



FACULTY-LED  
STUDY ABROAD

## KIIS Italy Program, Winter 2024

---

### PSY 299: Culture, Aggression, and Violence in Italy

**Instructor:** Dr. Lynda Sharrett-Field

**Email:** lsharrett@uky.edu

**Instructor's office hours:** on site and by appointment

*Syllabus subject to change*

### 1. Course Description:

Join me in travelling to **Florence and Rome** to discuss the psychology of aggression and violence. We will begin by developing a basic understanding of how to define and identify aggression and violence. In Florence, we will focus on how **honor culture** influences aggression and how **alcohol** can promote **interpersonal violence**. Next, we travel to Rome where we will discuss biopsychosocial factors that contribute to the **development of a serial killer** and search out evidence of these factors in Roman culture. Students will become familiar with famous serial killers who have plagued Rome throughout the centuries and discuss factors that might have contributed to the making of these serial killers.

**Course Level Note:** Western Kentucky University lists Special Topics courses in Psychology as 299. Despite this course's 299 listing at WKU, it is actually an upper level (300-400+ level) course at many other universities. As such, it is being taught as an upper level 300-400+ level course.

### 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:** By the end of this course students will be able to do the following:

1. Discuss and explain the differences between aggression and violence.
2. Appreciate how honor culture influences aggression and violence for individual and societal attitudes and behaviors.
3. Explain how alcohol impacts the brain, resulting in a change of biology and emotions and how this can influence aggression and violence.
4. Predict how exposure to early childhood aggression and violence can alter emotional, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes in adulthood.
5. Identify several major serial killers who have been active in Rome.
6. Explain how Roman culture may have contributed to the development of these serial killers.

**4. Major Topics covered in the Course:**

1. Major psychological theories of aggression and violence
2. Concept of Honor Culture
3. Biopsychological effects of alcohol consumption
4. Factors that contribute to the development of a serial killer

**5. Required Readings:**

So we can all have the same general background information, there will be 3-5 short assigned readings in this class. These will be available through a Google drive folder that students may access during the course.

**6. Graded Assignments:**

This course will include the following activities/assignments:

1. In class activities and discussions
2. Field excursion activities and discussions
3. Field observation assignments
4. "Most important concepts" reflections
5. Serial killer case study analysis or presentation

Details on these activities/assignments will be provided during the program.

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 KIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.)

**8. 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.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ena.demir@wku.edu)) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / [michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto: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.