



APDesign Italian Studies Program Frequently Asked Questions

This guide is intended to provide general information about the APDesign Italian Studies Program. It is structured in the form of questions and answers and is **by no means complete**. Should you have any questions regarding the content of this document please do not hesitate to contact the Director of International Programs or Courtney Markle, Project Coordinator by email at markle@ksu.edu or stop by the Student and Academic Services Office at 1127 Regnier Hall or call 785-532-1995.

1 GETTING READY TO GO

“How much luggage is a student allowed to bring?”

- We typically travel on Delta or American Airlines, which allows travelers to take one checked suitcase (50 lb. limit) and one carry-on. It is suggested that the carry-on be a small backpack or shoulder bag that can double as a travel bag for day/weekend trips. Additional checked bags will be assessed additional charges (estimated \$100-\$200 per bag). Remember, you will be responsible for carrying all our own luggage. **Keep in mind that it is very expensive to ship things back to the US and it is cumbersome and exhausting to carry luggage while traveling after the program.** Less is more! Students might want to bring items that can be disposed of or donated at the end of the semester. Students are strongly advised to check with the airline shortly before departure for the latest updated information/regulations regarding changes in baggage policies for either checked or carry-on baggage as well as any restrictions regarding what may be taken in your carry-on and/or checked luggage. There are often last-minute changes regarding baggage policies. For up to date and more information visit <https://www.delta.com/> or <https://www.aa.com>.

“How much should the student pack?”

- Pack everything you think you need then take half of it out. How can you know if you have too much? Take a walk down the block carrying all your luggage, and then decide what you really want to take. Roll clothes to increase packing space or use compression bags. It is useful to have a small supply of rubber bands and plastic bags for organizing and collecting things. Remember everything that goes to Italy either will need to be packed in your luggage, shipped by mail (which is expensive) or left in Italy.

“What does everyone forget to bring?”

- Remember to take medicine like ibuprofen and other brand names of medication which may be harder to find in Italy (although not impossible) and more expensive.
- Prescription medicine – see info below!
- It is a good idea to bring cold/flu/allergy medicine and cough drops.
- For those students who wear eyeglasses, plan to bring an extra pair of eyeglasses and/or a valid copy of your eye prescription.

“What kind of shoes/boots should the student bring?”

- Comfortable, warm and waterproof shoes or boots are recommended. Be sure that your footwear is broken in before you leave; blisters are not comfortable. One stylish pair of shoes that is comfortable is recommended. High quality socks are very important to avoid problems with blisters.

“What about adapters/converters for appliances?”

- Students will need to have adapters/converters. Small appliances that do not have voltage switches will need a converter as well. Inexpensive converter kits are available at discount stores or internet ordering. High voltage hair dryers are a problem. It is more convenient to buy an inexpensive hair dryer in Italy to share amongst roommates than it is for everyone to bring their own. Most laptops do not require a converter just an adapter.

“What personal business does every student need to attend to before departure?”

- Arrange for monthly or yearly bill payments/renewals for items such as:
 - Automobile tags
 - Health insurance
 - Life insurance
- Arrange for preparation/submittal of your Federal/State income tax forms
- Note that students planning to seek aid for the school year following participation in the Italian Studies Program are encouraged to complete their online financial aid application and scholarship application for the academic year prior to departing for Italy.

“What about the apartments in Orvieto?”

- The apartments are fully furnished. Linens, blankets, towels, and pillows are included.

“May students bring electric blankets?”

- No.

2 FINANCES

“What is the exchange rate?”

- Presently, the exchange is about 1 euro = \$1.05 (as of 1 December 2022).

“How much money will the student need each week?”

- It differs from person to person, and it can be more than you might think. This is especially true if the dollar is weak against the euro. A suggested weekly estimate is 150-180 Euros for food/meals, travel, and personal expenses. Students are responsible for their meals and personal travel. It is more affordable to eat at home and can be expensive to eat out. The cost of travel can vary considerably.

Developing a travel budget before leaving can be very helpful and is highly recommended. **On the extended field trips, students will need to cover meals and the cost of travel to sites that are not part of the field trip.**

“Approximately how much cash should the student bring to Italy?”

- There are many ATMs in Orvieto, at the airport as well throughout Europe. After you arrive, you may feel more comfortable to have €100–€200 in case the bank is not open, or the ATM is down. However, it can be expensive to buy Euros in the US. We recommend that you visit with your local bank and inquire about fees associated with obtaining Euros in advance as well as the exchange rate. We do not recommend that you exchange your US dollars for Euros at the airport (either here in the US or at Rome airport) as those usually charge a high service fee. We also discourage carrying large sums of US currency with you as you travel to Italy. Please be cautious with all your valuables and plan on a secure means of carrying money. Devices like money belts are a good way to secure belongings and can be found in most large retail stores and/or online. Wallets are not recommended as they are often targeted by pick pockets, particularly while travelling in Rome or other high tourist destinations.

“Can a student use a credit card?”

- Most major credit cards are accepted in larger establishments and can be useful for large purchases and in emergencies; however, we do not recommend depending entirely on a credit card. We encourage you to inquire with your bank/credit card company regarding international transaction fees on credit card purchases and ATM withdrawals, as substantial fees may result depending upon the card/account.

“What do I need to tell my bank and credit card company?”

- **Be sure to ask your bank if your credit/debit cards can be used abroad and let them know you will be in Europe for approximately four months.** A photocopy of your bank card and other important documents, such as credit cards, passport, and ID, should be left with a responsible person at home. The student should also carry a set of these photocopies (to be kept separate from the original documents/cards). The name of each credit card, credit card number, your name as it appears on the credit card, expiration date, customer service number, credit card website and credit card mailing address should be included on the photocopy.

*****Bring an extra credit/debit card in case one gets demagnetized or lost!**

***** Note that restaurants usually will not split checks and many places have minimum amount requirements for debit/credit card purchases.**

3 MEDICAL

“What does healthcare coverage entail while studying abroad?”

- Kansas State University requires all students participating in study abroad programs to purchase supplement international insurance through the university. **Coverage begins on the date of departure and will end on the last day of the program.** The cost of this insurance for the spring semester is estimated to be approximately \$400 and will be billed to the student through KSIS. Additional information regarding this required supplement international insurance will be covered in the pre-

departure meetings, including providing you with your international insurance card (APDesign arranges for this coverage).

“Are there immunization shots that need to be taken care of before departure?”

- Immunizations are generally not required for travel to most European countries. Lafene Health Center at K-State offers complete travel counseling regarding immunization services, or you may consult with your family physician.

“How is seeing a doctor or medical emergencies handled?”

- If a student wants to see a public or private doctor in Italy, the student will have to pay and then seek reimbursement from his or her insurance. Serena Croce, the Program Director provides direct support for students with medical/dental problems and will help students find a medical provider. Students will be given emergency numbers upon arrival. In the case of a medical emergency, the Program Director will take the student to the hospital, arrange for emergency transport, etc.

“What about prescription medication?”

- **If you have been prescribed a medication which requires purchase at a pharmacy, please contact the Director of International Programs or Project Coordinator, Courtney Markle. We will visit with you one-on-one regarding the best practice to safely travel with your medication and ensure that you will have sufficient supply for the entirety of your time abroad.**
- It is important to bring all prescription medication in your carry-on bag. Prescriptions should be in the original packaging. Do NOT have prescriptions mailed. It will be stopped in customs and endless documentation and time will be required to receive the package. Many insurance companies do not permit the purchase of more than one or two months of prescribed medication. You (or your parents) and your doctor will need to work with the insurance company to get permission to obtain 4+ months of medication. It is very helpful to ask your doctor to write a note for you to carry the medication in case you are questioned by TSA or at customs. If you have periodic problems requiring medication, remember to bring the appropriate prescription or non-prescription medicine. Do not take a chance that you will not need this medicine. Not all medications which have approval and are legal here in the US are available in Italy.

“How are allergy shots managed?”

- Students who need to locate a local physician in Italy to administer shots for special needs can do so with assistance from the Program Director.

“What about dental care?”

- There are qualified dentists in the area. However, it is always better to have your own dentist check your teeth and correct problems prior to traveling abroad. Italian dentists do not use Novocain to the same degree that we do in the U.S. Remember that dental bills must be paid at the time of service and then submitted to the U.S. insurance company. The Program Director provides direct support for students needing to seek medical or dental attention in Italy.

4 ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION

“After arriving in Rome, how long will it take to get to the center?”

- Transfer by charter bus from Rome to Orvieto will be arranged and will take approximately 1 ½ hours. Students and faculty will begin getting settled in their apartments shortly after arriving at the Piazza Cahen. A more detailed orientation to the center and community will begin on the day after arrival.

“What is involved with orientation?”

- In the first few days, students will be oriented to the Study Center and the town. Students will learn how to use the bus and train by traveling as a group to several nearby locations within the first week. This will help the students learn about the immediate environment and gain confidence using different forms of transportation.

5 THE TOWN: ORVIETO

Orvieto is a naturally fortified city and was one of the 12 original city-states during Etruscan times. Rome is easily accessible by train (approx. 1 hour).

“Are there organized trips to operas, symphonies, plays etc.?”

- Yes. The Program Director and faculty will identify cultural activities by interest and based on the schedule.

“How expensive are clothes in Italy?”

- Clothes in Italy generally cost more than clothes in the US. On a day-to-day basis, people in Italy, tend to dress better than people in the US.

“What about purchasing groceries?”

- There are several grocery stores in town and a public market that takes place on Thursday and Saturday mornings. There are also specialty shops such as bakery, fresh pasta, butcher, etc. Students are introduced to marketing and preparing meals in the early weeks of the semester.

“What about replacing toiletries, etc.?”

- While many familiar brands are available, it may be hard to find your preferred toiletries. There are small stores where you can find most of these items, or a local equivalent. There is also a larger supermarket just outside town (The COOP) that has a broad range of sundries for less.

“Do most Italians speak English?”

- No. Most people from ages 15-30 speak some English. Older people speak very little English. In the larger cities (i.e., Florence, Rome) some shopkeepers speak English. From the program’s perspective, it will be important to begin speaking Italian as soon as possible. There is required language instruction built into the program at Orvieto and students are expected to make an effort to speak Italian. Please do not expect people to speak English and do not get frustrated when they do not.

“What about the weather?”

- It can be cold and damp in the winter months. It is important to have layers of clothing, including long underwear, to put on under slacks/jeans and to have a warm coat, hat, and gloves. During field trips students may be standing for a long time on cold marble floors or pavement, so having warm socks and good walking shoes/boots is critical. **Heat is restricted in Italy, so buildings are not always warm and when the heat is on it is not kept as warm as most homes in the U.S. This will also be true for the apartments in Orvieto.**

6 THE STUDY CENTER/APARTMENTS

“What is the address and telephone number of Orvieto?”

- **NO MAIL/PACKAGES MAY BE SENT PRIOR TO THE STUDENTS ARRIVAL IN ORVIETO!!!!**

Fondazione per il Centro Studi Città di Orvieto

Piazza Corsica, 2
05018 Orvieto TR Italy
Telephone: +39-0763-393496

Serena Croce, Fondazione per il Centro Studi Città di Orvieto,
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Kansas State University is a not-for-profit educational entity recognized by the Italian Ministry of Higher Education.

Serena Croce is the Program Director. She works with Kansas State University and APDesign on all aspects of the program. Serena’s email address is: croce@ksu.edu and her cell number is +39-349-4495-150.

“How many students reside at the study center?”

- The Center in Orvieto does not include residential facilities so students and faculty are placed in apartments throughout the town.

“What about computers?”

- Students need to bring a laptop computer. There is wireless access in the study center, apartments, and in some of the public spaces. Connectivity varies. It will not be the connectivity you are used to at K-State or here in the States. Free wireless access is available in some Orvieto cafes if you buy a drink.

“Who owns Centro Studi Città di Orvieto?”

- Orvieto started their study center in 1998 and it is supported by the city, a private foundation, and a bank. APDesign contracts directly with the study center for space and support service.

“Do students have a curfew?”

- No, BUT sound carries easily through the building and through the narrow streets so students **MUST be quiet at night**. There are regulations for students living in the apartments in Orvieto that must be strictly observed. Italians do not typically have parties in their homes. Students will be required to sign a lease and can be removed from the apartments for not following the regulations as stipulated in the lease. If a student is removed from the apartment, he or she is automatically dismissed from the academic program. Inconsiderate or rude behavior, excessive noise, public drunkenness, etc., will not be tolerated.

“How are roommates selected, and number of people assigned to a room?”

- Roommate sign-up is handled in the pre-departure meetings. The apartments in Orvieto will accommodate two to five persons, depending upon the apartment.

“Is bedding provided and will it be warm enough?”

- Warm bedding is provided in the apartments in Orvieto. **Keep in mind that heat is restricted and regulated in buildings and homes.** Buildings, homes, and apartments may not be heated to the degree you are accustomed to in the U.S. Generally, the heat is on for three hours in the morning, three hours in the afternoon and for three hours in the evening. **It is recommended to bring clothes that can be layered.**

“Do students have to prepare their own meals in Orvieto?”

- Students will be responsible for shopping and preparing their meals. As here in the U.S. it is typically more expensive to eat in restaurants and/or purchase prepared food at grocery stores than it is to cook at home. One recommendation is for each apartment to bring an Italian cookbook. You will be cooking with fresh ingredients that may be different from what you are used to in the US. Upon arrival in Orvieto students will participate in a one-day cooking school that includes an introduction to available local/fresh foods and a visit to the Thursday morning local market.

“Will the student have contact with the local community?”

- Students live in the community and must shop and travel to and from school but will need to be proactive in meeting and talking to local people. We also offer a series of workshops that will provide further opportunity to meet local people.

“Have any students been dismissed from Orvieto for misconduct?”

- The KSU Student Code of Conduct and academic policies apply even though the students are not on campus in the US. Students are also subject to the guidelines of the Study Center as well as the civil and criminal codes of Italy. Students are required to sign an agreement to abide by the Study Center guidelines. The few problems in the past have been associated almost exclusively with disruptive behavior due to intoxication. We certainly do not anticipate this conduct; however, we will follow procedures to dismiss the student(s) if necessary.

Hotels will call the police and hold person/persons responsible for damages to hotel property as determined by the proprietors, not by the Program Director or KSU faculty.

Students will sign a lease agreement for the apartment and will be expected to follow the landlord's regulations. It is each student's responsibility to comply with the landlord's rules and if he or she fails to comply and is asked to leave the apartment, the student will be dismissed from the academic program.

Violation of Italian civil and/or criminal code is very serious and getting into legal trouble while abroad can be an expensive, difficult, and lengthy process to go through.

7 MAIL SERVICE

“How long does it take to receive packages and letters from the US?”

- About two weeks via air mail, or 1-2 months via ground transport.

“May items be shipped prior to departure?”

- **NO! –NO MAIL/PACKAGES MAY BE SENT PRIOR TO THE STUDENTS ARRIVAL IN ORVIETO!!!** We recommend that each person should go to Italy with no more than one suitcase and one carry-on.

“Can we ship things to our son, daughter, or student while they are in Orvieto?”

- **Yes, once they have arrived. Remember there will be custom charges on the declared value of the package.** Charges are 20-30% of the declared value. Photographic equipment, electronics, and cosmetics should not be sent as the custom charges can be 50% of the declared value. High custom charges are also imposed on lotions and cosmetics.

“How much does it cost to ship packages to Italy?”

- Cost is based on the weight of the package. Call the post office for the current rates. Shipping can get expensive, as well as customs charges, so we recommend that you try to avoid shipping items. The post office also has a list of what is prohibited to ship, so be sure to check this out before attempting to send anything. You may also have packages shipped via UPS, FedEx or other shipping companies. Insured packages are charged a percentage of the worth and you must pay that amount to obtain the package. This can be very expensive. If you do choose to ship any items, consider all the costs associated with the package, including any insurance and custom charges.

8 PHONE CALLS/VISITS

“What about bringing a cell phone?”

- We require each student to have a cell phone number.

Talk to your cell phone provider in the US prior to the end of semester regarding a phone being “set up” for international use and ask if you can have an international plan or an Italian SIM card. However, one can purchase or lease a cell phone in Italy and obtain a phone number. These phones use prepaid cards which are relatively inexpensive.

“Can parents call the Center?”

- Parents should call Centro Studi only in the case of an emergency.

“What is the cheapest way to call home?”

- The cheapest way to communicate is to use the internet. International plan options can include inexpensive international calling.

“May visitors stay in the apartment in Orvieto?”

- **NO.** Visitors, including fellow classmates, friends, and family member are not allowed to stay overnight in your apartment. The Program Director will be happy to share lodging options in Orvieto you’re your visitors.

“Are hotel accommodations available in Orvieto, and do you have a list of their addresses and phone numbers?”

- Students may contact the Program Director to obtain a list of hotels, B&B and other kinds of accommodation available in Orvieto.

9 TRAVEL

“How are the required field trips organized?”

- The primary field trip day will be Friday and will use either a tour bus or the train system for transportation. There will be several overnight field trips occurring during the course of the semester. **Students are required to participate in all the course related field trips. Leaving a required field trip early to embark on independent travel or to meet up with friends/family is not allowed.**

“How accessible is transportation to other cities?”

- Very accessible. There is a train station at the bottom of the “hill” in Orvieto.

Train travel in Europe is often the most convenient and economical way to get from one city or country to another. If planning to travel extensively during and after the program, a student may find it advantageous to purchase some sort of rail pass. Preparation of a detailed travel plan will help in making the decision to purchase a rail pass. Information about the Italian State Railway is accessible at <http://www.trenitalia.com/>

“How much time will the student have to travel during the program?”

- Students will have time to travel on most Saturdays and Sundays but need to consult the semester calendar. There will be several extended field trips scheduled as well as some required workshops/activities scheduled during the semester.

“Are students allowed to take trips on their own?”

- Students are allowed and encouraged to travel on their own within Italy during their free time. Travel to other countries is difficult to accomplish in two days and is best reserved for spring break or after the program. Consulting the State Visiting department web site for travel advice, visa requirements, etc. is important. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>
- **“Are students required to provide weekend travel plans to Program Director?”** YES. We require that students provide the Program Director with a detailed itinerary of their independent travel plans, including accommodation information. Providing the itinerary to the Program Director is for your safety.

“What about renting motor bikes or bicycles?”

- There are organizations in the larger cities that do rent motor bikes, mopeds, and/or bicycles. However, keep in mind that injuries resulting from an accident associated with driving a two or three wheeled vehicle are **excluded from the Study Abroad insurance coverage**. Most students are not accustomed to the traffic and driving habits of Europeans. There have been serious accidents involving students on bikes and motor bikes – yes, it is risky! We encourage students to enjoy this semester by getting to know the culture and participating in the activities that are organized and leave more “adventurous” activities for their next trip to Italy. Students are urged to be cautious as pedestrians. Look both ways, twice!

“What about discount student flights to other cities in Europe?”

- Yes, there are discount flights. Past students have traveled on Ryan Air and utilized websites such as kayak.com and euroflights.com. *Mention of this airline and websites does NOT constitute any endorsement by K-State and/or APDesign but are only mentioned for information purposes.*

“Is it better to fly or take the train?”

- It depends. Some of the special rates for flights are quite good and will shorten travel time so that one can enjoy more time in the destination. However, some of the discount air companies like Ryan Air do not operate out of main airports but instead use the smaller airports which can be more difficult to access by bus or train. Most discount airlines have very strict baggage allowances. *Mention of this airline does NOT constitute any endorsement by K-State and/or APDesign but are only mentioned for information purposes.*

“Is it possible to buy a Eurail pass when in Europe? Do the students need one during the semester?”

- You may wish to check options for Eurail passes at www.eurail.com. You can determine if a Eurail pass will save you money if you know your pre/post-program travel plans and can compare the cost of a Eurail pass with individual train tickets. There are many options, plans, etc. to compare. A Eurail pass can be purchased online with a credit card. It will take at least five regular delivery days for it to be delivered. It appears you can purchase a Eurail pass in Europe but there are restrictions: only certain train stations sell Eurail passes (Bari, Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Pisa, Rome, Turin and Venice); not all stations sell all varieties of Eurail passes; Eurail passes purchased in Europe will cost 20% or more than if purchased in the states.

It is possible to have parents purchase a Eurail pass and mail it to Italy (via Fed Ex or DHL for reliability and speed). If you ensure the rail pass, we have been told by other students that it can cost €80.00 to receive it.

“What about renting cars?”

- We do not recommend renting cars. The cost of the rental, the driving regulations and the habits of Italian drivers are all serious considerations. We request that students who are considering renting a car to speak to the Program Director prior to making any arrangements.

10 AFTER THE PROGRAM

“How many souvenirs can be brought home? Is there a limit?”

- Travelers can bring back as much as they can carry and are willing to declare, as long as it does not go over the customs limit. In most cases, travelers are permitted to bring up to \$800 worth of merchandise back to the United States without having to pay duty. (Numerous exceptions apply.) There is a tax on any amount over that limit. There are restrictions as to what any traveler may bring into the U.S. It is the student’s responsibility to pay any tax as well and to be informed as to what is legal/illegal to bring into the U.S. after being abroad.
- As of June 2013, the United States has imposed a 100% rate of duty on certain products, from several countries, including Italy. If you should bring more of these items than fall within the flat rate of duty, you will pay as much in duty as you paid to purchase the product(s). For information and restrictions check the U.S. Customs website at www.cbp.gov.
- Upon re-entering the U.S. students must declare certain articles acquired abroad to customs officials. There are restrictions as to what any traveler may bring into the U.S. It is the student’s responsibility to pay any tax and to be informed as to what is legal/illegal to bring into the U.S. after being abroad. These customs regulations are too detailed to be covered in this document. If a student has specific concerns about customs, it is recommended that a travel agent or a U.S. customs office be contacted. Airlines will provide travelers with customs information while in flight.
- The Department of Homeland Security has a “Know Before You Go” website that may be helpful. <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go>
- **Note: Any student anticipating the need to take prescription drugs with them to Italy should obtain a letter from their physician on letterhead to present to customs agents.**

“What happens to the luggage when traveling at the end of the semester?”

- You may be able to leave your luggage at Centro Studi if you wish to travel and then return to Orvieto prior to departure for the U.S. Check with the Program Director prior to the end of the semester. Otherwise, it is best to plan to carry all your luggage with you. You may be able to, for a small charge, store luggage in lockers at major train stations for a few days. Airports will not permit luggage to be stored. Ground shipping is also available but can take up to three months and the luggage does not always arrive in one piece. It is much easier to “wear” your luggage than it is to pull your luggage.

“What happens if the student decides to stay longer and has to change the return date?”

- The student is allowed to **CHANGE THE DATE** of his or her flight, **ONE TIME AFTER ARRIVING IN ITALY with no additional fee other than fare difference (if any)**. If a student decides to make a second change or makes a request after the deadline TBA, there will be a penalty fee.
- Students will **NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE CITIES OF DEPARTURE/CONNECTION/ARRIVAL AFTER THE FLIGHT HAS BEEN BOOKED**.
- Recent changes in how other countries “interpret” the expiration date on the student visa suggest that the student should not remain in Europe beyond the expiration date of their student visa.

11 SAFETY**“How are crisis managed?”**

- The Program Director, in consultation with Kansas State University, has a crisis management plan in place. The detailed plan will be shared with students, faculty, and staff during orientation in Orvieto.

“How does one find out about travel advisories?”

- Contact www.travel.state.gov/.