

FLORENCE, ITALY

LAUREN SKLBA

Program: UW in Florence, Spring

Lauren's Majors: Journalism and Mass Communication

Academic Life: The students in my classes were from UW-Madison, Vanderbilt, and Cornell. Classes were taught by instructors who lived in Italy, while not all were Italian. Art History was possibly my favorite class because we took a lot of field trips to the many museums and churches in Florence, and our professor was incredibly brilliant. This class provided a lot of context to the places and sights we were seeing every day.

Housing: I lived in an apartment in the city center of Florence. In our building there was only one other apartment of Americans; the other residents were Italian, which provided an opportunity to meet new people and learn more about Florence and the culture. I lived with three other girls who all went to Vanderbilt together, so I was the only UW-student in my apartment. While this was intimidating at first, we all got along surprisingly well and had a great semester living together!

New Perspectives: Studying abroad in Italy will alter your perception of history and the world we live in. In America, everything is relatively new. But Italy is a country rooted in culture and changing slowly. Being immersed in a place so different than Madison for a season of life taught me a lot about myself, how I handle being alone and uncomfortable, navigating change, and the role I play in a much bigger story of the world. The language barrier will challenge you but also teach you the importance of experiencing cultural differences. The program itself is a good balance between being at a school in America and moving to a foreign country. Yes, you are living in Italy, but being surrounded by other Americans will keep feelings of being overwhelmed at bay for the most part.

Tips for Future Students: If you have any interest at all, do not hesitate. You will not regret this incredibly special semester.



Lauren with the view of Florence from Fiesole in the background.

“Italy did feel like home. I had established a daily routine. My street became my neighborhood. My roommates became friends.”

