, articles and essays on the political and military aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Siena. He also teaches Art History, History of Italian Food and Wine, and is expert archivist consultant. His current researches focus on the military organization of the Italian medieval communes, on urban social revolts in Italian cities (second half of the XIV century) and on the urbanistic transformations of Siena from

Antiquity to the Middle Ages. He is also an officially licensed tourist guide. In particular, Giovanni Mazzini is deeply engaged in the life of his own Contrada and in the whole matter of the Palio; he is Archivist of the Contrada della Tartuca. He is currently considered the greatest expert in the History of the Sienese Contrade and the Palio, about which he published some relevant works. He frequently appears in documentaries and TV programs about the Palio. Since 2018 he is the co-anchorman of the live TV broadcasting of the Palio for the Rai TV (national public broadcasting television of Italy).

Standard citation needs to include: APA

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 researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Attendance Policy:

Successful progress of the program depends on the full cooperation of both students and faculty members. Regular attendance and active participation in class are essential parts of the learning process. Attendance at and participation in all class meetings and field-studies are required. More than TWO unjustified absences (that are not medically excused with a written certificate of the doctor or caused by serious sudden family and/or personal occurrences, as for example death of a family member) will result in a lowering of your grade by two percentage points for every unexcused absence.

Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Reporting

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at safe.uoregon.edu. To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour hotline at 541-346-7244 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-8136. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to Callisto, a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university.

Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information at respect.uoregon.edu or aaeo.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential AAEO office at 541-346-3123 or the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available at [Discrimination & Harassment](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration.

Specific details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees can be found at titleix.uoregon.edu.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Students with Disabilities

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.