

Spring | Summer | Fall

CENTER FOR FOOD & SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

Environmental Studies | Sustainability | Food Studies



umbra.org/food



The Umbra Institute's Center for Food & Sustainability Studies (CFSS) invites students and professors to participate in the study of food cultures, sustainability, and the environment. The Center offers students the opportunity to take semester courses with community-engaged components, work on independent research, and do credit-bearing internships.

Students of all majors are welcome to enroll and may choose electives from among the courses offered. All semester students are required to enroll in the Institute's mandatory Italian language and culture class.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Students interested in completing the Certificate for the Food & Sustainability Studies Program (FSST) may do so by enrolling in one of the tracks described below. All Certificate students are required to take an Italian language and culture class as well as the one-credit certificate core course, FSST 100: Experiencing Sustainable Italian Foodways.

Students completing the **Food Studies** track will then choose three of the following 3-credit elective courses:

- FSST/GSCI 250: The Science of Italian Food
- ENG/FSST 325: From Literature to Social Media: Reading and Writing Italian Food
- ENV/FSST/SOC 330: Sustainable Food Production in Italy: Local Traditions and Global Transformations
- FSST/HIST/SOC 350: The History and Culture of Food in Italy
- COMM/BUS/FSST 355: Wine & Olive Oil: Marketing and Communication Strategies
- ANTH/FSST/SOC 375: The Anthropology of Food

Students completing the **Environmental Studies & Sustainability** track will choose three of the following 3-credit elective courses:

- ENV/FSST/GSCI 320: Water Resources: Environment, Society and Power
- ENV/FSST/SOC 330: Sustainable Food Production in Italy: Local Traditions and Global Transformations
- BUS/ENV 340: Global Sustainable Business
- ENV/SOC 355: Towards "Green Cities": Creating Sustainable Urban Spaces & Communities
- BUS/ENV 365: Tourism for Sustainable Development: Italian & Global Models

Students can complete a **Dual Concentration** by completing two elective courses in food studies and two courses in sustainability & environmental studies.

The Scholars Program

The [SCHOLARS PROGRAM](#) offers students the chance to pursue individualized research project under the mentorship of an Umbra Institute professor. Students participating in the Scholars Program must enroll in IR 499: Research Writing & Methodology for Food & Sustainability Studies as part of the program track curriculum.

PROGRAM GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Center's faculty and staff have drafted the following programmatic goals for the FSSP as a whole and for each track. Each course has detailed skill-related learning outcomes that together assure students in each of the three tracks fulfill the overall and track-specific goals.

Overall Programmatic Goals

All students completing the Food & Sustainability Studies Program will:

1. Study various natural and human systems from social-scientific, humanities, and scientific perspectives, framing them within appropriate natural, cultural, and ethical contexts.
2. Understand how these systems are impacted by local, national, and international politics and economies.
3. Recognize the global interconnectedness of these systems, while also understanding their unique histories and current trajectories in Italy.
4. Participate in co-curricular activities through which key topics and concepts are related to practical and applied situations.
5. Engage in community-based learning and similar field experiences that connect classroom learning to real world problem-solving.
6. Understand how to leverage their classroom and hands-on experiences as they pursue graduate study and/or seek to advance their career goals.

Food Studies Track

Students completing the Food Studies track will:

1. Examine local, national, and international food systems from both a historical and contemporary perspective.
2. Study the scientific and social processes that contribute to transforming raw materials into edible food.
3. Understand the practices and politics of food, with specific focus on the dynamism that has characterized Italian food culture over the past three millennia.
4. Produce oral and written work that critically evaluates various aspects of contemporary food systems.

Sustainability & Environmental Studies Track

Students completing the Sustainability and Environmental Studies track will:

1. Enhance their knowledge of sustainability and sustainable practices both globally and within Italy.
2. Engage with contemporary debates around sustainability from a cultural, scientific, socio-economic, and political perspective.
3. Study efforts to define and enact sustainable practices and engage in projects aimed at identifying and supporting practical solutions.
4. Produce oral and written work that critically evaluates various aspects of sustainability and the environment.

RESEARCH

While teaching is central to the CFSS's mission, research serves both didactic and professional goals. Recent faculty research has included a monograph on the [FOOD BUSINESSES](#) of Italian emigrants in Belgium, an edited collection on [REPRESENTATIONS OF ITALIAN FOOD](#), a critical analysis of the [MEANING OF HERITAGE IN FOOD](#), and a handbook for Italian winemakers looking to export to the United States. Current projects include a monograph on Italian *sagre* (local food festivals), an article exploring the absence of the enologist's laboratory in the discourse about food landscapes, and anthropological research on fisherfolk's perceptions of fish in Lago Trasimeno. This research not only keeps the CFSS faculty actively involved with academic discussions on food, but also provides readings for courses and opportunities for students to engage in faculty projects.

The CFSS also promotes student research through faculty-led independent study projects or the more intensive semester-long [SCHOLARS PROGRAM](#). A recent student project on the Italian aversion to taking food home from restaurants led to a three year-long community engagement project with the City of Perugia known as Repeat, designed to promote doggie bags in the city's restaurants. The CFSS welcomes students who wish to pursue their own independent research as well as those students who would like to work with CFSS faculty on their projects. Past students have won of the Forum on Education Abroad's Award for Academic Achievement Abroad as well as the Christine Wilson Award from the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition (story [HERE](#)). Students have presented their research several times at both the [BIENNIAL CFSS FOOD CONFERENCE](#) and the [ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF FOOD AND SOCIETY](#).

The CFSS is launching a long-term institutional research project in collaboration with the City of Perugia, the University of Perugia, and Perugia's Augusta Library (and archive). This five-year project will produce a digital and physical archive of Umbrian foods and foodways. Umbra students will contribute text, photographs, interviews, and video to the first bilingual archive of its type. The project is in collaboration with parallel research initiatives at Chatham University and Ohio Wesleyan University.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Community-engaged has been an important part of the FSSP curriculum since its founding in 2011. Perugia-focused learning and service learning projects allows students to simultaneously learn from and give back to the community that acts as their temporary home and outdoor classroom. The Umbra Institute's many community partnerships make it an ideal place to get to know the real Italy—and Italians. Building on the Umbra Institute's large network of public and private partners, the FSSP offers these opportunities in almost all of its courses. Past and present projects include coordinating outreach for an urban garden, working with the City of Perugia to launch a doggie bag program, providing market analysis to local wineries, archiving oral histories about food production, and growing long-dormant Umbrian seed varieties to test them for a hotter climate.

In keeping with the academic goals of the Food & Sustainability Studies Program, students directly experience the material they have studied: they meet and converse with professionals in the food industry, visit the bustling farms and factories of Umbria and Tuscany, and speak with the families behind the wine labels.

STUDENT INTERNSHIPS

For students who complete the Certificate in the Spring semester, the CFSS offers a variety of 3-credit internships in the offices of the local government, the University of Perugia, food-related businesses, and the Center itself. Some of the internships currently offered include:

- Urban Agriculture Development Assistant (“Orto Sole” urban garden)
- Urban Food Mapping & Community Archiving Research Assistant (Umbra Institute)
- Public Communications Assistant (Umbra Institute)
- Research and Tour Assistant (local tour company)
- Marketing and Sales Assistant (local organic winery)
- Sustainability Workshop Development Assistant (Umbra Institute, Italian equivalent of the EPA)
- “Green Team” Member (University of Perugia Agriculture School)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHING & FACULTY RESEARCH

The Center for Food & Sustainability Studies has for the past eight years regularly hosted faculty-led programs. The CFSS looks forward to new proposals for custom programs and is able to integrate its community partnerships into visiting faculty teaching. See the Center’s website [HERE](#) for more details.

BIENNIAL FOOD CONFERENCE

Since 2012, the Umbra Institute has hosted a biennial food conference in Perugia. Past keynotes have included Ken Albala, Massimo Montanari, Rachel Black, Kolleen Guy, Amy Trubek, Simone Cinotto, Molly Anderson, Alice Julier, Lisa Heldke, Michael Herzfeld, and John Lang. Some of the contributions to the first conference have been published as *Representing Italy Through Food* (Bloomsbury, 2017), edited by Peter Naccarato, Zachary Nowak, and Elgin K. Eckert. In June 2020 the CFSS will host the fifth edition of its biennial food and sustainability conference (see conference website [HERE](#)).

DIDACTIC KITCHEN

The CFSS’s didactic kitchen, located in the Institute, is the ideal venue to explore food chemistry as well as to provide students with hands-on, non-credit-bearing activities that compliment their classroom studies.

CURRENT CFSS FACULTY & STAFF

The CFSS relies on experienced instructors for its courses. Most of the professors have the terminal degree in their field. All cvs are available upon request

Zachary Nowak, PhD—Advisory Board Chair

Elgin K. Eckert, PhD—Academic Director of the Umbra Institute, FSSP professor

Elisa Ascione, PhD—lead professor & FSSP Coordinator

Brooke Porter, PhD—FSSP professor

Olivier de Maret, PhD—FSSP professor

Filippo Benedetti Valentini, PhD—FSSP professor

Raymond Lorenzo, MCP—FSSP professor

Viviana Lorenzo (certified architect)—FSSP professor

Manuel Barbato, MA—FSSP program assistant

CFSS ADVISORY BOARD

The Umbra staff of the Center for Food & Sustainability Studies are advised by a eight-member board of academics whose research is in the field of food studies. These board members assist in curriculum development and strategic planning. The members are:

Zachary Nowak, PhD—Harvard University (chair)
Elgin Eckert, PhD—The Umbra Institute
Elisa Ascione, PhD—The Umbra Institute
Alice Julier, PhD—Chatham University
Peter Naccarato, PhD—Marymount Manhattan College
Joyce Chaplin, PhD—Harvard University
Chris Fink, PhD—Ohio Wesleyan University
Michael Di Giovine, PhD—West Chester University

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Center for Food & Sustainability Studies, see the [CFSS WEBSITE](#) or contact Zachary Nowak (ZNOWAK@UMBRA.ORG).