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Lifestyles of the Mediterranean Study Abroad
Syllabus & Tentative Itinerary
Rutgers University, Summer 2024, Session 1

Credits	Dates	Year
3	May 13-26	2024

Course Description:

The traditional Mediterranean lifestyle is a cluster of habits and practices that have been associated with various health benefits and are the heritage of millennia of exchanges of people and cultures of all countries around the Mediterranean basin. With a view to spreading the core constituents of the traditional Mediterranean lifestyle and passing the knowledge regarding its beneficial effects on health, the paradigm of 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, in Athens and Leros Island, where the Mediterranean lifestyle has been practiced for thousands of years. Lectures, workshops, and other educational activities will cover the fundamental principles of the Mediterranean lifestyle.

The program will also address Mediterranean lifestyle practices:

- Consumption of fresh, minimally processed, local, seasonal, and eco-friendly foodstuffs
- Frugality and moderation in relation to energy balance and body weight
- Use of herbs and spices to introduce a variety of flavors and palatability to dishes and allow for a reduction in salt use
- Adequate hydration with emphasis on water and traditional herbal infusions
- Adoption of a physically active lifestyle
- Conviviality about the social and cultural value of meals and physical activity
- Stress relief and adequate rest during the day

We will begin the program in Athens where we will meet and then continue to the Island of Leros. In Leros, we will study the production, nutritional properties, and health benefits of traditional Mediterranean foods and spirits, experience the concept of Greek breakfast, taste traditional Mediterranean recipes, visit traditional food markets and establishments and participate in several interactive educational group activities. The program will return to Athens where we will familiarize ourselves with the history, evolution, and culinary aspects of the Mediterranean lifestyle, through visits to archaeological sites.

During the 2-week program, some days will be devoted to theoretical lectures, discussion sessions, or workshops on the scientific and cultural themes of the day, followed by studying in local establishments. 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.

Students will also have 2 full “study days” with no scheduled activities- one in Athens and one in Leros.

Pre-Requisites:

1. Instructor’s consent
2. Minimum GPA 2.5

Course 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, per 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:

- Textbook (***Optional***): Sidossis LS, Kales SN. Textbook of Lifestyle Medicine; Wiley 2022 (<https://www.amazon.com/Textbook-Lifestyle-Medicine-Labros-Sidossis/dp/1119704421>)
- Lectures, notes, and other files relevant to the course's learning objectives (printed and electronic material).
- Leaflets relevant to the course's educational and cultural activities (e.g., Athens-Attica Guide and Gastronomy, Ministry of Tourism, Greek National Tourism Organization).
- Research papers relevant to the course's learning objectives (e.g., Foscolou A, ..., Sidossis LS, Panagiotakos D; MEDIS Study Group. Lifestyle determinants of healthy ageing in a Mediterranean population: The multinational MEDIS study. *Exp Gerontol.* 2018 Sep; 110:35-41; Diolintzi A, Panagiotakos DB, Sidossis LS. From Mediterranean diet to Mediterranean lifestyle: a narrative review. *Public Health Nutr.* 2019 Oct;22(14):2703-2713. PMID: 31156076)

Instructors:

Director: Labros Sidossis, Ph.D., Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

Co-Director: Joanne G Hunt, MA, Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

Co-Director: Nancy Goldberg, MA, Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University

Course Requirements:

Coursework	Due Date	Percentage
Pre travel assignments (studying course materials) On-line quiz	Prior to departure	10%
Participation (attention and interest in the course's activities) & Professionalism (professional behavior, teamwork, and communication)	Throughout the course	30%
Module Quizzes	Throughout the course	30%
Final Project	Last day of course	30%
Total		100%

Individual presentation for all students plus individual written assignments only for graduate students.

Final Project:

All students will be expected to prepare and present a 3-minute vlog presentation on an assigned topic 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. Students w

Grading:

100% total for the course.

Letter Grade	%Percent
A	90-100
B+	85-89.9
B	80-84.9
C+	75-79.9
C	70-74.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

PREMILINARY ITINERARY SUMMER 2024 Session 1

Course Dates: May 13-May 26, 2024

Flight Dates to Athens Greece- Arrive on May 13 no later than 2:30 pm

Return to the USA May 26, 2024-anytime

Note: Pre-departure meeting, Loree 022, Sunday, April 7 at 11 am.

This in-person orientation will review important details and information.

Arrival & Flights:

Fly to Athens on May 12 from the USA to arrive in Athens on May 13. You must arrive no later than 2:30 pm. We will then meet as a group at 3:30 pm and travel via overnight ferry to the Island of Leros and arrive to Leros on May 14.

Departure Flights:

Students may depart any time on May 26 from the Athens airport.

Hotels:

Leros: Crithoni Palace <https://www.crithonisparadisehotel.com/en/>

Athens: Athens Coast Hotel <https://www.athenscoasthotel.gr/>

Breakfast provided daily. Lunch or Dinner will be provided on most days.

*Preliminary Schedule- A detailed schedule will be distributed daily
*(Subject to change)

Leros Island: May 14 to May 22 Course Topics

- Connecting ancient history with the present- tour of Leros (Castle – War Museum - Agios Isidoros – City of Lakki)
- Introduction to healthy lifestyles and wellness
- Traditional Mediterranean cuisine & rural lifestyles
- Production, nutritional value and health effects of wine
- The importance of seasonality
- Mediterranean Cuisine- cooking lesson
- Role of herbs & medicinal plants on health
- Health benefits of physical activity (hiking, walking, swimming)
- The Importance of conviviality and social skills
- Local food tasting, discussion of ingredients and health benefits and the importance of seasonality
- Production & benefits of olive oil
- Forest Bathing”- fitness and mindfulness practice

Athens, Greece: May 23 to May 26 Course Topics

- Connecting ancient History with contemporary way of living- Bus tour of Athens- visit to Olympic Stadium & Parliament
- Guided tour of Acropolis Museum
- Self-Guided walking tour of Parthenon & Plaka district
- Student project presentations & reflections

Note: Students will also have 2 full “study days” with no scheduled activities- one in Athens and one in Leros