



KIIS Italy Program, Winter 2024

IDST 350 Study Abroad: Digital Humanities in Italian Culture

Instructor: Jessica Lowman

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

Digital Humanities is an emerging, interdisciplinary academic discipline that centers on the convergence of the humanities and digital technologies. This course offers an introduction to the field of digital humanities with a special focus on projects related to Italian culture. Students will make in-person site visits to significant cultural and historical sites in Italy, such as the Uffizi Gallery in Florence and the Pantheon in Rome, and discover digital humanities projects created for these sites. Students will analyze and discuss existing digital humanities projects, then further explore concepts, methods, and tools such as digital presentation of text with markup languages (including HTML and XML), map visualization, and digital curation. Students will then use what they have learned to create their own digital humanities projects based on their experiences in Italy, using freely available online resources such as Google Maps and Omeka. Throughout the course, we each will grow our understanding of the digital humanities and their relevancy to humanistic inquiry in today's digital world. No prior experience with coding, data analysis or digital design is required. Students from any academic major program are encouraged to register for this course to uphold and promote the interdisciplinary nature of the field of digital humanities.

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 have the ability to:

1. Formulate a working definition of digital humanities and understand the field's applicability to the current academic major program of the student.
2. Articulate issues, such as social, cultural, economic, technical, and aesthetic, common to the field of digital humanities and explain their relevancy.
3. Identify, critically assess, discuss, and engage with digital humanities research and digital tools used by practitioners.
4. Further develop digital literacy skills that are curriculum-independent and transferable to real-world scenarios.
5. Collaborate with peers by using digital tools and employing team management strategies.

During the course, students should be prepared to:

1. Attend all class sessions, excursions, and scheduled site/museum visits.
2. Contribute to in-person class discussions and/or virtual discussion boards facilitated by the instructor.
3. Work in small groups with classmates to complete assigned tasks.
4. Complete short, informal reflection papers (~400 words) on topics related to assigned readings, site visits, or class discussions.
5. Complete one approximately 800-word reflection paper and further expand on ideas explored in the first three reflection journals. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the digital humanities and how technology is used within digital humanities projects to develop research and access to humanistic inquiries into Italian culture.
6. Review and evaluate existing digital humanities projects to better understand the tools, methodologies, agents, and research associated with each using a prepared project evaluation template.
7. Develop a rudimentary digital archive in Omeka centered around a specific topic using original digital images they collect throughout their trip, conducting research into the subject of each image to produce original descriptive metadata for their images, and sharing their final product with their classmates and professor. This final project should be accompanied by a write-up that clarifies the topic choice, digital curation, metadata discovery, and the experience of creating the digital archive.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

What is digital humanities? What projects qualify as digital humanities projects? Why is this relevant to me? How is Italian culture represented in the digital humanities realm? What can I learn from digital humanities projects about Italian culture?

These questions will all be addressed as we explore Italy and learn about its culture and history through digital humanities projects. Students can expect to cover other relevant

topics such as digital archives, text analysis, digital curation, textual display, metadata, and open-source software.

6. Required Readings and Materials:

Required readings and course materials will be provided digitally using Google Classroom. Students can either print readings and bring them abroad, or they may access them digitally with a device such as a tablet, smartphone, or laptop.

Students will be required to capture digital photos during the course. The final project will require students to provide original digital photography they create throughout the course and during their travel in Italy. A camera phone will produce image files sufficient for this purpose, but students may choose to bring a digital camera if it is their preference.

While it is not required to bring a laptop on the trip, students will be expected to access and transfer files to Omeka using a computer, laptop, or device to complete their final project. It is recommended to bring a laptop or tablet that will allow you to do this during the trip.

7. Graded Assignments:

Progress in the course will be measured and assessed in the following ways:

Final Project	150 points
Digital Project Evaluation (2 total worth 75 points each)	150 points
*Active Participation (attendance, discussions, & excursions across 10 days)	75 points
Final Reflection Paper	50 points
Reflection Journals (3 total at 25 points each)	75 points
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	<u>500 points</u>

Grade Scale:
A = 450 – 500 points
B = 400 - 449
C = 350 - 399
D = 300 - 349
F = Below 299

Please note KIIS/WKU does not award +/- grades.

*What constitutes active participation?

- 1) Arriving promptly to class and excursion sites
- 2) Engaging in discussions with professor and/or classmates during class time and visits to, during, and from excursion sites
- 3) Completing assigned readings and other assignments.

These items represent the minimum expectation for your participation in my course. Students who exceed these expectations will earn a higher grade in this area.

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.