**Benvenuti ad Arezzo 2016!**

This handbook will help you get started in preparing for your trip to Arezzo, plan your semester there and let you know what to expect during your first days in Italy. Read it carefully – much of the material presented here is thanks to suggestions from former program participants.

Before you go on the University of Rochester program, take some time to prepare for your voyage mentally as well as materially. The **advance purchase and study of a good guidebook** to Italy (**required text for the program**) is a good starting point to plan your free weekends and Fall travel breaks. Learn enough in advance so that your expectations are informed ones, but expect some of your expectations to be violated even so. **Above all, think about what you want to get out of your time in Arezzo.** You will find that it's impossible to plan for every contingency, but that thinking in advance about your goals will guide you in responding to the unexpected and accomplishing what you set out to do.

Arezzo is a city of contrasts - at once a rather modern city with many of the excitements and problems that implies, and a place where the antiquity lives on in architecture and art. The impressions students bring home range from discussions of contemporary politics to romantic hillside olive groves and the experience of seeing great works of art in the land where they were created. Most students are sad to leave at the end of the semester and hope to return. You might enjoy reading the testimonials of past participants on the URArezzo website.

### General Program Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arrival in Rome</td>
<td>Monday, August 22nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation &amp; Ancient Structures</td>
<td>Tuesday, August 23rd – Sunday, August 28th in Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand tour in southern Italy</td>
<td>Monday, August 29th – Saturday, September 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free Friday 3-day weekend</td>
<td>Friday, September 16th - Sunday, September 18th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall travel break 1</td>
<td>Thursday, September 29th – Sunday, October 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free Friday 3-day weekend</td>
<td>Friday, October 7th - Sunday, October 9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall travel break 2</td>
<td>Friday, October 28 – Tuesday, November 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venice weekend</td>
<td>Friday, November 4 – Sunday, November 6th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exams</td>
<td>Monday, November 14 – Tuesday, November 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program ends/Departures</td>
<td>Wednesday, November 16</td>
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**All participants must arrive at ROME, LEONARDO DA VINCE Fiumicino airport on Monday, August 22nd no later than 2 pm.** Travel from the airport to our Rome housing will be in private coach. The program will begin with orientation and the intensive unit on **Ancient Structures** in Rome including a study-related site visit to Ostia Antica. We will travel to Castellammare on the afternoon of Monday, September 29th where our **Ancient Structures** site visits will continue in Castellammare, Capri, Pompei, Herculaneum, Baia, Naples and Paestum. Students travel to Arezzo on Saturday, September 3rd. Regularly scheduled classes begin on Monday, September 5th.
**Tentative study-related site visits include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>August 22nd – 29th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castellammare</td>
<td>August 29th pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paestum</td>
<td>August 30th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pompeii</td>
<td>August 31st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herculaneaum, Oplontis</td>
<td>September 1st</td>
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<td>Campi Flegrei</td>
<td>September 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arezzo</td>
<td>September 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>September 9th</td>
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<td>Siena</td>
<td>September 23rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assisi</td>
<td>October 14th</td>
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<td>Poppi</td>
<td>October 21st</td>
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<td>La Verna</td>
<td>October 24th</td>
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<td>Venice</td>
<td>November 4-6th</td>
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**Seminar guest lecture series - tentative schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Roman Engineering from Pompeii</td>
<td>R. Perucchio</td>
<td>Aug 23rd – Sept 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>To Imperial Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>In terra d’Arezzo on Dante’s</td>
<td>D. Stocchi</td>
<td>Oct 16th – Oct 27th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Footsteps</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**University of Rochester in Arezzo Faculty and Staff**

- Donna Logan
  - Director on Location
  - EMAIL dlogansi@UR.Rochester.edu

- Alessandra Baroni
  - Art History Instructor

- Federico Siniscalco
  - Italian History and Cultural Studies Instructor

- Paolo Vitti
  - Ancient Structures Instructor

- Italian instruction
- Accademia Britannica
Travel and Travel Documents

Passports & Visas

You will need a valid passport. Please note that US citizens are allowed to stay within the Schengen area without a student visa for a 90 day period all inclusive. Please see http://www.axaschengen.com/english/schengen-countries.html for map of the area. If you have travel plans which might take you elsewhere (especially into Eastern Europe) after the program has ended, check with the appropriate Consulates for entry requirements and stay permit regulations. If you are not a US citizen, it is imperative that you determine if you will need a visa to study in Italy.

Passport Security

The U.S. Department of State estimates that 25,000 American passports will be lost or stolen this year and will have to be replaced. There are a few precautions you can take to speed up the process of replacing your passport if it is lost.

- Write down your passport number and the place and date of issue on a piece of paper and carry it separately from your passport.
- Keep a few extra photos and an extra photocopy of your birth certificate.
- Make at least 4 good photocopies of the important pages (with photo) of your passport for: your family, the Center for Study Abroad, the program director and scan the picture page of your passport to keep on file and to send to me at your earliest convenience.
- Keep a copy to carry yourself, too.

Given the slow mail service between Europe and North America (ten to fourteen days each way), it can be quite a delay to have any of these items sent from home.

Especially while you are traveling, it is safest to keep your passport separate from your wallet in a moneybelt or other concealed carrier. That way, if you should lose your wallet, you won't have lost your passport as well.

International Student Identity Card

You are required to obtain an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) prior to your departure. This card is valid until the end of the year, and you can receive discounts on airfare, hotels, transportation, computer services, foreign currency exchange, phone calls and major attractions. Most important, the ISIC provides the following insurance coverage for international travelers: sickness hospital benefit, accident medical expense, accidental death and dismemberment, emergency medical evacuation, and repatriation of remains as well as a 24 hour emergency help line. www.myisic.com

Transatlantic Travel

You may wish to look for on-line fares, if you are experienced and feel comfortable doing so. You may also use a travel agent or work directly with an airline to make your arrangements. Whatever plans you make, keep in mind that the group will be met at the Rome Leonardo Da Vinci (Fiumicino airport) on Monday, August 22nd no later than 2 pm, from where we will travel as a group to the center of Rome.

The following information is intended to suggest some possible routes to Rome; however, check with a travel agent about other possibilities. Be sure to take into
consideration the time you will need to make connections between planes and so that you arrive in ROME safely and at a reasonable time.

From the US you can easily fly directly to Rome. Another excellent method of entry is flying to a major European city (London, Paris, Frankfurt, Amsterdam) and catching a connecting flight to Rome.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Our meeting point will be at the airport in Rome. As soon as you book your flights, e-mail flight details to Donna Logan dlogansi@UR.Rochester.edu to ensure meeting times.

### When you first arrive

The airport in Rome is very large and almost always undergoing renovations, so be prepared for changes. Once you’re off the plane, you will go through Passport Control. After that you will collect your luggage before proceeding through a door where the general public is allowed to wait. The Program Director, Donna Logan, will be waiting for you there. Once everyone has arrived, we will travel to the center of Rome by private bus.

We strongly recommend that you wear your money, passport, and any valuables in a moneybelt. This is especially important in the airport and trains and railroad stations where petty theft is common. **Wear the money belt / travel wallet hidden underneath your clothes. It does you no good if you put it in a backpack or a pocket!**

### Luggage and packing

**Do not pack more bags than you are able carry yourself.** Do a “trial run” and carry your luggage for 15 minutes. If that is not comfortable, decide what you can leave behind. **Huge suitcases are not practical,** especially since you will probably want a **small suitcase or backpack** for weekend trips. Also keep in mind that elevators are not available in many places such as train stations and much student housing. Remember that your luggage should make your trip easier, not more difficult. **Pack light!** Check with your airline and weigh and measure your bag. There are many new restrictions on size and weight, and an overweight bag can cost hundreds of dollars. Don’t wait until you get to the airport to find out. All airlines post information about luggage restrictions on their websites. This is where you will find the most up to date information.

When traveling within Europe on weekends, you will probably use the excellent train system, but for longer distances (Barcelona, Paris, etc.), you may use the many low-cost airlines that tend to use smaller airports such as Pisa or Perugia. Ryan Air, Easy-Jet, Go-Fly, Vueling and others have very restrictive luggage policies that change regularly. Typically, a checked bag cannot exceed 15 kilos (get in the habit of thinking metric – multiply by 2.2 to get the number of pounds). Hand luggage is usually around 10 kilos. That may sound like a lot, but if you are carrying a laptop and a few books, 22 pounds isn’t much! Excess bag fees on these airlines can be as much as $10 a kilo.

### Clothing

Try to select flexible and layered clothing that will adapt to different seasons and situations. Again: **PACK LIGHT!** Do not take clothing you will wear only once or twice during the semester. Wash-and-wear clothing is recommended, since both dry cleaning and laundromats are expensive. You will probably do more washing by hand than you normally do and dryers are not
There is a Laundromat close to the semester housing where you will do your laundry.

European heating is nothing like what you are used to in the States and may only be turned on at some time in November. You may be chilly indoors even when it is not that cold outside, so plan your wardrobe accordingly. Layers are important.

You will arrive at the end of the summer, but it most probably will get chilly in Arezzo in the evenings. By October, the days will be getting shorter and Italians will wear their Fall clothes. It does not get as cold as upstate New York, but the heating is much less efficient and is regulated by the government. It can get very cold and damp even indoors. September and October can be rainy months in Tuscany. A rain jacket and umbrella are highly recommended.

Be aware that churches in Italy are not heated. Other public buildings, such as galleries, theaters, etc. are quite cool by American standards. A raincoat with a zip-in lining would be practical, or a jacket or blazer to wear over sweaters. Bring your jeans, of course, and one or two other pairs of pants. You should have casual clothes for everyday and a dressy outfit for special occasions.

For warmer weather and our trip to Castellammare you should bring a bathing suit and a towel (which may be convenient to have, since linens might be changed less often than you are accustomed to). Churches in Italy and other places in Europe do not allow shorts, mini-skirts or skimpy tops even in very hot weather. Keep this in mind when packing and planning sightseeing expeditions. A fleece or sweatshirt is good as a cover-up and for layering.

Typical Italian student dress in Arezzo is casual, but not sloppy. You’ll notice that the “look” is often more sophisticated. It is a good idea to buy a few items in Arezzo that you can wear while out with Italian friends without appearing too obviously American. Clothes are expensive in Italy, but you can always find less expensive shops off the beaten path. Bring what you need, but remember that you will buy some things in Europe, and you will need to have room in your luggage. Leave space for purchases or bring along an empty duffel bag.

Walking will be your main form of transportation so comfortable walking shoes are a top priority. Break them in before you leave. Also bring a good supply of comfortable socks that work well with your walking shoes. Remember to pack gloves, a scarf and hat; you will spend much more time outdoors sightseeing and walking than you would typically in the United States.

**MUST-HAVE CHECK-LIST**

1. Winter coat, hat, scarf and gloves
2. Comfortable walking shoes
3. Reliable wrist watch
4. Slippers or flip-flops (for indoor use)
5. Umbrella
6. Small flashlight
7. Guidebook of Italy (see last page for suggestions)
8. Italian language phrasebook.
9. Pen & notebook for first week of classes

**What else to bring**

**Journal:** so you can record your impressions. Photographs will show you what things looked like, but a journal will remind you how they made you feel. If you
have artistic tendencies, a sketchbook will also allow you to record your impressions more personally than a camera.

**Travel alarm:** essential for catching trains and getting to class on time. Italians tend to be punctual.

**Photos of family and friends:** your new Italian friends will enjoy seeing photographs of your home and school.

Also, if you bring a camera, computer or any other kind of expensive equipment with you, it should be registered at the airport customs office before you leave the States -- or take along the receipt to avoid problems when re-entering the U.S.

### What NOT to bring

**Try not to bring electrical appliances.** If you find a hair dryer or electric razor absolutely necessary, the **voltage in Europe is 220**, so you'll need a converter (unless your appliance is dual-voltage 110/220) and plug.

NOTE: Utilities in Italy are among the most expensive in Europe, so your sensitivity to turning lights off, taking short showers, and using electrical appliances sparingly are important.

You don't need to bring lots of toiletries or cosmetics since most American brands are now available in Europe. That said, **sunscreen** and **insect repellent** are essential and will come in handy at the beginning of your stay so you should pack these items. You will no doubt find local brands that you like as well. (For information on medications see the section on “Health”.)

### What you might want to take into consideration

**Personal computer:** Arezzo is now becoming increasingly ‘wireless’ so if you are accustomed to doing all of your work on your personal computer, you will definitely want to bring it to Italy.

**Mobile phone:** if you have a tri-band phone that will work on European standard, we suggest you bring it with you. You can then purchase an Italian prepaid sim card for local use. (See the section on communications.)

**Insurance:** Be sure that personal items, such as cameras, computers, etc. are properly insured. Do not bring any irreplaceable items, such as heirloom jewelry, with you.
Cultural Differences

You will find participating in an off-campus program quite different from life at your home college. The success of your stay in Italy will depend upon your ability to observe and to adapt to a lifestyle very different from what you are used to. Typical differences you may encounter in Arezzo if you are not familiar with Italy: the kind of bread and coffee you find on the breakfast table, the length and frequency of showers, establishing friendships with Italian people, and very different political attitudes. Being alert to cultural differences is tiring at first, especially when you are speaking in a foreign language. Even speech requires effort, but your experience in Italy will be enhanced if you are open to these differences.

Culture shock is experienced by almost everyone travelling abroad, and not only for first-time travelers. Cultural differences may make you feel out of place during the first few weeks. One thing that may discourage you at first is the language barrier, but generally speaking, Italians are very helpful and will try to help you if you are trying to speak Italian. Carry your phrasebook and don’t be afraid to try!

Americans also often have difficulty adjusting to some Italians' attitudes toward women and minorities. Women (especially those who are traveling to Europe for the first time) should be aware that they are likely to receive unwanted attention from men, especially on public transportation. The best method of discouragement is generally to ignore completely anyone you do not wish to speak to! Do not engage the person in any way. Avoid eye contact or hostile remarks. Keep in mind that your American idea of "personal space" is far larger than the Italian one, and that vocal appreciation of attractiveness is considered socially acceptable in Italy. However, do not feel that you should not defend yourself if you feel threatened by particularly aggressive behavior. As you become more comfortable with the language and the city, both the attention and the notice you take of it will diminish greatly.

Academic Differences

Academically, too, an off-campus program is different from your home campus. You do not have a variety of courses from which to choose. Most participants have found this to be an advantage. With a small group of students studying fewer courses, topics can be studied in greater depth. You may also find that some of the material from different program courses is interrelated.

Philosophical ideas presented in one course may provide a background for understanding the works of art discussed in another. There are, of course, disadvantages as well. With fewer options available, you may find yourself in a course that you would not have chosen at home. A subject of interest to you may be taught at too basic a level, or perhaps with the assumption of greater prior knowledge. You will have to take the initiative to talk to your instructors; they will be more than willing to discuss your questions, suggest supplementary readings, and help you pursue your interests through written assignments.

In order to fit in field trips, site visits, lectures, etc., the courses are highly structured and may meet for longer stretches of time than on your home campus. Also, since lecturing is not allowed in most galleries and is difficult to accomplish in others, instructors of art history courses spend some time lecturing on slides of works you will see in person later.
Doing research and writing is very different without the resources of the UR library, or your own personal computer and desk. You will have to learn to make use of the new resources that your surroundings do offer: museums, architecture, newspapers, and historical sites. This is an opportunity for intellectual growth. The extra effort and greater sensitivity required of you will be richly rewarded.

The University of Rochester Libraries are accessible to you while you’re overseas. Click here for resources: [http://www.library.rochester.edu/study-abroad](http://www.library.rochester.edu/study-abroad)

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**Life on the University of Rochester in Arezzo Program**

The program begins with an orientation in Rome, an introduction to the city and Italy. During this week general, practical and administrative details will be tended to. Students need to bring basic stationery supplies (notebooks, pencils and pens) for an intensive week of study. It is also recommended to have any other personal necessities (basic toiletries, etc.) with you for this first week.

*The University of Siena and The Accademia Britannica Toscana*

Our program is hosted at the Accademia Britannica language school. This location makes space available to University of Rochester for all courses. When free our classroom and the computer room also serve as study areas. Most classes are held at the Accademia Britannica where University of Rochester students have the opportunity to meet local language students. The Accademia Britannica operates separately from the University of Rochester program and offers language instruction to other foreign students as well. It has become a central meeting place for American, Italian and European students. This is also the mailing address you will use during your stay in Arezzo:

(Your name)  
c/o Accademia Britannica Toscana  
Vicolo Pietro da Cortona, 10  
52100 Arezzo  
Italy

Tel. 011-39-0575-21366  
Fax 011-39-0575-300426
Classes

Monuments of Ancient Italy is intensive. Classes and coursework will be completed by mid-semester. Italian, History and Art History classes run throughout the entire semester. Classes meet regularly Monday through Friday. A few Fridays are dedicated to study-related field trips. Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of the weekends for individual travel (a list of recommended sites will be discussed during orientation). Program participants are expected to attend all classes, site-related visits and other organized activities.

University of Rochester students: Because this is a faculty-led (and graded) study abroad program, the grades you earn will appear on your University of Rochester transcript and will average into your grade point average. Do not assume that participation in the program equates to grades of “A.” Your instructors will provide you with clear grading criteria. If you have questions about grading, please see Donna Logan.

Books

You will soon receive the list of books and readings you will need for your courses. Since many of these texts are not readily available in Italy, or are far more expensive, those that are not already available for your use in our small library will be purchased in the US and you will bring them with you.

Living Arrangements

Students will be housed in lovely, privately owned residence apartments. Final accommodations will depend on availability at the time of confirmation in the program.

You will be living within the city of Arezzo amongst its citizens and guests. There is no ‘student’ housing as we know it in the US. Therefore interaction between generations is frequent, enjoyable, and an important element in Italian life. Certainly, housing regulations are much more structured than what is common in the U.S.

Rules, including limited visitation rights, will be applied to participating students.

Meals

Weekday lunch and dinner are provided at local eating establishments by the program.
Communications

Please be sure to leave a copy of the program address and telephone number with a family member at home. This address is where you should receive all your mail, since the Accademia Britannica staff is there to greet the postal service. You can also receive faxes at the Accademia, and you can send faxes for about 4 euros per page. Private fax service is also available in Arezzo. The program provides limited e-mail access for program participants at the Accademia Britannica and at semester housing. For more information, see the “E-MAIL” section below.

On your way to Italy, you should carry these two phone numbers: Donna Logan, 0575-24442 (home) or 338-442-2444 (mobile). If you are dialing from the US, dial 011-39 first for international access, and Italy's country code. Please be reminded of the six hour time difference between Italy and the US. When it is 6 pm in New York it is midnight in Arezzo.

You should also carry the following address in the event your luggage does not arrive with you:

Residence Le Gagliarde
Via delle Gagliarde, 17
52100 Arezzo
Tel. (+39)0575-353326

Receiving packages

If your family sends you a package with an insurance value stated on the documents, customs and value-added tax will cost you almost 40% of the amount declared plus an undefined amount of time to clear. Do not have your family send you anything expensive; you will pay too many fees. Airmail packages, sent from the States, take about two weeks to arrive. Packages sent by sea take about three months. Make sure your family does not send you anything that will arrive after you have gone back to the States.

Your mailing address in Arezzo:

Your Name
c/o Accademia Britannica Toscan
Vicolo Pietro da Cortona, 10
52100 Arezzo ITALY

NOTE: Bring all the medication that you will need as well as the prescriptions themselves. It is impossible to get mailed medicine through Italian Customs. If you rely on medications for which you may have difficulty getting more than a 90-day supply due to your US insurance company’s policies, work with your physician to settle this prior to departure. This can take a while so if you take any medications regularly, contact your physician without delay.
**Telephones**

To call Europe from the United States, you need to dial 011 for access to an international line; 39 for the Italian country code; 0575 is the city code for Arezzo. Over the past few years, UR students have found owning mobile phones the most convenient way to keep in touch with their families. In the event you do not bring a phone from the US, new phones are available at reasonable rates and, once activated, students may receive calls for their entire stay at no additional cost.

Students have also found that, at times, it is convenient to make calls on public telephones at various locations throughout the city using a prepaid phone card or a credit card. Please note that there is a surcharge on pay phones.

We also recommend getting a calling card from one of the numerous American long-distance carriers. Using an American calling card for calls to the US is another reasonable method of phoning. Last year some students brought international calling cards from America only to discover that they didn’t work in Italian phones, so check with your carrier before purchase! These cards are intended for calling overseas from the US.

In the interest of safety and good communication, students are to **carry cell phones at all times**. Even if you do not use one in the US, you will find that text messaging is an easy and low-cost way to communicate. In case of emergency, it facilitates your communication with the program directors and vice versa.

**E-mail**

The Program provides students **limited e-mail access**. There is also a 30-minute per day free service at Informagiovani youth center as well as other internet cafes in town. If you have a personal computer the public library, the park, the university and several local cafes all provide free wireless access. There is also both Ethernet and wireless connections in the residenza.
Living Expenses and Money

Money

The European currency, the Euro (symbol: €), is the only valid currency in Italy. **Have with you about $50 in Euros for your trip** in the event of emergency or delay. Euros can be purchased in the U.S. at any bank with an international department and at some airports. You should not keep more than €50 cash in your wallet. Credit cards are usually not used, and sometimes not accepted for purchases under €20), (approximately $22). Keep in mind that in Italy it is virtually impossible to use a personal check. Do not even think of using your American paper checks in Italy (with one exception – your damage deposit – see next paragraph). You should bring an ATM card to be able to access all the money you think you'll need. **Make sure you inform your bank that you are coming to Italy so they don’t think you are victim of identity theft.**

The amount of money you'll need over the semester depends upon your plans, tastes, and habits. Students on past programs have spent anywhere from $1200 to $4500 in three months in Italy! It is hard to predict what the exchange rate will be. Your only significant daily expenses are personal necessities. Required study-related field trips are included in your program fees.

**Damage Deposit**

You will need to bring $200 (in a personal check or traveler’s checks) as a damage deposit to be given to the program director during orientation. We also recommend that you bring $150 extra in case you need to visit the doctor or dentist's office. Be sure to keep this money aside from your spending money and in a safe place until the end of the program.

You'll need extra money if you plan to travel extensively during the program breaks, or if you plan to buy a lot of gifts and other things to take home with you. Other costly items include cigarettes, eating in restaurants (remember, most meals are provided), and making particularly expensive trips on the weekend and during the Fall breaks. The $1,200-$4500 is a very rough estimate, so adjust it to fit your own lifestyle. Your program directors and Italian students you will meet can give you valuable information about good money management.
Travelers’ cheques and Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)

It is not practical or advisable for students to open a bank account in Arezzo. The red tape involved outweighs whatever advantages there may be in having a temporary account.

Traveler's cheques and cash are now more and more difficult to exchange and generally incur high fees. It is also difficult and very costly to have funds sent from home. On the other hand, ATMs on the PLUS and CIRRUS networks are very common in all Italian cities, including Arezzo, and can be used to withdraw currency from your American account. Students last year found that ATMs were readily available, and gave the best exchange rates.

SOME VERY IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT ATMs:

• Before you decide to live off your ATM card while in Italy, CHECK WITH YOUR BANK to make sure that the card is compatible with the networks used by Italian ATMs,

• Ask what fees, if any, you will be charged for using your card abroad.

• Get a NUMERIC PIN if yours is currently alpha; most ATM keys in Europe do not have letters on them! Be aware that ATMs – both here and abroad - do not work 100% of the time. On big holiday weekends, ATMs can actually run out of cash.

• Find out before you leave how to obtain a replacement card from overseas in case your card is lost or stolen, or the magnetic strip stops working. Bring some money in cash in the event of emergency.

• Most ATMs have lower withdrawal limits in Europe (250 euros).

Getting Money from Home and Using Credit Cards

We strongly recommend that you bring a Visa or MasterCard with you to Arezzo. If you run out of money, having a credit card provides the easiest solution. Credit cards are widely used in Italy, but expect differences in usage. Merchants often display signs that credit cards may not be used for purchases under 20 € because they have high percentages to pay with each charge. In addition, some shops do not have phone lines and are unable to accept credit or debit cards. Students have found that American Express is inconvenient in Arezzo. There is an American Express office in Florence, but it is 45 minutes away by train.

If you are a relatively new traveler, or new to using credit cards, be sure to consult available materials on using credit wisely and responsibly. Do not get yourself into debt you cannot manage. This can have serious repercussions on your future credit, and may damage your ability to attend graduate or professional schools, buy a car, rent an apartment, etc. In addition, find out what the interest rate is on cash advances on your card.
Health, Personal Safety and Study Abroad

Study abroad offers new educational opportunities, but can also present challenges and risks that are different from those on your home campus. Just as you prepare for a new mode of learning on the program, you should also think about living in a new environment that may contain new kinds of risks. **You will not have the same support systems or forms of assistance that you have on your home campus or in your hometown.** Here are some guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare for your semester abroad.

**Traffic and Personal Travel**

Some of you will be living and studying in a larger city than you have previously experienced. In Arezzo, you may be using public transportation. You might also be returning to your residence at night from program-sponsored events or socializing with your friends. You will need to become aware of different traffic patterns and practices. Public transportation is widely used and apt to be crowded at times. The program staff can advise you about how to ensure your safety as you travel around Arezzo and elsewhere.

You must keep safety considerations in mind as you travel independently around Europe on free weekends or during the breaks.

**NOTE:** You are required to inform the Program Director and your host residence of any travel plans, your itinerary and your expected time of return any time you leave Arezzo.

In some places, it is better that women do not travel alone. In general, however, traveling alone in Italy has been safer than in most places in the United States. Take advantage of independent travel during the program; your exploration of different regions will bring to life some of the classroom discussions of Italy's history and character.

**REMINDER:** Under no circumstances when you travel, by foot or using public transportation, should you ever put wallet, money or passport in your backpack, purse or pocket. They must be secured in a hidden travel wallet.

**Hitchhiking is not permitted. It is very dangerous.**

You may **not** acquire or operate any kind of motorized vehicle: cars, scooters, motorcycles, etc. while you are a participant in the University of Rochester in Arezzo program. You will probably find, as do many Aretines, that public transportation and your own two feet are the most efficient means of getting around. Walking in Europe, especially in a Tuscan hill town is enjoyable, good exercise, and most of the time the shortest distances between two points.
**General Wellness**

While you are in Italy, you need to be aware of your health and your responsibility for monitoring new or familiar medical concerns. AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases are public health concerns of which you must be conscious.

The challenges of adjusting to a new culture are an important part of what you will be experiencing in Italy. Adjusting to a new environment can be especially difficult when you are away from friends, family and college faculty or staff that you know well. You will have days that are exciting and rewarding and also days where everything seems strange and exhausting. Program staff and new friends can help you recognize and talk through these issues and the Program Director can also recommend counselors if you feel they might help.

**Health Insurance**

Students must be insured before beginning the program. Discuss your health insurance with your parents before you leave so that you fully understand what coverage you have and how to go about making a claim. Make sure that your college or family medical insurance covers both doctor and hospital expenses and that the policy is valid abroad. You should bring insurance claim forms and proof of coverage with you. You will be expected to pay for any medical expenses at the time of treatment and seek reimbursement from your insurance company afterwards.

**Notifying Your Family**

In case of serious illness or injury involving hospitalization or a series of visits to a doctor's office, University of Rochester will ask your permission to inform the person you designated as an emergency contact. This is necessary not only to keep your parents or guardian informed, but also to let them know that you are incurring medical expenses for which they may wish to seek reimbursement.

**Your Medical History**

Health will be a special concern while you are living in an unfamiliar place without access to your regular physician or health service. The Center for Study Abroad has provided you with a confidential Health and Special Needs form. Full disclosure is to your advantage. We must know about pre-existing conditions in order to prepare to assist you. Provide as much detail as possible. For example, in the case of allergies, we will need to know exactly what you are allergic to, what the reaction is, and the remedy you generally use.

Providing an accurate and complete medical history will ensure that you will receive proper care from a physician who does not know you. Remember, health information you provide to the Study Abroad Office is confidential. It will be released only to the program director and, if necessary, to the physician who treats you in Arezzo.

NOTE: If there are changes to your medical condition from the time you fill out the form, it is your responsibility to provide the Center for Study Abroad with this updated information.

**Medications, glasses and contact lenses**

Most standard pharmacy products are available in Europe. However, the equivalents of Tylenol or Ibuprofen products are very expensive and sold only in a pharmacy. If you require prescriptions, you must bring a supply of them with you for your entire stay, because medications mailed through the postal service will not make it through customs. Make sure your medications are labeled with the generic
pharmaceutical name, not the brand name. Also ask your physician to type the prescription in Latin and make sure this official pharmaceutical description accompanies your medication in your carry-on luggage.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair or the prescription with you. **Do not put prescription medications and eye-wear in your checked luggage.** Contact lens wearers should know that solutions are much more expensive in Europe. If you have questions about your medications, talk to your physician and to the Center for Study Abroad before you leave the US.

**Special Diets**

If you are a vegetarian or have any dietary restrictions, you must note this on your Health and Special Needs form. You should describe your diet, specifically which foods you avoid, your reasons for following it (has your doctor prescribed it or is it personal choice), and let us know whether you can be flexible about your restrictions. The University of Rochester staff will want to place you where your special needs will cause as little inconvenience as possible for you and for your hosts. Information from you in advance is essential.

**Required Inoculations**

Traveling in Europe does not present any serious health risks that you would not encounter in the United States. It is important, however, that you have the following inoculations before getting to Arezzo. Failure to do so not only endangers your health, but that of the other participants, the program staff, your host family and the general population. For more information, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

- Adult Booster Shots
- You must receive booster shots as an adult for tetanus-diphtheria, polio, and measles. It is your responsibility to have your physician verify that these inoculations are current.
- Childhood Inoculation Series
- This includes measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio. Your physician should verify that you have received a complete series of inoculations as a child for each disease listed above.

NOTE: Participants are particularly urged to verify that their tetanus vaccination is up to date.

UR students are also recommended to use the services of Passport Health, located in Helen Wood Hall (across from Strong Hospital). Passport Health will advise you on a variety of travel health issues.

http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/son/cnc/ph.cfm
Crime and Random Violence

Arezzo is a generally safe city, and Italy is a hospitable and secure country. Like any place in the world, however, Arezzo and other parts of Italy have crime and random violence. We encourage you to travel with a partner or small group. Follow your program director’s advice about coming home at night, and follow more than your usual precautions until you learn to read “street signals” or cultural signs that might be warnings. On your home territory, you know what the potential danger signs are; you should take special care until you learn the comparable signs in Italy. Be aware that “street smarts” are important, and alcohol impairs them dramatically.

Gender Relations and Sexual Harassment

In the same way you have learned how to judge your behavior with men and with women in the United States, in Italy you need to become accustomed to new guidelines and issues. American movies and popular television shows have exported an impression of free and easy (and highly active) sexual relations between Americans. An open approach towards strangers in the street, or in a bar, or "sexy" clothing will be viewed as evidence of promiscuity. For example, Americans are known for the (unconscious) habit of smiling at strangers in the street. It is a disarming and recognized non-verbal communication in the US, one that is meant to telegraph “I am not a dangerous or aggressive person.” However, outside the US, it is generally read as an invitation to conversation, or much more.

Even more than in the US, casual flirtation from women or men while under the influence of alcohol will very likely be interpreted as a come-on. Students have found it is more comfortable to adapt more conservative dress and behavior than at home.

UR policy prohibits sexual harassment by program staff and students. Each student is entitled to participate in the program without having to put up with harassment or an uncomfortable situation. Any problems should be immediately reported to the Program Director, whether it involves another student, program staff or faculty, or another setting outside the program. It may be possible to help you identify a way of stopping the harassment or it may be necessary for you to get out of that setting.

If you have questions…please ask us!

You will face tangible risks in Arezzo, just as anywhere else. Part of what you want to learn on this program is how to recognize dangers and danger signs that are different from those you know at home. In most cases you can learn how to recognize and avoid these risks. In any case, let people know if you are feeling concerned or unsafe. Program staff, and others can help you learn to manage the risks in Arezzo, just as they can help you learn to understand the history and culture.

Legal and Ethical Issues

Drugs

Anti-drug laws in Italy are very severe and, contrary to what may be generally believed, enforced with notable rigor. In Italy you are subject to a minimum sentence of three years for use or possession of drugs (including marijuana, uppers, downers, etc.). You can be arrested for suspected possession, suspected use, knowledge of possession or use not reported to the police, and on these charges you can be held incommunicado, without bail, for an indefinite period of time. Any accusation of
a University of Rochester program participant by the narcotics police could have severe repercussions on the program, the staff, and all of the students.

NOTE: The possession or use of any illegal drugs will result in immediate dismissal from the program. If you are arrested because of suspected involvement with drugs, the UR program staff and American Consulate can do virtually nothing to help you.

Alcohol and Alcohol Abuse in Italy

When one thinks of Italy, frequently images of food and wine come to mind. Wine has been an integral part of the Italian diet and culture and a fundamental economic resource for centuries. Up until very recently there was no drinking age in Italy because drinking for the sake of drinking was never a problem. When an item is a basic part of life it is unnatural to abuse of it. However, as times have changed and the Italian culture we once knew gives way to a more global one, very young teenagers in the throes of adolescence have begun overdrinking. It is a problem that is being treated in a similar fashion as drug abuse and eating disorders as it obviously is a sign of malessere (uneasiness, unhappiness, troubles). Overdrinking is socially unacceptable in our community. When a young American abuses alcohol in Italy, Italians ask themselves what is wrong. It makes them uncomfortable and therefore compromises your role as ambassador of young people from the US and representative of the University of Rochester while in Italy. For this reason and others alcohol abuse is not tolerated on the program and will result in immediate dismissal. Sensitivity to this cultural norm will help you make the most of your experience here.

Program Regulations

You will be expected to conform to Italian behavioral standards that, as mentioned before, are more rigid than ours. This will be discussed in detail at Orientation in Italy. You will be registered with the American consulate and the Italian police.

Your attitude, cooperation, and flexibility will make the difference in the quality of your experience abroad, and will be especially important to the success of your stay with your Italian hosts.

In a group as small as the UR group, cooperation from everyone is necessary if the program is to function smoothly. Lack of cooperation from one or a few students can make the experience less successful for the whole “team.” Therefore, you must be certain that whatever plans you make for weekend travel or for the long break will not prevent you from meeting your obligations to the program. You are engaged in a program of study, and your academic obligations come first.

Student Conduct and Discipline

Enrollment in an off-campus study program obligates you to conduct yourself as a responsible member of that program. While on the program, any behavior by a student that discredits the student or the program, as determined by the program rules and the program director, may result in disciplinary action.

The Program Director reserves the right to discipline or dismiss a student whose conduct is in conflict with the best interests of the program and in violation of its rules, either academic or social.
The Director of the program also has the authority, in consultation with the Center for Study Abroad and the Dean of Students, to remove a student from the program because of a medical or psychological crisis or any other serious situation that might arise. Life-threatening events, serious involvement with the police, unscheduled loss of contact with a student, and incidents having the potential for serious public relations consequences may also warrant dismissal.

We look forward to welcoming you to Arezzo!

Remember to bring a copy of this Handbook as well as your UR Study Abroad Pre-departure Handbook with you.

Some useful web links:

www.visitarezzo.com

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/europe/italy

http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Europe/Italy/TravelGuide-Italy.html

http://www.roughguides.com/

http://us.penguin.com/nf/Browse/BrowseStdPage/0,,212676,00.html

http://www.towncountrytravel.com

studentsabroad.state.gov

International Youth Hostels

www.hihostels.com

What former program participants have to say:

“I spent the best afternoons walking down Corso Italia while eating gelato and talking to friends. There are wonderful things that I would have never learned about if I had not been in Arezzo. It is a great experience to be able to interact everyday with Italians and to learn more about their culture and language firsthand. Arezzo proved to be the best fit for me because it allowed me to experience the “small town” Italy side, while being centrally located that it was easy to travel to the major cities.”

“It was the best experience of my life.”