



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Italian Wine Culture in Literature and in Practice

PROF. FEDERICO BELLINI

Term	Summer 2026
Area of study	Cultural Studies
Credits	6 ECTS
Dates	8 – 19 June 2026 (2 weeks)
Method of instruction	In person

Description

Wine is as much an important part of the Italian economy as a central feature of Italian history and daily life and it has, accordingly, always been part of the Italian literary imagery. In this course, students will be led to discover the history and complexities of the Italian wine culture in two different but interconnected ways. On the one hand, they will learn the history of the Italian wine culture by means of an exploration of the representations of wine in literature and the arts from the ancient times to the present day. On the other hand, students will explore the unique variety of Italian grape varieties and wine styles as a reflection of the multifaceted Italian regional culture and acquire the basics of professional wine tasting techniques.

Course contents

Students will be led to familiarize with the multifaceted aspects of the Italian wine culture while learning about the importance that wine played in the Italian imagery and literature through the centuries. They will discover the long history of wine in Italy, starting from the ancient Greeks and the Etruscans down to the Italian wine renaissance of the '80s and the most recent developments; they will learn how wine is produced and what are the main Italian grape varieties; they will understand the complexities of the Italian denomination system and appreciate the connection between each denomination and the local history and culture; they will discover the economic importance of the Italian wine industry and understand the new trends in wine production and wine communication; they will be taught how to approach wine professionally by means of an appropriate wine-tasting technique.

Prerequisites

None.

Method of teaching

The course alternates lectures, discussions on a selection of literary texts, practical wine-tasting sessions and student presentations.



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Course requirements

Attendance is required and the active participation of the students is strongly encouraged. Students will be required to give a class presentation on one Italian wine denomination. Students should be aware that during the course they will be required to taste wine, an alcoholic beverage.

Grading

Attendance and class participation	25 % of final grade
Midterm Exam	25 % of final grade
Class Presentation	25 % of final grade
Final exam	25 % of final grade

Course readings and materials

All reading material will be made available on Blackboard.

Instructor bio

Federico Bellini is Lecturer in Comparative Literature at the Università Cattolica. He has done research on the representation of work in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century literature, on the relationship between literature and philosophy and on transnational Modernism. He is a certified WSET Level 3 sommelier and has built an extensive experience in wine education and communication collaborating with, among others, La Strada del Barolo and Wine Pro Academy.

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Syllabus

Syllabus subject to change. Students will be notified in case of change.

1	08/06/26	Welcome; What is wine?
2	08/06/26	The grape; Alcoholic Fermentation.
3	09/06/26	Wine in Antiquity. Greeks and Romans.
4	09/06/26	Red/White Winemaking; Wine tasting technique 1.
5	10/06/26	The Middle Ages; the monasteries; <i>Carmina Burana</i>
6	10/06/26	Geography and wine; Italian Denominations; Wine Maturation (pre-bottling); Wine tasting technique 2.
7	11/06/26	The Renaissance; Lorenzo il Magnifico, <i>Trionfo di Bacco e Arianna</i> ; Malolactic conversion.
8	11/06/26	Sparkling wine production; Wine tasting technique 3.



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9-12	12/06/26	Field trip (full day).
13	15/06/26	MIDTERM EXAM.
14	15/06/26	Food and wine pairing.
15	16/06/26	The Enlightenment; Wine and Coffee; Overview of Italian Wine Geography: The North-West; The North-East; The Center; The South and the Islands.
16	16/06/26	Passito and fortified wines.
17	17/06/26	The Nineteenth Century; Wine at the Opera.
18	17/06/26	Rosé wine production.
19	18/06/26	The Twentieth Century; Giosué Carducci, <i>San Martino</i> ; Giorgio Gaber, <i>Barbera e Champagne</i> .
20	18/06/26	Ageing; Wine Faults; Wine service.
21	19/06/26	FINAL EXAM.
22	19/06/26	Presentations.