



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Italy Program, Summer 2027

ART 401: Art of the Italian Renaissance

Instructor: Prof. Alexandra Challenger

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: This course examines the art and architecture of the Italian Renaissance in Rome and Florence, with particular attention to the values and philosophies that shaped artistic production. Students will study both canonical works and a broader range of visual culture, situating them within the intellectual framework of humanism, religion and evolving approaches to knowledge that defined the period. Through site-based analysis in churches, urban spaces, and museums, the course emphasizes how artistic meaning is informed by context, both in original settings and in modern display. Students will integrate close visual analysis with historical interpretation to develop a nuanced understanding of Renaissance art.

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 should be able to:

- Interpret works of art by placing them within their historical, political, religious and spatial contexts.
- Identify the major artists, monuments, and stylistic components of the Italian Renaissance in Italy and identify their stylistic elements.
- Research and communicate unique interpretations of art and architecture using art historical vocabulary and visual analysis in both oral and written presentations
- Compare and contrast the artistic traditions, innovations, and contexts of Florence and Rome during the Renaissance

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

This course will address the art and architecture of the Italian Renaissance by considering art from the 14th through the 16th century. It will not only introduce students to the basics of art historical analysis but also help them understand the importance of the Renaissance within the larger timeline of art. The major themes that will allow us to do this will include (1) an understanding of Florentine and Roman history, (2) the role of Humanism and classical learning, (3) changes in schooling and scientific observation, (4) major stylistic changes to painting and sculpture, (5) the role of the Church and politics in Italy, and (6) the influence of Italian art on European (and Global!) style during the early modern period.

5. Required Readings and Materials:

Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

- In particular, students should plan to focus on “The Period Eye” (chapter 2).

This course also makes use of free online resources like SmartHistory (<https://smarthistory.org/>) and the Met's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (<https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/timeline-of-art-history>) for additional resources on specific works and movements. These short readings will inform your understanding of on-site lectures, discussions, and excursions.

6. Graded Assignments:

The following assignments will form the basis for your final grade in this class:

- Participation (15%): Students should attend all course meetings and excursions and be prepared to discuss course materials, lecture topics and class experiences.
- Slow Looking Assignment (15%): This assignment will be given early in the semester as a warm up for how to look at art! Students will find a work of art/architecture that they encounter in a museum/excursion and spend 10 minutes looking at it. They will answer a series of guided questions to help them look deeply and thoroughly at a work of art.
- Observation Journal (30%): Students will work on this assignment for the duration of the class by selecting and responding to a series of prompts with reflections on their observations during the semester. This should be illustrated with photographs taken by students or even sketches to illustrate observations and new knowledge gained on the trip.
- Short Comparative Assignment (15%): Students will be asked to compare two works of art they encounter during the class: one from the early Renaissance and one from the High Renaissance. They should plan to identify the characteristics of Renaissance style

and show how they compare to later works. A worksheet will be given to help students organize and structure their observations and research.

- Renaissance Walking Tour (25%): Students will be divided into small groups of 3-4. Each group should design a realistic walking tour through Florence or Rome with 5-6 stops. Groups should be able to explain why each location belongs on the tour, its historical context, relation to other sites and what viewers should pay attention to. Each group needs to only submit one walking tour plan.

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.

7. 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.]."

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/>.

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.