

Italy: Inspiring Intercultural and Organizational Communication in the Mediterranean

COM 2124 and/or COM 3152
Summer 2024

STUDY ABROAD IN FLORENCE, ITALY!

The capital city of the region of Tuscany



Experience the wonders of Florence, Italy, with its rich culture, bustling businesses, breathtaking landscapes, phenomenal cuisine, and famous masterpieces and architecture.

This hybrid, experiential program will focus on the study of Intercultural and Organizational Communication within the workplace in and around Florence. We will learn the best practices for communicating effectively and efficiently in a professional environment by combining classroom learning, company visits, cultural activities, and excursions within industries such as Hospitality, Commerce and Retail, Culinary Arts, and Tourism.

Do not miss this chance to engage with professionals and small business owners in an international setting and the opportunity to earn six college credits while studying in this stunning location. This will be an unforgettable experience.

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Travel: May 28th – June 11th, 2024

Teaching Philosophy and Resources

Teaching Philosophy: As instructors, our first commitment is to you; our intention is to create a vibrant, engaging learning experience. We are dedicated to a collaborative and comfortable learning environment, which is a cooperative effort between us. Our role in this class will be primarily that of a facilitator of critical thinking... someone who brings to you a variety of information that is relevant to our trip and the theme of the class. We hope this will be a course where we can all teach each other, through our own experiences and reflections about communication and cultural differences in various workplace contexts. Therefore, the discussions can be very meaningful if everyone gets involved. Respect for every student's experience and opinion will be expected.

Primary Resources: This course is composed of a range of different free, online materials. While there are several different readings throughout the course, extensive use is also made of YouTube and other online media, which offer insights from experts regarding specific content. Online sources are also used to allow those involved in various intercultural and organizational relationships to share their insights and experiences with you. The course makes primary use of the following text, which is available as an e-text. Chapter outlines and powerpoints will be posted on asUlearn.

Brewer and Westerman. (2017). *Organizational Communication: Today's Professional Life in Context* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.

Course Overview and Objectives

Course Overview and Objectives:

This course is aimed at first providing you with the basics of intercultural communication and examining communication within organizational structures. It then encourages you to utilize that knowledge and skills in interacting in another culture. This course is to help you understand the role that communication processes play in the function of organizations.

By the time you have completed this course, you should be able to...

- 1) Interpret organizational experience using communication theoretical concepts.

- 2) Understand the typical communication dynamics of organizational processes.
- 3) Explain the differences between organizational processes, differences, cultures, dynamics that
- 5) Identify and highlight the differences of different points, cultural interaction and

We ask that you approach this experience with an open mind and with the understanding that the journey is the real learning experience and that the suspension of expectations and judgment and some level of comfort with uncertainty will be key to your experience.

Course Requirements and Grading

Course Requirements:

Pre-Trip Meetings (10%)

Much of this class relies on discussion, so attending every meeting prepared to participate is important. We understand that people participate in different ways and will try to incorporate several venues for participation. This includes email, text and our asUlearn discussion links. This also includes getting to know each other and familiarizing ourselves with the culture of Italy.

Italy Trip Course Assignments (20%)

These will depend on our interests as a group, but this generally includes: communication measures, readings, reflections, case studies, media critiques, etc. In such a small group, it's apparent when people come unprepared and we reserve the right to add reading quizzes as a means to encourage preparedness and insights from all. All of our pre and post-trip assignments will be due on asULearn.

Daily Meetings Abroad (30%)

These daily meetings will consist almost entirely of reflections and group discussions. You will take part in daily group meetings that serve several purposes: to reflect on the day's happenings, discuss key concepts of intercultural awareness/workplace communication, encouraging group cohesion, and planning.

Final Project (30%)- Choose one of the 4 Final Project Ideas

- 1) **Video Documentary:** You are required to create a video documentary or you may come up with a self-designed project. Individual projects should be based in a content area that interests you or furthers your studies. We require that your project reflects your understanding of the cultures we visit and key concepts of

the class (e.g. conflict resolution, crisis/change, leadership, cultural relativism, particulars of the cultures, communication theory). Projects will be due and presented during the last week of the summer session.

The documentary will require you to attend a documentary workshop and to use still photos, subtitles, and video to communicate to a general audience the experience of studying organizational and intercultural concepts and topics in Italy and should reflect your content learning and skills including mastery of basic tenets and selected theories. This project may be submitted for competition.

- 2) **Restaurant Experience:** Food feeds the soul. To the extent that we all eat food, and we all have souls, food is the single great unifier across cultures. But what feeds *your* soul? Food preferences are personally meaningful — and also culturally meaningful. Our comfort foods map who we are, where we come from, and what happened to us along the way. In her Ted Talks, Jennifer Lee states, “what you want to cook and eat is an accumulation, a function of your experiences — the people you’ve dated, what you’ve learned, where you’ve gone. There may be inbound elements from other cultures, but you’ll always eat things that mean something to you.”

This restaurant activity is designed to get you thinking about how other cultures experience life. We will be eating at a variety of restaurants over the course of our time in Italy. You may choose any of the restaurants we eat at as a group for your paper or you can pick one to visit during our free time. Food is, of course, deeply rooted in culture. In this assignment, you should note how food is presented, what kinds of food are offered, and how food is cooked. You will write a 3-4 page analysis paper which connects your dining experience with concepts we learn in the course.

- 3) **Virtual Organizational Tour:** Create a presentation on a specific area of communication in the Italian workplace. Obviously, Italy has a rich and expansive culture, the more narrow or specific the area you choose to focus on the more detailed and interesting your presentation will be. The presentation can take the form of a documentary, a powerpoint or Prezi. It should be image based rather than word based. You may include other kinds of media to enhance your presentation, but the majority of content should come from pictures and videos you take during our time in Italy. Further details will be posted on asUlearn.
- 4) **Workshop Training:** This project will give you hands-on experience preparing a workshop presentation on an organizational communication topic. The goal of each group is to prepare a professional quality workshop. One of your first tasks is to determine what your individual skill sets are relative to the requirement of

the assignment (who is best qualified to do what). You will get experience with research, analysis, critical thinking, technical aspects of presentations, and writing reports – that is, with professional workshop planning and presentation. We will discuss the final project in more detail and all information will be posted on AsULearn.

TRIP SUMMARY and ITINERARY:

*****Please note that this itinerary is subject to change.*****

Tuesday, May 28th, 2024

Group departs the U.S. to Italy

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Arrival in Florence

10am-3pm TBC

Airport Reception

Airport reception and transfer to accommodations

API health, safety & cultural orientation.

7.30pm

API arranged welcome dinner

Thursday, May 30, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Free morning

Afternoon

Lunch on own

Guided walking tour of Florence to see the main city sights like the Duomo and the Ponte Vecchio

Evening

Dinner on own

Friday, May 31, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Class time with LDM guest lecturer, Professor Alessandro Lorenzelli, an experienced business and strategy executive, founded Deconstruct, an independent market and customer strategy advisory network and idea agency. He has held senior roles in leading market research and management consulting firms in UK and Italy, with a solid record of above-expectation results.

Afternoon

Lunch on own

3.00pm

Visit to Mirror showroom and presentation with organizational leaders

Evening

Group dinner pizza tasting

Saturday, June 1, 2024

FREE WEEKEND!

Sunday, June 2, 2024

FREE WEEKEND!

Monday, June 3, 2024

Day trip: Modena

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Departure by Private bus to Modena

Visit Ferrari Museum

Afternoon

Group lunch in Modena

Transfer by private bus to Modena - Balsamic Vinegar Factory

Balsamic Vinegar family-run factory visit + tasting with an opportunity to speak with a representative about how they use communication in their business practices

Return to Florence

Dinner on own

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Visit to Nana Bianca

Afternoon

Lunch on own

Guided tour and visit of the Uffizi Gallery

Evening

Dinner on own

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Meeting in Piazza San Lorenzo

Visit and guided tour of Basilica di San Lorenzo including the Medici Chapel

Afternoon

Lunch on own

Visit to ARTEX Conventino

Evening

Group dinner

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Day trip: Siena & Chianti

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Departure by private bus - Day Trip: Siena & Chianti area

Guided visit of Siena

Meeting in Piazza del Campo

Afternoon

Transfer to Winery - wine tasting + lunch

Arrival at Castello da Verrazzano

Visit of the Castle and the cellars

Wine Tasting pairing lunch

Depart for Florence by private bus

Evening

Dinner on own

Friday, June 7, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Guided Accademia Gallery visit

Afternoon

Lunch on own

Meeting in St. Mark's Square

7.00pm

Traditional pasta cooking class (dinner included) Dinner includes an appetizer, pasta, and dessert.

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Morning

FREE WEEKEND!

Sunday, June 9, 2024

Morning

FREE WEEKEND!

Monday, June 10, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Free morning

Afternoon

Lunch on own

Sunset River cruise with aperitivo

Evening

API arranged farewell dinner along the river.

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Morning

Breakfast at accommodations

Independently arranged airport return and departure to the U.S.