

MICROBIOLOGY IN ITALY

SUMMER 2014



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 context for the study of pathogenic microbiology and basic immunology. The lasting impacts of infectious diseases that once swept Italy remain readily apparent there today. These courses are offered in a Tuscan setting that predates medieval times. Special emphasis will be placed on the social and economic impacts of disease in this region.

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 second 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 day trips to Florence, will explore Italian culture and history. The group also visits Siena, where the Black Plague killed fifty percent of the inhabitants in 1348 – an interesting perspective when taking a course on pathogenic and infectious diseases. These excursions complement the classroom component of the two courses. Classes will be held Mondays through Thursdays, although some day trips will take place on Fridays. 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 prerequisites for this program are a minimum 3.0 GPA, plus MBIO 3812 and 3813. The prerequisites provide a solid background for the courses taught and are required. However, students who will have completed only MBIO 3813 may contact [Casie Collamore](#) to discuss participating in the program.

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. The small class size and compressed schedule facilitate group activities, independent assignments, and active learning, all of which contribute to the students' success.

