
IB495 Business Study Abroad
MBA691 Directed Study
TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE IN ITALY

Spring Semester 2023 (with travel over Spring Break)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why study abroad to Italy? Well....most everyone has a passion for Italy for one reason or another. But, consider that Italy left a great mark on Western culture and business. In fact, the Italians – with their entrepreneurial spirit – created many technologies that continue to shape our way of life: the telephone, radio, battery, piano, banking, newspapers, jeans and many others.

With Italy as the backdrop, this program explores the powerful relationship between technology and culture throughout history and in today's global environment. We'll ask these questions: How does technology shape the way people live and work? How does culture influence the development of technology? What can we learn by considering the past, present and future of technology? What insights do we gain in the context of Italy?

We'll use various tools to 1) become familiar with Italian history, customs, etiquette, and business environment, and 2) learn about the concepts of technology and culture. These include class sessions, reading assignments, case studies (of Italian companies), online videos, internet research, and both individual and small-group activities.

That's all leading up to the most exciting part: the Business and Cultural tour of Italy over Spring Break! We'll stay in Milan and Florence with stops in several small cities. The itinerary includes professionally-guided walking tours, visits to important historical sites, and company visits.

Find out why Northern Italy stands out as a hotbed of innovation and economic success. See some of the greatest Renaissance technologies and realize how these continue to influence our world. Discover first-hand the Italian passion for art, design, innovation and aesthetics – hallmarks of the Italian way of life and drivers of their economy since ancient times.

3 credit hours, no prerequisites; Open to undergraduate and graduate students

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe important technologies that have shaped today's world and how technology development influences culture and culture influences technology development.
- Describe the different features of Italian business culture, etiquette and management styles
- Compare and contrast Italian culture and business customs with that of the U.S. and other countries
- Analyze the current economic issues and trends in Italy and evaluate the current conditions and trends with regard to the key indicators of doing business in Italy
- Successfully navigate databases to collect and analyze relevant materials on Italian businesses

COURSE FORMAT

This is a 3-credit UAB course that includes two main components:

- 1) Class Sessions and Course Assignments: Both before and after the study tour
- 2) Study Tour of Northern Italy: 9-day cultural and business study tour to Milan and Florence, March 10-18, 2023; With excursions to San Gimignano, and Sant'Agata Bolognese.

The combination of class sessions and time spent on the study tour fulfills the UAB requirement for a 3-credit hour course. And while there will be much enjoyment and deeply personal experiences on the study tour, this is a for-credit learning experience. It is therefore very important for students to recognize that the course is more than a trip and tour.

Students will read assigned material, complete online assignments, take an exam, conduct research, make presentations to the class, post to the travel blog and complete a reflection workbook. Graduate students complete a research project and presentation to the class.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Leonardo to the Internet: Technology and Culture from the Renaissance to the Present, by Thomas J. Misa, Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology, 3rd Edition, 2022.

Strolling through Florence, by Franco Ciarleglio, Edizioni Polistampa (Publisher), Dec. 2015.

Milan for Kids, I Bambini Alla Scoperta Di (Publisher), Mar. 2015.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Pro Assessment, One-time access to CQ assessment, Personalized Feedback Report, Digital copy of *Expand Your Borders: Discover Ten Cultural Clusters* by David A. Livermore.

Customized Harvard Business School Case Packet (digital)

Other required course materials will be posted in Canvas, available through the UAB library or accessed from internet websites. Students may purchase other materials, such as language learning tools.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assignments vary depending on student status (undergraduate or graduate).

Assessment of Undergraduate Students	Percent	Assessment of Graduate Students	Percent
Attendance, Preparation and Participation, and Professionalism	20	Attendance, Preparation and Participation, and Professionalism	20
Assignments, including Travel Blog and Reflection Journal	40	Assignments, including Travel Blog and Reflection Journal	30
Quizzes (5)	30	Quizzes (5)	30
Post-Travel Presentation	10	Research Project and Presentation	20
Total	100	Total	100

Attendance, Preparation and Participation, and Professionalism

Attendance at all class meetings and study-tour activities are required. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in class discussions.

Students on the study tour are representing UAB and the Collat School of Business. To provide a favorable impression and to get the most benefit from the study tour, students are assessed on professionalism and participation. The criteria include time management (attendance, promptness), respect (social behaviors and etiquette based on both US and Italian norms), preparedness (motivation, contribution) and appearance (well-rested, dressed appropriately in business casual as required). Students are expected to abide by all rules spelled out by the local tour coordinator and must be back at the hotel by 12 midnight on each study tour day.

Assignments

Assignments will involve reading and exercises to build the student's knowledge of technology and culture, a "traveler's" level of Italian language skills, and an understanding of the history and culture of Italy.

Students are required to post to the class travel blog while on the study tour. Guidelines and practice posts will be made prior to travel. Students will be responsible for the technology tools (device and internet access) needed to post on the assigned days. The grading rubric includes criteria such as timeliness, content, reflection, voice, text layout, use of graphics/multimedia and quality of writing.

Students are required to write a reflection journal that includes reflection exercises before, during and after the business and cultural tour. Questions focus on specific activities on the study tour and more general questions about the impact of the study tour on the student's perceptions and beliefs. The reflection journal is due at the last class session after the study tour.

Quizzes

There are 5 quizzes related to the materials in the modules. The quizzes contain multiple choice questions to assess your understanding of the lectures and reading materials.

Post-Travel Presentation (undergraduate)

Students will be assigned in teams to conduct research and provide an informative presentation on a topic related to the relationship of technology and culture at the final class session after returning.

Research Project and Presentation (graduate students)

Graduate students are required to complete a significant research project and to present the results to the class. This may include specialized research in a particular discipline and may involve another faculty member as advisor. The project and presentations are due at the last class session after the study tour.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule includes 9 sessions (8 before and 1 after spring break) and a 9-day study tour to Italy over spring break. The class meets on 9 selected Mondays from 5 to 7:30 pm. Remote students in the QX course section have the option of attending the class sessions via Zoom or later viewing a recording (Contact Dr. Bunn for arrangements).

BUSINESS AND CULTURAL TOUR

Details coming soon. Program highlights include:

- The Duomo of Milan
- 3D Printing Lab
- Museo Nazionale Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci.
- Italian car producer (Lamborghini or Pagani)
- Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore (with Brunelleschi's dome)
- Frantoio dei Colli Toscani; olive oil mill
- Scuola del Cuio; leather artisans and school

COURSE POLICIES

Students must apply, be accepted and pay program fees for the Education Abroad Faculty-Led Program AND register and pay tuition for the course (either IB495 or MBA691). No other students or student companions are permitted on the study tour unless he or she is a student at UAB and has met both of these requirements.

The same policies that are in effect for "regular" courses are apply to this course including all Collat School of Business and UAB Policies. While on campus for class sessions or while traveling, students are under the ethical and professional standards and policies of the The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The UAB Education Abroad office provides additional policies for the conduct of students while traveling abroad. These are provided when students apply for and register for the course.