



KIIS ITALY, Winter 2022-23

HIST 490 Topics: Italian Design and the Making of Modern America

Instructor: Melissa A. McEuen

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

The course will examine how the United States' structural development as a fledgling imperial nation—from 1890 to 1915—reflected Italian design principles and models. From the “White City” at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago to the massive Union Station railway terminal in Washington DC, numerous structures were raised to evoke a nation on the rise, consolidating its political, economic, and social power to compete with European nations spreading their influence globally. While American politicians wielded influence with oratory and the titans of industry with wealth, their counterparts in the fields of architecture and landscape design looked to Rome and Florence for classical models that signified power and authority. Even interior designers turned toward spare, clean lines of earlier centuries as guides for modern living. It is these physical and spatial arrangements—and their underlying ideologies—on which the course will focus.

Students will study classical Roman design, the Medici family's impact on politics and culture, and modern American arbiters of taste. Students will visit gardens, villas, and historic sites that demonstrate the relationship between aesthetics and power.

2. 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.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Identify and describe principal elements in classical design
- Identify and describe key figures in U.S. political and social culture, 1890s-1910s
- Explain U.S. imperialism, 1890s-1910s
- Explain the development of American architecture and landscape design, 1890s-1910s
- Analyze the connections between three distinct historical eras/places: imperial Rome, Renaissance Florence, and the modern American city
- Synthesize evidence from site visits to create arguments about power and culture

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- U.S. empire-building in the 1890s-1910s
- The role of expositions/world's fairs in the U.S.
- The City Beautiful Movement
- The Medici family's power and patronage of the arts
- Uses of the Roman Forum and the Pantheon

5. Required Readings and Materials:

- BBC, "Italy's Invisible Cities: Florence," narrated by Dr. Michael Scott, 2017, video clips
- Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago*, 2nd edition (2009), excerpts
- Kristin L. Hoganson, *American Empire at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (2016), excerpts
- Ross King, *Brunelleschi's Dome* (2005), excerpts
- Tod Marder and Mark Wilson Jones, eds., *The Pantheon* (2015), excerpts
- Eleanor M. McPeck, "Beatrix Jones Farrand: The Formative Years," 1982
- Julie K. Rose, "The 1901 Plan for Washington DC," 1996, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/CITYBEAUTIFUL/plan.html>
- Edith Wharton, *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (1904), excerpts
- Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever" (1934)

6. Graded Assignments:

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| • Reading & Reflection Journal (based on daily prompts) | 40 points | 40% |
| • Active Participation, Professionalism, and <i>Esprit d'Corps</i> | 40 points | 40% |
| • Historic Site Report ("place as text" analysis/500-600 words) | 10 points | 10% |
| • Final Essay (synthesis/900-1000 words) | 10 points | 10% |

Grade Scale: Note that KIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

A = 90-100 points

B = 80-89 points

C = 70-79 points

D = 60-69 points

F = below 60 points

7. Attendance Policy:

KIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

8. Disability Accommodation:

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.

9. 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/eo/titleixbrochure2020.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.