SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Fall 2013
Discipline: Geography
SEMS 2500-103: Geography of Wine
Division: Lower
Faculty Name: John Boyer

Pre-requisites:
none

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Analysis of physical and cultural forces which shape the production, consumption and great variety of wine in the world. This complex commodity will be examined through its economic, social, political and ideological impacts in different parts of the world throughout history, and up to the present. Particular emphasis will be focused on PLACE as an agent in defining the product, along with the tangible skills of interpreting wine labels, wine etiquette, and incorporating wine with food as a part of a healthy lifestyle.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
To introduce students to geographic concepts and spatial thinking using a familiar commodity as a vehicle. At course completion, students will be able to
- Utilize an historical geography approach--how this commodity evolved, changed and moved throughout the world, as well as how they are shaping the world of today.
- Be able to interpret labels, pair wines with foods, and recognize major stylistic differences and grape varieties from around the world.
- Appreciate cultural diversity and history at the global scale, as manifested in the great variety of wines and wine styles.
- Understand and be able to elaborate on how the physical and cultural components of a PLACE combine to form a unique commodity identity, and identify major wine regions of the world by styles and grape varieties.
- Identify the role of globalization in the production and consumption patterns, as well as marketing and distributional ones.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Phillips, Rod
TITLE: A Short History of Wine
PUBLISHER: Ecco
DATE/EDITION: First Edition (October 16, 2001)
(This book is out of print; I can provide .pdf online)

AUTHOR: Unwin, Tim
TITLE: Wine and the Vine: An Historical Geography of Viticulture and the Wine Trade
PUBLISHER: Routledge
DATE/EDITION: First Edition (June 20, 1996)
(I will provide excerpts from this text online)

AUTHOR: Zraly, Kevin
TITLE: Kevin Zraly's Complete Wine Course
PUBLISHER: Sterling Epicure
DATE/EDITION: Revised edition (September 6, 2011)

AUTHOR: Boyer, John
TITLE: Drink This Now!: Step by step lessons for the aspiring wine connoisseur
PUBLISHER: Wiley
DATE/EDITION: 2nd edition (January 7, 2010)
(I will provide digital versions of this entire book for those desiring such option)

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

A1- August 27:  
A1: Intro to wine. Wine: the basis of civilization? The commodity’s influence, past & present  
Read Phillips, Introduction p xiii-xviii  
Read Phillips, Chapter 1 On the trails of the earliest wines, pp 1-28  
Q: How/where/when did wine begin, and how did it affect human culture both in antiquity and even now in the modern age?

A2-August 29:  
A2: What is alcohol? 3 forms to know: Beer vs. wine vs. liquor...vs liqueur?  
Read Boyer, intro  
Q: What are the basic differences between the major categories of alcoholic products, and how are each crafted?

August 30-September 1: St. Petersburg

A3- September 3:  
A3: The Sip & Swirl: Basic Wine Etiquette, Label Reading, & the Language of Wine  
Read Zraly, Introduction pp viii-xi  
Read Zraly The Physiology or Tasting Wine pp. 255-264  
Read Zraly Understanding Your Own Sense of Taste pp. 273-278  
Read Boyer, Lesson 2: Glassware, yes it does make a difference  
Q: What is all that swirling and sniffing about? How do I serve wine? How do I make sense of those confusing wine labels? How do I understand all those crazy wine words that snobs use when drinking wine?  
Assignment: Wine Quiz

September 4-7: Copenhagen
A4- September 9:
A4: Viticulture: Grape Growing, Grape Diffusion, & Modern Grape Varieties
Read Unwin, Chapter 2, pp. 27-46
Read Zraly, A Prelude to Wine pp. 1-26
Q: How are grapes grown? How do regional, seasonal, and cultural variation affect the finished wine? What is the difference between a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Bordeaux?
Assignment: Tasting Journal Due

September 10-12: Antwerp
September 13-15: Le Havre

A5- September 17:
A5: Vinification: How wine is made.
Read Unwin, Chapter 2, pp. 46-57
Q: How is wine produced, what are the major steps in the process, and how does winemaker variation in these steps affect finished wines aromas, flavors, and body?
Assignment: Wine Film Review Due

September 18: Arrive & Depart Galway
September 19: In Transit
September 20-21: Dublin

A6- September 23:
A6: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: Portugal (Portugal wine primer prior to port)
Read Zraly Class 8: Sherry & Port
Readings specific to Portugal wine industry TBA
Q: What is Port wine, and how does it differ from other wines? What other wines is Portugal producing right now? What is the history of the modern Portuguese wine industry and their major wine regions?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

September 25-27: Lisbon
September 28-30: Cadiz

A7- October 1:
A7: Vinification: Stylistic variations and the use of wood
Read Boyer, Lesson 4: Got Wood?
Read Boyer, Lesson 5: Dry vs. Sweet
Read Boyer, Lesson 6: Color Me Clueless
Read Boyer, Lesson 7: Rock Your Body, But Keep Your Balance
Q: How does the use of wood affect finished wines aromas, flavors, and body? And what specific processes and traditions do winemaker's utilize to produce quality, distinctive wines?

October 3-6: Casablanca

A8- October 7:
A8: Wine history: Wine origins & diffusion up to Middle Ages & wine's changing role in societies
Read Phillips, Chapter 2 Democratic Drinking: Wine in Ancient Greece and Rome, pp 29-63
Read Phillips, Chapter 3, Were the ‘Dark Ages’ the Dry Ages? Europe 500-1000 AD, pp 62-83
Read Phillips, Chapter 4, Wine Resurgent The Middle Ages, 1000-1500, pp 84-115
Q: Where did grapes come from? How did the specific grapes used for wine diffuse from their origin to all corners of the classic world? How did wine affect the Near Eastern and European societies of the classic and medieval
Assignment: Tasting Journal Due

A9- October 9:
A9: Wine history: The Revolution in Alcohol: 1500-1700
Read Phillips, Chapter 5 New Wines New Skills: Revolution in Alcohol, 1500-1700, pp 116-151
Q: How was the Renaissance an unprecedented era for new alcoholic products in general, and specifically, how did it set the stage for modern wine regions and modern wine styles?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

A10- October 12:
A10: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: This very special French term: terroir
Read Robinson, ‘Why are some vintners reluctant to put a wine’s true geography on the label?’
Read Robinson, ‘When Geography Overrides Reality’
Read Tradition, Territory, and Terroir in French Viniculture: Cassis, France and Appellation Controlee
Read Zraly Class 1: The White Wines of France pp 29-56
Read Zraly Class 8: Champagne pp. 193-200
Q: What is the concept of terroir, and how is it a central component in understanding all wine? How is it increasingly being applied to other commodities? What are the major white wine producing regions of France? What are the major white grapes and white wine styles of France?

October 13-16: Tema

A11- October 18:
A11: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: France
Read Zraly Class 4: The Red Wines of Burgundy and the Rhone
Read Zraly Class 5: The Red Wines of Bordeaux
Read Boyer, Lesson 12: Bordeaux's Big Boys
Read Boyer, Lesson 13: Burgundy's Big Hitter
Q: What are the major red wines of France? What are the major red wine producing regions of France? What are the major red grapes and red styles of France?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

A12- October 21:
A12: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: South Africa (African wine primer prior to port)
Read Zraly Wines of the World pp. 211-248
Readings specific to South African wine industry TBA
Q: What are the major wines of South Africa? How has their wine industry evolved historically? What are the major wine regions of South Africa? What are the future prospects of their industry?
Assignment: Wine Film Review Due

October 23-27: Cape Town

A13- October 28:
A13: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: Germany & Austria
Read Zraly Class 3: The White Wines of Germany
Read Johnson Atlas of Wine, pp Germany
Q: What are the major wines and wine styles of Germany and Austria? How can we make sense of their very unique labeling system? What are the major wine regions of the countries?
Assignment: Tasting Journal Due

A14- October 31:
A14: Written Midterm, Visual Wine Label Exam

A15- November 2:
A15: Wine history: Wine in New Worlds
Read Phillips, Chapter 6 Wine in New Worlds: America, Africa & Australia 1500-1800, pp 152-178
Read Zraly p. 40: American Wine and Winemaking: A Short Story
Read Boyer, pp 181-197
Q: How did the European wine grapes and wine styles spread to the rest of the world? What part did European colonization patterns play on the current wine styles and wine cultures of New World countries?

A16- November 5:
A16: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: South America (Argentinean wine primer prior to port)
Read Zraly Wines of the World pp. 211-248
Readings specific to South American wine industries TBA
Read Boyer, Lesson 16: America's Finest
Q: What are the major red and white wines of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil? What are the major wine producing regions? Their major grapes? How did their industries evolve and what are the current trends in this explosively growing part of the wine world?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

November 7-9: Buenos Aires
November 10-12: Montevideo

A17- November 13:
A17: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: Italy
Revisit Zraly Class 7: Wines of the World, Italy
Read Boyer, Lesson 13: The Italian Stallions
Q: What are the major wines and wine styles of Italy? What are the major wine regions of the countries? How is their industry changing radically in the modern era?
Assignment: Tasting Journal Due

A18- November 15:
A18: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: Spain
Revisit Zraly Class 7: Wines of the World, Spain
Read Johnson Atlas of Wine, pp Spain
Read Boyer, Lesson 14: The Spanish Princes
Q: What are the major wines and wine styles of Spain? What are the major wine regions of the countries? How is Spain leading an exciting period of experimentation in European wine?

November 16-18: Rio de Janeiro

A19- November 20:
A19: Wine history: Wine troubles of the last two centuries
Read Phillips, Ch 7 Wine, Enlightenment & Revolution, Europe in the 18th Century, pp 179-217
Read Phillips Ch 8 Towards an Age of Promise, Uncertainty & Prosperity, 1800-1870, pp 218-270
Read Phillips, Ch 9 A Time of Troubles, Wine and Its Enemies, 1870-1950
Q: What major events almost destroyed the wine industry worldwide? How did these challenges, and the solutions to them, affect modern wine regions, wine industries, and wine styles?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

A20- November 22:
A20: Wine history: Wine’s great rebounding…1950 to the present
Read The Economist, Survey of Wine, 18DEC1999, pp. 91-105
Read Boyer, pp 181-197 Stylistic summary: New World vs. Old World wines
Q: How has the world of wine been revolutionized in the last 50 years? What accounts for its explosive growth?
How is the increase of both production and consumption of wine worldwide mantises itself on landscapes, cultures, and diets worldwide?
Assignment: Wine Film Review Due
Assignment: Tasting Journal Due

A21- November 25: (enter Amazon)
A21: Evolution of Modern Wine Regions: Other world highlights
Revisit Zraly Class 2: The Wines of Washington, Oregon, and New York
Revisit Zraly Class 6: The Red Wines of California
Read Johnson Atlas of Wine, pp Australia, New Zealand
Revisit Zraly Class 7: Australia
Read Zraly Wines of the World pp. 211-248
Q: What are the other major wine regions outside the Atlantic world's wine heartland? What are their major grape varieties, styles, and histories?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

November 27-29: Manaus

A22- December 1: (exit Amazon)
A22: Current Trends & Future Regions
Read Boyer, Lesson 17: When Worlds Collide
Read Boyer, Lesson 18: Significant Others
Q: How about the future of wine? Where are the up and coming wine regions in the world? How are changing consumption patterns affecting wine production? How are the changing economic fortunes of places like China, Russia and South America affecting demand and production? How is a more wine educated generation of Americans changing their alcohol consumption patterns?
Assignment: Wine Quiz

A23- December 3:
A23: Panel Discussion with Fellow Faculty Wine Enthusiasts
Q: How did fellow faculty and staff first get introduced to wine? Do they drink wine on a regular basis? Do they collect and store wine? What wines did they drink when they were in college? What changes have they witnessed in the world of wine, and in drinking behavior in the US?

A24- December 10: A Day Finals
Assignment: Tasting Journal Due
FIELD WORK

**FIELD LAB** (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.) Attendance and participation in the Field Lab is MANDATORY. Lab specifics and associated assignments TBA.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

**Assessment**
Grades will consist of
1) On-line Quizzes (5) (20%)
2) Midterm Examination (10%)
3) Final Examinations (10%)
4) A Visual Wine Label Examination (5%)
5) Wine Film Discussion/Quiz (2) (10%)
6) Paper/presentation/report/video on your visitation to a wine-producing region OR a full wine/food focused meal (20%)
7) Tasting Journal: A descriptive dialogue on the wines and other alcoholic beverages you partake of while traveling, and keeping a detailed photo-journal of the food/beverage experience. (25%)

1) Weekly Reading Quizzes
Each week, an on-line quiz will be posted on the class website. The quiz will consist of questions from selected chapters of the *Drink This Now!* tasting textbook and the *Windows on the World, Complete Wine Course*; Zraly, Kevin 2012 Edition. These quizzes are open-notes, open-book, open-website and can be taken as many times as you like. In other words, keep taking them until you get a 100% on it.

2) and 3) Midterm and Final Examinations; type of test TBA (essay, multiple choice, short answer)

4) Wine Label Visual Examination
This is a visual on-screen test that acts as both a way to earn points, while simultaneously providing you with a study guide/practice for the midterm and final exams. It will focus solely on actual wine labels themselves, and nothing more, and is a visual exam. That means that the exams will be on-screen, and entail the identification of major characteristics of the wine in the bottle by interpreting the information presented on the label.

5) Wine Film Assignments
Five nights throughout the semester, a wine-themed film will be shown in the evening. It is possible that other film events will become available as special circumstances present themselves during the semester. I will make an announcement and post to the course calendar when additional films are added. It is expected that you will attend at least two of these films, participate in the discussion, and then take a short quiz.

Directly after viewing the film, we will have a discussion and quiz on the wine aspects of film--some of the questions will be used to spark debate and analysis and the answers will be given; other questions will simply be asked and you have to provide the answer. So what we have is a unique kind of test in which some answers are given, and some are not--in both scenarios, you are expected to treat this quiz just as you would a regular examination.

Possible Films:
Blood Into Wine
Sideways
Uncorked
Merlove
Bottle Shock

6A) Wine Region Assignment
Throughout our trip, we will be near many, many wine regions on three different continents. Of course, you can
pick one region you want, anywhere you want! Then plan a field excursion to this place, and visit a winery or two. Do some research on the web or the wine books at your disposal on the ship, and figure out in advance where you are going and which wineries you want to visit. Call ahead and make sure that they are open before you take off…it shouldn’t be a problem, but it may be the off-season for wine tourism in certain areas. But you are going to this place to find out, and tell me about, their terroir and their wine.

Again, your ‘report’ is largely left to your creativity and interests. You can do a standard paper, a journal, a powerpoint presentation, a talk when you get back here, a website, a video journal, a photojournalism approach…or anything else that you want. Any/all formats should include photos though. I’m mostly interested in you researching, visiting, tasting, and talking to folks in a recognized wine region, and then reporting on your findings. This is not an exhaustive list, and I certainly don’t want to restrict your particular focus of interest, but at a minimum you should at least consider these things about the region:

- What are the major sub-regions within the region?
- What are the major grape varieties of that region and sub-region?
- What government-sponsored control agencies, if any, control the production of wine from the region? Are they the same for each sub-region? What are the controls?
- What is the history of this wine region?
- Are the wines from this region and sub-region made from blends of different grape varieties? If so, which ones? Why?
- What information is on wine labels from this region that help to differentiate quality?
- What are the features about this region that contributes to the reputation of superior wine quality? What is unique about this region?
- What packaging features, if any, differentiate the region or sub-region?
- See if you can find out what makes up their unique terroir…that is, what are their unique soils, climate, grape varieties, wine-making techniques, terrain, blends, etc….you will find that most regions will highly define what makes them unique, as its part of the European way, as well as a marketing technique.
- Photo-document the landscapes, the wineries, the vineyards, the wine labels, the peoples, and the good times that you most certainly will have.

Collect literature from the place, sample their beverages, tour the production facilities, walk through the vineyards, participate in a festival if its happening…hell, go for the full immersion experience. But document it well! Take pictures, take descriptive notes of the place and your experience, take separate tasting notes of what you tried, and be sure to get details off the bottles themselves to reference.

To turn in, craft a nice, creative report on your experience including everything you can, outlined in a narrative format. In other words, I don't want you handing me a pile of scratched notes, a handful of random unlabeled pics, and a damp coaster. Tell the story of your visit logically, well organized, and place images in along the way, and be sure to label them. Paper or digital works for me either way.

Because these will be creative and contain images (including some of yourself and the wines), I can't really put a page count or a word count on these things for you to shoot for. Like anything else, I know a good report when I see it…and we all recognize crap when we see it too. As soon as some of you hand in some good ones, I will post them on-line on the Boyer Wine Site as a guide for others to follow. With your permission of course!

Cool? Is that sufficiently detailed enough and yet still nebulous enough to get you going in the right direction? 25% of your grade, so don’t feel like you have to kill yourself over it….I mostly just want to get you out in those landscapes and drinking some great wines, and seeing how awesome the wine-producing lifestyle is on the ground. So party on!

**OR**

**6B) Wine Dinner Report**
This is another optional assignment created to encourage you to engage more deeply in the real deal about wine: experiencing it as it was created for, as an accompaniment with food. Wine is food, dude! So here is a great chance to see what it is like to pair a region's wine with a region's cuisine...albeit in a totally local venue that uses locally produced foods, as organic as possible, and does a nice job of creative fusion to represent the cuisine of the wine regions of the world that each pairing focuses on.

What to turn in? Document the hell out of your experience. I want pics of you and your friends at the dinner table, and the food and the wine. I want you to take notes of the dishes you eat, tasting notes of the wines you have (including info on each wine, as well as your tasting/smell descriptions of those wines) and how those wines paired with the foods. Choose a variety of dishes off the menu, and a variety of wines they offer. Ask the sommelier for help if you need it. Write up a journal report containing all these details and your overall impressions of the experience, and turn it in either in digital or paper format before the following Thursday. Grab pics, menus, descriptions of each dish, descriptions of each wine, and description of how the flavors and aromas changed as you tasted different beverages with different food. Talk with the chef if possible. Talk to the wine steward. Talk to each other, if you are their with friends. Its what food and wine and dining are really all about.

Be forewarned: while I am open to experimentation, I must insist on this activity being done at a respectable venue, be it a small specialized local restaurant or a big fancy-smancedes one. Getting a cheap house wine at an Olive Garden that you found in the touristy section of London won't cut the mustard. No chain restaurants, and nothing that doesn't focus on local/regional cuisine and local/regional wines. That is the real mission for this exercise: to drink and taste a sampling of the local culture. Get outside your comfort zone and experience what these places have to offer!

Post meal, research the wines you had at the meal and include their official description in your report, and assess your level of agreement/disagreement with the official wine-writers views of the wine.

How cool is that for a grade? Please give me some personal feedback as soon as possible on if this is a good experience and a learning opportunity for you, as this is a first time experiment.

7) Weekly Tasting Assignment Journal
Your main assignment for your semester abroad is to become familiar with wine drinking practices, wine styles, wine grapes, wine and food pairing, and wine vocabulary….but don’t fret: this can all be achieved by just drinking wine and paying attention as you do it!

To help you along with this task, I’m going to make you do something I wish someone would have made me do years ago: keep a journal of your wine/beer experiences. Pay attention. Jot down words and phrases that describe the smell, the tastes, the body, the experience. Write it all down. Tear off and save the label if you can. Take pictures. Express opinions. Heck, just describe and document as much as you can while tasting…it really doesn’t have to be complicated, and should not be looked upon as a chore or task that has to be ‘worked’ at. And you don’t have to do this for every single wine you taste all semester, but I insist that you have at least 3 full journal entries for at least 3 different wines per port for the entire the semester.

While describing your wine sensory experiences, be honest and open about your perceptions. You don’t have to ‘find’ the flavors or smells that the professional wine writers describe in such flowery terms. If it smells like an old shoe or bubble gum or a cheeseburger to you, then say so. Your personal opinion and tastes are always exactly right for you. Be confident. Talk openly about it. That’s half the fun. After the experience, once back in front of a computer, so a bit of research on the wine. Cut and paste some professional wine writers descriptions of the wine, and put them into your journal as well.

Otherwise, just seek out local bodegas, enotecas, wine bars, or wineries….and do a few wines per week at each port of call...and I'm talking about 3 glasses of wine over the course of your stay, not 3 bottles on wine in a single sitting! Or just head to the local wine shop or grocer and grab a bottle to do with a small group down by the lake. It doesn’t matter to me, as long as you do it! And wine, as with life, is meant to be shared and enjoyed with friends and fellow humans, so always do these tastings in groups, regardless of size. That way you can always discuss and debate the wines as you imbibe. As it should be.
For the journal entries, you can really do anything that works best for you. Buy a small journal or do it all digitally, either way will work. Just try to somehow standardize your entries so you always hit the same topics for each wine. At a minimum, document this for each wine journal entry:

- Name of the wine/beer/liquor
- Name of the producer/winery
- Identify the varietal(s) used (i.e. Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, or if a blend, what all is in it)
- List the vintage (year of production)
- Country of origin
- Major region of origin
- Sub-region of origin (if applicable)
- Price
- Alcohol content (if can be determined)
- What the wine color looked like (elaborate)
- What the wine smelled like (elaborate)
- What the wine tastes like (elaborate)
- What you liked about the wine/What you didn’t like about the wine
- Grab the label off the bottle, or take a pic of it. You will thank me later for this.
- Cut and paste a professional review of the wine, or the description from the wine-maker themselves
- Where you had this wine, name of the establishment (with a pic), the ambience
- Any food you paired with it, and the whole experience of that.

Once you get more familiar with wine, you should consider also talking/thinking/writing about these themes: The overall intensity of the wine’s aroma and flavor, The overall complexity of the wine’s aroma and flavor, The level of astringency in the wine, The sugar-acid balance in the wine, The level of bitterness in the wine, List the structure/texture, body and flavor synergy and/or contrast of the wine, What “image” does the wine packaging evoke? Did you have it with food? How did it pair with different flavors?

Does all that make sense? Is that cool? If not, give me some feedback and we can modify. Keep all your journal stuff together and you can turn that stuff into me upon your return, not before. How about we make that 25% of your grade?

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Steven Kolpan, Brian H. Smith, Michael A. Weiss and The Culinary Institute of America
PUBLISHER: Wiley
DATE/EDITION: 3 edition (September 14, 2010)

AUTHOR: Hugh Johnson (Author), Jancis Robinson (Author)
TITLE: World Atlas of Wine
PUBLISHER: MITCH;
DATE/EDITION: 6 Rev Upd edition (October 1, 2007)

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

AUTHOR: Unwin, Tim
(I can provide digital copy of this work)

AUTHOR: Boyer, John
TITLE: Drink This Now!: Step by step lessons for the aspiring wine connoisseur
PUBLISHER: Wiley
DATE/EDITION: 2nd edition (January 7, 2010)
(I will provide digital versions of this entire book for those desiring such option)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
N/A

HONOR CODE
Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”
Wine is an alcoholic beverage made from grapes, and depending on your definition of "made from grapes" there are at least two independent inventions of the lovely stuff. The oldest known possible evidence for the use of grapes as part of a wine recipe with fermented rice and honey was in China, about 9,000 years ago. Two thousand years later, the seeds of what became the European wine-making tradition began in western Asia. Archaeological evidence of wine-making is a little difficult to come by, of course; the presence of grape seeds, fruit skins, stems and/o