

MICROBIOLOGY IN ITALY

SUMMER 2015



This study abroad opportunity is an example of the College of Arts and Sciences' commitment to offer more study abroad opportunities for science majors. Francesco Redi, the scientist who disproved the theory of spontaneous generation and is known as the "father of the modern germ theory of disease," was actually born in Arezzo, Italy. That provides an interesting context for the study of microbiology and its development over time.

Faculty instructors and program leaders are Professors Casie Collamore and Tyrrell Conway, both from the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology at The University of Oklahoma. This will be their third year to lead the program, which they developed.

Students begin with a few days in Rome before moving on to Arezzo, the base for the rest of the time. Other excursions, including an overnight trip to Florence, will explore Italian culture and history. The group also visits Siena, where the Black Plague killed fifty percent of the inhabitants – an interesting perspective when taking a course on pathogenic and infectious diseases.

Classes will be held Mondays through Thursdays, although some day trips may take place on Fridays in order to keep the rest of the weekend free. There is an open 3-day weekend mid-program for independent travel.

Participants on this program will live in either apartments within the city of Arezzo, or hotel rooms shared with one other person. In hotels, breakfast is provided on site. In the apartments, the students receive meal vouchers that they can use in a variety of restaurants in town – one voucher for breakfast or brunch, and the other for dinner. Those vouchers are included in the program cost. Apartments also have full kitchens, allowing the students to prepare meals.

The prerequisite courses for this program are MBIO 3812 AND 3813. Those two courses provide a solid background for the courses taught on the program. Students who have neither of those, or will have had only one of them by the time the program would begin, need to contact the instructors to discuss the situation.

This program is designed for students who will take the academic component of a study abroad program seriously. Studying is an integral part of the experience. However, the faculty leaders have worked to create a balanced program, including visits to local wineries, a pasta-making class, art and history of science museums, and the now famous "Plague Day" in Siena.

Along with learning pathogenic microbiology and its relationship with the host immune response, students will have the opportunity to see priceless pieces of art. In Rome, students will get to tour the Vatican Museum and see Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling. In Florence, they will tour the Uffizi Gallery, which includes numerous pieces of Renaissance art, and the Accademia, which houses Michelangelo's David. At another museum visit, students will get to see Galileo's actual finger! These excursions complement the classroom component of the two courses.

