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ITALIAN STUDIES  
AND CULTURE  
DEPARTMENT

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ACCADEMIA  
EUROPEA  
DI FIRENZE



# ITALIAN STUDIES AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

Italy is synonymous with style, art, cooking, fashion, cinema... and much more. In short, beauty and quality of life. At AEF we have decided to offer our students an authentic experience of the Italian way of life, because we believe that those who study with us should not feel like tourists, but instead, even if only temporarily, become citizens of Florence.

This is why we have designed courses in which students can gain in-depth knowledge of the sectors that have made our country famous worldwide, by getting to know them from the inside and visiting the sites, manufacturers, craftsmen and professionals that, with their every day work, give life to this idea of beauty that stems from the past, but that is powerfully projected towards the future.

## OUR COURSES

Our Culture courses address many aspects of the Italian way of life and the history that precedes it. The Italian Studies and Culture department is divided into three main areas:

### **FOOD CULTURE**

- COOKING CLASSES
- FOOD AND CULTURE
- IN THE KITCHEN!
  - A side by side experience with the cook
- ITALIAN WINE: CULTURE AND TASTING

### **CINEMA-THEATRE STUDIES**

- THE HISTORY OF CINEMA
- ITALIAN CINEMA
- THE HISTORY OF THEATRE

### **HISTORY AND LITERATURE**

- MODERN ITALIAN LITERATURE
- THE HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY ITALY
- THE HISTORY OF ITALIAN LITERATURE
- THE HISTORY OF THE MAFIA

## SEMESTERS, SHORT TERMS AND TAILOR-MADE COURSES

Our Italian Culture courses are available all year round, and can be taken in conjunction with semesters abroad, or alongside the Italian Language course. With the flexibility of being able to choose when to start and for how long to stay, students can create their own tailor-made courses to suit their schedules and needs.

**FOOD CULTURE:** We like stories about food, stories about the people who produce it, the places and the traditions. For Tuscans, food is first and foremost synonymous with culture, a relationship with nature, and conviviality. This is the reason why our cooking classes and food classes have the aim of promoting the culture of food. Students will experience the love of good food and will learn how to give the right value to food, how to recognize the diversity of the recipes and flavours and the variety of different products, and how to respect the rhythms of the seasons.

Not only will they learn how to prepare the dishes, they will also go on an authentic journey into the world of flavours and quality. What is more, there will be opportunities to visit small local farms and producers in the hills of Tuscany – hidden gems off the beaten track – to see the true origin of the ingredients and of



the recipes being studied. Students also have the opportunity to take a course in wine tasting, where qualified teachers will show them how to recognize the difference between wines, and together they will analyse winegrowing, the features of the terrain, the type of fermentation, and bottling.

For those who require a more professional training, AEF offers an extraordinary opportunity to gain practical experience side by side with a cook: this course is recommended for students who really wish to learn how to cook, or for those who already work or want to specialize, with the possibility of getting to know an environment of coexistence with Italian cuisine, and also the customers' preferences.

**HISTORY AND LITERATURE:** Most English-speakers who read literature have heard about Dante, but maybe not all of them know that the "Divina Commedia" is written in Literary Tuscan, and that when Alessandro Manzoni wanted to write an Italian realist novel five centuries later, it cost him years of work on Literary Tuscan. Florence is a sort of crossroads for the birth of the official Italian language; this is the reason why two of our Culture courses are dedicated to Literature.

As they learn about the history, students will get to know the fascinating panorama of Italian literature, covering authors such as Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio as well as other works from the following

centuries, right up until the neorealist season and contemporary literature. There is also a course devoted only to Modern Italian literature, where The Futurists, Hermeticism, Expressionism, Neo-realism, the new Avant-garde and Post-Modernism will all be taken into consideration. In many ways, the history of Italy can be considered the history of the modern world: while travelling around the country, one can still perceive the grandeur of Rome, the magnificent of the Renaissance, the Risorgimento and the battlefields of World War II. Maybe, not everybody knows that Florence has been the capital of the new established Kingdom of Italy before Rome from 1865 to 1870.

In the aim of providing our students with an in-depth comprehension of the country where they are studying and living, we have decided to focus on the History of Contemporary Italy. Our course documents the developments in Italian history from the end of the Napoleonic wars (1815) to the present day, as well as concentrating on several key concepts such as the nation and the colonialist shift, religion, the modern state and its foundations, the economy, society, geography, informal institutions, and the arts.

The course on History of the Mafia offers students the opportunity to fully understand a phenomena that has strongly influenced the image of Italy around the world, and gain a comprehensive knowledge of Italian society.

**CINEMA AND THEATRE STUDIES:** Federico Fellini, Vittorio De Sica, Marcello Mastroianni, Roberto Rossellini, Anna Magnani, Sophia Loren, and more recently Roberto Benigni and Paolo Sorrentino... just to name a few of the directors and actors who made Italian cinema known all over the world. Our Cinema Studies course covers the evolution of Italian cinema, its relations with literature and society and the history of the latter part of the twentieth century.

Thanks to the use of audiovisual and multimedia instruments, students taking Theatre Studies will learn the language of the stage and its regional declinations that have strongly influenced the evolution of theatre in Italy.





## OUR TEACHERS:

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### **MARCO CERVIONI - THE HISTORY OF CINEMA**

Marco obtained a degree in History of Journalism and a Ph.D in History and Sociology of Modernity from the faculty of Political Science of the University of Pisa.

In his course, the History of Cinema is viewed not only as an art, but also as the result of a precise historical, cultural and social context, so that students have the chance to gain a truly in-depth understanding of the country they are in.

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### **VALENTINA DOLARA - THE HISTORY OF THE MAFIA**

Soon after graduating with a Law Degree from the University of Florence, Valentina began her work in Human Rights, completing her training at the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva and the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg. She then expanded her range of interests to Mindfulness practices, studying at the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies and Greater Good Center of Berkeley University and collaborating with the University of Florence

and Toronto. She works as a trainer; teaches in many American universities and is also the author of numerous publications on the subject of human rights.

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### **TINA FALLANI - ITALIAN CINEMA**

Tina has a degree in Film Editing, Video and Film at the Scuola del Cinema, Regione Lombardia RAI, Italian Radio and Television Network, a diploma in Script Writing with Tonino Guerra at Evviva Il Cinema, Repubblica di San Marino and studied Law at the University of Florence. She started teaching History of Italian Cinema in 1992 and currently teaches for Georgetown University Villa

le Balze, Studio Art Centers International and Santa Reparata. Since 2013 she has taught Italian Cinema at Kent State University Florence. She has worked on many feature films, including: *The Secret Garden* (Agnieszka Holland); *Dracula*, *The Godfather Trilogy* and *Godfather III* (Francis Ford Coppola); *Henry and June* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (Phil Kaufman); *The Neon Empire* (Larry Penn); *Mountains of the Moon* (Bob Rafelson); *Dead Poets Society* (Peter Weir); *Willow* (George Lucas); *Of Men and Angels* (William Farley). She has been a jury member at the San Francisco International Film Festival and a coordinator of the Florence Film Festival.

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### **LEE FOUST - MODERN ITALIAN LITERATURE**

Lee has a degree in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University, and after an initial study trip to Italy he went back to the same university to obtain a second degree in Italian Language and Literature. In 2008 he completed his education with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from New York University, with a thesis on Dante. He has been living and working in Florence

for many years and teaches literature at various American universities in this city. He has been collaborating with AEF since 2010, where he teaches a course on Dante.

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## OUR TEACHERS:

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### **FLOAREA VIRBAN** - *THE HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY ITALY*

With a Degree in Literature and Philosophy from the University of Bucharest, Floarea later obtained a Ph.D. in Literature from the same university and a second Ph.D. in History and Civilization from the European University of Florence. She is the author of numerous publications and has carried out intense research work. She has been teaching since 1991, initially in Romania and then in Italy, mainly in programs for the American Universities in Florence. She speaks 6 modern languages as well as several ancient ones.

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### **ANTONIO VIRDIS** - *ITALIAN WINE: CULTURE AND TASTING*

Antonio Virdis achieved his Sommelier qualification at the A.I.S. in 2009, and since then, has dedicated himself to the organization of courses and seminars on the topic of "Wine Communication" and "Logic of Tasting". He is currently Official A.I.S. Taster and is actively involved on a full-time basis to teaching in the field of Sommelier training.





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