



KIIS Italy, Summer 2026

ENG 290 / HON 300 Creativity and Identity in Florence, Siena and Rome

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Tentative Syllabus: subject to change

Course Description:

This course engages students with particularities of Italian social life and cultural identity through selected readings, self-guided explorations, interactive encounters, descriptive and imaginative writing and creative responses (such as videos, photography, and drawing), and through group activities such as place-as-text observations and analyses of the cultural spaces and the distinctive neighborhoods of Rome and Florence. It takes inspiration from the ways in which travelers and writers of the past have also encountered Italy and memorialized their experiences in creative works that contribute to the Italy of the imagination. The course includes in-depth exploration of the streets, piazzas, art and architecture of these Italian cities, and is designed to enable students to identify and appreciate aspects of Italian life and the cultural landscape that might otherwise remain hidden in plain sight to the average visitor.



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, Element 5 Social Sciences, or Element 6 Diversity. Check with your home institution's study abroad office.

Texts:

Required Texts (in hard copy or digital format):

- 1) Selected readings by Moravia, Pasolini, George Eliot, Stendhal, Henry James and others, from *Italian Short Stories* (Penguin), *Rome Tales* (Oxford), *Rome Stories* (Everyman's Library/Penguin) – compiled in course PDFs.
- 2) Selected poems by du Bellay, Goethe, Barrett Browning and others, compiled in course PDF.
- 3) Other online materials TBA.

Strongly Recommended Tool: Google Maps – download maps of [Florence](#) and [Rome](#) for offline use while exploring

Student Learning Outcomes

This course will provide:

- 1) Interactive knowledge of Italian cities, neighborhoods, and cultural identity:
 - a. An informed acquaintance with significant features of traditional and contemporary Italian society, cityscapes and culture, through discussion of readings, self-guided learning explorations and a variety of writing exercises combining observation, interaction and creative response.
 - b. An appreciation of the distinctiveness of Italian social and cultural space
 - c. Class visits to major cultural sites in Florence and Rome
- 2) Intellectual and practical skills, including:
 - a. Developed capacity for critical thinking and detailed observation
 - b. Increased proficiency in reading, writing and speaking
 - c. Creative interpretation and response to cultural experiences
- 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
 - c. The importance of community and cultural factors in the formation of identity
 - d. Familiarity with intercultural encounters and interaction

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 to Google Classrooms page (COURSE CODE: TBA)

Students will attend and participate in all classes, discuss readings and how they relate to on site experiences, complete writing exercises and other creative responses to be submitted in the form of journals for review, comment and grading, at designated points throughout the course. See *Submission* dates in the Schedule (below). By the end of the course, your Journal must include the following:

4 Observational and Creative Response Journals taking inspiration from course readings, excursions, small group activities and individual exploration. There is no required length, since these exercises will take many different forms, including descriptive essays, short stories, poems, etc. Each submission must be full, rich and developed, and continuing submissions must take feedback and recommendations into account. Some exercises will be required (TBA) and some will be free choice. Students will submit a selection of their best work to the course portfolio.

Each of the submissions is of equal weight.

All work will be evaluated in terms of completeness, carefulness of execution and clarity of expression.

Journals must be submitted to the course [Google Classrooms](#) page (COURSE CODE: TBA) or in case of glitches or other difficulties they may be submitted in PDF (preferred) or DOCX format electronically to both instructors at erik.liddell@eku.edu and Kelly.liddell@eku.edu or they may be delivered on a flash drive in PDF or DOCX format.

Students must participate in all classes.

Assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale.

These requirements are weighted as follows in calculating final grades:

- Journals: 75%

- Class attendance, active 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.

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.

Basic Schedule – TBA

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.

Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- **Brainstorming:** You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- **Citation Assistance:** AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- **Grammar and Style Checking:** AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- **Concept Understanding:** Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- **Research Assistance:** AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- **Plagiarism:** Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- **Data Manipulation:** Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- **Misrepresentation of Skills:** Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- **Confidentiality Breach:** Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

“I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]”

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.

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.

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.