The Art, Fashion, Opera and Food of Italy!

A 2020 UMN Global Seminar
in
Milan and Florence, Italy
MAY-JUNE 2020

Led by:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Art, Fashion, & the Opera of Italy is a three-week May Term 2018 Global Seminar that will feature three weeks divided between the two exciting cities of Milan and Florence. You will explore the thrilling arts of Italian opera, renaissance art, and fashion after WWII. These three areas of art had a major impact on the life and society of Italy. You will trace the impact of these game-changing arts of the peninsula states of the 1500’s though modern day Italy impacting our modern global society as a whole.

FLORENCE: You will begin your journey in this magical renaissance city. It will offer you an opportunity to go back in time and experience the world of the great Medici family, Michaelangelo, da Vinci, Raphael, Botticelli, and so many more Italian renaissance artists and patrons too numerous to mention here. We will enter the Cathedral of Florence and walk to the top of Brunelleschi’s magnificent dome. We will spend a day at the Uffizi Gallery where we will see first-hand the great masterpieces of these artists. At the Accademia Galleria we will gaze upon the all-empowering David, close enough to see the individual chisel marks Michaelangelo made while creating this monumental statue.

MILAN: You will end your journey in the vibrant and energized city of Milan meeting for daily classes at the Fondazione IES Abroad, Italy. Housed in student apartments near the school facilities, You will be able to walk to class daily with afternoons open to explore the city on foot, bus or the underground metro. With Milan as your classroom, you will be able to experience world-class operatic and instrumental music performed in the concert halls and opera houses where they were first experienced, visit museums, castles, and churches where the great Italian artists envisioned their art, and stroll down the iconic Via Monte Napoleone and Galleria Victor Emanuelle famous for the major fashion design houses of Italy.
THE SUBJECTS OF OUR STUDY

OPERA:
Starting in Florence and ending in Milan, you will begin to explore the Italian Opera origins. In the late 1500’s a small group of Florentine humanists known as the “Bardic Camarata” felt music had fallen into corruption. They were searching for a way to improve society by recreating the forms and styles of the ancient Greeks. Unintentionally, from this exploration, a new musical art form was born; OPERA! We will pay particular attention to exploring the life and works of Giuseppe Verdi and understand his part in the Risorgemento movement of the 1800’s unifying the peninsula states into the country we know today. Through the centuries opera morphed and changed with individual composers from other countries adopting the Italian genre and adding their own unique touches to this amazing art form. Studying and experiencing opera in the country of its origin is an opportunity beyond compare.

ART/ARCHITECTURE:
The output of artistic expression during the Italian renaissance was one of the most prolific eras of humankind. With Italian society slowly evolving out of the dark ages following the fall of the Roman Empire, humanists from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries sought to recover the civilizations of Ancient Rome and Greek to better help their own societies. In doing so, artists became obsessed with Roman and Greek sculpture, art and architecture. Our seminar will explore these works focusing on the major works of da Vinci and Michaelangelo, the two great giants of Renaissance art that were rivals and opposites in their approach to art. We will study their lives and how they intersect and weave in and out of Milan and Florence. In addition, we will experience Raphael, Bottecelli, Donatello, and many greater artists of the time.

FASHION:
You will explore the iconic Italian fashion world following WWII. We will learn how Italy reinvented its economy after a devastating world war turning Milan into a major fashion capital of Europe rivaling Paris, France, and birthing the talents of great fashion designers such as Armani, Versace, Pucci, and Valentino. In Milan, we will spend time walking the great fashion street of Via Monte Napoleone, visit the Fashion District, and take in the sights and sounds of this great fashion city of Milan. In Florence, we will learn about the first fashion show of Italy following WWII and visit the famous Via de’ Tornabuoni which is home to the Ferragamo Museum, as well as the fashion design houses of Gucci, Emilio Pucci, Versace, Pomellato, Roberto Cavalli, Hermes, Tiffany & Co, and Cartier to name a few. It’s the most elegant street in Florence.

FOOD:
Italian food is loved worldwide! Favorites of this cuisine is of course pizza and spaghetti, however there are many more regional dishes that are unknown to the average consumer. Since the fall of the Roman Empire in 475 AD, distinct regional cuisines began to develop in the many individual city states that sprouted following the fall. Breads and pasta dishes varied greatly from city to city. For example, Milan, influenced from its many years of occupation of France and Austria, developed delicate risottos and white sauces. Influenced from Spanish dominance, Naples and the southern cities incorporated rich tomato sauces and chewy doughs resulting in the first "folded" pizza and hearty tomato-based spaghetti meat sauces.

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Goals:
You will:

- Experience first-hand the artistic contributions of Italian Opera, renaissance art, and Italian fashion to the world.
- Appreciate the great artistic contributions made by the artists of these movements to the history of Italy and the world at large.
- Be inspired to establish a lifelong relationship to opera, art and fashion, with its creative cultural history and future.

Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of the course you will be able to:

- Discuss with confidence major aspects of Italian opera, art, food and fashion.
- Have an understanding of Unification Movement, the composer Giuseppe Verdi’s contribution to this movement, and how it shaped modern day Italy.
- Possess a strong grasp of the historic city districts of Milan and Florence, and the locations of major artistic significance.
- Appreciate first-hand a world beyond your own personal experience, expanding your education and awareness of the world at large.
- Develop, through the international language of art, an understanding and tolerance of other cultures.
- Explore the world of Italian fashion design and its economic impact on Italy from 1945 to present day.
- Awaken the senses to the exquisite culinary delights of Italian food, its historical background and its impact economically and upon the world at large.

ITINERARY OF POSSIBLE EVENTS
Daily lectures will be presented by the professor tracing the major artists’ lives, their artistic output and their contributions to the Italian culture. Political and economic influences during these artists’ lifetimes will be discussed.

MILAN

- Required class guided tours will include:
  - The Milan Cathedral
  - Teatro alla Scala: Museum and Opera Theater
  - The church of Santa Maria delle Grazie: The Last Supper, da Vinci
  - The Cemetery Monumentale di Milano
  - The Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio, built in 379–386,
  - The Navigli Canals
  - La Casa Verdi
  - The Milan Fashion District
  - Cooking class in Milan

- Suggested points of interest for you to explore on your own:
  - Armani/Silos Museo
  - Galleria Vittorio Emmanuelle II
  - Sforza Castle and Museums
  - Piazza del Cuomo, Milan
  - Porta Tidiness
  - Parco Semitone
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- Royal Palace of Milan
- Museo della Scienza e della Tecnologia “Leonardo da Vinci
- Modern Art Gallery
- Teatro Verdi
- Monza Villa Reale
- Via Monte Napoleone
- Conservatorio di Giuseppe Verdi
- A highly suggested one-day excursion to Bellagio, Lago di Como with the professor (one-hour train ride from Milan)
- Other excursions from Milan may include, The Cinque Terre, Cremona, Lugano, Venice, Verona, and Genoa

FLORENCE:
Required class guided tours:
- L’Uffizi galleria
- Accademia Gallery: Michaelangelo’s David
- Florence Cathedral
- Ferragamo Museum
- Medici Villa I Castello
- Cooking class in Florence

Suggested points of interest for you to explore on your own:
- Santa Maria Novella
- Abby San Miniato al Monte
- Boboli Gardens
- Florence Opera
- Ponte Vecchio
- Piazza della Signoria
- Campinile di Giotto
- Palazzo Pitti
- Mercato Nuovo
- Possible excursions from Florence may include, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Pisa, Sienna.
- Cooking class in Florence

Assignments/Grading:
- Summary of Grading:
  - Journal maintenance: ⅓ of final grade
  - Participation/attendance: ⅓ of final grade
  - Seminar presentations: ⅓ of final grade

- Journal maintenance and assignments:
  - You will write about your discoveries and observations in Italy
  - You will be assigned the task to specifically observe these historic works and to record your thoughts in a journal. You will share their daily journal in group discussions and with the professor. Guidelines to journal maintenance will be given out by the professor before leaving for Italy.
October 7, 2019

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- This journal and the commitment to it are ⅓ of the student’s final grade.

- Participation/attendance:
  - You are expected to attend class every day except for the day’s explicitly called FREE DAYS, which appear on the final schedule of events.
  - Most classes will be traditionally held in the school facility. You will be encouraged to be open and flexible as there may be classes held off campus in a museum or performance hall in order to enhance the student’s experience in this learning adventure.

- Participation/attendance are ⅓ of the final grade.
  - Active participation in the class requires you to:
    § Ask questions
    § Participate in discussions
    § Treat each day with energy and attention
    § (Excused Illness will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.)

- Seminar presentations:
  - Before leaving for Italy, each of you will be assigned to a group of two or three and given a topic fashion of their choice to research while in Italy.
  - Your research will be presented to the rest of the group in an oral seminar style format during the last week of the course in Florence.
  - You will be graded on overall preparedness and committed, energetic and timely execution.

Materials:
- You are encouraged to bring a computer or ipad/notebook, in order to maintain a digital journal and research seminar topics.
- If you prefer to hand write your journal that will be fine.
- No formal paper is required for the class.
- A suggested list of periodical readings, textbooks, and operas will be assigned ahead of time in order to prepare and immerse yourself in the Italian experience. This will not be required but highly encouraged in order for you to experience the full impact of the course.
- A bibliography of the course content will be provided by the professor.

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General Outcomes: upon successful completion of Milan and Florence: The Cities of Opera, Art, Fashion and Food the student will be able to:

- Discuss with confidence major aspects of artistic movements in Italian opera music, architecture, visual art and fashion from the Renaissance through the 20th century.
- Become familiar with the "Made in Italy" fashion world and its contribution to the global fashion industry.
- Possess a strong grasp of the historic city districts of Milan and Florence and the locations of major artistic significance.
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• Build upon the knowledge acquired through the study of Italian opera, architecture, fashion, Italian cuisine and visual art. This study will help the student understand how the Italian society as a whole was shaped by these artistic movements and their continuing impact on our present day global society.
• Appreciate a world that will expand the student’s education and awareness of the world at large.
• Discover the diversity of global cultures through the international language of art resulting in tolerance for individuals from cultures different from their own.

What are the objectives of this course?
• This course offers the opportunity to learn facts about the industrialized city of Milan and Italy as a whole in its historical position in our globalizing world.
• You will discover what the role and responsibility of the arts in Italy plays in our global society going forward through the study of individual artists and the history of Italian art movements.
• You will develop skills in you that will help you critically interpret the artistic contribution as a reaction to the political and environmental movements during the artist’s lifetime.
• This course will help build awareness in you regarding the importance of becoming a global citizen engaged in learning and thinking about the challenges of not only Italy but all countries today.
• This course will facilitate learning in the organization of academic and artistic knowledge gained by you that crosses in other disciplines and sub-disciplines, including, geography, cultural geography, history, economics, and Italian industrialization post WWII.

What is Liberal Education and why is this course part of a Liberal Education Theme?
Definition:
“Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.” Association of American Colleges and Universities, https://www.aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education

How does this course fulfill a Liberal Education Core requirement?
Humanistic Studies, includes such disciplines as art history, classics, cultural studies, design history, film and media studies, philosophy, and religious studies. Works in Humanistic Studies reflect on the common and familiar human condition—our human limitations and unique failures together with our distinctive human capacities and achievements. Courses in this group examine works that invite or compel critical thought. Reflection on such works will enrich students' lives and make them more thoughtful and perceptive members of our communities.”

To satisfy the Arts and Humanities Core requirement in Humanistic Studies a course must meet these criteria:
• Students engage in detailed analysis of and reflection on some humanistic literature or creative product—for example, a philosophical essay, a religious treatise, a work of cultural commentary, or a documentary film.
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- Students develop their understanding of the works or cultural practices they consider. Where appropriate (for example, in considering a philosophical work) they engage in critical evaluation of the work.
- Students examine how the work under consideration arose out of its cultural or historical context.

The course explores the role the work plays in the larger society of which it is a part. UMN CLA: https://www.aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education

- This course develops the important value of critical thinking and analysis. In studying the artist’s environments and their reaction to their environments both culturally and politically, you will become better informed as to how Italian society developed and its present day contribution and position on the global stage.
- This course offers an opportunity for you to understand the competing perspectives that go into a developed society by way of artistic commentary through the artist’s medium.
- All Course projects, readings, class discussions, lectures and blogging will have a contemporary component reflecting upon present international news drawing parallels and comparisons to historical facts of the past. Through this perspective of the comparisons you will become aware of present day artists in Italy, and most specifically Milan, and their reaction to such contemporary issues as the refugee crisis, European Union issues, terrorism and economic disparities within their society.
- Your class project will form an argument as to the artist’s validity of perspective of the art work/s studied. Through this argument, you will discover a more in depth understanding of the art works themselves as well as the society in which it was conceived.

What is a Global Perspective Theme course and how does this course fulfill the Global Perspectives Theme?

Global Perspectives Theme objectives and criteria:

“Undergraduates must develop the competence to function effectively and ethically in a complex, rapidly changing world that is increasingly interdependent yet fraught with conflicts and disparities. The Global Perspectives Theme assures that graduates from the University have had at least one significant academic exposure to the world beyond U.S. borders, and the opportunity to consider the implications of this knowledge for the international community and their own lives. Courses in many disciplines and interdisciplinary areas may be suitable for the Global Perspectives Theme, and efforts should be made to assure that all world regions are represented among courses meeting this requirement. Topics addressed in a Global Perspectives Theme course might include (but are not limited to) contemporary popular culture; nationalism; globalization; human rights; comparative politics, economics, or cultures; historical studies; different modes of material and political life; regional, ethnic, or religious conflict; artistic and literary responses to colonialism or the colonial legacy, and the role of governments, corporations, or international organizations. Through concentrated study of a particular country, culture, or region, through in-depth focus on a particular global issue with reference to two or more parts of the world, or through the study of global affairs by a comparative method, students may cultivate a broader and more thoughtful perspective; increase their global awareness; and learn the importance of the particularities of place, time, and culture to understanding our world.”

UMNCLA: http://asr.umn.edu/liberal-education-course-proposal-guidelines/global-perspectives-theme-proposals. All Theme courses have the common goal of cultivating in students a number of habits of mind:

- Thinking ethically about important challenges facing our society and world;
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- Reflecting on the shared sense of responsibility required to build and maintain community;
- Connecting knowledge and practice;
- Fostering a stronger sense of our roles as historical agents.

With their emphasis on compelling contemporary issues, the Themes offer opportunities for students to consider timely and engaging questions in all of their complexity; to reflect on ethical implications; to discuss and to debate; to formulate opinions; to have their opinions respectfully challenged and to respectfully challenge the opinions of others; and to connect what they are learning to their own lives and to the world around them. Courses in these areas offer students a sustained opportunity to engage in difficult debates around moral, legal, and ethical issues that require critical inquiry from a variety of perspectives and the cultivation of independent thinking.” UMN CLA : http://asr.umn.edu/liberal-education-course-proposal-guidelines/global-perspectives-theme-proposals.

- This course will reveal to students the value of critical thinking and analysis of major art movements with specific direction in music, visual arts, architecture and fashion. Specific assignments will be given to you with thought provoking criteria to help you discern and analyze the ethics and value of individual art pieces as well as major movements.
- This course will help students understand and become aware of competing perspectives that helped form artistic movements from the Renaissance through contemporary times resulting in major contributions by artists. Through the readings and analysis criteria you will be asked to reflect on these movements and how the artistic community has a major responsibility to speak for communities that would otherwise not have a voice.
- Becoming an informed and educated global citizen will be a major focus of this course. With the student's experience in Italy, it is the desire of the professor that this course will encourage the student to become more aware of current international news with an emphasis on artistic reactions to that news. Armed with the understanding of how art movements are formed and enacted, students will be able to better understand the current global events with a new perspective connecting knowledge with practice.
- The student’s role as an informed global citizen will empower them to form stronger and more valid arguments in many areas of their life going forward. In this course they will learn through their class projects how to form an argument and defend that argument from the artist’s perspective. It is the professor’s desire that this exercise will help the student form a strong sense of their role as an agent of historical facts, thereby empowering them as a contributor to our society at large.

How does this course address the CLE Student Learning Outcomes?

At the time of receiving a bachelor’s degree, students:

1. Can identify, define, and solve problems.
2. Can locate and critically evaluate information.
3. Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry.
4. Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.
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5. Can communicate effectively.
6. Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines.
7. Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.

At a minimum this course will fulfill 5, 6, and 7. NO. 5. Can communicate effectively:

There will be four forms of communication in this course:

1. Daily discussion in group sessions will assist the Professor in evaluating whether students are actively participating in assigned readings, observations of assigned art works and independent excursions in and about Milan and other cities visited. Individually or in pairs, students will be assigned an observation to accomplish for the following day’s group session. The student(s) will then communicate to the group what they observed and record their impressions of the observation. A guide for observations will be handed out at the beginning of the course. Students in the audience will be encouraged to actively ask questions and participate in assisting in the presentation when needed.

2. Final oral presentations. With assigned research partners, students will divide tasks of research and create a 20-30-minute oral presentation covering topics chosen by the students. The Professor will provide a list of ideas from which to choose these topics. Included in this presentations students may use power-point presentations, videos, slides, live or recorded music, etc. Creativity in their presentations is highly encouraged.

3. A written daily blog on the-three week course experience will ensure communication in written skills. The daily blog-writing following our tour will be turned into me weekly and final grading will be posted at the end of the course. I will provide rules and guidelines for this daily blog in order to assure proper communication skills in writing.

4. Communication with the citizens of Milan when the Italian language is not native to the student may present a problem. I will assist students in basic Italian pronunciation and phrases that can assist them for a successful experience. Learning how to negotiate in restaurants, buses, trains, etc. will help them with life-long communication skills while travelling abroad.

NO. 6 Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines:
Students will learn the role of creativity of the artist in society, examine the fruits of innovation, decipher the growth in discovery and expression of the human spirit as the artist's visions have influenced other disciplines.

• By studying the arts in Italian culture students will discover how creative and innovative visions by specific artists have changed attitudes in individuals as well as the Italian society as a whole. Through these artists' personal expressions of the human spirit, lasting concrete changes took place in the Italian culture. For example, artistic creation and innovation has occurred throughout the works of artist Leonardo da Vinci, musician Giuseppi Verdi and fashion icons of the Post WWII Period all of which had major influence on economics, politics and social norms.

• Through the student’s blogging and research projects, students will discover and communicate how these creative innovations crossed into other disciplines of the society. Parameters for observations will be give by the professor at the beginning of the course as a guide for inquiry.

NO. 7 Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning:
A major goal of this course is to open the doors to life-long learning.
• It is believed that the learnt skills of gathering information in a foreign country for research
projects, communicating and arguing these projects to large group, will help stimulate inquiry and desire for life-long learning.

- Citizenship is no longer limited to a single country or even continent. With the skills of this course students will experience another culture, many for the first time, growing their awareness of responsibility of their own US citizenship but their role of citizenship in the vast global society we have become.

- It is hoped that travelling abroad will create a lasting effect upon the students in this course as students live amongst Italian citizens. They will experience new viewpoints that may change attitudes, instill tolerance, and invite pro-active involvement in future challenges going forward. Through this experience, students will become enlightened to another culture and its place in the global our society. This will help students become more effective in their understanding and engagement with the world.