

FLORENCE, ITALY

ROBERT GRUENER

Program: UW in Florence, Spring

Robert's Major: Biochemistry

Academic Life: The classes were a refreshing change of pace from the large lecture classes at Madison. The classes were taught in English and had a maximum of 20 people from UW and other universities. The small class size allowed for ample discussion. Florence made a perfect setting for these courses, and my favorite part of the classes was the many excursions we took from the classroom. We had many lectures in Renaissance Art and Architecture in front of the original work of art.

New Unexpected Interests: Study abroad not only changes your outward perspective on the world, but also gives you more perspective on yourself. You could find that you have interests in areas you never expected. I learned that I really appreciate art and art history. I am a biochemistry major, who never had any interest in art. By the end of my semester in Florence, I gave tours at seven different spots around Florence eagerly telling the students everything I learned from the Renaissance Art course.

Advice for Someone Considering UW in Florence: The program was perfect for me and great for anyone who wants to experience something new, different and exciting but perhaps not drastically outside their comfort zone. While you are living and traveling in a foreign country with a new language, the UW professor and CET staff made it so I never felt abandoned there. One of the things I loved most about this program is that it didn't have one exclusive focal point for the types of classes. I was able to enjoy an art class, an anthropology class, a tourism studies course and a language course, which provided a nice balance of topics different from my biochemistry coursework but general enough that I wasn't lost in these new topics.



Robert looking out over Florence, and all the places he came to know so well, from Giotto's Bell Tower overlooking the Duomo.

“I had never traveled outside the US; now I have lived in one country and traveled to seven others.”

