

Summer Study Abroad in Italy

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Studying abroad is a once in a lifetime opportunity that I will likely never forget, and would highly encourage every student to partake in. I studied in Milan, Italy, with the College of Education, and got the amazing chance to observe in a highly regarded international school called the American School of Milan. The school was quite amazing – with students from 60 + different countries. Not only did this opportunity allow me to submerge myself in a different culture and diversify my teaching style, but it also gave me great insight, resources, and ideas for my future career as an educator. While observing in the school, I was also taking EAF 228 online. The option to take this course really helped push me to choose this program, as EAF 228 is a class that I would be required to take anyways, and most likely during the summer to fit my schedule. I couldn't help but think: "If I am taking this course during the summer anyway, why not do it in Italy?" And I did not regret this decision.

There were several other reasons why I chose the ISU in Milan program as well. For one, I have always dreamed of going to Italy, because it is where my grandmother is from. Her parents moved to America from Florence, Italy, and she talks about it fondly all the time. I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Florence on one of the weekends that I was studying abroad. Exploring the beautiful city and connecting to my family roots was a priceless experience that has grown me closer to my grandmother and Italian heritage. I also picked this program for its length – four weeks – because it sounded like the perfect length of time for my personal preference. I love being home with my family, so I did not want to do a whole semester, but I also wanted to have enough time in my host country to really get a feel for the culture and

people. By the end of the four weeks I was sad to go, but also excited to be with friends and family again, and to tell them all of my stories.

Our apartment became fast friends, and we planned to travel around and outside Italy together for all the weekends that we were there. We traveled to Florence, Rome, Greece, Switzerland, and Venice. Then my friend and I traveled to London at the end of the program. When in Europe, you have to take advantage of being so close to all those amazing places. As a whole group, we also got the chance to travel to Lake Como and Cinque Terre with our faculty leaders. Traveling around Milan, and around Europe really put me out of my comfort zone. Learning the metro systems, flying on countless airplane rides, finding accommodations, and exploring new and foreign places by myself and others my age helped me gain so much confidence and take on large responsibilities. Coming back to America, I felt so much more confident in myself and excited to continue on in my academic career as a future educator. I can't wait to implement everything that I learned into my future classroom, and share my experience with everyone. I am a stronger person and student thanks to this experience. If you are questioning whether or not to study abroad, I suggest just taking a leap of faith and go for it. The memories and lessons learned will last you a lifetime. Even though there were challenges, and highs and lows, I do not regret this choice, and am grateful to have had the opportunity.