



## KIIS Italy Program, Summer 2026

### ART 102 Introduction to Making Art & Making Meaning

**Instructor:** Kevin Gardner

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

*Syllabus subject to change. Updated: 04/15/26*

**1. Course Description:** This is a hands-on material-specific course that examines human experience through the visual arts. It requires no previous art experience. The course employs a physical exploration of one or more media to examine art's central and proactive role in the articulation of culture, and its important function in determining-and not merely illustrating- the structure of human society across time.

This particular course, "Portrait of Place," is built on the idea that drawing on location richens an overall travel experience, providing students with an informed and particular sense of location through focused observations. With an introduction of some foundational ideas in drawing, this class is designed for students with limited previous drawing experience who wish to engage directly with the artistic traditions they will see around them in Italy, complementing both their experience traveling and their appreciation for visual art. At the end of the course, students will have produced a travel sketchbook as a record of their drawing observations and time traveling.

#### Course format and schedule:

Much of the work will be done on location at sites to be announced. Be prepared for all excursions and site visits, dressing appropriately for specific locations, indoor or outdoor. See the KIIS Italy schedule for class times and excursion plans.

**Unless mentioned otherwise, our class sessions will begin at announced sites, not meeting to travel together to a location. Be sure to plan your routes in advance and plan travel times to happen outside of class time.**

## 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:**

- Experiment with drawing media to explore illusionistic possibilities in two-dimensional visual art,
- Draw on site for focused observations of specific places and experiences,
- Create a travel sketchbook as a record of your understanding of place, and
- Discuss work – your own, your peers, and historic or contemporary work – as a means of improving personal critical judgment and visual literacy.

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

- A variety of on-site drawing experiences,
- Drawing techniques,
- Discussion and critique of drawings, and
- Exploration of place and your relationship to it as a traveler.

**5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement:** This course will be designed to complete a general education arts requirement, pending institutional approval. Speak to your institution about requirements, general education or for your major or minor, that this course may fulfill.

**6. Required Readings and Materials:** ART 102 will work in physical drawing (e.g. graphite, charcoal pencils, pen, and watercolor) materials at a scale that makes sense for travel drawing on site. This course will not have a textbook.

**7. Graded Assignments:** Grading will be based on completion of travel book assignments, including on-site drawings during classes or group excursions as well as other assignments to be completed outside of class time. Class participation and completion of work will be important. Drawing assignments will be announced and discussed during the course, and it's strongly recommended that you keep a list of assignments to organize your work and to make sure all assignments have been completed. Once completed, be sure to date all sketchbook pages and identify assignments in the pages of your sketchbook. You are welcome to use your own photography to inform completion of or touching up of drawings; however, since this is a travel course, it's important that much of your work is done on site.

All artwork must be your own original work.

Assessment will be based on completion of and thorough engagement with assignments.

- An **A grade** is earned for exceeding expectations with strong commitment to work: all drawing assignments must be completed and thoroughly engaged with while demonstrating significant effort and careful observations in your drawings.
- A **B grade** is earned for entirely completing and thoroughly engaging with all drawing assignments. For B work, no assignment will be missing or significantly incomplete.
- A **C grade** is earned for mostly completing and thoroughly engaging with drawings assignments. For C work, no more than 2 drawing assignments may be missing or significantly incomplete.
- A **D grade** is earned for somewhat completion of and thorough engagement with drawing assignments. For D work, no more than 4 drawing assignments may be missing or incomplete. Missing and/or not completing 5 or more assignments will earn a **failing grade (F)**.

Essentially, if you engage with and complete all assignments, you will earn a B in this course. If you neglect or miss some, you will earn a lower grade. If you exceed expectations by demonstrating an especially thorough approach and well observed approach to your work, you will earn an A.

If for medical reasons you are absent of a class session, you will be expected to make up missed work.

Note that WKU, the institution you will be earning course credit from, does not offer minus and plus grades.

**8. Generative AI Policy:** Students are prohibited from using generative AI in any way on any assignment in this course. The use of generative AI in this course will be considered academic dishonesty and would result in a failing grade on the assignment.

**9. 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.

**10. 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.

**11. 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/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.