

## Experiential Learning and Student Mentoring Plan



Benvenuti a Firenze! Welcome to the UH Manoa Study Abroad Program for the summer of 2025! While each of you will pursue their own program and plan of study at Lorenzo de Medici (LdM) in the heart of this beautiful, historic city, as the Resident Director for the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Study Abroad Center, I have some responsibility for each of you. Although I won't be teaching a formal class, I will be there to make sure your program of study at LdM proceeds smoothly, to gauge your degree of participation and involvement in the program, to mediate and advise on any problems or issues you may encounter along the way, and to act as your on the spot guide and mentor. I will also oversee and issue final grades. In addition to these duties, I have designed an experiential learning component for the summer program that will be used to fine tune the final grades reported by your host institution.

Studying in another country is a unique opportunity to learn about others, and to learn about different ways of life. This experiential learning component is designed to enable you to explore and extend the cultural knowledge that you will be acquiring from your summer classes and, most importantly, from your period of residence in Florence. Your tasks will be guided by the following student learning outcomes (SLOs) developed by the

University of Hawai'i at Manoa Study Abroad Center and will aim to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of your own cultural values and biases and how these impact your ability to work with others;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in your Study Abroad program;
3. Communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups; and
4. Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.

During your time in Florence, you will be asked to pay attention to the rich cultural and historical landscape in which you will live, move, work, study and play. Florence is an ancient city of enormous historical importance, the center of the Italian Renaissance, the home of the Medici family, and the first capital of the newly created Italian state during the Risorgimento. It is a city of municipal magnificence and quiet splendor, and during the course of your stay, you will be asked to explore its past as well as the vibrant contemporary life of the city.

As a professional historian, I am always keen to connect past and present, and to explore issues of continuity and change. Guided by the theme of **tradition and transformation**, I will ask each of you to record your impressions of life in present day Florence and the way the past shapes the present life of the city. I want you to observe closely the daily life of the modern city and to focus on the way tradition and transformation, the old and the new, materialize and manifest themselves in different aspects of Florentine life, from in its cafes and restaurants to its food ways and markets, its public art and museums, its fashion and dress, its popular entertainment, its politics, and of course in the stunning physical and architectural features of the city. Besides keeping regular journal entries, I will also ask you to visit specific cultural sites and report back on them, encouraging you to explore its most celebrated sites: the Duomo, the Uffizi, the Piazzale Michaelangelo, and Santa Croce, but also the modern city and its dense and fascinating social and cultural life.

### Rubric for Student Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives	Below Expectation	Satisfactory	Exceptional
Demonstrate awareness of your own cultural values and biases and how these impact your ability to work with others.	Fails to submit regular journal entries, or to recognize the way personal values shape cultural meaning and	Submits regular journal entries that include some self-awareness about the cultural mediation of knowledge.	Journal entries show real insight into the way personal values and ideas shape cultural meaning and interaction.

	intercultural interactions.		
Demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in your Study Abroad program.	Fails to submit regular journal entries or to recognize and distinguish cultural difference	Submits regular entries that recognize and describe local cultural difference	Submits regular entries that recognize cultural difference but also identify and explain diversity within the host culture
Communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups.	Poor attendance and poor engagement with formal program and host culture.	Regular attendance and participation in formal programs and engagement with host culture.	Regular attendance and ability to link classroom learning and everyday experiences in host culture.
Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.	Fails to participate in experiential learning work or to develop a critical understanding of issues and cultural/political differences	Participates in experiential learning and develops an awareness of major issues and political/cultural differences	Participates in experiential learning and demonstrates deep awareness of major issues, and the reasons for political/cultural differences

## Final Grading

As the Resident Director I am responsible for guiding your Experiential Learning Experience and monitoring your overall academic participation and progress, and we will meet individually or collectively once a week to discuss your progress in the program. I am also responsible for assigning the grade for the Experiential Learning component of the program, and this grade will be used to adjust the final grade that you earn from your host institution.