

**Boston University Summer Global Program
Padua, Italy**

June 2022

**SAR HS 608
*Mediterranean Diet: Food, Culture & Health***

4 credit Graduate Elective

Faculty:

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Prerequisite:

A 4-credit introductory Human Nutrition Science course (SAR HS 551, or equivalent)

Course Description:

This course is a four-week, 4 credit summer global immersion course taught in Padua, Italy by Boston University faculty. How does the Mediterranean region offer unique opportunities to introduce students to the Mediterranean lifestyle and its relationship to culture, society, promotion of health and prevention of disease? The course will expose students to food and eating patterns within the Italian way of life and aspects of Italian culture, agriculture, the food industry, and public health policy. The course will culminate with an immersion in the scientific evidence demonstrating the benefits derived from the Mediterranean eating pattern that prevent chronic health conditions including diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, cancer and more. The course is designed to allow students to strategically apply their lived experience as well as the scientific and culinary principles of the Mediterranean diet to their own lives and in their professional careers. Students will learn how to effectively communicate this information in the context of patient- and population-based health promotion work. The course combines classroom experiences with hands-on workshops and activities in communities in northern Italy. Students will explore local resources in and around the city of Padua along with field trips to neighboring regions of Italy.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To understand the science-based characteristics, food/nutrient components, and regional/global variations of the Mediterranean Diet.
- 2) To experience the Mediterranean Diet through cultural immersion in the city of Padua in Veneto and surrounding regions of Italy; and to compare and contrast the lifestyle, environmental, and behavioral characteristics of a Mediterranean culture and its food industry to the U.S. experience.
- 3) To apply critical thinking skills to reading published nutrition research evaluating the effects of the Mediterranean diet on selected health outcomes (specifically cardiovascular disease, metabolic disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease).
- 4) To prepare future health professionals to integrate and translate their lived experience in a Mediterranean culture and new knowledge acquired in this course to inform a variety of career applications, namely clinical practice, public health practice, health communications, health education, and related industries including culinary nutrition, agriculture, and the food industry.

Taught concurrently with the undergraduate companion course, SAR HS 408

Examples of field trips, activities and guest speakers in prior years (Specific details, subject to change):

- Organic farm visits with lessons on sustainability
- Meals at Agriturismos and Malgas
- Vineyards with wine tasting
- Eatlay's FICO World in Bologna
- Food production – making of cheese, pasta, pizza, gelato, olive oil...
- Hiking in the Lessinia mountains or the Dolomites
- The business model of healthy food production and distribution (Ecor Natura Si)
- Slow Food, Italy
- School nutrition for child health promotion in Italy
- Research at the Agricultural Research Institute in Legnaro
- Historical tours of Padua, Venice and Verona
- Tour of the University of Padua's historical site at the Palazzo Bo including the renowned anatomical theater at the medical school
- Museum of Medicine
- Scrovegni Chapel, home of frescoes by Giotto