

LC 265 “Renaissance Italy” Getting Ready to Travel

To take care of immediately:

Apply for passport. If you have a passport, it must be valid at least 6 after our scheduled return to the USA—meaning roughly December 1, 2016. For your passport you will need 2 photos. You can have these taken at places like Kinko’s, Walgreens, or at the Post Office—which is where you will have to apply for the passport. Click [here](#) for information about applying for a passport.

Something to consider:

You might want to think about travel insurance. You never know if you might fall ill, or if a family emergency might prevent you from traveling. Consult <http://www.travelguard.com/> for an example of one company offering travel insurance. Be aware that there ARE deadlines for applying for travel insurance—sometimes within a certain amount of time either after the final payment for the trip or within a certain number of days prior to departure.

Money:

The currency in Italy is the Euro. A good rule of thumb is to expect to have access to \$30-50 a day for spending, depending on your eating/shopping habits. The exchange rate is variable, but may favor US travelers in May 2016. If possible, you could bring some Euros to Italy with you, but it’s often expensive and difficult to get foreign currency prior to leaving. However, you can exchange dollars for Euros at O’Hare, but it can be expensive, since there’s always a service fee as well as an elevated exchange rate. We should be able to get money once we arrive in Italy as well, so long as you have a bank card. Credit cards work well, and ATM cards (Cirrus and Plus networks are acceptable in Italy, as well as others). Make sure you have a PIN that uses 4 digits, not letters. You could also use Travel’s cheques, but there is a fee unless they are cashed at a Travelers Express office.

Behavior:

Always try to blend in. Don’t attract attention. Don’t yell. Don’t gesture broadly. Protect your valuables from pickpockets. Use the buddy system. Use good judgment when meeting strangers. NEVER go to anyone’s house. You could be sent home for bad behavior. Should problems arise, we will have a group meeting in Italy to discuss them. Please see the behavioral contract for more information.

Health Issues:

You should be up to date on your shots. At this point no special shots are required to travel to Italy. If you have medical issues (asthma, food allergies, problems walking, etc.) or you take medication for anything, it needs to be disclosed on the medical sheet you turned in. Basically, I need to know about it NOW. We’ll talk about issues with taking medication abroad later, but in general, it must be in the original container with the prescription information.

Packing:

Pack light. Put out what you need, and take half. I suggest 1 checked bag, and a carry on (in addition to a personal item), but we’ll need to look into the airline’s restrictions regarding this. A backpack works well as a carry on. The less you bring the better. You can wash clothes in Italy, although it’s a pain. If you need to buy luggage specifically for the trip, make sure it’s sturdy but light, and that it meets the size requirements. Please consult: http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/traveling-with-us/baggage.html Sunscreen and sunglasses are a good idea, as are a small umbrella, a light rain jacket, sturdy shoes (for lots of walking), some band aids for blisters, etc. Keep in mind that all liquids, lotions, and gels have to be put in a plastic bag when going through security.

Clothing:

Don't bring ONLY jeans, shorts, and flip-flops, since you'll need nice clothes, too (for when we have our group dinners and when we attend performances). Temperatures might be hot (low 90s) during the day, but it can also be rainy, and cool (especially at night). We should have some time to spend at the beach in Ravenna, so bring a swimsuit. Some churches require that women cover their shoulders upon entering, so women should always carry a light sweater or shawl with them. It's best for everyone if we try to attract as little attention as possible, and that includes with respect to clothing. The Italians are known as the most fashionable of all Europeans, so keep that in mind.

Electricity:

In Italy they use appliances that take 220V with the European-shaped plug, so get an adapter/converter if you need to use an American gadget in Italy. (Mac devices and some laptops often require only the adapter for the plug, while others require a converter from 110/120V.) I would avoid bringing/using anything that heats up, but if you need to bring a hairdryer or curling/flatiron, make sure you get an adaptor/converter that is suitable for the wattage required for your gadget.

Phones:

More and more students use their cell phones in Italy, since most US carriers now offer reasonably-priced international plans. Please check well in advance and have a plan for calling when abroad. Most hotels we are in should offer wifi, but it isn't always free. Data plans for use on phones when in Italy would be useful, but not required.

Some calling cards work: you would need to buy an "international calling card" that allows you to phone TO the US from abroad (many only call abroad FROM the US. It is pretty cheap to buy these kinds of cards in Italy, at vending machines, phone card vendors, and "tabacchi." Even so, it might be a nice option to look into, since I require that all students either call or email home immediately when we get to the hotel in Rome, to let everyone know we got there OK, and to email or call occasionally during our travel.

Attendance:

Required, for everything. When in Italy, arrive AT LEAST 5 minutes prior to time.

Course Syllabus:

Like all other classes, this travel course is also an academic offering with expectations and goals for student learning. Please refer to the course syllabus for information about the academic aspect of the class.

Language:

We will have a "crash course" in Italian just prior to leaving.

Questions : Contact me (sheridan@iwu.edu, 556-3238) at any time.