

Report on the 2017 JSIS Study Abroad Program in Rome

On January 3, 2017, twenty students from the Jackson School of International Studies arrived in Rome for a 10 Week program focused on the Challenges to European Unity.

Winter quarter in Rome is an excellent place and time for study abroad, the summer crowds are gone and the Mediterranean climate is mild. The UW Rome Center (UWRC) is walking distance from some of Rome's best loved historic sites, see <https://depts.washington.edu/roma/>



The Center has three floors of classrooms, lecture halls, faculty apartment and administrative spaces directly overlooking the Campo De Fiori in the historic Center of the city.

Classes were held in the UWRC, with the NATO Class on Monday and Wednesday mornings, and the US-EU Class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Early in the program we had the opportunity to be hosted at the Turkish Embassy, The Turkish Ambassador was kind enough to spend 90 minutes with our students in a reception room of a palace acquired by the Ottoman Empire in the 1890's. In a short time we were able to learn much about the importance of diplomacy in a fast-changing and dynamic international environment.

Students were housed in comfortable apartments just a few minutes' walk from the UWRC, all apartments were equipped with kitchen facilities and wireless internet. Three interconnected courses were offered, for a total of fifteen credits. The NATO course included the multiple challenges facing the North Atlantic Alliance, and a second course presented an historical look at the US-European Relations. Both courses were designed to support a third course, a Task Force, developing policy recommendations for US foreign policy in Europe.

In the 2017 Program we had regular field trips and excursions on Fridays, and students had the opportunity to plan their own weekend trips in Italy, visits included Florence, Milan, Naples and the Almafai Coast. The local excursions included the Forum, Coliseum, Ostia Antica, Jewish Ghetto, the Vatican Museum and the American Academy in Rome. We made a day long trip to Pompeii, and students were free to stay the weekend in Naples and make independent travel plans.



In Rome we were fortunate to have the support of the NATO Defense College, we were hosted for a day of lectures and interaction with faculty and staff. A number of NATO officers came to



the UWRC to meet with students and provide research assistance. A senior NATO Staff member from the Brussels Headquarters spent ten days with us in Rome as guest faculty, she provided a number of lectures and moderated the NATO Forum, modeled after a meeting of the North Atlantic Council.

Group dinners were an important part of the program, with the opportunity to socialize and interact with guest speakers and local experts. All speakers were asked to discuss potential career paths were later available to meet in small groups and over dinner with students.

Task Force: This was the first time that a Jackson School Task Force was offered outside the US, and it proved to be very successful. The Task Force has been part of the International Studies major at the Jackson School since 1983. The original format was modeled on the Presidential Commissions common in policymaking in the United States. Graduating seniors work on important international issues through rigorous coursework in a wide variety of

disciplinary and cross-disciplinary settings. This gives an opportunity to provide leaders with substantive policy recommendations based on rigorous research and evaluation.

Before departure from the US, students were assigned to teams to begin assess the current security situation in Europe. In the fall of 2016 they met in Seattle to identify important issues and develop the scope and focus of the Task Force Report. In Rome they met with local officials the State Department, International Organizations and the NATO Defense College. This provided an unparalleled opportunity to understand the current challenges facing Europe and



brief a high level official on the results of their research.

The Rome Task Force completed its written report during the first week in March, 2017, and this was the first Task Force to be evaluated by a sitting US Ambassador. Overall, the study abroad program was a great success, here is review by one of the students:

“This was a transformational

experience due to the unique opportunity to interact and discuss the most pressing challenges facing Europe with senior officials. It has been a great privilege to be able to interact with these individuals on such a personal level: it contributes to a wide array of perspectives on these issues. This... dramatically enhances our ability to make the most informed decisions possible for our policy report, and also for our personal futures.”

The Rome 2018 Program opened for applications the first week of April 2017. We plan the same two five credit courses in 2018 that were included in the 2017 program. Prospective students can find more information at <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/lorenz/50137/>

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