Major/Minor: Global Studies/ Italian Studies  
Country: Italy      Program: Bologna  
Term & Year Abroad: Year 2008-2009  

Instructors
- **What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?**
  Stricter, more formal. The lessons are only the instructors speaking, no visual aids. They are not usually open to questions until a designated part of lesson, and office hours.

- **Could you call them by their first names?**
  No! Very formal.

- **Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?**
  Yes, students should dress up for classes and use formal tense only with professors.

- **Were they available for help during office hours?**
  Yes, although the hours change often and they occasionally don’t show up and can be extremely late.

Courses
- **Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?**
  Yes. I was used to powerpoint, not the Socratic method, and also the language barrier hurt.

- **Was the grading system similar to UCSB?**
  Grades are out of 30, but if you divide them by 3 it is exactly the same. For instance, 27/30 is a 9/10, or A.

- **How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?**
  No homework or quizzes, usually only just the one final exam, which is oral. Books are assigned, only to be read by the time the final comes around.

- **Did you have oral and/or written exams?**
  Oral.

- **What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?**
  The UC center was available for support, and my Italian roommates were very helpful.

- **Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?**
  Absolutely.
- **Was classroom participation expected?**
  No. Occasionally they ask for our opinions as Americans, but very rarely.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  The teaching style is very different, no visual aids, just speaking and often on tangents, and of course they were in Italian.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  They could be any time, any day. Usually about 2 hours long.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  Not important to be punctual, the teachers themselves were at least 15 minutes late. Eat or drink silently, that was never a problem for me. Italian students share their notes often, and are much less competitive than Americans.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  Italian, then occasionally a few foreign language courses.

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
  Italian, but also one 3 week course in English, which really only the Italians took.

- **If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.**
  It gets much easier second semester, although because they just talk the whole time, it is hard to keep up with notes, especially if you miss something small. They weren’t too bad though, and my Italian was initially abysmal. I learned very quickly. Final exams were the hardest, as they were oral in front of Italians, but teachers generally took into account that we were Americans.

**Host University**

- **How large is the university? Student enrollment and approx campus size (smaller than UCSB)? Is it an urban campus with many tall buildings or just a few building?**
  The University is about 100,000 students, although attending class (for Italians) is optional. Class sizes are about 100-200, though I had one with 12. They vary as much as UCSB does. The buildings are beautiful, all my classrooms should have been museums. The campus is very spread out across the town, but it’s easy to get around and rarely did I have a full day of classes anyway.
- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  There is no actual campus, some students live at home with their parents outside of the city, but most live in the center in apartments. There are some studentati (dorms) located at the edge of the city, where many students, especially on scholarships, live.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - **How far or close is it to the city?**
  - **What type of public transportation could you take – cost?**
  - **Could students take cabs -cost?**
  - **How long would it take to get to the city center?**

- **Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?**
  I believe there are, but they aren’t promoted much, and I don’t know anybody who joined them, Italian or otherwise.

- **Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?**
  Buy books from the main bookstore, like a Borders. They are always available there.

- **Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?**
  Students should bring a laptop, but there are a few places with internet, including the study center.

- **What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)**
  The University neighborhood is all throughout the city, and so there is everything everwhere. You won’t go hungry in Italy.

**Housing**
- **What types of accommodations are available to UC students?**
  We lived in apartments that we had to find.

- **How close are they to campus?**
  However close you choose, mine was less than 5 minutes from all my classes, some of my friends were much more spread out.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  I used internet websites, like a craigslist.

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  In the city center, about 5 minutes between classes and the main square in town, with 3 Italian roommates, two men, one woman.
- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
  It was not difficult for me to find one, some people had stranger experiences, but mine was okay. I met some odd Italians on the way though.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  My room was huge and fantastic, but they vary greatly.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
  My rent was about 320 dollars, some people in singles paid up to 700. Depends on your choices.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  My roommates dealt with the rent, so I gave them cash.

**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
  Phenomenal. It never got old, I love it.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
  I cooked often with my roommates, but then we went to cafes and restaurants quite a bit too. Not many street vendors in Bologna. Only roasting chestnuts at Christmas, which is lovely.

- **How much was an average meal?**
  About 10-15 euros at a good restaurant, including wine and dessert.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
  Late, lunch around 1-2, dinner 8-9

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
  No, Italians love their vegetables.

**Travel/Safety**

- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**
  Walking is easiest, everything is walking distance. Buses can be used, although it is a little unnecessary, unless going literally from one end to another.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
Very safe, although Italian men are a little creepy. I walked alone and was fine and felt safe, but I would suggest future students avoid eye contact with men. Look down when you walk!

- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**
  Trains were fantastic in Italy, cheap and very very convenient, you can get anywhere.

- **Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?**
  Easy, the train system through Europe is great and flights through RyanAir and EasyJet make flights so cheap.

### Host City/Country

- **What was the weather like?**
  Very hot in summer, very cold in winter. It snowed only a few times, and rained quite a bit. Summers are ridiculously hot and humid.

- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
  Apparently it is similar to Berkeley, though I have never been. It is very cute and little and the most liberal in Italy.

- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**
  We went to Piazzas often and just sat, watching the Italians go by. Events take place often in piazza maggiore, the main square, and we attended those as much as possible.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**
  Not many tourists, which is great because you mostly hear Italian. Also not too culturally diverse, and so they tend to be racist. And mostly local/national businesses.

### Culture

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    Always late. Everyone, for everything. They are very lax about time.
  - **Eye contact & staring**
    If you make eye contact with an Italian man, they sometimes take that as being hit-on, and proceed to follow you incessantly. Don’t do it. However, sitting in a piazza and watching people go by is totally normal, as is thoroughly examining outfits.
  - **Relationships**
    Much PDA occurs in Italy between couples. You get used to it. Kissing on the cheek for even strangers is normal.
More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?
Yes. To show that you are taking it seriously, for school dress up. In general style in Italy is considerably more formal for both men and women.

Alcohol consumption
Italians don’t get drunk. They will stare at you if you do.

What culture shock did you go through?
Different language, dress style.

Other?

Banking
- Were credit cards widely accepted?
  Yes.

- Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?
  No, it is very difficult

- If you did not open a local bank account, was it easy to withdraw money from the ATM? Which banks were popular & had low ATM fees?
  It was very easy to withdraw money, I used First Republic Bank which does not charge atm fees.

- Were there ATMs on campus?
  No campus, but ATMs everywhere!