

LS SO CI 200 CULTURAL INTRODUCTION TO ITALY

1 CREDIT HOUR (45 lecture and field trips hours)

The study of the culture of Italy helps the student to acquire a deep awareness of both the cultural unit and diversity of the people of Italy.

Major themes of Italian Culture and thought are presented in historical contexts and brought to life through guided tours and visits to churches, synagogues, museums, palaces as well as other significant sites to understand present-day Italy.

THE SIRENS OF SICILY:

A STRATIFIED PERSPECTIVE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SOUL

Sicily remains an fascinating mystery to travelers both Italian and non-Italians alike. The largest island of Italy is straddled between the European and African continents and has been a cultural, commercial, and ethnic crossroads for millenniums. Stratification in all of these areas, due to the convergence of various peoples and invaders that have passed through and left their mark on Sicily over time, have slowly built up one of the most intense, saturated, and provocative cultures in the world. Sicily in fact known to bewitch its visitors and its cultural and historical attractions call out to travelers like the mythical sirens of the sea.

The course and proposed itinerary consider stratification from the following points of view:

Historic: Archeology, major civilizations (Greek and Roman), ancient and modern empires (Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arabic, Normans, to name a few)

Culture, Mythology, Literature, Music: Baroque opera house of Noto, Palermo's salons, ancient and contemporary Sicilian literature, traditional music.

Geography and Landscapes: Natural sites such as Mount Etna and the Gardens of Naxos, city architectures, the influence of the island culture

Gastronomy and Enology: open air markets, Sicilian cuisine and wines, Pachino tomato

Students will be required keep a daily log of places visited throughout the entire trip. Notes should be organized according to the stratification categories listed above, categorization is essential to the final oral presentation that students will give at the end of the course. Please see specific presentation info after the day by day schedule of the course.

DAY BY DAY COURSE SCHEDULE

**Please note that two Sicily sections are offered depending on the period of the academic year. Students will participate on one of the two day by day schedules listed below that corresponds with the session that they are enrolled in.*

Sicily I

Departure for Palermo and hotel checkin

Visit of Palazzo dei Normanni, la Cappella Palatina, la Chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, and la Cattedrale di Monreale.

Websites for research:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palermo>

<http://www.grifasi-sicilia.com/monumpalermo1.htm#La%20Cappella%20Palatina>

<http://www.seepalermo.com/palatine.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martorana>

<http://www.paradoxplace.com/Perspectives/Sicily%20&%20S>

[%20Italy/Montages/Sicily/Palermo/Monreale%20Cathedral.htm](http://www.paradoxplace.com/Perspectives/Sicily%20&%20S%20Italy/Montages/Sicily/Palermo/Monreale%20Cathedral.htm)

Day 2

Departure for Segesta, visit of archaeological site

Visit of Erice

Return to Palermo in the evening

<http://www.thinksicily.com/guide-to-sicily/archaeological-sites-in-sicily/segesta.aspx>

<http://www.bestofsicily.com/erice.htm>

Day 3

Morning checkout and departure for Vucciria and visit of ancient market

Departure for Syracuse, one stop scheduled along the way in Enna (Barocco Siciliano e “Torre di Federico II, Duomo, Castello di Lombardia).

Evening checkin at Syracuse hotel.

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2007/05/20/travel/20journeys.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573550/Syracuse_\(Italy\).html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573550/Syracuse_(Italy).html)

Day 4

Visit in Syracuse – morning at the necropolis and catacombs and Ortigia island in the afternoon

Late afternoon boat ride and ocean rock-jumping

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>

<http://www.bbnaif.it/en/ultime/san-giovanni-s-catacombs.html>

http://www.ansa.it/opencms/export/site/notizie/rubriche/inlavorazione/visualizza_new.html_933166837.html

Day 5

Departure for Noto and visit of the baroque town

Transfer to Pachino for a visit of a Nero d'Avola winery and the pomodoro di pachino consortium

Return to Syracuse

<http://www.bestofsicily.com/noto.htm>

http://www.siciliaonline.it/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5468&Itemid=420

<http://www.wineloverspage.com/wineadvisor/tswa030328.phtml>

6° giorno

Syracuse hotel checkout and transfer to Catania and departure for Florence

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catania>

Sicily II

Day 1

Departure for Taormina

Visit of Taormina and ampitheater

Visit of Giardini Naxos beach.

Transfer to Syracuse and hotel checkin

Websites for research:

<http://www.bbnaif.it/en/ultime/san-giovanni-s-catacombs.html>

<http://www.bestofsicily.com/taormina.htm>

Day 2

Visit in Syracuse – morning at the necropolis and catacombs and Ortigia island in the afternoon

Late afternoon boat ride and ocean rock-jumping

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>

<http://www.bbnaif.it/en/ultime/san-giovanni-s-catacombs.html>

http://www.ansa.it/opencms/export/site/notizie/rubriche/inlavorazione/visualizza_new.html_933166837.html

Day 3

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http://www.siciliaonline.it/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5468&Itemid=420

<http://www.wineloverspage.com/wineadvisor/tswa030328.phtml>

Day 4

Visit in Enna (Barocco Siciliano e “Torre di Federico II, Duomo, Castello di Lombardia)

Transfer to Valle dei Templi in Agrigenti and guided tour of archaeological site

Return to Syracuse

<http://www.enna-sicilia.it/english/>

<http://www.italiansrus.com/articles/temples.htm>

Day 5

Transfer to Etna and guided tour of volcano

Transfer to Aci Castello and visit of the Cyclops Coast

Transfer to Catania and visit of the city (Duomo, Palazzo del Vicerè, Università e via Etnea)

Ritorno a Siracusa – cena

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Etna

http://www.catania-sicilia.it/english/aci_castello.htm

http://www.thetraveleditor.com/article/1084/Introduction_General_Cyclops_Riviera_Catania_.html

<http://www.catania-sicilia.it/english/>

Day 6

Free time during the day

Transfer to Catania and night departure for Florence

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate a deeper grasp of how cultural, historic, economic and social stratification was developed in Sicily and how it continues to evolve in the present and future
- Gain an overall understanding of what position Sicily holds in Italy and how it differs from the continent
- Gain familiarity with important examples of literature, art, and music that have contributed to the fabric of Sicilian evolution

Research requirements

- Students are required to research the websites included in the day by day schedule.
- Recommended resources are not required but highly encouraged

Journal requirements

- All students are required to keep a daily log of observations of the sights, sounds, places, and facts encountered each day on site.
- Observations need to be organized according to the four stratification categories outlined in the course description on page 1
- Stratification is best when “mapped out” according to time periods and themes. Students are encouraged to use real maps, local newspapers, photographs, and other printed or electronic media (cite links to websites or videos) to support the textual analysis of their observations.

Oral exam requirements

- Topics to be chosen individually with the professor
- All exams will be conducted in the presence of the entire class with time for peer critique and comparison sessions for each presentation
- Each student will choose a stratification theme, based on his findings and personal experience during the week in Sicily supported by historical and contextual support, that presents a critical attempt to understand Sicilian culture through the eyes of a new explorer.
- The final grade will be determined by how successfully the student has grasped the complexity of the layers and his integration of documentary and contextual evidence to support the presentation.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Students are highly encouraged to research the following topics pre-departure and throughout the entire course.

History

The Normans in Sicily: The Normans in the South 1016-1130 and the Kingdom in the Sun 1130-1194

by John Julius Norwich

The Sicilian Vespers: A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century by

Steven Runciman.

Mythology by Edith Hamilton.

[*The History of Sicily*](#) by M. I. Finley and Denis Mack Smith

Literature

The Shape of Water by Andrea Camilleri,

Cento giorni a Palermo by Giuseppe Ferrara,

Il gattopardo by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa,

Places

Palaces of Sicily by Angheli Zalapi,

Cuisine

Pomp and Sustenance: 25 Centuries of Sicilian Food by Mary Taylor Simeti.