

01:377:415 Lifestyles of the Mediterranean

Credits	Language	Term	Year	Start Date	End Date
3	English	Summer	2022	May 17	May 29

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 (optional): Textbook of Lifestyle Medicine. Sidossis LS and Kales S. (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., Bach-Faig A et al. Mediterranean diet pyramid today. Science and cultural updates. Public Health Nutr. 2011 Dec; 14 (12A): 2274-84.).

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)	May 16 th	10 points
Participation (attention and interest in the course’s activities) & Professionalism (professional behavior, teamwork and communication)	Throughout the course	30 points
Portfolio	May 27 th	30 points
Project *	May 28 th (presentations) & Jun 14 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*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-departure orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study abroad basics & travel logistics 	-	4
May 16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Athens 	-	-
May 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome lecture • Welcome dinner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief introduction to the course 	-	1
May 18 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture & discussion session • Private city hop-on hop-off bus tour & visit to places of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical presentation of the course (itinerary & academics) • Introduction to healthy lifestyle & wellness • Exploring the city of Athens 	1, 2, 6	3
May 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided tour of the Acropolis museum • Visit to the Parthenon • Lecture & discussion session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Greek civilization & lifestyle • Connecting ancient history with contemporary way of living 	1, 2, 3, 6	3
May 20 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to “Organization Earth Center” • Guided tour in Mediterranean plantations & gardens • Collective culinary activities & voluntary work • Lecture & discussion session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
May 21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study day with supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free day to study 	-	-
May 22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Nafplio • Guided tour of a winery • Lecture & discussion session • Wine tasting • Study with supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production, nutritional value & health benefits of wine • Grapes & wine in the Mediterranean diet • Portfolio & project overview 	3-6	3
May 23 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies • Lecture & discussion session • Hiking to “Karathonas” beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept, evolution & health aspects of physical activity • Physical activity patterns in the Mediterranean lifestyle 	1, 2, 6	4
May 24 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek folklore dance lesson • Lecture and educational activities: Fish & Seafood in the Mediterranean Diet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits and seasonality in the Mediterranean diet • Sustainable production and consumption • Alternate physical activity based on tradition and socializing 	3-6	5
May 25 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Epidaurus • Lecture & discussion session • Tour in ancient sites • Visit to an olive oil production factory • Lecture & discussion session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Greek culture & medicinal practice • Production, nutritional value & health benefits of olive oil • Olives & olive oil in the Mediterranean diet 	1-6	5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olive oil tasting 			
May 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to Tolo • Collective culinary activities • Mediterranean rural activities • Lecture & discussion session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediterranean culinary tradition • Traditional Greek cuisine and rural lifestyle • Food “from farm to fork” 	3-6	5
May 27 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking to “Palamidi” fortress (1000 steps) • Health benefits of a Traditional Greek Breakfast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due date for portfolios • Mediterranean culinary tradition 	-	-
May 28 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student project presentations & overall reflective discussion session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection & facilitated discussion of the program 	1-6	5
May 29 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to USA 	-	-
Jun 14 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.