



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Made in Italy: shaping Italian lifestyle through Fashion & Food

PROF. LUDOVICA CARINI

Area of study:	Italian Studies and Culture
Area Code:	SO/CU330
Method of Instruction:	In-person

DESCRIPTION

This course aims to deconstruct cultural stereotypes about Italy by introducing students to the role of the creative industries, both as a resource the national economy and – most poignantly – as tools that shape and sustain the cultural imaginary of the country. To address these topics, we will engage with a range of scholarly literature on the creative industries. In addition to theoretical material, the course incorporates guest lectures and ethnographic observation. Fieldwork will take place in Milan—a city that exemplifies the balance between heritage and innovation, and one that attracts individuals with high creative capital. Meetings with experts in the fashion and food sectors, alongside urban observation, will offer students the opportunity to understand real-world dynamics and enrich the content discussed in lectures.

Course objectives can be synthesized as follows:

- a. To develop a realistic knowledge of Italy by deconstructing cultural stereotypes;
- b. To critically examine the cultural imaginary that depicts Italy as *Bel Paese*;
- c. To identify, understand and articulate the role of creative industries in the shaping of *Made in Italy*;
- d. To engage with professionals and gain first-hand experience through field-based learning.

COURSE CONTENTS

We will explore historical, theoretical, and practical issues regarding:

- a. the concept of culture in a sociological perspective;
- b. the advent of the cultural and creative industries;
- c. the concept of Made in Italy;
- d. how the definition of what is considered “Italian” is changing;
- e. Fashion and Food as examples of cultural hybridization.

PREREQUISITES

The course has no formal prerequisites and is suitable for students without a background in the social sciences. However, students are expected to demonstrate intellectual honesty and genuine curiosity. They should be open to challenging their preconceptions through dialogue, and willing to engage actively and collaboratively with their classmates throughout the course.



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METHOD OF TEACHING

The course is structured to alternate between traditional lectures—where student participation is always strongly encouraged—and interactive seminars featuring group activities, guest speakers, and field trips.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to:

- a. Attend lectures and field trips regularly;
- b. Complete the assigned readings before each lecture;
- c. Engage actively in the learning process, particularly during group discussions;
- d. Complete one group assignment and present it to the class;
- e. Pass a midterm test;
- f. Present a final paper.

Participation and Attendance Policy (a; b; c)

This course is designed to be highly interactive. Students are expected to contribute proactively to group discussions and come prepared by completing the assigned readings, as familiarity with the material is essential for engaging meaningfully in class debates and activities. Therefore, participation will be assessed based on active and thoughtful involvement—not merely on passive attendance. While emergencies or illness may occasionally prevent attendance, students are responsible for catching up on missed material by obtaining notes from classmates and staying in communication with their group members for any collaborative assignments. Group discussions are scheduled meetings where students discuss assigned topics in turn, fostering peer-to-peer learning and deepening understanding.

Group Project (d)

To encourage cooperative learning, students will work in groups of about five to produce a multimedia presentation at the end of the semester. Each presentation, lasting about 15 minutes, will introduce the research project, showcase multimedia content (such as a short video), and conclude with a Q&A session. The project should focus on an Italian cultural product or lifestyle practice — such as an object, recipe, social custom, or tradition — researched using methodologies covered in class and analysed through the theoretical frameworks discussed.

The presentation must address:

- a. the cultural significance of the chosen subject;
- b. its contribution to the Italian cultural imaginary;
- c. the group's key learnings;
- d. an overview of the research process.

Midterm Tests (e)

The midterm tests is a written exam comprising three open-ended questions of equal weight. Answers are graded from 0 (no response) to 10 (excellent response). Evaluation criteria include the number of questions answered, relevance and completeness, correct use of terminology, clarity of expression, logical and coherent argumentation, and the ability to identify conceptual connections.

Final Paper (f)

At the end of the course, students will turn in a one-page personal assignment about the covered topics.



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CREDITS

6 ECTS

GRADING

The final grade for the course will be calculated based on the following distribution:

- 40% of the final grade: Group assignment & class presentation
- 30% of the final grade: Midterm Test
- 20% of the final grade: Attendance & class participation
- 10% of the final grade: Final paper

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

All course materials will be accessible via Blackboard (<http://blackboard.unicatt.it>). Weekly readings will be uploaded by the end of the preceding week, and lecture slides will be made available following each lecture.

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Ludovica Carini is a post-doctoral researcher in Sociology of cultural and communication processes at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Università Cattolica of Milan, where she collaborates with *ModaCult: Centre for the Study of Fashion and Cultural Production*. She holds a PhD in *Sociology, Organizations and Cultures* and her doctoral research concerned the contribution of Afro-descendant designers to the Italian fashion system, and in particular cultural hybridisation, acculturation, and the role of personal ties in the construction of micro-economies with a high concentration of creative capital. Her research interests include consumption and cultural industries, socio-political implications of fashion, sustainability, and proximity networks. She is the author of several publications and combines research with teaching activities.

E-MAIL ADDRESS

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