

**University of Alberta
Faculty of Arts' Cortona School
Spring 2014**

Italian Theatre and Food

Instructor: Dr. Stefano Muneroni (stefano.muneroni@ualberta.ca)

Class Time: M & W, 11:40 AM - 2:40 PM

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-5:00 PM (or by appt.)

Field Trips: May 6: Trip to Teatro Romano di Fiesole (Firenze)

May 13: Trip to Siena.

May 20: Trip to Teatro Farnese di Parma

Course Description: From ancient Rome's decadent banquets to the exquisite court entertainments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, food has always had an integral part in Italian theatre. In the early modern time, for instance, comedies were often staged in the market place, where food was sold and consumed, and they featured food at the very core of their plots. Whether it is consumed on stage during the *mise en scène* of a play or used offstage to enhance the viewing pleasure of the spectators, food has firmly placed itself at the core of Italian theatre and drama.

Students will examine the relevance and food in Italian culture through critical and theoretical readings that explore the intersections between eating and drinking and theatre and performance. They will also engage with a variety of dramatic and performative texts from different historical times to probe ideas discussed in class. The course aims at unpacking 'the aesthetics and politics of food' and students will delve into critical questions both during the lectures and in-class discussions that will probe how theatre and performance uncover symbolical and literal meanings of food, the authenticity of food in a global context, the ethics of consuming food and drinks, food as sensorial performance, and food as political resistance. The selection of texts includes passages from Petronius' *Satyricon*, Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo*, Eduardo de Filippo's *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*, contemporary theatrical experiments where audiences share food to foster intercultural encounters, and examples of "teatro gastronomico."

Course Objectives: "The work of art functions as the imaginary resolution of real social contradictions" (Frederic Jameson).

Students will

- Analyze the socio-cultural and artistic relevance of food in text and performance
- Identify the way food shapes our understanding of dramatic texts
- Investigate the connections between food and the human experience
- Consider the shifting perception of food in the theatre from ancient Rome to contemporary time.

- Develop confidence in one's ability to think critically and communicate effectively
- Discuss and critique a play/performance in terms learned in class

Required Texts: All the readings for this class will be available on eclass.

Requirements:

Attend all classes and participate in class discussions and projects.

Read each of the plays before they are discussed in class.

Write each of the quizzes.

Bring your copy of each play to class when we are studying it. You will not be able to function without it.

Complete all assignments on time.

Sit the compulsory final exam.

Assignments & Assessment:

a) Attendance and class participation	30%
b) Quizzes (5)	15%
c) Position Papers (2)	20%
e) Final Exam	35%

Attendance: Your regular and consistent attendance is required. Active participation means coming to class prepared, ready to discuss your ideas and comment on the readings of the day. As so much of our work occurs in class, participation and attendance are essential to successfully complete this course. We can all benefit from our different backgrounds, experiences, and views on theatre. Share them! This class meets twice a week and you are expected to attend all classes. For every absence beyond this your participation grade will be dropped by a third of a letter grade (for example from B- to C+.) If it is absolutely unavoidable that you miss class, be considerate and make prior arrangements whenever necessary. Special consideration will be given for personal and medical emergencies

Quizzes: There are 5 short quizzes pertaining to plays and critical readings. There will be no make-up quizzes for this class.

Position Paper: You will choose two assignments from the ones listed in the syllabus (play, performance, critical reading, etc.) and write two short position papers (1 page, single-spaced) in which you articulate your ideas, responses, and criticism of the piece. This is not a “like/dislike” paper, it is instead a tool to engage critical ideas and develop a more profound understanding of the assignment. I want to hear your “voice” loud and clear.

Final Exam: it will comprise short essay questions and identifications about plays and critical readings covered in class.

Mark Procedures: All term work will be graded on a percentage basis and then converted to a final letter grade. Under the letter grading system, even though a

mathematical distribution of weight between term and final examination is required, the instructor is free to make a subjective assessment of the total worth of a student that, as it were, rises above mathematics, provided that students have been told what is expected of them and what will be taken into account (i.e., if the mathematical distribution has not misled them into thinking that they are required simply to accumulate points.) Instructors may therefore take into account class participation, completion of assignments, improving or deteriorating performance, etc., provided that their students are aware in advance of what is involved.

Late policy:

All assignments and presentations are due on time. Late assignments and papers will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero. In case of medical or other emergencies, please inform the instructor either in advance or as soon as possible.

University policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

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All students will be expected to take responsibility for their and other's safety, and to report any injuries and their progress of recovery.

Academic Dishonesty:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariate/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Tentative Course Outline:

- May 5 Introduction to the course. Food Studies / Italian Studies / Theatre Studies
- “Olfactory performances” (eclass)
- “Stirring the Pot: An Interview ...” (eclass)
- May 7 “Eating Together,” “The Grammar of Food,” and “Identity, Exchange, Traditions, Origins” (93-103; 133-137), in Montanari Massimo, *Food is Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. (Available as ebook through the U of A Library System).
- Excerpts from Petronius’ “Dinner with Trimalchio” (eclass)
- “Food and Communication” (eclass)
- May 12 “Food & Cultural Studies & Pop Culture” (eclass)
- Angelo Beolco’s *Il Parlamento del Ruzante* (eclass)
- May 14 Excerpts from *The Futurist Cookbook* (eclass).
- Daunia Del Ben’s *The Importance of Garlic* (eclass)
- May 19 Eduardo de Filippo’s *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* (eclass)
- “Italian Dramaturg in a Translation Process” (eclass)
- May 21 Dario Fo’s excerpts from *Mistero Buffo* (eclass)
- Claudio Batta’s excerpts from *Agrodolce* (photocopies will be handed in class)
- May 26 Watch *White Bread* in class. Guest Speaker: Mia van Leeuwen
- May 28 The Future of Food in Theatre
- Instructor’ evaluations
- Final Exam