



KIIS Italy Program, Summer 2021

ITAL 105 Introduction to Italian Culture

Professors: Dr. Erik Liddell, Prof. Kelly Liddell

Email: erik.liddell@eku.edu / kelly.Liddell@eku.edu

Tentative Syllabus: subject to change

Course Description:

This course introduces students to Italian culture and history through a focus on the many ways in which Italian artists, writers, composers, architects, scientists, inventors, scholars, political leaders and more have contributed to Western and World Civilization, as well as through interactive experience with the social and cultural spaces of Italian cities. The course begins with a focus on the spending and flourishing culture of the Italian Renaissance in Florence; moves to the peaceful countryside at a Tuscan villa; and explores the medieval heritage of Italy in Siena; before concluding with the incredible diversity of Rome, including highlights from the classical age of the Republic and Empire and the cosmopolitan bustle of the modern age and contemporary life. Significant concepts and aspects of Italian culture to be explored include *sprezzatura*, *comunità*, *la dolce vita*, *la bellezza* and *la piacere*.



This course may be used to fulfill General Education Requirements, which vary depending upon home institution. E.g., at EKU, the course could satisfy Element 3 Arts & Humanities or Element 6 Diversity. Check with your home institution's study abroad office.

Texts:

Required Texts:

- 1) Storey, Stephanie. *Oil and Marble: A Novel of Leonardo and Michelangelo*. (Arcade, 2016). Must be purchased in advance: available in paperback or Kindle/E-Reader version. <https://www.amazon.com/Oil-Marble-Novel-Leonardo-Michelangelo-ebook/dp/B06XQ544VG/>
- 2) Epiro, Peter D' and Mary Desmond. *Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World*. Anchor Books 2001. ISBN: 978-0385720199. Must be purchased in advance: available in paperback or Kindle/E-Reader version. <https://www.amazon.com/Sprezzatura-Italian-Genius-Shaped-World/dp/038572019X>
- 3) Other materials to be made available in PDF (distributed by email and posted on the Google Classroom course page):
 - a. Hooper, John. *The Italians*. Selections: "The Beautiful Country" and "Questions of Identity"

- b. Gambescia, Carla. Selections from *La Dolce Vita University: An Unconventional Guide to Italian Culture from A to Z*
- c. *Rome Tales*. Selections: Rasy, “Two Days to Christmas”; Alvaro “The Small Hours”

Recommended Film (watch prior to departure):

PBS, *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance*, 2012. Part 2, “The Magnificent Medici”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-YyCyrSrQ>

Student Learning Outcomes

This course will provide:

- 1) Knowledge of Italian cultural history, including:
 - a. An informed acquaintance with major achievements of Italian culture, in the arts and humanities, especially, as well as in politics, the sciences, and social sciences
 - b. An appreciation of the complexity and variety of Italian cultural life
 - c. A historical perspective for understanding connections of past and present
 - d. Class visits to major cultural sites in Florence, Rome, Siena, Assisi and Tivoli
- 2) Intellectual and practical skills, including:
 - a. Developed capacity for critical thinking
 - b. Increased proficiency in reading, writing and speaking
- 3) Personal and social responsibility, including:
 - a. An understanding of society and human behavior
 - b. The role of artistic expressions in the development of cultural identity

Except for cameras and readers, no electronic devices are permitted while class is underway. Any student who uses an electronic device during class will be counted absent (see Attendance Policy).

Graded Work – submit via Google Classrooms page (CLASS CODE TBA)

Students will attend classes, participate in excursions and keep a developing Journal, to be submitted at designated points throughout the course. See *Submit Journal* dates in the Schedule (below). Each time, the full journal must be submitted with a DATE provided for each journal entry. By the end of the course, your Journal must include the following:

- 1) **6 Reading Reflections** of 400-500 words each. For full credit, each reflection must respond to aspects of the novel, *Oil and Marble*, or a chapter from *Sprezzatura* or another of the assigned readings and offer an interpretive response, by answering questions such as: How does the material from the novel bring to life Florentine culture and history? How do you respond to the characters (Michelangelo, Leonardo, and others) and their ambitions? What does the story’s development reveal about social, or political or personal life at the time? What strikes you as most intriguing and most interesting about the individuals (or groups or topics) in *Sprezzatura* and their contributions to culture and society? Why? How does this material relate to your own experiences and observations? In each case, you must discuss at least 2 specifics, with adequate development.
- 2) **3 “Connections” discussions** of 300 words each that highlight ways specific experiences you have had in Italy (official excursions or other experiences) connect to course readings. How did the reading illuminate your experience and your understanding?
- 3) **3 “Culture Beat” reports**. Based on your personal observations, explorations, experiences and encounters outside of class, write a letter home, a journalistic-style report

(like a travel magazine article or blog post) of 300 words that A) identifies a significant aspect or feature or curiosity of Italian culture, history or society beyond our course material and B) incites the reader's interest and curiosity by explaining its importance in lively, conversational terms.

- 4) **1 Photo Essay, with interpretive captions.** By the end of the course, curate a Photo Essay (of around a dozen images) that capture something of the essence of your understanding of Italy. In each case, add a short interpretive caption that helps the viewer to understand the significance of the image and its contents. You can choose to present this in a basic photo format or in a video montage (e.g., create a YouTube or MP4 or similar video with the images, text and music).

Thus, your Final Journal Submission must have 13 total entries. All individual items are of equal weight.

With each submission Journals must include 3 contributions that meet the minimum requirements. Otherwise, you will receive not receive full credit (i.e., missing or insufficient entries get a zero). Thus, you cannot fall behind and then make up work later.

Journals will be evaluated in terms of completeness, carefulness and clarity of expression.

Journals must be submitted to the course [Google Classroom](#) page (CLASS CODE: TBA) (preferred) or in case of glitches or other difficulties they may be submitted in PDF or DOCX format electronically to both instructors: erik.liddell@eku.edu and kelly.liddell@eku.edu or they may be delivered on a flash drive in PDF or DOCX format, or they may be submitted in hard copy. Handwritten journals are also acceptable so long as they are entirely legible.

Students must participate in all classes.

Graded quizzes may be given on any class day's material.

*** Students are invited encouraged to attend the Fiction and Film course film screenings as scheduled throughout the course. Students may substitute a film reflection for one of the reading reflections.***

Assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale.

These requirements are weighted as follows in calculating final grades:

- Journals: 75%
- Class attendance and participation: 25%

All formal assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale and converted to letter grades on the following basis: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; below 60=F. Final grades will not be rounded up; so, for example, an average of 89.9 is a B, not an A. Students who miss a quiz will have the opportunity to make up the assignment by writing a essay.

All work submitted for grade should be your own or properly attributed. Cases of plagiarism or dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the appropriate university authorities.

Students with learning disabilities or any other difficulty which might prevent them from fulfilling the course requirements should speak with the professor early in the semester. Together we can consider alternative methods of evaluation.

Materials and Preparation

Required readings must be purchased by students in advance of the course. All texts are available in paperback and electronic formats. Additional materials, such as online resources, extra readings, will be made available electronically and in hard copy when possible. Assigned readings and film screenings must be completed by the dates given in the syllabus. In order for the class to have lively discussions about the material, everyone needs to complete assignments on time and be prepared to share thoughts about them.

Attendance Policy and Class Notes.

Attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken for all course components (classes and excursions). It is vital that you register at each class meeting—and this is *your* responsibility. Any student who uses an electronic device during class, other than a camera or a reader, and any student who appears more than fifteen minutes after class begins, will be counted absent. If you miss two classes your final grade will be reduced by 5 points on the 100-point scale. If you miss three classes your final grade will be reduced by 10 points. If you miss four classes your final grade will be reduced by 15 points. If you miss five classes your final grade will be reduced by 20 marks. If you miss six or more classes you will receive a failing grade (F) for the course. You are advised to take accurate and detailed notes about all course elements. These, augmented by required readings, will provide the material for your written reflections and responses.

Provisional Schedule:

Strongly Recommended: READ at least the first half (preferable all) of *Oil and Marble* and the other short pieces for the first class day prior to departure. This will considerably ease your adjustment and optimize the value of your experience.

Basic Schedule – detailed version will be available early in the spring of 2021:

May 26 Depart USA

Florence

May 27: Arrival and Orientation

May 28: Class + walking tour of city center

May 29: Class + Duomo climb (optional)

May 30: Free day – Florence free day Recommendations: Strozzi Palace, Palazzo Pitti, Boboli Gardens, winery tour, or side trip via train (e.g., Venice, Cinque Terre, Lucca)

May 31: Class + twilight visit to San Miniato

June 1: Visit to Fiesole (ancient Etruscan and Roman ruins)

Due Date: Journal 1

June 2: Free day

June 3: Class + Accademia museum

June 4: Class + Uffizzi Museum

Jun 5: Free day / Recommended: Palazzo Pitti, Boboli Gardens

Jun 6: Free day

Castelfiorintino/Boscarecce

June 7: Tuscan villa / Program assembly

June 8: Class + agriculture tour

Due Date: Journal 2

Siena

Jun 9: Visit to San Gimignano en route to Siena

Jun 10: Class, city center, cooking lesson

Jun 11: Class, contrada tour, cooking lesson

Jun 12: Free Day

Rome

Jun 13: Visit to Tivoli en route to Rome

Due Date: Journal 3

Jun 14: Class + night hike through highlights of Rome

Jun 15: St. Peter's and the Vatican Museums

Jun 16: Class + Papal audience (optional)

Jun 17: Free day

Jun 18: Free day

Jun 19: Free Day

Jun 20: Roman Forum + Colosseum

Jun 21: Class + Keats House (Spanish Stairs)

Due Date Journal 4

Jun 22: Class + Arrivederci! Banquet

Jun 23: Depart Rome, Arrive USA

Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

Attendance Policy

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson (270-745-5398 / andrea.anderson@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may

contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eoo/brochure2019update.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.