History of Wine

*Wednesdays, 12:00 noon - 1 pm*, June 22 – July 31 online

**Course Aims**

Wine has often been called the divine beverage and the elixir of joy and may be one of the first steps in agriculture into plant domestication as an early cultivar. The history of wine is closely connected to the history of civilization and overall spread of highest culture and the arts. Archaeological evidence shows that wine became a social force in the Celtic world when chiefs gained greater status by offering imported wine to their warriors. We also know that viticulture has been traditionally bound up with the development of Western thought. Plato’s *Symposium* connected wine to philosophizing, and the cultural work of bards, poets, dancers, and musicians was often accompanied by wine rituals. In this course, we take a deep historical look at the development of winemaking and its relationship to Western culture. According to archeological findings, viticulture began in the Neolithic period more than six millennia ago in the Caucasus region. Carbonized grape seeds have been found in sites and wine chemical residues remain in some of the oldest pottery known to man. Ancient literature confirms the gradual spread of viticulture from the Near East to Egypt, Crete, and the broader Mediterranean world, including France and other regions of Europe. While even Sumerian hymns from the Early Bronze Age (ca 2500 BCE) mention excessive wine celebration of gods, the Western literary tradition started with the Greeks and Romans and continued down through the Medieval and Renaissance periods and into modern times.

This five-week course will draw strongly on science, history, literature, and art. Students will leave the course knowing more about the locales and differences of major global wine varietals from antiquity to the modern viticultural world.

**Course Requirements**

Students attend lectures and complete assigned readings from assigned or recommended texts, and supplemental texts as provided. Grading can be one of three options: NGR (no grade requested) is the default option: no work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided. CR/NC (Credit/No Credit) is the option that requires you answer the weekly discussion questions in Canvas for a total of 1,000 words posted. Letter Grade, (scale = A, B, C, D, F) is the option that requires you submit a brief 10-page paper - topic at instructor consent – and answer the weekly discussion questions in Canvas for a total of 1,000 words posted.
Tentative Weekly Zoom Schedule*:

Wednesdays 12:00 noon – 1 pm

*Please note that the Zoom schedule is subject to change. Attendance at Zoom sessions is optional. Zoom sessions will be recorded and made available to enrolled students who are unable to attend.

Required Course Text

Patrick Hunt, Wine Journeys: Myth & History 2013 (plus supplementary online articles)

Course Outline

6/24 Introduction, Neolithic and Early Viticultural History, Egypt, Mesopotamia
   Reading: Hunt, chs. 1-2 (Prehistory, Egypt, Mesopotamia)
   J.Owen, “Earliest Known Winery Found in Armenian Cave” National Geographic News 1/11

7/1 Greek, Etruscan and Roman Wine and the god Dionysus / Bacchus
   Reading: Hunt, chs. 3-5 (Greece, Etruscans, Rome)
   (http://www.electrummagazine.com/2020/05/lake-como-domasino-winery-in-sorsasso/)

7/8 Medieval to Modern Europe: Italy and Sicily, Germany, Tyrol, Switzerland
   Reading: Hunt, chs. 6-10 (Campania, Sicily, Alto Adige, Alsace, Switzerland)
   (http://www.electrummagazine.com/2014/04/the-maienfeld-wine-of-schloss-salenegg/)

7/15 Medieval to Modern Europe: Bordeaux, Rhone
   Reading: Hunt, ch. 11 (Bordeaux, Rhone)
   Emma Balter, “The ABC’s of Bordeaux”, Wine Spectator, March 2019
   (https://www.winespectator.com/articles/modern-abc’s-of-bordeaux-3490)

7/22 Medieval to Modern Europe: Burgundy and Champagne
   Reading: Hunt, ch. 12 (Burgundy, Champagne)
   Patrick Hunt, “Chateau Boursault: Champagne Legacy” Electrum Magazine, June, 2020
   (http://www.electrummagazine.com/2020/06/champagne-legacy-chateau-boursault/)

7/29 California and Beyond: The Judgment of Paris
   Reading: M. Steinberger, “Judgment of Paris: What the French Didn’t Learn…”
   Slate Magazine 5/24/2006
   (http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/wines_world/2006/05/the_judgment_of_paris.html)

*Note: Instructor reserves right to adapt schedule