CGIS: Italian 230 in Ferrara, Italy

Handbook Supplement

Spring 2017

University of Michigan
Center for Global and Intercultural Study
Congratulations on your acceptance to the CGIS Spring 2017 Italian 230 in Ferrara, Italy program. This program is specifically designed for students interested in completing the final two courses of their University Italian language requirement while expanding their knowledge of the culture of Italy.

This manual is intended to provide students with an introduction to the program, information about what you can expect from the experience (and about what the program expects from you), as well as pre-departure suggestions and requirements. Please read through it carefully and take it with you while abroad.

**BASIC PROGRAM CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, May 8, 2017</td>
<td>Arrival Day (students housed in orientation hotel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 9</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Move in with host family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, May 10</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, June 20</td>
<td>Program Ends; last night with homestay family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, June 21</td>
<td>Departure Day</td>
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</tbody>
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**VISA**

**U.S. Citizens**
U.S. citizens participating in an academic program in Italy for less than 90 days are **not** required to obtain a student visa.

**Non-U.S. Citizens**
Please visit the following site to learn if you are required to obtain a visa for a short-term program less than 90 days: [http://vistoperitalia.esteri.it/home/en](http://vistoperitalia.esteri.it/home/en)

If you require a visitor visa to enter Italy, please check with the Italian embassy in your home country for visa requirements: [https://embassy.goabroad.com/embassies-of/italy](https://embassy.goabroad.com/embassies-of/italy)

**Special Note About Travel**

Italy is one of 25 European countries included in the Schengen agreement.

Schengen countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland
When you enter one of the Schengen countries, the customs authorities will stamp your passport with date of your arrival. From that date you are only permitted to stay in the Schengen region for 90 days: this includes travel time before or after the program dates. Failure to comply with this limitation could result in detention, fines, deportation and repatriation, and prohibitions against re-entry, so be sure that you will not stay in the region for more than 90 days total if you plan to travel before or after the program dates.

NOTE: the 90 day limit applies within a 180-day period, i.e., you cannot simply leave the Schengen region for a day and then re-enter to “restart the 90-day clock” over again – U.S. citizens who stay in the Schengen region for the full 90 days must leave the region and wait 90 days before they are allowed to re-enter and begin another 90-day stay.

For more information on the Schengen Agreement:
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1115665/Schengen-Agreement
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/europe/euro-glossary/1230052.stm

TRAVEL INFORMATION

1. CGIS does not arrange group flights for students; you are responsible for booking your flights.

2. There are no direct or non-stop flights to Ferrara from the U.S.; the closest airport is Bologna.

3. You should plan to arrive on May 8 by 4:00pm (and enter this information in your CGIS Travel Itinerary in M-Compass, due April 15). If you arrive by 4:00pm, program staff will be available to meet you at the Bologna airport and take you to Ferrara.

4. If you are arriving early, you can simply make your own way to the orientation hotel on May 8 and check in by 4:00pm. (It is about a 10-minute taxi ride from the Ferrara train station, about 9 Euro).

5. The last night with your host family will be June 20th, 2017. You must depart on June 21st.


ON-SITE ORIENTATION

You will have a small welcome reception in the hotel on May 8 and a full day of orientation activities on May 9. During this time you will be placed with your homestay family and move in. You are expected to arrive in time to participate in the full orientation.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Running six weeks, the program offers students the opportunity to receive 8 credits in Italian 230 while living and taking classes in Ferrara, Italy. The Spring 2017 course will be taught by Amaryllis Rodríguez Mojica, Lecturer IV of Italian in Romance Languages and Literatures.

All courses will count as University of Michigan in-residence courses; thus, all credits and grades earned will appear on your Michigan transcript.
**Please Note:** Students are required to attend all class meetings and the final exam at the scheduled time; students may not miss scheduled class meetings or reschedule their exam unless in the case of an emergency.

**COURSE REGISTRATION**

Before departure, you will register for **Italian 230.601** in the **U-M Spring term**.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

You will be responsible for purchasing your course books prior to departure and bringing them with you. Sending your books to Italy is **NOT** recommended. Information about required books will be provided closer to departure.

**TENTATIVE PROGRAM CALENDAR**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor Arrives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>8 Students Arrive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>Classes begin 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>15 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>16 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>17 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>18 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>19 Program Excursion: Tuscany (Florence &amp; Siena)</td>
<td>20 Program Excursion: Tuscany (Florence &amp; Siena)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>22 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>23 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>24 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>25 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>29 Palio Parade And races</td>
<td>30 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>31 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>June 1 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>2 Holiday (Festa della Repubblica)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>6 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>7 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>TBC Bocciofila</td>
<td>8 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>9 Day Trip: Ravenna</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>13 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>14 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>15 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19 10am-12pm Lunch Break 1:30-3:30pm</td>
<td>20 Final Exam Farewell Lunch</td>
<td>21 Students Depart</td>
<td>22 Instructor Departs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MANAGING YOUR MONEY

It is important that your supply of money is secure and accessible from the beginning of your stay. We recommend that you have a variety of ways of receiving available money.

Cash

Bring at least $100 worth of euros with you from the U.S. Euro can be purchased at some local banks or travel agencies, but you usually need to allow several days for this transaction. We strongly recommend that you purchase Euro before arrival; offices for exchanging money (cambio) at airports or train stations are sometimes closed, and when open, lines are usually long and move slowly. Rates of exchange in such places are often unfavorable. Moreover, the facilities for changing money at the airport can be hard to find—especially if you are tired and jet-lagged.

ATM

An ATM card allows you to access money in your American account. Cirrus and Plus systems are the most common in Europe. (Look on the back of your ATM card to see which system is compatible.) Check with your bank to make sure your PIN is international. This is a great way to get money as you receive a favorable exchange rate. Do not make this your only means of getting money: machines break and cards get eaten. Your bank may have a limit on how much can be withdrawn weekly, and there will likely be transaction fees as well. Please check about these fees with your bank before leaving for Italy; we also recommend you notify them that you will be in Europe so transactions from abroad do not come as a surprise (and lead to freezing the account).

Credit Cards

MasterCard and Visa, as well as American Express, can be used at some European establishments to charge meals, lodgings, and purchases. Do not take this service for granted, however. Always check since many small hotels, restaurants, and stores do not accept credit cards and many require a minimum purchase amount. If you wish to bring a credit card a back-up, be sure to alert your credit card company where you will be and when.

FEES AND BILLING

You will be charged U-M tuition, at appropriate resident/non-resident upper-/lower-division rate, plus a CGIS Program Fee. For more information on tuition costs, please refer to your Budget Sheet. Both will be billed through U-M Student Financial Services (your U-M student account) and be due according to the regular billing cycle of the University: http://www.finance.umich.edu/finops/student/billing/duedates

The Program Fee includes housing, 2 meals per day with your host family, program excursions, cultural activities, on-site support services, orientation, and international health insurance.

Expenses NOT covered by the Program Fee include airfare and ground transportation from your U.S. departure point to Italy and back; textbooks; accommodations before and after the beginning of the program; meals not provided with your host family; cost of personal trips and phone calls; other personal items such as toiletries.
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

All University of Michigan students will be covered by U-M’s health insurance policy with HTH-GeoBlue for your program dates. CGIS will automatically enroll you in the plan and the cost is included in your Program Fee. Details of your plan can be found on the CGIS Website, the GeoBlue website, and the UHS Website. If you plan to travel before or after the program, we strongly urge you to begin the coverage earlier or extend the coverage the plan provides; information about how to do so can be found on the CGIS website.

PACKING

Most of us over-pack, with the result that we later waste time and money mailing home unneeded articles in order to make room for what we have in the meantime acquired abroad. And we often find that we bring more than we will wear or need during our time abroad. Pack lightly! Our suggestion, based both on our own experiences and on feedback from former students: **Pack what you think you will need, and then take half of it out!** Most incidentals (such as toothpaste, shampoo) can be bought as easily in Ferrara as in the U.S. Buying them in Ferrara will add interest to your stay and improve your Italian. You will be able to do laundry in your homestay so there is no need to take huge amounts of clothes. In addition, closet and wardrobe space in your homestay may be limited, so if you bring too much with you, it may have to stay in your suitcase.

Never bring more than you can carry. Not only is traveling with too much an unpleasant experience, but it makes you a target for petty crime. Make sure you can carry what you bring. The walk between flights or to the train platform can be long, especially if you’re loaded with heavy luggage.

**Articles you may wish to have**

- Light clothes
- At least one outfit for formal occasions
- A bathing suit
- Sunglasses
- A fleece or light sweater
- An umbrella
- Sturdy walking shoes, well broken-in, preferably waterproof.
- Insect repellent
- Sun block

Do not bring plug-in electrical appliances, especially hair dryers, unless they have built-in adapters and can be used on 220-volt current. Alternatives: using battery-operated items (e.g., alarm clocks) and buying what you need in Italy. If you bring a laptop, please make sure that it can be used on 220-volt current.

**Other suggestions**

- Pack your carry-on bag with any essential items, (medicine, toiletries, etc.) and one change of clothes.
- Instead of a suitcase, consider bringing a backpack. This also comes in handy if you plan to travel before or after the program.
- You may find a money belt useful when you are traveling around Europe. It will enable you to keep your money, passport, credit cards, or other important papers in a safe place.
- Laptops: There are computers available at the program center, and some host families may have internet, but students often prefer to bring their own laptops. If you elect to do so, please put it in your carry-on and not in your checked luggage. Also, remember that if you travel before or after the program, you will want to be sure that it is always in a safe place.
FERRARA
(Info provided by CIEE)

Ferrara was the first modern city in Europe. This was due to the “Herculean addition” commissioned by Duke Ercole I d’Este in 1492, which not only doubled the surface area of the city, but also radically changed its appearance. Ferrara is full of fascinating reminders (fortunately still intact) of the splendor of its extraordinary past, in its gardens, in the narrow streets which are only properly seen by those who take their time, preferably by bicycle.

One of the main sights is the sumptuous Castello Estense (Este Castle), a typical example of late medieval architecture. It is one of the few Italian castles whose moat is still filled with water, and is an ideal landmark when going around town, as it stands at the centre of the circle formed by the city walls.

Nowadays Ferrara has a population of about 135,000. Its small size allows people a very quiet pace of life. It is ideal for foreign students who will be able to fully immerse themselves in an authentic Italian atmosphere, and will gradually discover how Italians are and live.

TRAVELING IN AND OUT OF FERRARA
(Info provided by CIEE)

Bicycles

Ferrara is also known as the city of bicycles. Every day at any time and in any weather you will see people cycling in streets, alleys, roads, along the 80 km of cycle paths, from the city centre to the suburban areas of Malborghetto, Francolino and Pontegradella. There is also a panoramic cycle path on two levels that goes around the 9 km city walls.

Ferrara has at least 170,000 bikes in circulation. Cycling is cheap, environmentally friendly, keeps people fit, it’s a pleasurable activity and is always the fastest way to travel around town.

However, there are a couple of things that could spoil an otherwise idyllic portrait: bike thieving and accidents.

Thefts are on the increase. For this reason you must be extra cautious and when leaving your bicycle always remember to lock it with a good, strong lock, preferably to a signpost, bike rack or similar, something that will make it very difficult for the thief to succeed.

Most importantly, do not underestimate the dangers of riding a bicycle. You must be extra careful and follow some basic rules:

- Never ride against the traffic.
- Ride on the right-hand side of the street, so you travel in the same direction as cars do.
- Always ride with your hands on the handlebars.
• Walk your bike across busy intersections using the crosswalk and following traffic signals.
• Use bike lanes or designated bike routes wherever you can.
• Stop at all stop signs and obey street (red) lights just as cars do.
• Ride single file on the street with friends.
• Use a helmet.
• Never go the wrong way up a one way street.

Bus

Using busses is easy. Ferrara is not big and even if you get lost or miss a stop you can easily find your way back. Plus there is no better way to find your way around than getting lost!

Tickets should be bought before boarding the bus, they cost €1.20 and last 75 minutes. If you are in a rush and need to jump on the bus you can purchase the ticket from the bus driver for €1.50

Taxi

To call a taxi dial 0532 900900 and state clearly in which street you are. Alternatively, go to a taxi stand. Usually there is one at the train station in the town centre and in front of the hospital. This applies to the majority of cities in Italy. Remember that at night you will have to talk to an automated service, so speak clearly and state the name of the road and number (e.g. Corso Giovecca 143).

Trains

Train travel is one of the best ways to explore Italy. Tickets are inexpensive and services frequent. The fastest and more expensive Eurostar (ES) and Alta Velocità (AV) almost always require pre-booking of seats. Intercity (IC) trains only stop at major stations and always require the payment of a first or second class supplement (un supplemento) on top of the standard ticket. The Regionali Veloci (RV) and Regionali (R) make more stops and require no supplement.

Tickets are available as single (sola andata) or round trip (andata e ritorno) in first (prima) or second class (seconda classe). They can be bought at a ticket office (biglietteria) or you can also find automatic ticket machines at any station. It is also possible to get some tickets on the net. Remember to validate your tickets before boarding a train or you will be fined. You will find small yellow machines around the station or on train platforms, where you can do this.

For any other information visit www.trenitalia.it (English version available)

Airports

Bologna airport G. Marconi www.bologna-airport.it is the closest to Ferrara. It has all the main international airlines and from there you can go anywhere in Italy and Europe.

You can reach the airport easily using the Bus Service (AerBus) that leaves from Ferrara 8 times a day or alternatively you can get a train and then shuttle from Bologna train station
WHERE TO FIND WHAT?!?

In the town centre there are many shops in which you can find what you need, from electrical appliances to cell phones, from bicycles to postage stamps. The following is a brief list, in no way comprehensive, of places you may find useful to visit in the first few days. We do not want to take away the fun of discovering and exploring for yourself, which is part of getting acquainted with a place and starting to feel part of it.

BE AWARE that most shops are closed during lunch break (usually for 3 hours) on Thursday afternoons and all day Sunday.

**Biciclette / Bicycles**
- Baratti, via degli Adelardi, 1 (rent for short periods)
- Romanelli, via Aldighieri, 28a
- Rip. Cicli, via Garibaldi, 169
- Bagni & Pirani, piazzale Stazione, 2
- Marchi G., via Saraceno, 56

**Cellulari / Cell Phones**
These are the major companies Vodafone, Tim, Wind, but now you can also buy a sim card at the Post office with Poste Mobile
- Here’s where you can buy some cell phones and get advice on a phone plan that will suit you
  - Vodafone One, via Bersaglieri del Po, 21
  - Wind, Via Mazzini
  - Centro Tim, Piazza Trento Trieste

**Tabaccherie / Tabacco Shops**
Tobacconists are much more useful than you might expect
- They are a good source of many useful supplies. Apart from cigarettes and matches you can buy batteries, bus tickets, international calling cards, pens, notebooks, recharge cell phones, and at some you can also purchase postage stamps.

**Ferramenta / Hardware Stores**
- Balboni, via Garibaldi 114
- Bersanetti, piazza Sacrati, 17

**Uffici Postali / Post offices**
Main Post Offices in
- viale Cavour, 27 open Mon to Fri 8 – 18.30 Sat 8 – 12.30
- via Giuoco del Pallone, 7
- open Mon to Sat 8 – 18.30

**Banks and ATM**
The majority of Banks are open on Monday to Friday and in the afternoon between 2.30 until 3.30. They are always closed on Saturdays and Sundays
- ATM (Bancomat) are available, and you will usually find them near a Bank or Post Office
Supermarkets
Conad, via Garibaldi, 51
Plenty Market, via Bersaglieri del Po, 62
Metà, via Mazzini, 90

Informagiovani
YOUTH INFORMATION AGENCY
Piazza Municipale, 23
This is an office aimed at young people who are looking for local information about jobs, housing, volunteering, courses, entertainment, holidays etc.
www.informagiovani.fe.it
Opening times: Mon to Sat: 11.00/13.00;
Mon to Sat 17.00/19.00
Wed closed
In 2007 CIEE Italia moved to a new office in Via Aldighieri 10. The building, called Palazzo Spisani, is situated within a beautiful green garden right in the centre of Ferrara, 5 minutes walk from the Estense Castle and the cathedral. In the garden there’s a coffee bar where students can enjoy coffee or lunch. The new office is located on the second floor of the antique building. On the ground floor there are two spacious classrooms available for the CIEE courses. The Center has WIFI connection in the classrooms and in the coffee bar.

CIEE has a library where you can borrow books and DVDs. Please note that DVDs can be loaned for a week only. To borrow material you will have to sign each item out on a form, when you return it just place it on the desk at CIEE office and we’ll take care of it.

CIEE OFFICE HOURS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9.00 – 1.00 and 2.30 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>9.00 – 1.00 and 2.30 – 4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9.00 – 1.00 and 2.30 – 4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>9.00 – 1.00 and 2.30 – 4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>9.00 – 1.00</td>
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CIEE STAFF AND ROLES

Patrizia Turchi (Resident Director)
Oversees all study center operations and institutional relations

Riccardo Rossi (Administrator and Housing Advisor)
Oversees all housing operations, organizes cultural events and trips

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS: HOST FAMILY
(Info provided by CIEE)

Living with a family is a great opportunity to experience how Italians live first hand. You will have to adapt to another culture, another mentality, another way of dealing with problems. It may challenge preconceived ideas – if you had any – about Italians, but for sure it will be a learning experience.
Families that have chosen to welcome American students in their home are diverse: young and older couples, single women, families with children. The majority of homes are in the city, some are a little farther out.

Keeping an open mind and being aware of your expectations is probably the secret to making the most of your homestay living. Of course things are going to be different from what you expected and of course you will have to adapt to new ways. Don’t fall into the trap of criticizing immediately what is different from your own standards. Take a step back and reflect on the fact that it is probably due to societal and cultural differences and that learning to learn/comprehend those differences is one of the reasons you chose to spend your time in Ferrara with a family.

Please read carefully the following suggestions; they will help you to make the most of your homestay experience:

- Respect your host family’s daily routines and habits and bear in mind that everything that may appear odd or different is an opportunity to learn directly from a different culture
- Phone ahead or leave a note if you will be late coming home for a meal or if you will be coming home late at night, or not at all
- Ask permission to use stereos, computers or other belongings
- Try to contribute to conversation and daily chores. Don’t just use the family as a bed and breakfast

TELEPHONES

Cellular phones (telefonini) are cheap and work well. There is no charge for receiving international calls. No contract is necessary. You will then need to purchase a chip to allow you to activate the phone and make calls either locally or internationally. You will learn more about this option at the orientation when you first arrive.

Note: Please remind your friends and family that Italian time is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. If they call you from the East in the U.S. at 10p.m., it will be 4a.m. in. Similarly, if you call them at noon, before lunch, it will be 6a.m. in Michigan, North Carolina, and New York.

MAIL AND THE POST OFFICE

Italian mail truly lives up to its reputation for being SLOW. Postcards are given low priority and may take a month or more to reach the U.S. Air mail letters take anywhere between one and two weeks to reach the U.S. Stamps and aero grams can be purchased at tobacco shops.

To send home larger items there are a variety of rates depending on the contents of the packages. Packages may be sent by airmail, which is very expensive, or by sea. Shipping by sea is more reasonable but is very slow (3-4 months) and is not trackable. Shipping agencies may also be used to send your things home; this may be necessary if your packages are too big to be mailed by the post office. Agencies such as Emery Worldwide Air Freight can also provide door-to-door service for an additional cost.
ITALIAN CUSTOMS AND MORES

Italy is not the U.S., and you may find yourself puzzled, or even annoyed, by various Italian customs and practices. It's obviously impossible for us to tell you in advance everything you will experience or feel while in Italy, but there are some differences that you may want to know about in advance. Here is a very incomplete list of some of the cultural contrasts you may encounter:

- Conceptions of personal space are quite different in Italy. You may find that people stand closer to you than at home, especially in public areas and on public transportation.
- Italians value courtesy and politeness. On buses, for example, you will find Italians readily giving up seats to the elderly, mothers with children, and invalids. In waiting for the bus, while you may be taken aback by the lack of line, you'll find people get on in an orderly fashion without pushing or shoving. Start immediately to use small courtesies in Italian (per favore, grazie, scusi, etc.). You'll find that it's appreciated.
- In shops, merchandise is often kept on shelves behind the counter, and a sales person shows you what you ask to see rather than allowing you to sort through the stock yourself.
- According to new Italian law, smoking is banned in all enclosed spaces unless there is a separate area with continuous floor-to-ceiling walls and a ventilation system. The smoking ban is one of the toughest in Europe.

SAFETY

You are urged to use all possible precautions to ensure your personal safety. Be familiar with the Italian monetary system and always count your change, and put your wallet back in your purse or pack before leaving a shop. Shoulder straps should be placed across the body and purses firmly held. In addition, carry purses and bags away from the street side. Wallets in back pockets are easy targets for theft; keep your money in front pockets, money belts, etc. and be particularly careful on buses and in crowded places like markets. Also, only carry as much cash as you need or can afford to lose. Be particularly careful of your purse, wallet, or backpack when in crowds or on public transportation.

Caution and discretion will aid you in recognizing and responding to the different social signals from Italian men and women. Be aware modes of behavior such as walking barefoot and public drunkenness are viewed as extremely offensive, and may be construed as making you fair game for unwanted approaches. In general, good manners and courteous behavior is recognized as such and reciprocated.

Gender Differences and Women's Safety

Both men and women on first encountering another culture may become aware of different expectations from what they are accustomed to at home as to how to behave. In Italy, norms for some behaviors, like dress, may seem much stricter, while other behaviors, like physical touch between men, may seem much looser. In some countries, including Italy, American women may find themselves uncomfortable with the looks and comments of the men, while American men may find it very difficult to meet women of the host country. Sometimes American students have found that people have made assumptions about them and their attitudes simply because they are American or dress inappropriately.

One significant area of difference between the U.S. and Italy has to do with consumption of alcohol. While there is not the rigid enforcement of a “drinking age” in Italy, you will find Italians seldom drink to become intoxicated. Rather, alcohol is consumed in moderation on social occasions, most typically with meals. Public drunkenness and rowdy behavior, by both men and women, are frowned upon. Moreover, over-consumption of alcohol poses special difficulties for women: Not only are women who are publicly drunk in Italy looked upon as “loose,” they also put themselves at risk for sexual assault.
and other unwanted attentions. Please keep in mind that your judgment is likely to be impaired with alcohol, and you may lose the ability to evaluate situations with the same caution and sensitivity you normally use. Remember you may not be aware of or able to read the various social signals that are being given.

Women may find themselves confronted with the distorted stereotype of American women based on images from American movies and TV. (Madonna, after all, attended U-M—but did not graduate.) A smile, eye contact, certain clothing or the way you carry yourself can connote different things in Italy than in the U.S. For example, Americans tend to respond politely to unwanted attentions, often saying “no thank you” as nicely as possible. Italian women, on the other hand, are likely to be less courteous, and even rude, in such situations.

Safety Tips

You will learn more about safety in Italy and specifically in Ferrara at the orientation when you first arrive. In the meantime, here are some general suggestions for traveling and living in Italy.

- Read travel guides (Let’s Go Italy and the Rough Guide both have sections addressed to women travelers) and talk to women who have been to Italy.
- Follow the example of women who live in your city in terms of culturally appropriate dress and behavior. You’ll find Italian women do not wear shorts or bare their midriffs except at the seashore.
- Walk with a purpose and avoid eye contact with strangers.
- Firmly say “no” to invitations you don’t want and turn away. Ignore persistent overtures. Never feel you need to be polite to an unwanted show of interest.
- When alone in a café or other public place, carry an Italian newspaper or Italian reading matter. Do what you can to blend into your surroundings and show would-be admirers that you belong.
- Get to know your host city. Learn which areas are safe (and at what hours) and which are not. Ask Italians and local staff for advice.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Remember, if you are taking medication for a medical condition such as diabetes, you must bring all medicine with you. Do not attempt to mail prescription medications to Italy. It is very difficult to find the exact equivalents of U.S. medicines in Italy.

If you have a special medical condition (respiratory problems, allergies), it is a good idea to bring copies of your medical records with you for consultation in the event that you require medical care. Keep these records in a sealed envelope in the program office; they will be kept confidential and only opened if needed. They can be returned to you at the end of the term.

Some Additional Health Tips

- Tampons are available at the local grocery store.
- Condoms are sold at the pharmacy and in condom machines in restrooms and some street corners.
- Exercise the same caution with regard to sexual activity and safe sex as you would at home.
- If you use birth control, bring enough for your stay. Do not plan to refill your prescription in Ferrara.
- Bring Midol or other such medications if needed.
OTHER INFORMATION

Tips from U.S. Students Studying in Ferrara

1. All students currently studying in Ferrara with CIEE rave about their homestay families – the program works very closely with families and everyone I talked to had a great experience.

2. This is not universal, but in general, don’t expect a lot of pasta; this is not as common in northern Italy, much of the cuisine in Ferrara will likely be meat-based. However, students who were vegetarians and students with a gluten-free diet said that these needs can be easily-accommodated and people are generally very understanding – just make sure to indicate dietary needs on your housing form!

3. Definitely plan to rent or buy a bike on the program; as you will quickly learn, Ferrara is the city of bikes. Ferrara is a very walkable city, but you may be housed up to 30 minutes away from the CIEE Center, and could comfortably commute with a bike.

4. Most of the streets are cobblestone, so comfortable walking shoes is a MUST. Flip-flops would be very uncomfortable, and high heels would be impossible.

5. Electricity is used sparingly in Italy; you won’t be able to have multiple appliances plugged in at once without blowing a fuse, so you may only need one or two adaptor plugs.

6. You won’t be able to find American brands of things like shampoo, toothpaste, or deodorant in Italy, so if you are dedicated to a certain brand, you may want to bring it with you.

7. Basic ibuprofen is very expensive, so make sure you bring a supply to last the entire program. (The same, obviously, for prescription drugs – make sure you bring enough to last the full 6 weeks – you cannot mail medication to Italy; it will be confiscated by customs.)

Resources

Before you travel to Italy, begin to learn about the country and city where you will be spending your time while studying abroad. The internet is a wonderful resource for finding out about Italian politics and culture. A good place to start is the following: http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/ambasciata_washington, the website of the Embassy of Italy, with general information about Italian food, government and politics, cultural activities; links to Italian newspapers and news services; and tips for travelers.

Other sites to check:
- www.initaly.com – Links to various Italian cities
- www.enit.it – Italian office of tourism website

CIEE recommends the following links:

Find CIEE on facebook:
http://www.facebook.com/cieeferrara.italia

Ferrara Terra e Acqua Tourist Information:
http://www.ferraraterraacqua.it/en?set_language=en

Webcam del Comune di Ferrara
http://ferrara.comune.fe.it/index.phtml?id=1442
Some enjoyable books on Italy are:

- **A Room with a View**, E. M. Forster; A tale of love in Italy. Also see the movie. Beautiful scenery.
- **Any Four Women Could Rob the Bank of Italy**, Ann Cornelisen; Novel takes place in Tuscany.
- **Italian Folktales**, Italo Calvino; Two hundred tales of witchcraft, love and trickery.
- **Under the Tuscan Sun** and **Bella Tuscany**, Frances Mayes; An American writer’s experience of living in Tuscany.
- **A Season with Verona**, Tim Parks. Insight into Italy’s calcio (soccer) mania.

Italian cinema provides another window on Italian life and history, and there are many films, new and old, available on video. Why not give yourself a crash course in Italian cinema before leaving for Italy? Classic films include those directed by Federico Fellini, Roberto Rosselini, Vittorio DeSica, and Lucchino Visconti. Newer films include **Life is Beautiful**, **Il Postino**, **Bread and Tulips**, **The Son’s Room**, and **Cinema Paradiso**.

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Contact your local program/on-site staff immediately if you are the victim of crime or need emergency assistance. Please also contact the University of Michigan to let us know of the situation as soon as you are able. The University of Michigan Police Department has a 24 hour number which is (734) 763-1131. They will then contact the necessary on-campus offices, including CGIS, to respond to your situation. You may provide this same 24 hour number to your parents should they experience an emergency and need to get a hold of you while you are abroad and are unable to contact you directly. To contact HTH-GeoBlue in the event of an emergency, call +1-610-254-8771 (collect calls are accepted) or globalhealth@geo-blue.com.