

Experiential Learning and Mentoring Plan for Students

Welcome to our Study Abroad Program in Florence, Italy, summer 2024. I use “our” intentionally here as all of us will contribute to our collective experience so that we both enjoy and grow from it. The program coordinator for Florence, Lorenzo de’ Medici, will be our onsite liaison, overseeing logistics and excursions, and I will be your Resident Director.

As Resident Director, I will be your main point of contact and will hold office hours daily at the host institution; you will also be able to contact me via phone and email at any time with concerns or questions. My role as Resident Director also encompasses monitoring your class progress, helping you to navigate living abroad, and importantly, ensuring that your time abroad is a rich cultural exchange between us and the host culture in Florence. During our program, there will be several mandatory meetings, both with you individually to check on your progress and on your experience more generally, and several as a group to address practical concerns and share experiences, including the presentation assignment detailed below. I have designed the following activity to further increase our engagement with all that Florence has to offer as well as with each other. This assignment in combination with our group and individual meetings attend to all four of the following Study Abroad SLOs:

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

Multimedia Portfolio: Representations of Global Perspectives

Studying Abroad through UHM builds off a long tradition of reaffirming the value of learning from other cultures and being a cultural ambassador (something we will talk more about during one of our first meetings). King Kalākaua initiated a Hawaiian Youths Abroad Program in 1880, and he visited two of the young students studying in Naples, Italy, during his around-the-world tour in 1881. As I was preparing for our program, I came across an article in *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Sept 3, 1881), that noted King Kalākaua had expressed “great regret” at not having the time to visit Pompeii. While I could not find much more written on this comment, it struck me that the King’s interest in Pompeii is likely connected to his having lived his whole life among active

volcanoes—I speculate he wanted to explore how the Vesuvius eruption in Pompeii might compare to his own experiences witnessing Mauna Loa and Kīlauea erupt. This account is the inspiration for the portfolio assignment outlined below so that we too can bring our own lived experiences and ways of being in the world into conversations with all that we experience in Florence.

The Assignment

General Description of Final Product:

You will produce a multimedia portfolio (using Google Slides, Canva, Prezi, or some similar platform) that juxtaposes what I am calling “sites of engagement” in Florence with an artifact, experience, or way of doing something from your home. You will share your portfolio in a 15-20 minute presentation with our cohort toward the end of our stay. During one of our first meetings, we will talk about this assignment more, and I will provide examples.

Details:

Each week you are in Florence as part of the program, you will select one “site of engagement”—an artifact, event, or interaction—and reflect on the practices, ideas, values, traditions, history, and/or politics you think are being enacted or conveyed through it. You can choose to discuss a visit to a museum, an architectural site, a play, a reading, or even an exchange in a restaurant or coffee shop. Your work will include capturing the site you chose for that week and reflecting on it through a multi-modal representation.

There will be one entry for each week, and each entry will consist of three parts, with each part represented on one slide (or something comparable):

1. You will first capture the site of engagement through a picture or description (we cannot take pictures of people, so if you choose an exchange, you will need to describe it with words or your own drawing. This will be slide one for the week.
2. You will then juxtapose—compare or draw an association with—something from home, whether it is a way of doing something, an activity, a particular place, etc. Add a representation (a picture or description) of this element to a subsequent slide. This will be slide 2 for the week.
3. Provide an explanation of your comparison of the two representations, answering the following questions:
 - a. How are they alike? What is similar between the two representations?
 - b. How are they different? Do they convey different attitudes, values, ways of interacting, or ideas of beauty?

c. How are each a reflection of “where” they are enacted/located?
This reflection can be in bullet points on the second slide, or you can add a third slide. You should be prepared to talk through the bullet points.

You will conclude your presentation with a brief discussion focusing in the question:
What have you learned about the cultural differences and your own positions?
Briefly discuss how doing the comparisons and thinking about your experiences in Florence by associating different events with home has increased your understanding and appreciation of our differences and similarities.

Assessment Rubric

SLO	Exceeds Expectation	Satisfactory	Below Expectation
Demonstrate awareness of your own cultural values and biases and how these impact their ability to work with others.	Attends all meetings and participates in all required activities. Interactions with cohort members are respectful and take into account different viewpoints and experiences. Interactions both in the program and public arena are consistently engaged with critically and treated as opportunities to nurture intellectual growth.	Meeting attendance and participation in activities is less than 85%. Interactions with cohort and in interactions in and out of the program are generally fine, but do not reflect engagement beyond meeting the requirements.	Meeting attendance and participation in activities is at 75% or lower. Interactions both in and out of the program generally lack critical engagement and self-awareness. A resistance to working together and experiencing activities collaboratively is apparent.
Demonstrate knowledge of diversity with a focus on the population or topic of interest in the specific Study Abroad program.	Every element is included in the multimedia portfolio and insightfully captures the diversity between home culture and the sites of engagement in Florence. Discussion reflects self-awareness.	The portfolio falls short of the assignment requirements (3 parts for each entry for every week) in 2 ways. Discussion meets requirements, but lacks detail.	Reflections in portfolio are absent or are superficial. 1 or more weeks of the assignment is missing. Discussion is not complete and details are absent.
Communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups.	Attends all meetings and responds to all mandatory communications. Interactions with cohort members is always respectful and takes into account different viewpoints and experiences. Final presentation is presented clearly and effectively. The discussion is thoughtful and reflects consideration of different positionalities.	Regular attendance at all meetings and activities, and engagement throughout the program; however, while engagement is consistent, it is not initiated. Presentation is complete, but is lacking in detail such that results in lack of clarity.	Fails to attend all meetings and required activities. When attending, engagement is minimal. Final presentation is not well prepared or complete.

<p>Demonstrate an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.</p>	<p>Discussion of sites of engagement reflects a clear awareness of differences in how values and cultural norms are represented and the “work” they do. Discussion of differences reflects critical engagement—thinking beyond surface representation to include how and why these differences manifest the way they do, and is applied to the Study Abroad experience holistically.</p>	<p>Completes all of the assignments and participates in all activities; however, engagement during events is cursory.</p>	<p>Fails to complete assignments and participate in a majority of activities. Treatment of experiences in general does not indicate critical engagement.</p>
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