

01:377:415 Lifestyles of the Mediterranean

Credits	Language	Term	Year	Start Date	End Date
3	English	Winter	2022	Jan 2	Jan 16

Course Description:

The traditional Mediterranean lifestyle, a cluster of habits and practices that have been associated with various health benefits, is the heritage of millennia of exchanges of people and cultures of all countries around the Mediterranean basin. With a view of spreading the core constituents of the traditional Mediterranean lifestyle and passing the knowledge regarding its beneficial effects on health, the program «Lifestyles of the Mediterranean» aims to introduce this traditional lifestyle pattern to students of the modern era, through observing traditional practices and undertaking experiential activities.

The program will take place in Greece, where the Mediterranean lifestyle has been implemented for thousands of years. Lectures, workshops and other educational activities will cover the fundamental principles of the Mediterranean diet, a dietary pattern that has been recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and recently proposed as a health promoting diet in the 2015-2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The program will also address other Mediterranean lifestyle practices, including: 1) consumption of fresh, minimally processed, local, seasonal and eco-friendly foodstuffs, 2) frugality and moderation in relation to energy balance and body weight, 3) use of herbs and spices to introduce a variety of flavors and palatability to dishes and allow for a reduction in salt use, 4) adequate hydration with emphasis on water and traditional herbal infusions, 6) adoption of a physically active lifestyle, 7) conviviality with regard to the social and cultural value of meals and physical activity, and 8) stress relief and adequate rest during the day.

During the first week, the program's educational activities will take place in Athens, the capital of Greece. While in Athens, students will familiarize with the history, evolution and culinary aspects of the Mediterranean lifestyle, through visits to archaeological sites and educational workshops in traditional food markets and establishments. The program will continue with a 5-day trip to Peloponnese, a peninsula in the southern part of Greece. While in Peloponnese, students will study the production, nutritional properties and health benefits of traditional Mediterranean foods and spirits, familiarize with the concept of Greek breakfast, taste traditional Mediterranean recipes, and participate in several interactive educational group activities. During the 2-week program, some days will be devoted to theoretical lectures, discussion sessions or workshops on the scientific and culture themes of the day, followed by studying in local institutions. Other days will be devoted entirely to field trips, excursions and interactive educational activities, including visits to monumental sites and cultural places of natural beauty, demonstrations of Mediterranean lifestyle practices, as well as collective activities in nature.

Pre-Requisites:

1. Instructor's consent
2. Minimum GPA 2.5

Objectives:

1. Become familiar with the concept of the Mediterranean lifestyle as a holistic way of living, incorporating not only lifestyle habits and practices but also other social, cultural and religious aspects of life.
2. Become aware of the fundamental principles of the Mediterranean lifestyle, its history and its evolution throughout time in the populations of the Mediterranean region.
3. Be able to identify the unique characteristics of the Mediterranean diet and its differences compared to other dietary patterns adopted around the world (e.g. the Western type diet).
4. Obtain the skills to properly select foods according to their nutritional value, degree of processing, locality, seasonality and eco-friendliness, in accordance with the principles of the Mediterranean diet.
5. Gain competencies in Mediterranean lifestyle practices, such as the design of nutritionally balanced meals

and the application of traditional food production, preservation and cooking techniques.

6. Critically understand and interpret the available scientific data regarding the beneficial effects of the Mediterranean lifestyle on health and disease

Course Materials:

- Lectures, notes and other files relevant to the course's learning objectives (printed and electronic material).
- Textbook: Textbook of Lifestyle Medicine. Sidossis & Kales. (WILEY 2021)
- Student portfolio (course overview and schedule, summary of learning outcomes, educational tasks, etc.)
- Leaflets relevant to the course's educational and cultural activities (e.g., Athens-Attica Guide and Gastronomy, Ministry of Tourism, Greek National Tourism Organisation).
- Research papers relevant to the course's learning objectives (e.g., Diolintzi A, Panagiotakos DB, Sidossis LS. From Mediterranean diet to Mediterranean lifestyle: a narrative review. Public Health Nutr. 2019 Oct;22(14):2703-2713; Rippe JM. Lifestyle Medicine: The Health Promoting Power of Daily Habits and Practices. Am J Lifestyle Med. 2018;12(6):499-512.,).

Instructors:

Labros Sidossis, PhD, Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University.

Course Requirements:

Coursework	Due Date	Possible Points
Course preparation assignments (studying course materials)	Jan 3 rd	10 points
Participation (attention and interest in the course's activities) & Professionalism (professional behavior, teamwork and communication)	Throughout the course	30 points
Portfolio	Jan 14 th	30 points
Project *	Jan 15 th (presentations) & January 29 th (written assignments)	30 points
Total		100

* Group presentation for all students plus individual written assignment only for graduate students.

Portfolio Instructions:

Students will have a portfolio of evidence in which they will record all the information necessary to demonstrate the completion of the specific objectives and any other relevant information. More specifically, students will describe and evaluate their experiences in Greece, as well as undertake short educational activities associated with the program's topics, in order to help cover the program's main learning objectives and assess the knowledge, the skills and the competencies they obtained. The portfolio will be completed through the PAL (Peer Assisted Learning) method. The term PAL essentially means that each student will work in collaboration with at least one other student in order to develop their knowledge and skills.

Project Instructions:

All students are expected to work in small groups (2 students) to prepare a 10-minute presentation related to the course's learning objectives. Graduate students are also expected to complete an individual written assignment (2000 words) related to the course's learning objectives. The presentation and written assignment topics will be assigned at the beginning of the course.

Grading:

There are 100 total points for the course.

100-90=A	89-85=B+	84-80=B	79-75=C+	74-70=C	69-65=D+	64-60=D	<60=F
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Preliminary Schedule

(Subject to change according to instructor availability and environmental conditions)

Day	Educational activity	Topic	Objectives met	Contact hours*
	• Pre-departure orientation	• Study abroad basics & travel logistics	-	4
Jan 2 nd	• Travel day	• Travel to Athens	-	-
Jan 3 rd	• Welcome lecture • Welcome dinner	• Brief introduction to the course	-	1
Jan 4 rd	• Lecture & discussion session • Private city hop-on hop-off bus tour & visit to places of interest	• Analytical presentation of the course (itinerary & academics) • Healthy lifestyle & wellness • Exploring the city of Athens	1, 2, 3, 6	3
Jan 5 th	• Visit to “Organization Earth Center” • Guided tour in Mediterranean plantations & gardens • Collective culinary activities & voluntary work • Lecture & discussion session	• Nutrition & the ecosystem • Food production, sustainable agriculture & development • Mediterranean plants & herbs • Nutritionally complete and eco-friendly meals • Cooking for the socially deprived	3-6	5
Jan 6 th	• Guided tour of the Acropolis museum • Visit to the Parthenon • Lecture & discussion session	• Ancient Greek civilization & lifestyle • Connecting ancient history with contemporary way of living	1, 2, 3, 6	3
Jan 7 th	• Free day	• Free day to study	-	-
Jan 8 th	• Travel to Nafplio • Guided tour of a winery • Lecture & discussion session • Wine tasting • Study with supervision	• Production, nutritional value & health benefits of wine • Grapes & wine in the Mediterranean diet • Portfolio & project overview	3-6	5
Jan 9 th	• Visit to the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies • Lecture & discussion session • Hiking to “Karathonas” beach	• Concept, evolution & health aspects of physical activity • Physical activity patterns in the Mediterranean lifestyle	1, 2, 6	4
Jan 10 th	• Hiking to “Palamidi” fortress • Walking tour at an open “laiki” market • Greek folklore dance lesson	• Mediterranean food markets & seasonal produce • Alternate physical activity based on tradition and socializing	3-6	5
Jan 11 th	• Visit to Epidaurus • Lecture & discussion session • Tour in ancient sites	• Ancient Greek culture & medicinal practice	1, 2, 6	3
Jan 12 th	• Guided tour of an olive oil production factory • Lecture & discussion session • Olive oil tasting	• Production, nutritional value & health benefits of olive oil • Olives & olive oil in the Mediterranean diet	3-6	5

Jan 13 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study with supervision • Cooking class & collective culinary activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio & project overview • Mediterranean culinary tradition • The role of conviviality in cooking and sharing meals 	3-6	5
Jan 14 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due date for portfolios • Free day to study 	-	-
Jan 15 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection day • Student presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection & facilitated discussion of the program 	1-6	5
Jan 16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to USA 	-	-
Jan 29 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student written assignments** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due date for the written assignments (electronic delivery) 	1-6	-
Total				48

* Lectures, discussion sections, and formal meetings with the students to present information or to review information, process and discuss what has been experienced in the field, etc.

** For graduate students only.