

## Travel Seminar HNRS 398M June 2020

### Italy (Rome, Florence, Venice, and Naples)

#### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: Do I need to be studying a specific major?**

A: No. The program is open to all students regardless of major. Any student wanting to learn more about Italy, its art, and its architecture is welcome to apply. Generally, students should have at least sophomore standing for this program (minimum of 30 credit hours completed prior to summer 2020).

**Q: Will we have free time?**

A: Yes. In each city, you will have free time to explore the city on your own and do activities that are of particular interest to you. This includes not doing anything, and just relaxing in your hotel room. The cost includes a walking tour in each city and at least one paid attraction. This way you get an overview of each city and visit at least one major attraction in each city without incurring any additional cost. Only limited dinners are included (one in each city) so you can explore food as per your individual liking.

**Q: Do I have to know Italian?**

A: No. The course will be taught in English. Tour guides in each city will be English speaking. For students who are learning Italian, this will be a great way to have a full immersion opportunity and practice what you have learned. We do encourage students to learn some basics of Italian and also download Google Translate app on their phone in order to help with language barriers.

**Q: Can I participate if I am not a WSU student?**

A: Yes. Please contact Dr. Rai for details ([atul.raai@wichita.edu](mailto:atul.raai@wichita.edu)). Non-WSU students are allowed to take this course as a non-credit course.

**Q: When do I enroll in the class?**

A: To enroll in the class is a two-step process.

The first step is to register in the travel seminar HNRS398M and make payments for the travel portion of the course. This step is open right now, with early-bird price deadline on October 1, 2019. The registration will be open until February 1, 2020, subject to availability of the space.

The second step is to enroll in HNRS 398M for one or three credits. For those who are allowed to take this seminar for non-credit, this step is not required. Enrollment for HNRS 398M will open sometime in

February, 2020 by the office of registrar. To enroll in this class is similar to registering for any other class. I will keep you posted about open the enrollment dates as an when they become available.

**Q: Do I have to pay the full price at one time?**

A: No, it is split into three payments. The first payment to reserve your spot is \$200. This payment should be made with your application. The deadline is October 1, 2019 for early-bird price, and February 1, 2020 for regular price.

The second payment of \$1,800 is due by December 31, 2019, and the final payment of the balance amount (\$1,945) is due February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

If you wish to suggest an alternative payment schedule, please discuss with Dr. Rai ([atul.rai@wichita.edu](mailto:atul.rai@wichita.edu)) to work out details if feasible.

**Q: Is money deposited refundable?**

A: All payments made up to October 15, 2019 are refundable. No refunds are allowed after that date. You can find a replacement for yourself without any refund from the program until January 15, 2020.

**Q: Where will we be staying?**

A: All students will stay in hotels (usually 3 stars) in each city. Students will be in shared rooms, two persons per room, each with their own bed.

**Q: Do I need travel or international health insurance?**

A: Yes, all students need to purchase international health insurance for this program. It will be a basic plan and more for medical emergencies. You should still check with your own health insurance company to see what kind of coverage they offer when you are traveling abroad. You will be given details on the international health insurance plan that WSU offers in late spring.

**Q: How do I get the right kind of currency for my expenses?**

A: The legal currency in Italy is Euro. There are several options to buy Euros in Italy. Each option incurs different cost for conversion from US dollars to Euros. What is the cheapest way for you will depend on your own bank and credit cards. If you have a no-fee credit card then using it whenever possible is usually the cheapest way. In this option, you don't actually buy Euros, but simply use your credit card in Italy, if accepted by the merchant. The merchant receives the amount in Euro from your card; the card converts the Euro amount in dollars; and you pay your credit card in US Dollars. Credits cards are not accepted everywhere, so it is prudent to have some Euros while in Italy. ATMs, using your bank card if accepted, are a low cost option to get Euros in Italy. ATMs are everywhere just as they are in the US. The bank will handle the exchange and the only fee will be for the ATM machine. Since each ATM transaction will incur a fixed fee, to avoid too many ATM charges, you may want to get out enough money to cover your expenses for several days at a time. Make sure you have enough money in your

account to cover your expected (and possibly unexpected) expenses. You can also convert dollars into Euros before leaving the US for Italy. Contact your bank for details. Intrust Bank and Commercial Bank in Wichita can convert your dollars into Euros (for a fee) and give you Euros before you leave Wichita. Other banks may also provide this service. Finally, you can convert US dollars in Italy for Euros at airports and other exchange kiosks. These are more expensive options to exchange money, so beware.

For security reasons, your bank and credit card company may deny any transaction you may have in Italy. So make sure to let your credit card company and your bank that you plan to use your credit card in Italy during the dates of the travel. This is very important.

**Q: Can I use my credit card to pay for purchases?**

A: It depends on the merchant. Credit cards are generally accepted, but not for smaller amounts. Even if a merchant accepts credit cards, it may not accept any credit card issued in the US. In that case, you may want to try a different merchant. If you plan to pay by credit card, always ask before buying the item, or ordering food. Often times, merchants will charge a slightly higher fee for customers who want to pay with credit card instead of paying with cash. If you do need to charge a purchase, MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted cards. Be sure to contact your credit card company in advance to let them know you will be traveling; otherwise they might freeze your account thinking your card has been stolen. And do the same with your bank account for the debit card.

**Q: Where will we be eating?**

A: Breakfasts are provided at the hotel. All lunches and most suppers will be on your own (a reasonable amount would be \$15 to \$20/day). There are many restaurants with varying price range accessible to you. You can eat cheap for some meals and save a bit for a nice meal occasionally. The meal estimate does NOT include the cost of any alcohol that you might consume.

**Q: What are the guidelines for alcohol consumption?**

A: In general, for all study abroad programs, we will observe the laws for whatever country we are in for legal drinking age. We are traveling to soak in the culture and a glass of wine is very much a part of the culture, so have a glass with your meal if you'd like. Alcoholic drinks are not including in the cost of the program. Several notes of caution: We will be walking a lot every day and any actions that leave you incapacitated will make the program much less enjoyable. If you are drunk, you are vulnerable, and you probably don't want to be vulnerable in a foreign country. Drinking can be costly and might result in running out of money.

**Q: Should I be worried about security concerns?**

A: I do not anticipate any serious security concerns, but urge everyone to use caution and common sense to avoid any potential problems. All places we will be visiting in Italy are large cities in comparison to Wichita so you should always be aware of your surroundings and look out for the other members of our group. Always travel with at least one other group member if you are going out on your own during

your free time. Pick pocketing is an issue in some places of Italy. You MUST carry your passport and larger currency bills in a hidden waist pouch or neck pouch or leave them in a safe at your hotel (have a copy of your passport at all times). Passport pouches can be purchased in the travel section at Wal-Mart, or online: See for example: <http://www.caribou.com/PassportPouch.html>

You should have a small luggage lock for your suitcase and should not keep any valuables in your backpack. If you are bringing a digital camera, hold onto it tightly (a fanny pack worn on your front is fairly secure).

**Q: How will we be getting around?**

A: We will use various modes of transportation, including bus/van between airports and hotels, public transportations, and inter-city trains. We will also do a lot of WALKING, so you might want to take some laps on the treadmill before we leave town and be sure to bring comfortable tennis shoes.

**Q: Will my electrical appliances work in Italy?**

A: Outlet plugs and electric current vary from the US (and from country to country). You will need a plug adaptor for Italy. Converters and adapter kits can be found many places for approximately \$30. Office of International Education has plug adaptors available for purchase at approx. \$10 each. Most students would only need a plug adaptor since cell phones, laptops, and tablets can typically convert the electric current.

**Q: Is there internet connectivity available?**

A: Yes. In Italy, you should have wifi service that you can use free of charge at the hotel.

**Q: How easy is it to call home?**

A.: Alert your family members that 'no news is good news' and that they may not hear from you regularly (except by email). Cell phones are very common, just like in the U.S. If you'd like to check into the feasibility and cost to use your cell service, check with your own provider. Some providers do offer service in Italy at no extra charge; however you will need to know how to set that up. You could also check into purchasing an inexpensive cell phone or SIM card for two weeks in Italy. Whatsapp is an excellent way to communicate if you have wifi service with your cell phone. That can be used with others in Italy.

**Q: Can we do laundry there or do we need to pack for a full 3 weeks?**

A: The hotel can help with laundry service. I would recommend that you pack enough clothes for at least 2 weeks if possible as long as you can stick to one suitcase and one carry-on. Pack the essentials.

**Q: What kind of weather might we expect?**

A: June is the start of summer in Italy. Expect highs in mid-80s during daytime. Humidity will be a bit high in Venice and Naples. Rains are minimal at this time. Packing an extra layer of water resistant cloth is prudent, just in case.