**01:377:415 Lifestyles of the Mediterranean**

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| **Credits** | **Language** | **Term** | **Year** | **Start Date** | **End Date** |
| 3 | English | Winter | 2025 | Jan 7 | Jan 20 |

**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 7-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:**

* 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).
* 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 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)

**Instructor:**

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

**Course Requirements:**

See Course Itinerary for Daily Activities and Assignment Schedule

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| **Coursework** | **Due Date** | **Percent Value** |
| Pre Departure Quiz (studying course materials) | Jan 4, 2025 | 10% |
| Participation: attention and interest in the course’s activities, professionalism, daily preparation,  behavior and policy compliance | Throughout the course | 30% |
| Quizzes (5) Based on Readings & Activities | Throughout course per schedule | 30% |
| Vlog Project\* | Jan 19, 2024 (presentations) & Jan 30, 2024 (written assignments) \* | 30% |
| **Total** |  | **100%** |

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

**Vlog Assignment**

For the final project of the course, each student is expected to prepare **a 3 to 3.5 -minute video log (vlog)**on topics provided by the instructors using CANVA, CapCut or IMovie. Topics will be assigned by faculty.

The topics cover fundamental components of the Mediterranean lifestyle and are fully presented during the course. Each vlog should include:

1. Brief introduction of the topic,

2. Main body, addressing topic-related historical, cultural, and scientific data (based on official reading material – notes, presentations, provided    scientific papers – and information provided on site during lectures and educational activities)

3. Reflection section, focusing on student experiences in Greece relevant to the project topic (students are highly encouraged to use personal notes from educational activities and field trips, as well as photos from their journey)- THIS IS KEY IN THIS PROJECT

4. Conclusion section, summarizing the main points of the presentation

5. Final Slide- Works Cited in with er MLA or APA

**Grading:**

There are 100 total points for the course.

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