

2026-2027 LA LEZIONE 'ZERO' PER LA SOSTENIBILITÀ A ROMA TRE

MODULE “Food: Nature, culture, and food safety”

Prof. Antonini, prof. Bruni, prof. Giulia Caneva, Science Department

Prof. Mario Ricca, Law Department.

NOTE

Departments involved: Department of Science, Department of Law

Credits awarded: 7

Duration of the module: 56 hours

Period: I Semester

Location: Department of Law

Method of delivery: Hybrid

Class Schedule: Tue: 6:00–8:00 p.m.; Wed: 6:00–8:00 p.m.; Thu: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

OUTLINE

The course is divided into three sections, each comprising a series of lessons.

The first section will be taught by Prof. Caneva. This section aims to provide students with an awareness that the current perception of the close link between humans and nature—and in particular with the plant world—has become completely tenuous, despite the fact that plants enabled humans to survive at the dawn of civilization and that their exploitation was the prerequisite for the development of human societies. For the sake of the planet's sustainability, we have much to learn about the balance that has been achieved by different cultures over the centuries in the harmonious use of natural heritage in all sectors, including food. Ethnobotany, therefore, contributes to characterizing that intangible cultural heritage that UNESCO has recognized as part of humanity's heritage, calling for actions that contribute to preserving this knowledge and reducing its erosion. The course aims to make students aware that ethnobotany can play an important role as a link between the wisdom of the past and the needs of contemporary society.

The second section will be led by Prof. Ricca. It will develop the relationship between nature and culture and the anthropological data provided by ethnobotanical methodology in relation to the topics of global justice and the legal regulation of territories and their use in inclusive and intercultural terms. To this end, teaching activities will focus on the 'dynamic radiality' of food, understood as the ability of food and related production processes to act as a hub for a variety of human activities: from those related to the management of physical space to the development of technological devices designed to support the cultivation and processing of raw materials; from those aimed at ensuring adequate levels of nutrition to support health and physical development to the symbolic universe generated by the inclusion of food in the circuits of cultural imaginaries and their multiple anthropological projections (social ties, mundane and religious rituals, processes of socio-economic differentiation, craftsmanship, culinary practices, etc.). The network of meanings and human behaviors that revolve around

food will be analyzed from the perspective of global justice, the enjoyment of human rights, and intercultural inclusion/translation between different agricultural/culinary traditions and practices.

The sections managed by Prof. Caneva and Prof. Ricca will include joint lectures focusing on practical implications and possible courses of action that could be developed, for example, in peri-urban areas, in line with the objectives of the **2030 Agenda (Goals: 2, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16)** and with the 'Framework for Promoting Integrated Territorial Development' provided by the United Nations document on 'Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles'.

The third section of the course will be coordinated by Prof. Antonini and Prof. Bruni and divided into two subsections. It will focus on food security and the analysis of good practices in the food sector. Both topics will be addressed and discussed with reference to the **2030 Agenda (Goals 2, 3, 12, 14, 15)**. In particular, food safety can only be guaranteed by adequate food production and handling practices, which together constitute a series of risk prevention and control measures. If these measures are not applied correctly, food contaminated by various physical, chemical, and microbiological agents can cause a range of diseases, some of which can be fatal. The enormous changes that have affected the food system, which is no longer characterized by a close relationship between production and consumption but in which food preservation plays a fundamental role, now pose new problems and critical issues that must be resolved in order to ensure food safety. Goods in transit, trade, exotic products from countries where food and agricultural legislation is not necessarily as strict as in Europe. But also mass catering and large supermarket chains with long-distance distribution of products; and the widespread use of preserved products, which must be kept within the cold chain and which a blackout can put at risk.

Finally, attention will be focused on food as a common factor and foundation of sustainable cities and communities, and on cooking as a revolutionary practice. The case of Rome, the largest agricultural municipality in Europe, will be presented and discussed, along with the implications that arise, such as: territory and food excellence, traceability and product quality, local production and agro-industry, food distribution, responsible consumption and production: all essential aspects for a necessary food policy.

Emphasis will also be given to the emerging reality of grassroots production based on a network of urban gardens, recently regulated by Roma Capitale. Science tidbits (technologies against food waste, the physics of al dente pasta, etc.) and the economic and political implications associated with them will complement the topics covered. (**Agenda 2030, Goals 2, 3, 12, 14, 15**).

OVERALL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2030 AGENDA – Goals: 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16.

CONTENTS AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES

A) From popular uses of plants to current prospects for sustainability (Giulia Caneva)

1. Ethnobotany: its origins and development to the present day
2. Current prospects for the use and traditional knowledge of plants
3. Food, culture, typicality: existing relationships in the ecosystem balance in relation to anthropic use and principles of environmental sustainability

B) Food radiality, global justice, and intercultural inclusion (Mario Ricca)

1. Food and space-time relationships
2. Variety and multiplicity of anthropological projections of food.

3. Food, rights, and global food injustice

C1) Food safety (Giovanni Antonini)

1. Main reference legislation and control authorities
2. Food hygiene and microbiological safety and HACCP procedures
3. Chemical safety and food additives

C2) Food as the foundation of sustainable cities and communities (Fabio Bruni)

1. Rome, the largest agricultural municipality in Europe.
2. Responsible consumption and production.
3. Local production and agri-business.
4. Scientific and technological aspects in cooking.

KEYWORDS

Territory, food, culture, nutrition, ethnobotany, food justice, environmental sustainability, traditional knowledge, human rights, inclusion, interculturalism, food safety, and good practices.

PROJECT-WORK AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The lessons will be geared towards providing students with a combined perspective of the results provided respectively by: a) ethno-botanical research into the relationship between cultivation methods and land management on the one hand, and cultural production processes on the other; b) the analysis of food projections and the related political and legal dynamics, both locally and globally, with a view to ensuring equity in the production of and access to food resources from both a nutritional and cultural point of view; c) knowledge of food safety protocols and the risks associated with non-compliance. Particular attention will be paid to the various new factors that can indirectly compromise food quality, with possible repercussions for consumer health. Awareness that other methods of food production and consumption are possible beyond those linked to large-scale distribution, with clear and significant consequences on environmental impact, sustainability, and food waste reduction.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Oral lessons delivered online and in person.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes consist of the knowledge and skills listed below:

1. Understanding of the connections between ethnobotanical knowledge, land stewardship, and current trends in their economic and cultural development
2. Understanding of global and dynamic radial projections (geographical, anthropological, economic, legal, etc.) of food as regards food justice and the protection of human rights in an intercultural context.
3. Understanding of ecosystem balances in relation to anthropogenic use, exploitation and principles of environmental sustainability.
3. Acquisition of knowledge related to AGENDA 2030 and the ability to articulate the integrated skills aimed at its implementation.

MARKING CRITERIA

Participants in the lectures will be invited to take part in an interview to assess their acquisition of the skills related to AGENDA 2030 and related integrated skills. More specifically, and with reference to the course outlined here, the interview will assess the acquisition of practical skills and abilities related to food management with reference to its ethno-botanical, anthropological, urban, agro-culinary, health, humanitarian, and, more in general, sustainability-related aspects.

With regard to the methods of assessing preparation, lecture slides or other teaching materials will be made available to students. The exam will be in person with a written test and a possible oral test.

RESOURCES/COURSE READINGS

ETHNOBOTANY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Caneva G., Pieroni A., Guarrera P.M. (eds) 2013. Etnobotanica: Conservazione di un patrimonio culturale immateriale come risorsa per uno sviluppo sostenibile nel bacino del Mediterraneo. Edipuglia Bari. 1-336, ISBN 9788-7228-724-8.

Balick, Michael J., and Paul Alan Cox. Plants, people, and culture: the science of ethnobotany. Garland Science, 2020.

Kumar, A., Kumar, S., Komal, Ramchiary, N. and Singh, P., 2021. Role of traditional ethnobotanical knowledge and indigenous communities in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainability, 13(6), p.3062.

FOOD, GLOBAL JUSTICE, ANTHROPOLOGY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Ricca, M., 2025 The Fluid Ubiquity of Food: Why Human Beings are Space–Time Cannibals. Int J Semiot Law 38, pp. 197–279. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-024-10237-w> - (The Italian translation will be available).

FOOD SAFETY

https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/temi/p2_3_alimenti.html

<https://www.aics.gov.it/settori-di-intervento/sviluppo-rurale-e-sicurezza-alimentare/sicurezza-alimentare/>

<https://agenda-digitale.it/haccp-normativa-di-riferimento-e-obblighi-per-la-sicurezza-alimentare/>

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/it>

<https://www.epicentro.iss.it/alimentazione/sicurezza>

C2) FOOD AS THE FOUNDATION OF SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

1. La Repubblica del Soffritto, A. Gussoni, S. Sartori e D. De Michele (podcast, <https://www.audible.it/>)
2. Kitchen Social Club. DonPasta, Altreconomia (2016).
3. Appunti, e presentazioni multimediali delle lezioni.