



ART 397 Special Topics: Drawing from the Renaissance

Florence Study Abroad

3 Credit Hours

May 3rd - 20th, 2024



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Course Description:

This course is meant to provide students with a deeply immersive experience through the artwork, history, food, travel, and culture of Italy. Students will engage with works of art and architecture from ancient Rome to the Renaissance and consider the historical contexts of their original production and their continued role in shaping the identity of the city and Italian culture. Another major part of that cultural engagement will be developing a series of drawings while fully immersed in the history and culture of the city.

Art Historical Immersion:

The Art Historical Immersion component is designed to immerse students in the art, architectural history, and culture of Florence. The component includes a series of on-site introductions to significant locations or monument and in-depth discussions of specific works of art or architecture at the different sites and museums around the city and on excursion trips. Students will be introduced to Italian art history, from ancient Roman to Baroque architecture, Renaissance paintings, and museum history, to contemporary art movements. They will also explore the social and cultural contexts that produced these works of art, including the politics, religion, and daily life of the people who created them.

Drawing and Creative Practices:

Drawing from the Renaissance is a special topics 397 course intended for upper-level art students, but also for non-majors with an interest in an immersive drawing, history, and Italian culture course. The focus of our studies will be on pictorial representation and will also be concerned with building technical skill and developing a sensitive visual understanding. A range of drawing material will be explored with relations to both linear, tonal, and color drawing media.

In this course, students will also be considering the thematic development of their work. This will occur through the formal construction of the drawings, but also through the ideas that the drawings evoke.

Projects will be based around drawing concepts developed from and during the Renaissance, while we engage with both the history and culture of Florence.

Spring 2024 Course Schedule (May 3rd - 20th)

*Be aware that the schedule may be subject to change because of rain, train strikes, festival days etc.

Friday, May 3rd	Saturday, May 4th	Sunday, May 5th
		
Students arrive in Florence and check in to downtown apartments.	Students will take a walking tour of Florence, pick up their course supplies from Zecchi's, and have a traditional Italian dinner at Trattoria Tiberio.	Students have the day off before class starts on Monday. Students can relax and explore Florence, or even take a short train ride to Pisa. There will be an evening student-led pizza party.
Monday, May 6th	Tuesday, May 7th	Wednesday, May 8th
		
In the morning students will tour the Duomo and climb up the steps to Brunelleschi's Dome. In the afternoon students begin their first drawing assignment at the Duomo Museum.	In the morning students will visit the world famous Uffizi Museum and see the Birth of Venus. In the afternoon students will begin a second drawing assignment at the Boboli Gardens.	Students will bask in the Tuscan countryside by taking a day trip bus ride to the beautiful hill top town of San Gimignano.

Spring 2024 Course Schedule Continued

Thursday, May 9th	Friday, May 10th	Saturday, May 11th
		
Students start the day off by visiting the David and making in-person drawings. In the Afternoon we will visit the San Miniato Cemetery and then stay for the Gregorian Chant.	We take a short bus ride up to Fiesole for a big drawing day at the Fiesole archaeological ruins. We will eat lunch on-site as a group and continue to work in the afternoon.	On this day we travel as a group by train to the Byzantine city of Ravenna. Students will visit the world famous mosaics in the San Vitale Basilica. There will also be plenty of free time to explore.
Sunday, May 12th	Monday, May 13th	Tuesday, May 14th
		
Students have the day off to travel around Tuscany or relax in Florence.	This day is “Medici Monday” and students will explore the Medici sites with Dr. Nunn-Kinias presenting history on-site. We will explore the Medici Palace, Medici Chapel, and the Palazzo Vecchio.	Students will visit and draw in their sketchbooks at the Bargello Museum in the Morning, followed by a return visit to the Boboli Gardens in the afternoon.
Wednesday, May 15th	Thursday, May 16th	Friday, May 17th
		
Students will visit the Convent of Sant’Appollonia, The Museum of San Marco, and Santa Croce to view some of the most famous and sacred art and Architecture of Florence.	Students will start the morning off by sipping coffee and sketching on the rooftop of the Museum degli Innocenti, followed by an afternoon of touring the Brancacci Chapel and Santo Spirito.	Students will explore the Church of Santa Maria Novella in the morning and have the afternoon off to pack and prepare for the final excursion to Venice.

Spring 2024 Venice Excursion Schedule

Saturday, May 18th	Sunday, May 19th	Monday, May 20th
		
Students will check out of their apartments and take a bus to Venice, where we will check into our hotel and visit Saint Mark's Square before free time.	In the morning students will visit the internationally famous Venice Biennale, and in the afternoon explore the Accademia before our final group dinner.	The course comes to an end and students are free to fly home, or continue to travel through Europe.

Course Outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Participate in at least six daily contact hours (or more) of on-site instruction (this time also includes travel, either by foot, bus, or train).
- Develop an understanding of the true impact of the Renaissance and its art. Students will learn to use Renaissance materials such as silverpoint and implement Renaissance processes and ideation into their work.
- Set and reach goals for completing quality work through successful time management.
- Develop and refine an understanding of technical concepts that were invented during the Renaissance, such as chiaroscuro, perspective, and sfumato.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the assessment of their own work in terms of visual and technical success.
- Demonstrate an appropriate understanding, engagement, and respect for the Italian culture and its people as we draw in the Florentine streets. Students will try new things and experience new cultural traditions.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation for the cultural and historical contexts of the art and architecture of Florence.
- Engage with the historical contexts of specific works of art as they are located in-situ in their original contexts and as they are preserved and displayed in museums and galleries in the city.
- Build toward a body of work that they will be able to both present over Zoom for a final meeting and also develop into a body of work that they will then present in the Fall at the Quigley Gallery.

Class Meeting Times

The class meetings everyday, and expect at least six hours of class time per day, sometimes more. This time includes travel and occasionally provided meals. Typically the class will meet at 9:00 am in the morning, break for lunch, and then meet again around 1:00 pm and end around 5:00 pm. Students are expected to be on time for every meeting.

Class time includes any orientation meetings before the trip and a final Zoom meeting in the Summer.

Course Materials for On-site Drawing

Materials for each project will be announced the day before they are required over WhatsApp. It is recommended that you bring a satchel or drawing box with supplies that you purchase before your arrival in Florence. You should plan on bringing your satchel, drawing board, materials, sketchbook, **rain gear**, sunscreen, good walking shoes, a water bottle, and snacks to each outing.

Additional Materials to Pack With You

Because the price of supplies will be slightly more in Europe, it is a good idea to have some supplies packed in your luggage. Do not carry anything questionable items, such as an Exacto blade or spray fixative.

Here is a list of recommended items:

A 9" x 12" Sketch Book (unless you would like to purchase a new one at Zecchi)

Clips to hold drawing papers to board

Assorted graphite and charcoal pencils

Graphite 2H, 2B, 4B, 6B (one each)

Charcoal Pencil, 2B, 4B, 6B, White Charcoal

Compressed Charcoal Sticks

A white eraser

A kneaded eraser

A chamois cloth

A small ruler

Blending stumps or tortillons

A pencil sharpener

Tape

Some bamboo brushes for ink

A plastic tube (for transporting drawings back home at the end of the session)

Course Items to Purchase in Florence

Zecchi is considered to be one of the greatest art stores in the world and will be just a short walk from our host school, Santa Reparata. Some of the supplies that may be easiest to purchase here would be:

A variety of papers that might be suitable for:

Graphite (around three sheets)

Charcoal or Pastel (White, Cream, Gray, or Black, two sheets)

For work with ink (one or two sheets of 90 lb cold press watercolor paper)

Zecchi

<http://www.zecchi.it>

Via Dello Studio, 19r
50122 Firenze, IT



Some supplies will be covered (such as silverpoint styluses) through the department funds. Don't bring any spray fixative or inks which may spill in your bag. Through the course budget, the faculty will be purchasing some specialty papers and small folding stools that we can use outside.

Homework Expectations

Since the work days will be incredible long and strenuous, and the course completed in a compacted semester, you will not have any required homework outside of class time. It is required that you soak up as much of Florentine culture during your time off. After the trip has concluded it will be expected that you finalize any drawings in preparation for our Zoom meeting in the Summer, and a group exhibition in the fall at the Quigley Gallery.

Course Evaluation and Assessment

Attendance is mandatory for each class. Students will be allowed one absence without consequence. Students missing more than two classes will not receive an "A". Students missing more than four classes will fail this course. Flexibility will be applied to extenuating circumstances only.

Drawing and Art History related assignments will be happening every day of class. In most cases, we will be working on a morning project and then an afternoon project. At the end of each week the work will be documented by the instructor and assessed through Canvas.

EVALUATION SCALE

93.0 - 100+= A	77.0 - 79.9 = C+	60.0 - 62.9 = D-
90.0 - 92.9 = A-	73.0 - 76.9 = C	0 - 59.9 = F
87.0 - 89.9 = B+	70.0 - 72.9 = C-	
83.0 - 86.9 = B	67.0 - 69.9 = D+	
80.0 - 82.9 = B-	63.0 - 66.9 = D	

The following are worth a minimum of the percentage listed towards the final grade:

- 65% Course Participation and Attendance (including a short presentation in front of your research topic)
- 35% Course Work and Completion of Projects by the Final Summer Meeting

*Since many of our drawing sessions will not be enough time to complete the artwork, it is expected that students take photographs, write notes, make multiple sketches, in preparation to complete some of the drawings when you return from the trip. Students who are also interested in photography should also make sure to take a little time to photograph at each site, along with the drawing project.

Sexual Harassment Policy

There is a zero tolerance policy of sexual harassment while participating in this course. As part of this course you are subject to the same Western policy. *Western Colorado University has no tolerance for sexual harassment. If you are aware of, or you have been subjected to, sexual harassment, please contact Gary Pierson, VP for Student Affairs/Title IX Administrator at 970.943.2049, or gpierson@western.edu.*

Students with Special Needs

The disabilities services handout states, “*Western Colorado University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In support of its commitment to provide equal educational opportunity, Western Colorado University provides a variety of services and accommodations to students with disabilities.*”

For more information regarding academic support, please visit: <http://www.western.edu/current-students/academic-resource-center/disability-services>.

Be aware that Florence does not have the kind of ADA accessibility as on Western’s campus.

Suggested Packing List

Clothing -Average Highs in Florence 76 and humid
Average Lows 46 and sometimes very rainy

- (1) nice outfit for dinners
- Shirts/Blouses/Tops
- Trousers/Skirts/Shorts
- Swimsuit and Coverup
- At least one sweatshirt or sweater
- Rainwear (rain jacket, umbrella)
- Socks
- Undergarments
- Sun Hat
- Great walking/Hiking shoes
- Durable Sandals
- Travel Wallet
- Towels (beach and/or bath)

- Twin or Single Sheets (Santa Reparata will supply blankets and pillows, just no linens)

Luggage (keep in mind the lighter you pack, the less expensive it will be to fly)

- Small Bag/Purse
- Tote Bag for Art Supplies/laundry bag
- Suitcase with wheels
- Extra Ziplock bags

Suggested Packing List Continued

Hygiene/Health

- Insect Repellent/Small Fan
- Usual Toiletries (Italy will have everything, but not the same brands)
- Sunscreen/ Lip Balm
- Band-aids/Bandages
- Menstrual Supplies
- Prophylactics
- Medications/Vitamins
- Water Bottle
- Glasses/Contacts/Sunglasses
- Laundry Detergent (I usually just bring some tide in a Zip-lock bag)
- Ear Plugs/ Eye Mask (For sleeping)
- Melatonin (for jet lag adjustment)

Documents

- Passport
- Travel Tickets/Itinerary
- ATM Debit and Credit Cards
- Prescriptions and Doctor's Note
- Copies of your Passport

Electronics

- Cell Phone and Charger
- Plug/Power Cord Adapters
- Laptop/Tablet and Charger
- Extra Batteries
- Camera

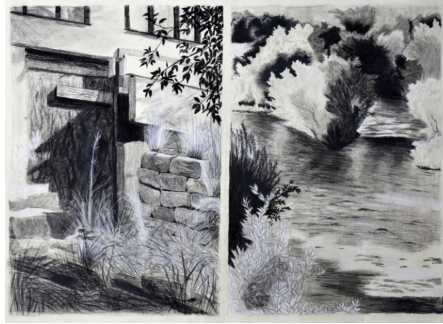
Drawing Assignment Themes

Each evening, students will receive a WhatsApp message which includes the following days assignment and what materials to bring. Students will have some flexibility with materials, especially if they would like to paint, work with pastel, or an alternate material for the next day, as long as they follow the essential theme. Below are a few examples of a typical drawing assignment.

Drawing Project # 1 – Garden State

Location: Boboli Gardens

Materials: Your Choice



For this drawing you will start by dividing up your paper into two distinct zones. The zones could be divided simply down the middle, or diagonally across. This division could be an actual line, or it could be a soft implication, or created with tape.

You are going to first explore the Boboli Gardens (take lots of photos) and make some associations with the spaces, foliage, sculptures, textures, and sensory experiences. You will then decide on two distinct viewpoints in the gardens, and designate a side of the paper to place each. These distinct viewpoints could simply highlight a contrast of forms (texture/smooth, light/dark, epic/intimate, etc), or they could tell a narrative through their juxtaposition.

Make sure to give yourself around two hours of drawing time (one hour for each side). You most likely won't finish the drawings/paintings but having an hour to work on site will be enough time for you to develop the structure of the drawing. Make sure to take good photos, write down notes about what you are seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and have that combination of photography/memory to work from when you need more time to complete these.

Upon finishing: You will have access to the Boboli Gardens anytime during the course with your Uffizi Pass. This would be a good drawing to re-visit again during free time. While some of our drawing projects will be more related to studies, this artwork in particular has a good chance of being one of your candidates for the Quigley Gallery Italy Exhibition in the Fall. Although the elements can sometimes be challenging for a plein air artwork, try to keep this particular drawing in good condition by using a garbage to cover the board if it rains.

Drawing Project # 2 - San Miniato Time

Location: San Miniato Cemetery

Materials: Your Choice



Before starting your next drawing, spend a little time walking through the cemetery and soaking in the history, sights, and sounds.

Concept Objective: For this project, you are going to be creating an artwork that references time, but not doing so without any common tropes regarding time and death. Continue to search for tensions of spaces and forms. Search for interesting textures, or interesting juxtapositions of architecture and nature. Look for a composition that may have a radical relationship between the foreground and the background.

Formal Objective: Depending on your viewpoint, this cemetery will also be a great place to implement some one - or two - point linear perspective, or atmospheric perspective into the artwork. If you don't have a ruler, simply using the side of another pencil or pen can help you achieve a straighter line to work from when drawing or painting plein air.

Your goal for this drawing is to create a visually complex and enigmatic space, but thematically keep it simple: try to create something that can function as a metaphor for time.

You may use any particular media, but be extra careful to leave no trace in this sacred place.

Drawing Project # 5 - Nocturne Drawing

Location: Piazzale Michelangelo

Materials: White Chalk on Black Paper

Drawing Boards or Sketchbook as surface, No Chair Needed



A nocturne is typically known as a musical piece that evokes the feeling or mood of nighttime.

For this drawing you are going to be walking up to the Piazzale Michelangelo and drawing a “nocturne” of the city.

You will be using your black pastel paper and some white chalk or pencil (that you will be given). These drawings typically don't have as much structure or clarity (simply because you won't be able to see as clearly) and sometimes will take on a dream-like quality.

Pick a viewpoint on the horizon and simplify down what you see. Some of the buildings and mountains will have to be softened and paired down. Focus on using the white charcoal pencil to build up the lights and let the dark of the paper evoke the shadows.

With the small paper this piece could be finished on site, make sure to take some photographs if you don't quite finish.