



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Italy Program, Winter 2024

PR 415 / COMM 415 Topics: Global Digital Storytelling for Public Relations

Instructor: Dr. Marcie Hinton

Email: mhinton@murraystate.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: (3 credit hours) In a globalized world, communicators need international experience in creating meaningful stories that engage the public via websites, social media and blogs. Students will become better writers and photographers, honing journalism, public relations, marketing and creative writing skills in order to support tourism and global awareness. We will examine creative rhetoric from Roman masters, like Cicero, in the places that informed them like Piazzas, Palazzo's and the Coliseum. Additionally, we will explore art and how it was used to communicate to the masses in Vatican City, the Duomo, Santa Maria Novello and the many other churches, art museums and public spaces. The digital stories students produce will have lasting impact on their audiences as well as the communities from which they report. Tourism, Social Media Influencing, Journalism and Public Relations students will dive deep into digital storytelling in a place where communication studies were born.

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: This course will challenge students to critically examine how travel narratives impact publics and the communities they visit. Students explore all facets of the tourism industry as they find the best way to communicate about a destination. They will investigate how to document their experiences and a sense of place using photography, journals, video, essays and/or documentaries. The class challenges students to find the best tools to communicate their unique inward and outward experiences.

They will:

- ✓ Demonstrate knowledge in the history and development of travel writing, exploring the differences between travel journalism, travel literature, guidebook writing, blogging, etc.
- ✓ Produce short travel features as published in many newspapers, magazines and online environments, as well as explore the best multimedia tools to communicate their journeys.
- ✓ Identify the distortions and misapprehensions of one's own perspective in examining history, cultural and accompanying social issues around the world.
 - Defining how media fosters understanding between groups, locally and globally
- ✓ Examine global audiences and a respect for cultural, racial and gender differences.
 - The globalization of media, the vulnerability of different kinds of audiences and the nature of stereotypes and media products mean producers and consumers of media must be aware of the many different audiences participating in mediated rhetorical situations.
- ✓ Express global awareness
- ✓ Practice communicating travel narratives and experiences across digital media platforms in order to support communities in their tourism goals.

Accrediting standards to which we adhere: The learning objectives above were developed according to the Journalism and Mass Communications department's accrediting body: the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. Murray State is one of them. As connected to the learning objectives above, this course will help you meet the following student learning outcomes that have been established by ACEJMC:

- ✓ Think critically, creatively and independently.
- ✓ Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which you work.
- ✓ Write strategically

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Writing, Tourism, Public Relations, Social Media Influencing and analytics, Marketing, Travel narratives, global audiences, website design, photography, Cicero's Philosophy.

6. Required Readings and Materials:

1. *Virtual course packets/assignment sheets will be provided by the professor in a Google Classroom that you will have available to you in November.*
2. *Access to a device that will allow you to produce daily journals and visual documentation methods probably a smart phone, computer, camera, etc.*
3. "Under the Tuscan Sun" by Frances Mayes (the travel narrative that was a catalyst for Americans' love of Italy).
4. Access to at least one of these movies <https://www.visititaly.eu/art-and-culture/best-movies-set-italy>

6. What's App, Google Classroom, Photocircle (to join our class group for easy access)
7. Additional readings provided in Google Classrooms.

7. Graded Assignments:

Pre-departure Response papers 20%

Attendance and participation in class meetings,
lectures, field trips prior to and during the term;
participation also includes feedback on peer blog posts. 20%

Maintaining an almost daily journal in country
(prompt questions provided) 20%

2 Blogs published on postcardsfromthebrink.com 30%
Including promotional social media products
(due January 17)

Online review on study abroad or consumer website 10%
(due January 17)

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A

80 – 89 B

70 – 79 C

60 – 69 D

Below 60 E (F)

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KUIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.)

Pre-Departure Assignments: 1. Read “Under the Tuscan Sun” by Frances Mayes and complete the response paper on Google Classroom. 2. Watch at least one of the following movies and complete a response paper: <https://www.visititaly.eu/art-and-culture/best-movies-set-italy>

3. Read through the other materials on Google Classroom.

The Blogs: There are two blog posts and Social Media Promotional pieces due during our program. One in Rome and one in Florence. See Google Classroom for details. Social Media Posts will also be required.

Using your experiences, readings, journal prompts and additional outside research, explore a specific “travel in Italy” topic more deeply, which should result in a travel narrative essay, fictional short story, video, or other multimedia platform as appropriate and confirmed by your professor (due January 17).

Topics to consider:

- Food Culture in Italy
- Touring Religious Sites
- The importance of the Piazza
- A First timer abroad in Italy

- What Frances Mayes didn't tell you
- If you love THIS movie, then WHAT

The Journal (and playlists): The mostly daily journal is not a diary. You are to evaluate and analyze inward and outward journeys as we visit relevant sites throughout Italy. Prompt questions for some daily activities will be provided. Prior to our departure, you are to familiarize yourself with travel media. Specifically, you will look at guidebooks, travel blogs and the assigned readings. (Journal will be electronic and submitted via Google Classroom).

Review: You will write a review of a Italian Site, the hotel or the program via an online website or app such as:

- TripAdvisor
- Yelp

Pre-departure work: There are some reading assignments, viewing assignments & response papers due December 20. Also, Please do the following as soon as you can, so we can start introducing ourselves and you have direct access to me for any questions you may have:

1. Join the What's App Group.
2. Text a selfie with your name to 615-481-8002 (this is my cell number. It is the one I will have with me in Italy as well, so go ahead and put that somewhere safe!)
3. Read the book, excerpts and websites assigned, available in Google Classroom and watch the movie.
4. Finish the response papers for book and movie; due December 20. (see Google Classroom)
5. Read the KIS Material.

Extra Money: It is possible not all expenses for class activities will be covered by the KIS program fee. Some places we visit may charge admission; some may ask for a donation. You might need to purchase newspapers/magazines, and it is possible that we will need to have a plan B if something "isn't as it appears on the internet." It is recommended that you set aside at least \$100 for such incidental costs associated with participation in the class.

A few rules and guidelines regarding our work & behavior

Academic Honesty Policy: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty on an assignment in this class will result in a failing grade on the assignment and may result in a failing grade for the class. Incidences of academic dishonesty will be reported to the student's home school. Please consult your school's academic dishonesty policy before departure.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is unacceptable at any time, whether intentional or unintentional. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means:

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

All of the following are considered plagiarism, according to plagiarism.org (quoted exactly and is a good source if ever you are confused):

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not .

What is Plagiarism? (n.d.) Retrieved January 20, 2011, from
<http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html>

Use of AI is unacceptable at any time: While the professor acknowledges that AI is useful in some ways, the point of this class is to explore how travel is connected to the authentic self and how armchair travel works best when connected to the writer's experience.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Your professor believes in it and expects it as travel in a foreign country demands it. That means among us from different schools as well as we interact with people in Italy.

Hints from Hinton: I love to take students abroad. I find you people endlessly energetic, funny, innovative and interesting. I love to read your work and watch your TikToks and support your creative endeavors. I will treat you equally whether you are a Murray State student or not. I love your enthusiasm and am eager to share these experiences with you. It will be helpful if you are on time, not hung over and don't ruin my vibe with arrests, hospital stays, complaints from your neighbors or the hotel or not showing up. I would HATE for you to miss any of this beautiful, fun, interesting journey abroad for such preventable violations!

8. Attendance Policy:

KIIS 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.

9. 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 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 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.

10. 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, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@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/titleix/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.