

Diana Garvin

Edible/Political: Understanding Italian Fascism through Food

ITAL 3670 cross-listings: HIST3670, VISST3670
Spring 2013, Morrill Hall 102, MWF 11:15am to 12:05pm

“*Non togliete il pane ai figli dei nostri lavoratori,*”
“Don’t take bread from the mouths of our workers’ children.”
– Fascist slogan

“*Non si vive di solo pane,*”
“One cannot live by bread alone.”
– Italian proverb

Instructor: Diana Garvin, deg97@cornell.edu, Morrill Hall 421
Office Hours: MT 12:05-1:05pm in Morrill Hall 421
Virtual Office Hours: WTR 8:00-9:00pm via Skype, dianagarvin

Experts’ Panel: These Cornell-based archivists can answer your research questions.
Olin Kroch Rare Books Library - Katherine Reagan, kr33@cornell.edu
Nestlé Library (Hotel School) – Jimena Rosés-Sierra, js2288@cornell.edu
Johnson Museum – Andy Weislogel, aw27@cornell.edu
Cornell Cinema – Mary Fessenden, mkf2@cornell.edu

1 Course Description

People experience politics through food. As such, we can analyze 1930s Italian culinary ephemera to understand Fascist regime politics. Governmental power reached the *Italiano medio* (the average Italian) through mass media related to food consumption and production. Key course approaches and themes include deciphering Fascist political structures with food, analyzing Italian food ways to characterize government-citizen relationships, and linking food and power in mass media. You will conduct archival research in museums, libraries, and archives at Cornell and online. Weekly research reflection blog posts encourage dialogue beyond the classroom. This content informs your interactive multimedia projects.

2 Course Rationale

This advanced Italian culture course provides an introduction to multimedia research technique for juniors preparing to write their senior thesis. Successful archival navigation, crafting of personal research methodology, and articulate communication of findings with diverse scholarly communities constitute the keystone skills fostered through blog writing, gallery presentations, sustained conversation with field experts, and interactive multimedia research projects.

3 Aims and Objectives

“Edible/Political” aims to demonstrate the relevance of Italian food studies and mass media to cultural history. We will challenge the following assumptions:

- 1) Designations of high and low culture are fixed in time and place.
- 2) Low social classes cannot read meaning in artifacts of high culture.
- 3) Politics are boring, impenetrable, and do not affect individuals.

This course will help you to effectively conduct archival research by introducing you to where these resources are, how to find what you’re looking for in databases, and how to convince cranky bureaucrats to help you access additional materials. In pairs, in small groups, and as a class, we will pick out themes, and then decide which particular documents are emblematic of those themes. Finally, perhaps most crucially, you will formulate your own methods for how to interpret your selected documents. Every discipline has a methodology, but I would like you to consciously craft your own based on your tentative thesis plans. You should justify your choices by highlighting innovative aspects of your method and demonstrating how your approach solves problems inherent in current disciplinary-bound models.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Interpret political power structures by analyzing patterns in food production, consumption, and promotion.
- 2) Appreciate the intimacy of the link between government and individuals via food.
- 3) Question divisions of “high” and “low” culture. Postulate why powerful political groups habitually assign particular media types to each category.
- 4) Articulate your personal approach for studying food and politics in media and persuasively advocate this methodology by using examples of culinary ephemera.
- 5) Identify and navigate appropriate research sites (both online and in the field) for the study of film, architecture, mass media, or the area of your choice.
- 6) Establish and develop an ongoing scholarly conversation via email with at least one archivist, either at your chosen site or an expert in the field.
- 7) Design and implement a multimedia project integrating food and politics. Initiate conversation with scholars at Cornell or further afield regarding your contributions.
- 8) Elicit weekly rapport with multiple audiences, using diverse register and tone in your presentation. Reflect on input, and adjust style and content if necessary. Put simply, you will be able to comprehensibly and appropriately explain your arguments to the field expert, grandma, academic bloggers, and your classmates.

4 Activities, Homework, and Projects

A) Weekly Skill-Building:

In-class Activities: During class time, we will peer-edit methodology statements, debate high versus low cultural attributes, brainstorm solutions to research problems, and reflect in small groups on linking food and politics. These activities provide a way for you to try out your ideas in a low-stress, scholarly setting and to refine them with the help of others. For this same reason, you will also give a presentation and introduce your project to the class and provide feedback for others so that everyone can learn from everyone else's hard work. Four visits to on-campus archives provide opportunities for you to ask questions and hone your research techniques with the guidance of resident experts.

Monday Homework: To prepare for each Monday class, you are expected to do the assigned reading or viewing. Because this class is intended to help you to independently navigate archives, "reading or viewing" will include online research assignments. Over the course of the semester, we will shift from instructor-dictated visits to self-guided exploration. You will begin to generate your own questions and seek focused answers, enabling you to target your searches to prepare for your final projects.

Wednesday Homework: Every first Wednesday, you must compose a response to the weekly readings and viewing, post it to your blog (see BB handout, "How to Start a Blog"), and solicit feedback from a particular audience (see BB handout, "Weekly Breakdown of Academic Groups"). Every second Wednesday, you must respond to their communication or, if they do not respond, write a reflection on why they may not have responded and how you might encourage them to communicate with you in the future.

Friday Homework: Friday homework includes preparation for presentations, question generation for keynote speakers, and generation of "What am I looking for? How will I find it?" lists for on-campus field trips. These major activities take place on Fridays so that you have the entire school week to prepare and do not habitually sacrifice weekends to coursework. Part of being a scholar is learning how to balance work with relaxation.

B) Cumulative Demonstrations of Skill:

Group Presentation: In the third week of class, the instructor will assign students to groups. These groups will work together on a presentation, and may also convene for additional study sessions and peer-editing if they wish. Presenting evidence of bi-weekly study group meetings can count for extra credit in your "Collegiate Participation" grade. Over the course of one month, you will meet both in class and outside of class to decide on a topic, conduct archival research, formulate an educational and interesting presentation style, design and troubleshoot the group presentation, present your work to the class, and reflect on what you have learned. This project emphasizes effectively sharing knowledge with peers and generating interest in further study. You must actively participate in and offer constructive feedback for others' presentations as well. These are interactive assignments.

Multimedia Project: All weekly course assignments and activities are intended to guide you towards the design and implementation of a multimedia project on Italian food and politics. Possible ideas include, but are by no means limited to: guest-lecturing for another course, curating a gallery at Kroch library, producing an exhibit in the Nestlé library, drafting an article proposal, composing a grant application, creating a website with images and links, designing a film series for the Cornell Cinema. Although it is not strictly necessary to implement your project, you are highly encouraged to do so. In-class activities will prepare you for potential bureaucratic hurdles on this front. This project should go beyond our classroom, either via online posting or in the inclusion of scholars at Cornell and further afield.

5 Viewings and Readings

Viewings: In keeping with the multimedia nature of this class, much of your at-home work will involve archival research with online databases for art, film, objects, and ephemera. You are free, and indeed encouraged, to seek out additional online sources and to share them with the class. Key online archives for this class include:

Film, Newsreels, Photography: <http://www.archivioluce.com/archivio/>

Menus: <http://www.academiabarilla.com/gastronomic-library/menu-collection/default.aspx>

Ephemera and Mass Media: <http://207.67.203.78/W10054Staff/OPAC/index.asp>

Culinary Objects: <http://207.67.203.78/W10054Staff/OPAC/index.asp>

Required Readings:

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| ISBN 9780253349811 | David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, <i>Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War</i> |
| ISBN 9781859738900 | Carole Helstosky, <i>Garlic and Oil: Food and Politics in Italy</i> |
| ISBN 9780816625635 | Karen Pinkus, <i>Bodily Regimes: Italian Advertising under Fascism</i> |

Recommended Readings:

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| ISBN 9780520223639 | Ruth Ben Ghiat, <i>Fascist Modernities</i> |
| ISBN 9780801484209 | Mabel Berezin, <i>Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy</i> |
| ISBN 9780520074576 | Victoria De Grazia, <i>How Fascism Ruled Women</i> |

These readings are available at the Cornell Bookstore, and can be found at discounted rates online. They are also available in Olin Library in the Course Reserves section, 3rd floor, room 302. Our Blackboard website will provide additional weekly readings on diverse research methodologies and political and media theory. Please bring all readings to class with you, be they in book form or printed for the BB site. We will often discuss readings in class, and you will need to point to passages to support your arguments.

6 Learning Assessment

You earn your grade based on the following distribution. Weekly skill-building and cumulative demonstrations of skill comprise equal proportions of your final grade, because regularly crafting excellent, small assignments results major assignments of excellent quality. Collegiate participation (“There’s that phrase again!”) creates an effective learning environment for you and your classmates. For details on how to achieve full points on all activities, please consult the BB folder “Learning Assessment,” which contains the measurement rubrics used in this course.

Activity	Percentage
Collegiate Participation	20%
Scholarly Blog Postings	20%
Thoughtful Blog Responses	20%
Engaging Group Presentation	20%
Original Multimedia Project	20%

“But what if...?”

Absences: You get 3 absences to use as you wish over the course of the semester, no questions asked. Email your instructor before the absence to keep them informed. Each subsequent absence will lower your final grade by 1%. Arriving late or leaving early without special permission from your instructor counts as half of an absence. “Late” means 11:22am or past.

Some Further Considerations:

- a) Religious holidays listed as such by Cornell United Religious Work are also justified. Let your instructor know as early as possible in the semester if you will be absent, and for which religious holidays.
- b) If you are a member of a Cornell athletic team, your team-related absences are justified. Bring your instructor your game-away schedule and a letter from your athletic director by the end of the second week of classes.

SDS Accommodations: If you are a student registered with Cornell's Student Disability Services, and need special accommodation during examinations, let your instructor know about this in the first two weeks of the semester, and bring a letter from the SDS.

Late submissions: All assignments are due in electronic form at 9am on the date indicated by the course schedule. You will lose 10 points per day for every day after this point. This means that if you turn in your assignment at 3pm on the date the assignment is due, you will lose 10 points. If you anticipate not being able to make a deadline, inform your instructor in person at least 3 days in advance. Depending on the situation, it may or may not be possible to get a 1-week extension.

Grade changes: Because I put a great deal of thought into reviewing your work, I rarely make changes to grades. However, if you feel strongly that your work merits reconsideration on my part, you may submit a 1-page response outlining why you feel that you deserve a different within 3 days of receiving the returned assignment. Please bare in mind however, that by asking me to reconsider your grade I will take that responsibility seriously, and your grade could move up, down, or stay the same.

7 How to be a Scholar

In class: Collegiate participation (“Finally - A definition!”) in activities provides the social and live component of this course. This means that you contribute your ideas, and actively listen to others’ points of view. Arriving in class on time, prepared to engage with your classmates and the instructor with all necessary assignments completed is another way of expressing this type of comportment. Because development of effective communication informs our course goals, you should not take this class if you cannot fully commit to this social and professional agreement.

At home: You are encouraged to form study groups to discuss your research outside of class. Exchanging ideas and suggestions, not text, is the goal because interaction helps develop mastery of communication skills. Research comes from many sources, but your articulation must be original. Everyone involved in this course, including the instructor, students, and archivists, will follow the “Code of Academic Integrity,” <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. Should copying occur, the copier will receive no credit for the assignment. A second instance of copying leads to an “F” in the course and University disciplinary action.

In archives: In some cases, you will need to leave most of your belongings in a locker to use an archive, so come prepared with a camera, a small notebook, and a pencil. You may need to turn off your camera flash. Pens are sometimes forbidden in archives because of the potential for spilled ink and ruined ephemera. Be friendly and respectful to all archive personnel. Initiating a warm rapport with everyone at your favorite archive ensures long-term research success.

On the web: Consider your audience when crafting either a blog posting or a reply to a posting. You can effectively connect with different groups by varying your register, tone, and vocabulary. Remember that once you put something up on the web, it is available to a vast audience until you decide to delete it. Post reflections you are proud to highlight.

8 Course Schedule

Theme 1: Deciphering Fascist Political Structures with Food

Date	Class Topic and Activities	Reading/Viewing Due	Homework/Project Due
Monday January 21	Introduction to “Edible/Political”	BB: “How to Start a Blog,” Explore Wordpress	Set up Wordpress account
Wednesday January 23	In-class exploration of Archivio Luce, Blogs	Archivio Luce, Forgacs pp. 124-167	Blog Post
Friday January 25	Cornell Cinema Visit	BB: McLuhan pp. 3-33 and 284-296	Preparation for Cornell Cinema Visit
Monday January 28	Debate: Forgacs v. McLuhan applied to Luce, Cornell Cinema	Review Forgacs, McLuhan highlighting	Outline pros and cons of Forgacs, McLuhan methodologies
Wednesday January 30	Brainstorming: How to Design a Film Series	BB: “Weekly Breakdown of Academic Groups,” “Addressing Your Audience”	Blog Response
Friday February 1	Group Presentation Prep: Content	BB: Geertz pp. TBA, Spitzer pp. 248-277	N/A
Monday February 4	Discussion: Which Methodology?	Forgacs pp. 27-63	N/A
Wednesday February 6	In-class exploration of Wolfsonian Object Archive	Forgacs pp. 63-94	Blog Post
Friday February 8	Group Presentation Prep: Structure	Targeted search of Wolfsonian Archive	N/A
Monday February 11	Reading Discussion in Small Groups, Class Debate	Forgacs: select a subchapter of your choice to read, analyze	Preparation for Reading Discussion.
Wednesday February 13	Reflection on Blog Posts Communication, Trouble-Shooting	Search for new archives, research venues	Blog Response
Friday February 15	Group Presentation Prep: Style	N/A	Final Preparation for Group Presentations
Monday February 18	Group Presentations	BB: Read either Ben-Ghiat pp. 17-45 or DeGrazia pp. 116-165	N/A

Theme 2: Analyzing Food Ways to Characterize Government-Citizen Relationships

Wednesday February 20	Group Presentations	N/A	Blog Post
Friday February 21	Olin Kroch Rare Books Library Visit	Pinkus pp. 1-21	Preparation for Olin Kroch Rare Books Library Visit
Monday February 25	Footnote and Bibliography Mining: How to Find “The Good Stuff”	Pinkus pp. 22-81	N/A
Wednesday February 27	Group Analysis: Advertising	Pinkus pp. 82-149	Blog Response
Friday March 1	Group Analysis: Advertising	Pinkus pp. 150-194	N/A
Monday March 4	Group Analysis: Advertising	Pinkus pp. 195-245	N/A
Wednesday March 6	Debate: Advertising v. Art	N/A	Blog Post
Friday March 8	Johnson Museum Visit	N/A	Preparation for Johnson Museum Visit
Monday March 11	Brainstorming: How to Curate a Museum Gallery	Explore Johnson Museum Collection	N/A
Wednesday March 13	Johnson Museum Collection Discussion	N/A	Blog Response
Friday March 14	In-class Exploration of Barilla Menu Archive	Explore Barilla Menu Archive	N/A

(Spring Break March 16-24)

Theme 3: Linking Food and Power in Mass Media

Monday March 25	Small Group Analysis of Barilla Menu Archive Materials	Targeted Search of Barilla Menu Archive	N/A
Wednesday March 27	Brainstorming: How to Curate a Library Exhibit	N/A	Blog Post
Friday March 29	Nestlé Library Visit	N/A	Preparation for Nestlé Library Visit
Monday April 1	Communicating with Archivists	Schedule Meeting with Archivist of Your Choice	N/A
Wednesday April 3	Reflection: Academic Conversations	N/A	Blog Response
Friday April 5	Introduction to Interactive Multimedia Projects	Helstosky pp. 1-38	N/A
Monday April 8	Peer-Mentoring: Presentation Plan	Helstosky pp. 39-62	N/A

Wednesday April 10	Refining Your Methodology	N/A	Blog Post
Friday April 12	Executing Your Methodology	Helstosky pp. 63-90	N/A
Monday April 15	Peer-Editing: Presentation Content	Helstosky pp. 91-126	N/A
Wednesday April 17	Crafting Your Project	N/A	Blog Response
Friday April 19	Responding to Critique	Preparation for Presentations	Preparation for Presentations
Monday April 22	Peer-Troubleshooting: Presentation Format	Preparation for Presentations	Preparation for Presentations
Wednesday April 24	Peer-Troubleshooting: Presentation Style	N/A	Blog Post
Friday April 28	Interactive Multimedia Project Presentations	Preparation for Presentations	Preparation for Presentations, Questions
Monday May 1	Interactive Multimedia Project Presentations	Preparation for Presentations	Preparation for Presentations, Questions
Wednesday May 3	Interactive Multimedia Project Presentations	N/A	Blog Response
Friday May 5	Reflection: Your Projects after “Edible/Political”	N/A	Preparation for Reflection