

SUSTAINABILITY, FOOD AND LANDSCAPES IN THE ITALIAN ALPS

Trentino, Italy, Summer 2018

Manola Corrent, M.A.

manola.corrent@dolomit-learning.it

"En montagna l'è tüt bon."

"In the mountains everything tastes good."

(Trentino saying)

Course description

A journey across time and space, from the traces of prehistoric peoples to the challenges of our globalized world. Food is the key to explore the complex interaction between humans and their environments, and its impact on culture, economy, identity, and landscapes. Issues of global concern such as sustainable practices, climate change and resource management are tackled from the unique perspective of the Italian Alps, a place renowned for its distinctive environment, rich agriculture and traditional food productions.

Course structure

The course is organized into:

- ✓ Twelve class sessions (24 contact hours)
- ✓ Five guided visits (10 contact hours)
- ✓ A residential lab (12 contact hours)

The course totals forty-six contact hours, corresponding to three semester credit hours.

Evaluation

10% Attendance and active participation

30% Midterm exam

10% Residential lab

10% Presentation

40% Final paper

Week 1 – Introduction to the European and local social, environmental and historical context; definition of the course’s key concepts; introduction to social sciences methodologies and research goals.

Class session #1 – Introduction to Italy, in the European context and with a focus on Trentino and its surroundings.

Class session #2 – Course presentation; definitions of sustainability, environment, food, landscape, and discussion on how they intersect.

- ✓ Eden, S. (2009). Environment. In R. Kitchin and N. Thrift (Eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 505-516). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- ✓ Marsden, T. (2009). Sustainability. In R. Kitchin and N. Thrift (Eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 103-108). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- ✓ Fischer, N. (2012). Europe landscape, landscape history, and landscape theory. In U. Kockel, M.N. Craith, and J. Frykman (Eds.) *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe* (pp. 322-333). Chichester: Blackwell.

Class session #3 – Introduction to social sciences research methods, techniques and goals; differences between natural and social sciences in their approaches and methods; focus on qualitative and ethnographic methods.

- ✓ Battacherjee, A. (2012). Introduction to research. In *Social science research: principles, methods, and practices*, (pp. 1-24), University of South Florida Scholar Commons.

- ✓ Given, L.M. (2008). Ethnography. In Lisa. M Given (Ed.) *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 288-292). Los Angeles: Sage.

Visit #1 – Guided visit to the “Mount Brione Biotope and Heritage Trail” in Riva del Garda.

Week 2 – Anthropological and archeological overview of consumption and production systems; history of food production; globalization, food chains and food ethics.

Class session #4 – Introduction to human evolution; passage from foraging to agriculture and its impact on human history.

- ✓ Diamond, J. (1999). *The worst mistake in the history of human race*. Retrieved from <http://discovermagazine.com/1987/may/02-the-worst-mistake-in-the-history-of-the-human-race>.
- ✓ Fussel, G. E. (2015). *Origins of Agriculture*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/agriculture>.

Visit #2 – Guided visit and tastings at an olive oil mill and a coffee roasting factory in Riva del Garda.

Class session #5 – Overview of food production and consumption systems across time and space, and their impact on human adaptation.

- ✓ Lobb, R.L. (2003). Food production, history of. In S.H. Katz (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture. Volume 2* (pp. 1-3). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- ✓ Gibbons, A. (2013). *Evolution of Diet*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/evolution-of-diet/>

Visit #3 – Guided visit to the ethnographic museum “Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina” and meeting with experts at the 19th-century agrarian school and research institution “Fondazione Edmund Mach” in San Michele all'Adige.

Class session #6 – Comparative analysis of different agricultural systems and food industries in the contemporary era, and their impact in shaping landscapes and ways of life.

- ✓ Hawkins, R. (2013). Food ethics. In D. Sloan (Ed.), *Food and Drink, the Cultural Context* (pp. 72-97). Oxford: Goodfellow Publisher.
- ✓ Korthals, M. (2002). Globalization of the food production system. In M. Korthals and P.B. Thompson (Eds.), *Before Dinner. Philosophy and Ethics of Food* (pp. 135-148). Dordrecht (NL): Springer.

Week 3 – Food, identity and heritage; how food production and consumption shape the Italian landscape; “Slow Food”, the organic food movements, and the politics behind labeling and certifications; the specificities of the human and environmental context of the Alpine region.

Class session #7 – Food, identity and the role of agriculture in shaping Italian regional cultures and landscapes.

- ✓ Harper, D. and Faccioli, P. (2009). Regionalism and national identity. In *The Italian Way. Food & Social Life* (pp. 27-66), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ✓ Helstosky, C. (2004). Epilogue: Food in Italy today. In *Garlic and Oil. Politics and Food in Italy* (pp. 155-165), Oxford: Berg.

Visit #4 – Guided visit to the science museum “MuSe” in Trento.

Class session #8 – Food and the economy; the “Slow Food” movement and short food supply chains; food and tourism; systems of food and agriculture certifications.

- ✓ Larsson, T. (2015). The rise of the organic foods movement as a transnational phenomenon. In R.J. Harring (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Food, Politics, and Society* (pp. 739-754). New York: Oxford University Press.
- ✓ Buiatti S. (2011). Food and tourism: the role of the “Slow Food” association. In K.L. Sidali, A. Spiller & B. Schulzer (Eds.), *Food, agri-culture and tourism. Linking local gastronomies and rural tourism: interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 92-101). Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.

Visit #5 – Guided visit to the “South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology” (home of Ötzi “the Iceman”) in Bolzano.

Class session #9 – Human-environment historical interactions and the shaping of the Alps.

- ✓ Cullen, B. (2003). Testimony from the Iceman. *Smithsonian Magazine*, 33, 11 (pp. 42-50).
- ✓ Mathieu, J. (2009). Environment and development. State formation and society. In *History of the Alps, 1500-1900: Environment, Development, and Society* (pp. 114-134, 195-221). Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.
- ✓ Fleming, F. (2004). The Alps and the Imagination. *Ambio. Special Report*, 13 (pp. 51-55).

Week 4 – Residential Alpine study lab in the Giudicarie Valley; guided fieldwork and data collection on mountain agriculture, natural resource management, and the future of the highlands.

The four-day residential lab will take place in the Giudicarie Valley, in Trentino, an alpine rural area that has obtained the UNESCO acknowledgment in the “Man and the Biosphere Program” because of the exceptional relationship that its people were able to develop with their environment.

This is an ideal context to interact with local producers, observe food production and processing, and reflect on the impact of certain practices on the environment.

The goal of the lab is to help students to put into practice what they have learned over the first three weeks of the course and to collect the data that will be the basis of their final paper.

The first day will be devoted to an introduction to the area and to the discussion of the following readings:

- ✓ Carrer, F. (2016). Secondary Products Exploitation: Preliminary Ethnoarchaeological Insights from Alpine Cases Study. In Biagetti, Stefano and Lugli, Francesca (Eds.) *The Intangible Elements of Culture in Ethnoarchaeological Research* (pp. 115-124). Newcastle (UK): Springer.

- ✓ Previtali, F. (2011). Mountain anthrosapes, the case of the Italian Alps. In S. Kapur et al. (Eds.) *Sustainable Land Management* (pp. 143-161). Verlag Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.

Each student will be assigned a specific theme, chosen from a selected list, including: alpine pastoralism; farm holidays; zero-km food production and consumption systems; local cuisine and diet habits. The following days will be devoted to carrying out the fieldwork, with the continuing assistance of the instructor and local tutors.

At the end of each day, the group will meet to reflect on the ongoing research experience and plan further steps.

Week 5 – Final project seminar, outline of the paper, group presentation and feedback; present and future challenges and opportunities in the field.

Class session #10 – Final project seminar: this seminar aims at helping students to interpret the collected data, select the literature, and write their final paper.

Class session #11 – Presentations: each student will prepare a presentation on the preliminary results of the research carried out during the residential lab and an outline of the paper; every participant is expected to ask questions and give feedback to the presenter.

Class session #12 – Future of agriculture in the Alps; impact of climate change on the environments and peoples of the Alps; conclusions.

- ✓ Flury, C., Huber R. and Tasser, E. (2013). Future of mountain agriculture in the Alps. In S. Mann (Ed.) *The Future of Mountain Agriculture* (pp. 105-123). Verlag Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.
- ✓ Bogataj, L. K. (2007). How will the Alps respond to climate change? Scenarios for the future of Alpine water. *Alpine Space - Man and the Environment*, 3 (pp. 43-50).
- ✓ Bourdeau, P. (2009). Mountain tourism in a climate of change. *Alpine Space – Man and the Environment*, 7 (pp. 39-52).