

What an extraordinary, breathtaking, life changing trip. From February 22nd through March 3rd, I traveled to Florence and Rome to partake in the study abroad program, "Power, Place and Image in Florence and Rome." I want to thank you for helping me on this journey as I never thought an opportunity to travel abroad would come so soon. It has been my lifelong dream to travel every inch of the world and this was a PERFECT way to begin my adventures. After my experiences, I have no doubt that I will soon be venturing to another place unknown.



It was one thing to read about the beautiful streets of Italy, it was altogether a different experience to discover them in person. The words and pictures simply did not do them justice. Focusing on history, culture, and society of late medieval and Renaissance Florence and Rome, no powerpoint slide can compare to the "glorious note-taking opportunities" in the streets of Florence and Rome. I found more appreciation for the beautiful art and architecture that filled the cities when learning how and why they were created. This was usually to express the power of the one who commissioned the creation. We used this art and architecture to gain insight about the history of the time, values, and ideas of the people and also came to understand the political and familial power that art and architecture can express.



Through our studies of the art of medieval and Renaissance Florence and Rome, we discovered the mentality, values, religious beliefs, and practices of the time period. In Florence, I was amazed to learn the relationship between men and women both inside and outside the family and in Rome, the way popes and nobles used art and architecture to express their power. The most impactful thing I learned in Rome was about how the Pagan elements in the city were Christianized, while the most impactful thing I learned in Florence was about the Santa Maria del Fiore and the creation of its miraculous dome. Besides being imparted with Professor Delph's three life lessons, including you get what you pay for in life and cheese, if you have something good keep it to yourself, and always take the opportunity to use the bathroom when given, my biggest takeaway from the trip was the differences of culture between Italy and the U.S, which included the food! The food we discovered in these two cities was some of the best food I have ever had! Pasta, pizza, and pastries were always on the menu and the fruit from the street markets was unlike anything here in the states. Wandering the streets of Florence and Rome gave me a new appreciation for a different culture and opened my eyes to a different way of life. Being in a city unknown to me quickly brought me out of my comfort zone as I adapted to the different culture, language, and way of life and as a result I feel I grew as a person. All this was done while creating lifelong friendships. I and 24 other classmates packed our life into a small suitcase and flew to the other side of the world spending almost every moment of the days there together. I look forward to doing what I can to help recruit more students into this wonderful program while encouraging all students to study abroad.

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I want to thank you for again for helping me on this journey. As a little girl I would stare, fascinated at the globe, wondering what it was like in place different from the one I was in. I got the same butterflies in my stomach sitting on the plane, ready to take off to Italy as I did when I would stare at the globe, and now, as I think of the endless possibilities of where my adventures can take me. It is with a grateful heart that little girl was able to begin the adventures she had always been craving.