Are you curious about Italian food? If so, this FIG will allow you to explore the great variety of food cultures of Italy, the connection between local foods and local identities, and the representation of food in Italian literature from the 19th century to the present – while also fulfilling 3 credits of the “L” (Literature) breadth requirement. You will discover novels with recipes, and cookbooks that read like a collection of stories. You will learn about the great migration at the end of the 19th century from Italy to North America, the export of Italian cuisine to America and the world, and the importance of food to ethnic identity. You will find out how the American super-marketing model was used in Italy. You will also learn about contemporary food movements born in Italy such as Slow Food and other interesting sustainable food programs in Italy.

You will discover:

- The variety of food cultures in Italy
- The impact of globalization on local food cultures and products
- The politics of gender and food
- The history of pizza
- Food in Italian American Little Italys
- Why Italian Futurist artists were against pasta
- Why Thomas Jefferson was obsessed with the Italian pasta machine

The main course in this FIG is not a traditional lecture course. It requires active participation. You will shop for Italian food, learn how to read labels, and discover what is real Italian food and what is fake “Italian Sounding” food. You will collaborate with other students on group projects. You will explore the local food history of the Greenbush (the Italian-American community in Madison) and the region. You will compare American food traditions and habits to those of Italy. You will also do hands-on food demonstrations and tastings for a real “taste of Italy” experience. The two linked courses will provide useful connections and tools:

In Horticulture 120 (Survey of Horticulture), besides learning about the history and philosophy of gardening, you will also explore our Mediterranean garden and make the connection between plant cultivation and their culinary uses.

In Italian 101 (First Semester Italian), you will get closer to Italian culture, including food, while learning one of the great languages of the world.

Buon appetito!
This FIG is a total of 10 credits. Students will need to take a 12 credit minimum to be a full-time student.