SES ITALY STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM
2015 HANDBOOK

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## Contacts

### CAPA USA
- CAPA Boston Office
  - 65 Franklin St, Boston, MA 02110
  - www.capa.org
  - 1-800-793-0334
  - 1-617-999-8126 Emergency number
dodonnell@capa.org Doreen O’Donnell

### CAPA Florence Center
- Via Pandolfini, 20
- 50122 Firenze, Italia
- 39-055-246-6439 (39 is Italy code, not needed inside Italy)
- 39-333-683-3808 Emergency number
  - (You must add a 011 if calling from the US)

### WSU Global Learning
- 509-335-6204
- Anjie Bertramson:
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- Hayley Chouinard, chouinard@wsu.edu, 509-335-8739
- Philip Wandschneider, pwandschneider@wsu.edu, 509-335-1906
  - *(Hayley & Phil will have Italian phones on arrival)*

## Pre-departure, final check list (after application is submitted to Global Learning)

- Complete CAPA application -- due November 2014 (includes room requests)
- Complete Passport & Visa passport forms (Study abroad/Global Learning)
- Complete self-assessment Medical Form completed (Global Learning)
- Register with the US Department of State https://travelregistration.state.gov
- Contact bank and credit card companies to inform them of your travel plans. Ask about bank partners in Florence that may charge a lower ATM fee. Ask for emergency phone number to use while abroad if your card is lost, etc.
- Review CAPA website especially the CAPA Florence Student Handbook http://programs.capa.org/florencepredeparture
Arrival

- At a European airport find an ATM and get some Euro currency
- Jet lag is real
  - Start adjusting to Italy time schedule early.
  - Avoid alcoholic drinks on plane. Drink a lot of water. Be careful about sleep aids Ambien etc.. Consider Melatonin
  - Stay awake in daylight in Italy
- CAPA center arrival & first days
  - Get to CAPA Center, Via Pandolfini 20 on February 1.
  - Get free taxi from CAPA to apartment
  - Apartment will have welcome basket with some supplies
  - Orientation at CAPA Center Saturday
  - Walking tour of Florence follows orientation

Airports ...

If you arrive at the Florence (FLR) Airport ...

- Shuttle bus -- “Volainbus” leaving from the airport every half hour (6:00am-11:00pm)
- If you decide to take a taxi from the Airport to CAPA, the fare will be around 30,00 euros. (Note that , is a . and vice versa in Europe. So this is 30 Euros or about $39.)

If you arrive at Rome Airport (Fiumicino, FCO)

- Train (Leonardo Train, € 9.00) from Fiumicino to Rome Termini Railway Station and from there, take a train to Florence Santa Maria Novella (SMN) Railway Station (Eurostar train, about € 40.00). Then take a cab to reach the CAPA Center in Via Pandolfini, 20

If you arrive at Milan Airport (Malpensa)

- Train from airport to Milano Centrale Railway Station
  - directly from the Terminal 1 by Ferrovie Nord Milano trains,
  - or, via Gallarate, by Trenitalia trains.
- From Milano Centrale Railway Station get a train to Florence. Santa Maria Novella (SMN) Railway Station. Then take a cab to reach the CAPA Center in Via Pandolfini, 20

If you arrive at Pisa Airport

- Train to Florence Santa Maria Novella (SMN) Railway Station. Then take a cab to reach the CAPA Center in Via Pandolfini, 20
Money

- Get a debit and a credit card. Have at least two cards. Banks in Italy are generally a pain, so avoid if you can and set everything up before you come.
- You will use a “bancomat” to get cash. There is usually a per transaction fee.
- Credit cards are now widely accepted.
- Contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them of your travel plans -- otherwise they will stop accepting your card!! No Fun.
- Ask about bank partners in Florence that may charge a lower ATM fee. Ask for emergency phone number to use while abroad if your card is lost, etc.
- Traveler’s checks are hard to use and are no longer recommended.

Communication

**Staying in touch with home...**

- Generally, you will use E-mail, Skype, Facebook on a computer, tablet, or smart phone app (see below).
- Computers and WIFI are available at CAPA. WIFI is available free in fewer locations than in US. However, internet cafes with by-the-hour WIFI & on-site computers plans are widely available.
- Your cell phone? Probably not. Extending coverage to Europe is expensive & inflexible.
- If you do plan to use your present cell phone, make sure your present cell phone has an international feature. Contact your provider.
  - However, generally, your cellphone’s plan will be really expensive
  - **TIP:** you might want to discontinue your phone service but bring your smart phone over and use it mostly as a mini-tablet computer for the apps.
  - CAPA Florence says that most apartments WILL have wifi (this is new so I wouldn’t depend on it).

**Get a cell phone in Europe...**

- Cell phones in Europe are usually of pre-pay, unblocked, swappable SIMM card type. They also operate on a different frequency/protocol. If you happen to have an unlocked cell phone that uses European frequencies and has swappable SIMM cards you can get a SIMM card in Italy for that phone
- You can also swap out and get new SIMM cards as you move from country to country when travelling. This cuts down on local phone costs.
However your best bet is...

- **Recommended.** CAPA has a cell phone provider. They suggest you wait until orientation for information. They usually have a provider come to the site to provide phones at orientation or within a day or two.

- You can arrange a telephone before you get here through piccell. Evidently they can even deliver it in USA. E-mail at info@piccellwireless.com and web at www.piccellwireless.com.

- In any case, use your cell phone sparingly. Voice and Data will both be more expensive than US. Monitor charges carefully.

**More phone info.**

- Recharging your pre-paid phone. You can “ricarica” your phone at many places, including phone kiosks, internet cafes, supermarkets and ‘tabaccheria’ (magazine stands or *edicola*).

**Safety & Medical Issues**

- Watch out for each other in Florence and when you travel

- Emergency tel. number. The 911 is U.S only. In Italy and many European countries, the emergency number is **112** (general). Ambulance in Italy is **118**.

- If you have an emergency in Florence or Europe ... 
  - If in danger, leave
  - If safe, stay
  - Contact CAPA when safe
  - Contact family – be careful with social media

- Medical concerns
  - Existing health issues– inform faculty, complete Global Learning form
  - Medical issue in Florence – inform faculty and CAPA immediately
  - No illegal drugs will be tolerated – Stupid, Dangerous, and/or 1-way trip home
  - Prescriptions – bring enough for stay and keep in bottle
  - Over the counter – bring what you like; but there are pharmacies in Italy/Europe (**farmacia**)
What to Pack

A former participant says...“I suggest talking to the people they are living with beforehand so that people aren't bringing multiples of the same things (mostly toiletries like hair spray, shampoos, hair straighteners, etc. They may not take up too much room in suitcases, but it would have been good if only one of us brought a hair dryer rather than three of us). (PW&HC: We recommend no hair dryer and minimal toiletries. These are fun to buy in Italy.)

General info

- Luggage: Check airline baggage rules re weight and dimensions for carry-ons and checked luggage. European rules are different. Checked baggage weight is generally less than US.
- Don’t pack more than you can carry. You will have to get it around the airport and into the taxi and around the streets. Your apartment may be upstairs with no elevator.
- Less is more – apartments have a washing machine (but usually, no drier)
- Also, you will want room to take stuff home
- It will be cold when we arrive, warm when we leave. Ave high in Feb is 53, in April is 65
- Include travel bag/back pack for day/weekend trips.
- TIP. Shop for small and large items in Italy – sales in February
- Bring a towel, bed linen not needed. (If old, leave behind)
- Don’t plan on shipping to or from Italy (especially to Italy) – Expensive & a hassle.
- Don’t bring anything you will be sad if you lose
- TIP. Consider a packable “travel cocoon” for hostels & week-ends

Electronics

- Computer or tablet? Optional. CAPA has computers and WI-FI as noted above. However, see note about smartphones as tablets.
- General rule: don’t bring appliances. E.g., buy hairdryer with apartment mates.
- Electricity: outlets and voltage/amperage differ. USA stuff will not work unless it is adaptable for 110 or 240 (sometimes there is switch, sometimes computers, etc just recognize it). You will need several plug adapters for the Italian type outlet (two circles and in two sizes). Converters are only necessary if you bring something that must run on 110.
Clothing

- Walking shoes/boots. (But stylish -- it’s Italy.) There are puddles and cobblestones and dog poo.
- Warm indoor wear. Apartments may be much colder than we are used to.
- Outdoor: rain and mild winter. If you plan to travel in mountains or ski, appropriate heavier wear.
- Italians generally do not wear shorts
- Italians generally dress a little less casually than American youth

Student life in Florence – Appartamento

- Apartment information by January 18 with information packet.
- Apartments of 3-6 students from our group
- Located close to, but outside the “centro storico”
- Usually a 20-30 minute walk or bus ride (autobus)
- Mostly apartments are in old buildings, sometimes a bit quirky and often a bit cooler/hotter (seasonal) than US
- If problem? - inform CAPA immediately so they can interact with landlord
- Respect each other ...
  a. Include each other in activities, trips, dinners, etc.
  b. Apartment living – respect space and others living nearby
  c. Work together – cook together, clean your space
  d. Academics – respect ideas and contributions of other

Shopping

- Supermarkets
  - Self-bagging & buy your bag (sachetto)
  - Save room in your luggage for your new Italian leather jacket, etc.
- “Tobacco” and magazine shops. Tabaceria and Edicola sell many things including (local) bus tickets, lottery tickets, postal stamps.
- Stores (negozio)
  - Jewelery – ponte vecchio etc
  - Leather, clothing etc, all around centro
  - Large stores (e.g., ZARA) near center & in suburbs (IKEA, supermarkets)

Shopping Italiano

- May I help you? Prego
- Next = prossimo
- How much? = quanto costa?
- This one = questo; that one = quello
- That’s enough, thank you = basta, grazie
• Luxury stores near Palazzo Strozzi
• Many small specialty stores

Shopping fun - Local markets
• Covered central market near San Lorenzo
• Local outdoor markets in a variety of places
• Vegetable & fruit stands. Do not handle the produce at the stalls & outdoor markets
• Bargain, especially at the stalls and outdoor markets

CAPA Neighborhood Amenities
• CAPA is located in the Centro Historico near lots of things.
• There is a supermarket (Billa) about 2-3 blocks away, and another small “supermarket” about 2 blocks away. The Post office is right across the street from the supermarket.
• There is a nice little fruit and vegetable stand about 2 blocks away.
• There is a bancomata about two blocks away.
• There is a friendly little bar/coffee place right around the corner.
• There are about 10 restaurants and 3 gelateria within a few blocks. These include
  • a “kabob” stand (Turkish gyro)
  • a couple of sandwich places panino (one sandwich), panini (plural)
  • pizza by the slice place
  • a few pizzeria, tratoria, and even a ristorante or two.
• It is lovely to walk around in the evening (well, watch for dog poop). Many of the major sites and many major pedestrian walkways are lit up at night. Especially fun Sunday afternoon.

Classes/academics/learning
• 4 day schedule; use your week-ends for “informal” learning
• Attendance is mandatory.
  • Come to class and come prepared; We expect 100% attendance unless you have cholera, pneumonia etc.
  • Respect ideas and contributions of others
  • Engage with material, instructors, each other
  • We expect you to attend all the organized field trips (and they are fun)
  • Italian instructors tend to be more formal; be courteous
• We expect you to learn about Florence, Tuscany, Italy, Europe on your week-ends! See Travel.
Materials.
- The EU class may require a book to be purchased in Florence.
- Your Italian class material will be provided in Florence for a small fee.
- Recommended: purchase a phrase book and you might want a dictionary. Both are available in Florence but fun to get before you leave. E.g., Rick Steves & Lonely Planet
- Maps and tourist guides are fun & useful. Available in Florence. E.g., Rick Steves & Lonely Planet
- Other stuff? Perhaps, but not likely
- There is an excellent English language bookstore near the Duomo. There are two very large bookstores as well as numerous small and interesting ones. All museums have tourist guides, postcards, knick-knacks, etc.

Travel

General
- We encourage you to travel -- you have 3 day weekends. Travel is part of your study abroad education
- Make your neighborhood, Florence, Tuscany, Italy first priority
- Use “Florence for Fun” and watch for other events in the weekly CAPA newsletter and posted on the bulletin board
- Play on the CAPA soccer team
- Remember, include different people in different trips; don’t travel in the same pack on all trips
- Plan for spring break – March 16 – March 24

U-Rail Pass?
- Generally, a U-rail pass does not save anything as the terms are fairly inflexible.
- However, if you have some specific regions/times you plan to travel, especially if they overlap with start or end, it would be good to investigate.

Buses
- There are city and regional buses. Regional buses are an alternative to train travel, especially for the little towns like Sienna, San Gimignano, and Volterra (Twilight fans?)

City buses
- You will receive a bus pass for Florence. If you are in another city you will buy bus tickets, usually at a Tabaccherie and Edicole. Sometimes there are ticket selling machines on the busses. Tabaccherie sell lottery tickets and stamps as well.
There are no on-board conductors to take your ticket. You just get on the bus. If you are caught without a ticket – really big fine.

Also, city busses can get you to places like the big shops (Ikea) and neighboring communities (Fiesole)

On-Bus (or train) Italiano:
- Next stop = prossima fermata
- Sorry (I pushed you, stepped on your foot) = Scusi
- Excuse me, coming through = permesso
- Exit = uscita

Train travel in Italia – Basics

- Ticket can be bought at a ticket counter or from self-service machines. Machines speak multiple languages and take credit cards! Most ticket people know some English, and some speak it well, but you cannot count on it. Ticket machines are usually easier and faster.
  - Tickets will by train type and class. Check the ‘orario’ for the train schedules. There is a schedule of usual trains posted somewhere, than there is an electronic display with trains coming and going similar to an airport.
  - Note that some tickets are associated with reserved seats on certain trains, while others are just tickets between two locations. Be sure you know which kind of ticket you have.

- Ticket must be validated (yellow time clocks near platforms). Usually the ticket is good for 24(?) hours once validated. ‘Occupato’ – some seats are reserved. You can reserve seats (more money) when you get tickets. Tickets will say which train, which binario, and which car and seat (if reserved)

- Platform (Binario) number. You need to know which platform and which train. The platforms usually list the trains, but there are often trains coming and going quickly so you should “pre-position” yourself near the anticipated platform, and check to make sure that the platform for your train has not changed. For little stations like Pisa, not a big deal; for Roma and Milano lots of platforms and trains.

- If not reserved, find a car of the appropriate class – usually just 1 and 2, where one is higher.

Recommended pre-departure reading & viewing:

- Reading:
  - John Grisham- Playing for Pizza and The Broker;
  - Under the Tuscan Sun (Frances Mayes).
  - The Enchantress of Florence (Saman Rushdie)
• **Brunelleschi’s Dome**
• Italian phrase book such as Rick Steves or Lonely Planet
  - Review Italian language book and guide books; e.g., phrase book such as Rick Steves
  - Watch a few Italian movies:
    - Classics: Bicycle Thief, La Dolce Vita; Il Postino,
    - Newish: Under the Tuscan Sun; La Vita es Bella; Bread & Tulips, Mediterraneo (1991)
  - Watch some Italian TV shows (PBS) (sub-titles)
    - Detective Montalbano (1999–) "Il commissario Montalbano" *(original title)*

**Things to Do, Week One**

- Climb the **Torre Giotto** (next to Duomo)
- View city from Piazzale Michaelangelo, at sunset
- Visit Piazza della Signore & Loggia (statuary)
- Visit Piazza della reppublica
- Visit Edison Book store
- Cross Ponte Vecchio
- Eat gelato! Eat
- Drink café at bar (stand up)
- Have *aperitivo* and people watch at outside cafe
- Sit on steps by Spedale degli Inncoenti
- WALK around town

**First trips outside Florence (treno)**

- Pisa & leaning tower
- Lucca, rent bicycles (bicecletti) & ride around wall

**Student thoughts/advice travelling to Italy on SES study abroad program**

“...suggestions to the new students going... I think my biggest one is just to not over plan. By that I mean to not go into the experience with this idea that they are going to see everything in this set schedule that they have created beforehand. That sometimes, the best things can come from spontaneous events like taking a 4:00 a.m. train to Venice to get there for the last weekend of Carnevale or spending the afternoon wandering around the Boboli Gardens “just because the sun was out” when you probably should have been studying for that Italian exam. I know that this suggestion may seem pretty basic, but I went over there with these great expectations that I was going to see everything Italian in the first month and have the rest of the time to travel around Europe. But, when it came down to it, I saw everything I needed to over those three months and saw enough of the rest of the Europe to know just how extraordinary Italy is and that I wouldn’t have wanted to spend my time living anywhere else (if that makes sense). -- AM’09