

L'Orologio

volume 3

Student Work

Rome, Italy

Fall 2023



BORROMINI[®]
INSTITUTE
CRITICAL FIELD LEARNING ABROAD



A produce stand in Mercato Testaccio

Located in the working-class neighborhood of Testaccio, this covered market emerges as an attractive and trendy spot that brings together producers, the local community, and visitors, where fresh foods meet with local artisanal shops in a welcoming and active multifunctional space.

– Stephanie Lepak, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

**BORROMINI
INSTITUTE ROME
STUDENT WORK
Fall, 2023**

edited by

Tom Rankin
Director, Borromini Institute

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left: our picnic spot during the Appian Way bike experience (ph: Rankin)

below: welcome reception on rooftop of Borromini Center

bottom: Erica greets UIUC students upon arrival



Intro

The students selected to participate in the Fall Program in Rome came from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines but shared a desire to learn from experience in one of the richest urban and agricultural centers in the world.

We at the Borromini Institute were happy to welcome them all into our facilities in the heart of Rome. Here they met new classmates, faculty and guest instructors who accompanied them in an intense whirlwind of hands-on learning which will stay with them forever.

First to arrive were the three students from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. They settled into their lodging, and then jumped right into learning Italian and Roman history and culture and preparing for their internships. By the middle of their first week they were shopping at farmers' markets and returning to their favorite coffee bars for the second time.

They were soon joined by the cohort from Hobart and William Smith Colleges led by Prof. Chris Annear. Professor Annear's wife Stephanie and two sons Gannon and Soren were all actively involved in the learning experience as well.

Despite their different universities of provenance the students shared most of their activities and coursework. For the first week's outing to Ostia Antica to the final day trip to the Abruzzo mountains they were all open to new experiences in Rome and around Italy.

This publication, part of our ongoing series of student work showcases, documents some of the great things that come from collaboration, open minds, and hard work.

Acknowledgements

All of the guest speakers like Milena Wilcox of Slow Food Roma, Ilaria Sferazza who guided multiple museum visits, economist Michele Trimarchi, representatives of the US Embassy who joined our orientation, and the several chefs who led their cooking classes such as Alice Adams, Fortuna Corbisiero, and Luigi Marra at San Carlo Pizzeria in Naples. In the trip south in particular we want to thank Michele Tripodi, the mayor of Polistena, Vittorio Zito, the mayor of Roccella Ionica, and Rosario Zurzolo who runs the Social Cooperative Jungi Mundu in Camini. And of course, Of course we thank Bruno who welcomed them into the building every day, Sonny for cleaning our facilities, and Dr. Andrea for keeping the students healthy.

Students



Ryan Brady is a sophomore at HWS, double majoring in Media & Society and English. Coming from Buffalo NY, she has loved her experience abroad and is so grateful for the opportunity. In addition to living in Rome, traveling in Europe has been an inspiration for her film and photography, which has been one of the highlights of her trip.



Jackson Acker is a current Sophomore at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, with a major in Management and Entrepreneurship concentrating in Food Studies. Additionally, he is minoring in Italian Studies. Being in Rome, he has tried to expand his horizons as much as possible within a new and foreign culture.



Michael Gilbert is a current junior at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, coming from Cleveland, Ohio. He majors in Environmental Studies and minors in Entrepreneurial Studies along with Italian Studies. He is also a member of the rowing team at Hobart. In Rome, he tried immersing himself in the culture by cooking Italian dishes.



Alex Barnosky is a senior at Hobart and William Smith Colleges majoring in Anthropology and Sociology with a minor in Studio Art. In Rome he strove to push himself artistically attempting to capture the essence of Rome through his photography.



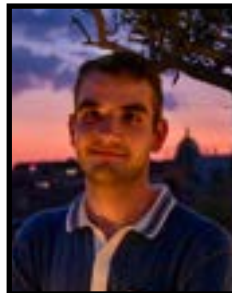
Emma VanGorder is a Canandaigua, New York native studying Dance and Educational Studies at HWS with a minor in Italian Studies. She's loved the focus on slow living and sustainability and has found community at a local Yoga studio, deepening her commitment to a simple, sustainable lifestyle.



Katherine Murray comes from Rochester New York and is currently studying Management and Entrepreneurship with a double minor in Philosophy and Media and Society. She has loved living in Rome and exploring everything the city has to offer. Being in Rome has also allowed her to connect with her Italian roots and meet her extended family.



Margaret Mulvaney is a junior at HWS, majoring in Anthropology and minoring in Italian studies and hailing from Ocean, New Jersey. While in Rome, she embarked on a journey that empowered her independence and sparked academic curiosity. Amidst ancient ruins, she transcended conventional ways of learning and immersed herself in local culture to expand her understanding of anthropology.



Tanner Tattan is a senior at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He is fortunate to have had the opportunity to delve into the culture of Rome through food and environment and learn about the city's commitment to sustainability. He is also grateful for the support and camaraderie from the members of his cohort and Borromini Institute staff.



Jose Tello Galicia is a junior, majoring in History and Anthropology with a minor in Italian at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. During his time in Rome he strived to learn more about the Italian culture and language while also rediscovering the city through an anthropological and historical point of view.



Stephanie Lepak is a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Global Studies and Spanish. Passionate about food and friends (not to mention café), she has made some of the best memories and everlasting connections while in Rome! She especially grateful for the enriching and unique opportunity working at social cooperative farm Il Trattore



Phoebe Flannery is a junior from Chicago, Illinois who studies at the University of Illinois where she is a Political Science major on the PreLaw Track. In Rome she enjoyed fully immersing herself in a new culture through her internship, classes and travels.



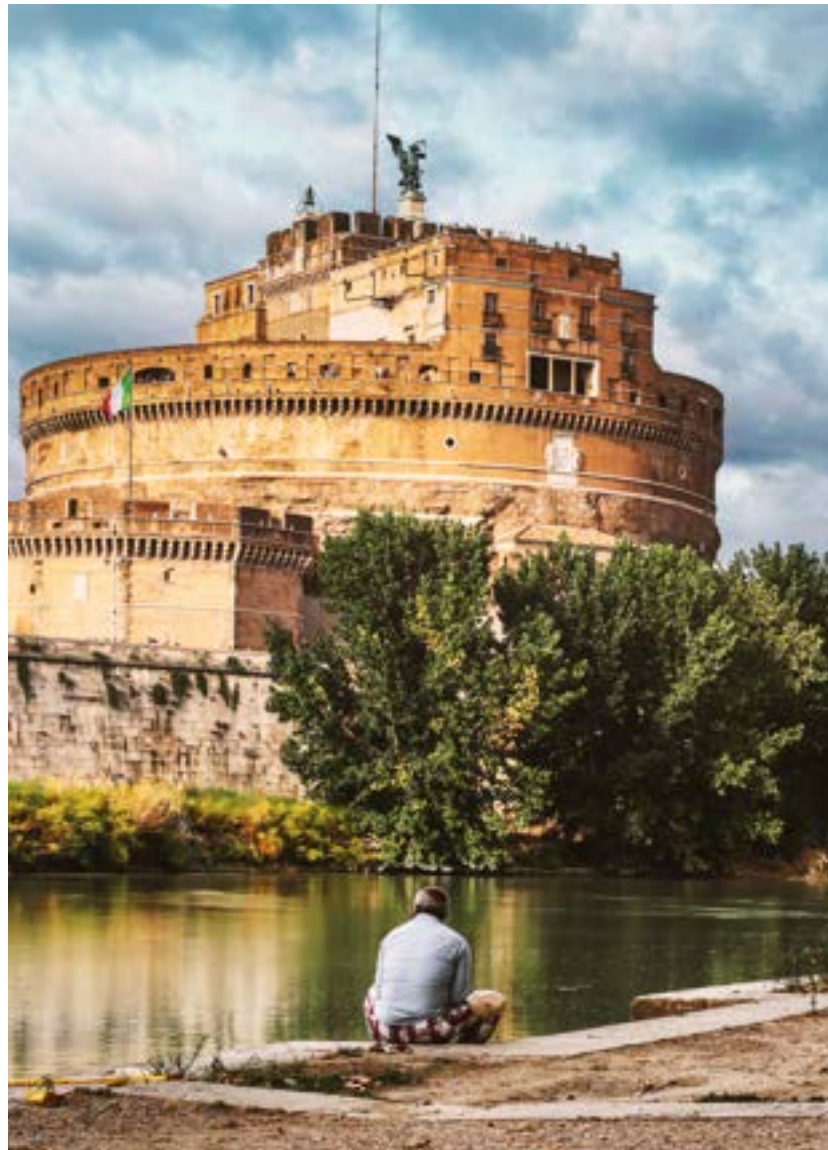
Jocelyn Gonzalez is currently a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Advertising. While in Rome she enjoyed exploring nearby neighborhoods, going to see Italian movies and exploring local bookshops.



Bode Lonergan comes from the suburbs of Massachusetts. He is currently a sophomore at HWS, majoring in Economics and Sociology with a minor in Italian Studies. While in Rome he has been soaking in the city life getting as much as he can before he goes back to Geneva, New York.



Matthew is a senior at Hobart and William Smith Colleges where he majors in Anthropology - Sociology and minors in Italian Studies. He studied in Rome to explore language, food, and authenticity. While traveling throughout Italy, he visited his welcoming family members and saw relevant applications of course theories.



right top: Ponte Sisto and the Tiber river, Rome (ph: Alex Barnosky)

right: Castel Sant'Angelo (ph: Alex Barnosky)

Faculty and Staff



above: students in Venezia, Palermo and Mestre (ph: T. Rankin)



Tom Rankin has lived in Rome, practicing architecture and teaching, since 1991. He received his Master's in Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design and a BA in Architecture at Princeton.



Pier Alberto Merli received his degree in Philosophy from Florence University and his Ph.D. in Economics and Social Sciences at Florence University. He is Resident Director for HWS and U of I in Rome. He is also a wine expert and sommelier.



Chris Annear is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at HWS with a focus on cross-cultural culinary and environmental knowledge in Zambia, Vietnam, the U.S... and now Italy! His research and teaching cover cuisine, political ecology, and local modes of development and power. He has truly loved to live and teach the slow, sweet life here in Rome.



Steve Nussbaum has worked in study abroad administration and instruction for his whole career, with long stints in Japan. At the Borromini Institute he is Director of Expansion and Development and Critical Studies on Food Systems and Sustainability in Japan



Vittorio Coronati is the Borromini Institute's trusted accountant. In his spare time he is an avid wood carver, making beautifully crafted objects of his own design.



Bruno Pallitto has been keeping order in Palazzo Bennicelli for decades, greeting students cheerfully and reminding them of the rules of proper behavior.



Lindsay Maldari came to Rome to earn her Master's in Art History with John Cabot University. Rome continues to inspire Lindsay's life and work on 20th century public monuments, and it is with great pleasure that she now shares her love of the city as a Program Coordinator at the Borromini Institute.



Erica Cacopardo has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Master's degree in Development Sciences and International Cooperation and has worked in Italy, Peru and Brazil. In her free time, Erica loves to travel, read, and go to the cinema and museums.



Laura Offeddu received her Law degree from La Sapienza in Rome and her Master's degree in International Environmental Law. Before joining the American Academy in Rome where she managed the Rome Sustainable Food Project, she worked as an international lawyer.



Lulu Yuan has a Master's degree in fashion design and marketing in Italy and China and has been working as a fashion designer for more than 15 years. She is a teacher of art anatomy, an illustrator and a photographer. And, of course, a food lover.



William Fincham is a student of University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He is majoring in Linguistics and Italian. Coming from a mixed Italian and Scottish background, it has been fun for him helping other young people get acclimated. He is thrilled to have been able to do his part in helping other people experience and see what his mother country is all about.



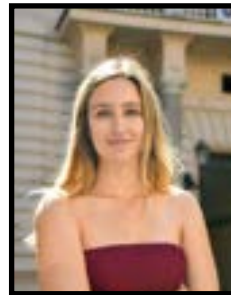
Filippo De Chirico studied history at Roma Tre and the University of Bologna and is soon to begin his doctoral research on energy policy. He is greatly interested in environmental topics and sustainability and is happy to share his passion with students and colleagues at the Borromini Institute.



Stefano Presutti has a PhD in Linguistics and since 2015 is an adjunct professor of Italian studies at American universities and study programs in Rome. His research has been recently published in Q1 academic journals such as *Lingua*, *Social Semiotics*, *Visual Communication*, and the *International Journal of Multilingualism*.



Michela Guida earned her Master's degree from La Sapienza University of Rome in Hispanic Languages and Literature. She is a DITALS II and CILS certified teacher of Italian and has taught for several institutions in Rome. She also leads Italian language learning workshops and has written several articles and books.



Veronica Orciari is a young Italian tutor who has worked and studied abroad several times in the UK, Malta, Spain, Ireland and Germany. With a background in foreign languages and cultures and journalism, she founded a festival centered on Italian poetry, music and theatre for young people in her hometown.



Kat Tan is a filmmaker and communications expert. Originally from the Philippines, she has lived in the US and now in Italy.



ROM 207

(Never) Basta! Edible Italy



above: students participating in cooking class with Fortuna (ph: E. Cacopardo)

left: after a long morning in Ostia Antica (ph: Yuan)

“A tavola non s’invecchia” (“One doesn’t age at the supper table”) expresses the importance of food and eating for Italians. In this course we used anthropological tools to study sociocultural meanings, practices, histories, politics, and economics of the foods Italian people produce and eat. Professor Annear developed this course with particular attention to the literal and figurative “terroir” of food, a French-originated term that references the expressive heritage and taste of a specific location. For Italians, this is terra (earth, place), which leads to the culinary production, conscious consumption, and regional marketing of fruits of the soil. We sought to understand how the foods people consume (and those they do not) provide more than simply nourishment—they help to constitute social identities and group formation, but also exclusion. Worldwide, humans use the social taste and terroir of land and its foods to define and enforce class, race, and gender parameters. How do Italian eaters, cooks, and food producers construct these categories and how have these categories, when related to food, changed over time? With a focus on primary research learning and hands-on practice, we studied regional and class differences in cuisine; gender roles and constraints; politics of the Italian Slow Food movement; and meanings constructed through claims of culinary authenticity. Whenever possible, our classroom was the restaurant tables, kitchens, and chopping blocks of Rome and the other Italian destinations we visited.

The student work below comes from assignments the students carried out during their semester in Italy.

Student Work

I believe authenticity in food is a dynamic and evolving concept, often linked to cultural values, practices, and traditions. Authenticity is defined as the extent to which a dish aligns with the cultural values, practices, and traditions of a particular region or community, even when it originates from a different culture.

The authenticity of Maqluba in Italy is a compelling case study of how immigration has enriched and diversified “Italian” cuisine. “Authenticity exists ex post facto. It is not an indication of origins, but of configurations of cultural values.” (Weiss 2001:75) While the dish itself is rooted in Middle Eastern traditions, its adoption and adaptation in Italy reflect the evolving nature of food culture. In this context, Maqluba can be considered an authentic Italian dish, not in terms of its origin but in the cultural values and practices it embodies. “Authenticity speaks to the evolving nature of being from that place. It’s not static. It can’t be.” (Alexander 2016). This dish represents the integration of immigrant traditions into Italian culinary heritage. The incorporation of ingredients like eggplant, which has Italian origins, into a Middle Eastern dish exemplifies the dynamic and transformative nature of food culture.

--Michael Gilbert, Authenticity Review of a Culinary Dish

I am asked if I would like it with a brioche. I wasn’t quite that hungry and hesitate and the server adds it’s the typical way of taking the breakfast. Typical in this sense refers to how Sicilians typically eat the breakfast, taken as a synonym of authentic. Weiss warns against equating the two words, as it “only a cross section of possibilities at a given moment of time (a synchronic



top: a window in Italy (ph: Alex Barnosky)

above: a street in Abruzzo (ph: Emma VanGorder)

analysis) and not a historical (diachronic) account” (Weiss, 2011). However, I do not view the two as false friends, but can be rather symbiotic in which I often find the employment of the term typical to carry its own ambiguity that allows for variation within the given moment (within the bounds of what is currently done regarding the thing in question), and one that represents the current moment within the historical timeline of a given thing/practice that is inherently informed by its history. Typical suggests popularity and consistency in its practice, likely done so in the context/inspiration of what is traditional, which inevitably attributes to the timeline of a practice, lending (in the long-term) to a kind of authenticity. In the context of Sicilian breakfast rituals, which I found to be commonplace and widespread, typical is synonymous with authentic. Typically, Sicilians order una granità with una brioscia col ‘tuppu (a brioche with a ‘tuppu, referring to the iconic-looking bun on top) together, dunking the brioche into the cold slushie-creamy mixture- it is what is considered the full authentic breakfast experience.

As I ripped off the ‘tuppu top of the brioche and took my first dip into the cream-laden top, tasting my first bit of granità in Messina, I savored the mixture of warm and yeast with creamy cold caffè. Phenomenal, and truly buonissimo. To me, this meal passed the authenticity test- both due to the experience of the meal alongside for the meal in itself. The connection to the terra/Sicily, while not a necessary inclusion within my definition, helped to solidify the experience. Weiss (2011) emphasizes that innovation does not destroy authenticity; while I doubt the ice being used necessarily came from the Sicilian mountain reserves, given we were in Messina, renowned for its granità and seeing it stored in a pozzetto helps me believe that it was likely produced using traditional production methods, a process that many Sicilians pride themselves on and that provides products of quality that brings locals to the bar, reproducing this shared experience. This goes beyond the technical aspects, as it lays the ground for a quality in the experience, of forming community that inevitably creates a shared history and common ground.

--Stephanie Lepak

What the works of Alexander (2016), Wong (2017), and Weiss (2011) all have in common is that they blur the distinction of what is authentic Italianità. Much of determining Italianità involves layers of politics, social tensions, nationalism, and The Southern Question. What is often missing from this discourse is what is perhaps most important—an eye towards culinary production and ingredients. If Italianità fails to give us the answers we seek, terroir is equally as convoluted in the Italian context. Terroir has been central to the Slow Food Movement in a effort to highlight the intersection of nature, culture, and food production. However, it can emerge to be problematic insofar as food from one region may be deemed as superior to the same food from a different region. Oftentimes, the person making a dish or cultivating a harvest becomes central to determining authenticity. Notions of racial supremacy and nationalism are therefore inherently laden in discussions of terroir, and one must be mindful of such when using it to determine authenticity.

--Tanner Tattan

“In 1970, anthropologist Agehananda Bharati described this process as ‘the pizza effect,’ using the way in which pizza, ‘a simple, hot-baked bread without any trimmings, the staple of the Calabrian and Sicilian contadini,’ made its way to the Americas, where it was adopted, adapted, appropriated, and then reintroduced back to Italy through the return of visiting Italian emigrants” (Wong 2017: 36). At what point does appreciation and inspiration of a dish turn into appropriation?

According to the “pizza effect,” pizza has been just about everywhere and

taken back to Italy after becoming Westernized. At the same time, pizza is supposed to be the food that represents the country of Italy. The location, transportation, and possible shifting of traditions show that authenticity isn't a linear trajectory. Similarly, arancini has had a similar effect because it has spread throughout Italy. The changing and innovative recipes have become broadened to include various regions and culinary techniques. The arancini that I ate was filled with pesto.

This fairly new sauce was created in Northern Italy. I indulged in a southern Italian pesto that filled the arancini. This new take on arancini didn't negate the authenticity of the dish, rather it showed the evolution and the innovation of the people of Italy, the spread of their ideas, and culinary techniques. Although arancini was once one thing, it has now evolved into something different but is still served and proudly eaten by those in Sicily. Arancini, while technically an authentic Sicilian dish, sparks a debate on the concept of authenticity in culinary culture. Some, like Alexander, dismiss the notion of authenticity as 'bullshit' and a marketing ploy, accusing chefs of using tradition as a shield for mediocre execution. However, I challenge this perspective. Instead of labeling authenticity with a negative connotation, I believe it is essential to preserve and honor culinary history. I agree with Alexander that the common understanding of authenticity can be misleading, especially in the US, where individuality can be more important than a collective tradition. Authentic cuisine can offer comfort and share the stories of a community. Authenticity, rather than hindering creativity, can adapt and evolve, serving as the backbone of many cultural narratives.

--Emma VanGorder

I must say, I am not a cake guy. I do not enjoy the texture, the overpowering sweetness, quite honestly, a typical birthday cake is the most overrated thing in my eyes. However, angel food cake reminds me of my grandfather and that alone will lead to memories and a delicious dessert each and every time. Vividly, I still remember the first and last time I had angel food cake for my grandfather's birthday. A man who grew up with nothing was accompanied by his living immediate and extended family members for every birthday. I was a part of each from his ages of 82-94 when he passed away. A quiet man who I never knew well and unfortunately never got the pleasure of knowing all that well, but a man I loved and looked up to. The thing about angel food cake that makes it unlike any other cake is the simplicity. Typically consisting of five ingredients: sugar, flour, egg whites, salt, vanilla...Even though the physical baking process is simple, it is a recipe and dish that needs a few hours to rest to properly air out and create that light, fluffy, cloud like texture that many love it for.

My "Madeline" experience is created through an angel food cake, a cake that reminds me of my forever resting grandfather. A man of little words, a simple life, and a lover of all things simple. Like Proust had said in the reading, "If a Happy Meal of pizza reminds of dinner with Dad after the soccer match, then rejecting fat means rejecting Dad", however, I enjoy this cake for my grandfather. I choose to indulge in the sweetness and airiness of the angel food cake as a nonverbal way of telling my grandfather I love him and I always will.

--Jackson Acker, Your "Madeleine" Experience

When I was young, every year around Thanksgiving, my mother would go out and pick apples from the trees. She would then fill the house with an amazing aroma of cinnamon and freshly peeled apples before cooking this amazing pie. What makes it so special is the many generations the recipe has been passed down from farmer to farmer; it is a simple pie that can send you into another world. My mother would make six pies for Thanksgiving every year because it was not just me, my brother, and my dad that loved this pie but my entire extended family waited all year every



above: heart shaped pizza made by students in Napoli (Ph: Phoebe Flannery)

below: students relaxing after class (Ph: Maggie Mulvaney)



year for the special treat only created once a year, which I believe added to the excitement and the incredible taste. I often forget these memories of helping my mom with the pie and picking apples since my farm had deteriorated over the years; she stopped making the pie for around three years because the farm was going through hard times. This past year, she brought them back to Thanksgiving but didn't tell anyone, and when she pulled them out, there were people in my family with tears of excitement. I remember taking my first bite after a long time, and a wave of emotion overcame me. I had every memory of my childhood and the farm in its heyday, and I looked around and saw my entire family having a similar experience; it was truly so special to share such a moment with the people I love, all thanks to simple but special food, much like Marcel Proust's experience, where he describes how food can transport us back and evoke long-forgotten memories as clear as day.

–Alex Barnosky, Your "Madeleine" Experience,

I remember baking ours [grandfather, Papa's soda bread] with my Dad in silence as we thought of my Papa and his memory. It was not a fond memory, only a sad one. That was until the bread got into the oven. The second that the aroma of the bread hit my nose, memories of smiles and hugs and laughter and love all flooded back into my mind. I remembered my Papa's smile after he would serve his bread, his hands guiding mine as I mixed the dough, the excitement that would rush through my family when we knew his bread was on the way. I had forgotten so much of this in the sadness of the loss, but the smell of the bread baking instantly replenished everything I associated the bread with in the first place. Similar to Belasco, when I realized this, I felt a "shudder run through my whole body" (Belasco, 25). A shudder of not only memories but the feelings felt alongside them all replacing the mourning I had been suffering through for weeks as well as filling the hole that my Papa's diagnosis had left in family gatherings for years.

–Phoebe Flannery, Your "Madeleine" Experience

Sicily was ruled by many different countries, empires and therefore has multiple influences in itself from various other cultures. This background then is important to determine if the popular pastry cannoli [in American parlance] is authentic as described in the definition provided in the beginning of the essay. I would say that the cannoli is authentic to Sicily in that it may have outside influences but came to be in Sicily and that it's connected to the location because of the culture, technique and other influences that remained in Sicily and constructed it.

–Jocelyn Gonzalez, Authenticity Review,



left: Students and staff exploring the markets of Palermo, Sicily (ph: Lu Yuan)



left: Students chatting amongst ruins of Rome's ancient port town of Ostia Antica (ph: Lu Yuan)

ROM 211

Terra Italiana: Environmental Studies in Italy

Can you envision a land conservation project that requires human habitation to succeed? How do we understand local opposition to the establishment of national parks in Sardinia? In which ways are heritage land claims both inclusive and exclusionary? In this course, we questioned conventional perceptions of the relationship between humans and nature as we study how the ecological environment is shaped by human behavior—and vice versa. We used an anthropological approach to study both local and global as we become acquainted with perspectives on how humans perceive, exploit, and socialize natural environments. Once we established core knowledge about how human beings live and work in the environment, we studied a series of concepts and case studies focused on Italian places and practices, including:

- “Sons of the soil”: how heritage land claims can create bonds to space for some, while excluding others
- Slow Food Land: how a sociopolitical movement seeks to remake human connections to land, conservation, and agrobiodiversity, but struggles with class
- Saving Venice from a “natural disaster” that is human made
- Indigeneity and the politics of national park formation in Sardinia

The student work below comes from assignments the students carried out during the semester in Italy.

Student Work

Venice's construction of the MOSE system is a testament to modern innovation and a powerful emblem of Italian unity in the fight against environmental threats and natural disasters.

However, this seemingly effective solution has not been without challenges, contributing significantly to social complexities and uncertainties regarding the future of Venice. These concerns for the city's fate are amplified by increased tourism and social disruptions that have emerged in the decades leading up to the MOSE's ultimate construction. While the MOSE system has successfully combatted flooding, its impact on the social fabric of Venice has complicated notions of the city's identity. It has created a polarized environment regarding its technological triumphs and the social repercussions of large-scale environmental interventions.

As Venice and Siamo Aqua navigate these complexities now and in the years ahead, the MOSE system will stand to represent a moment of Italian unity and innovation, as well as represent the intricate challenges when safeguarding historic cities from the dangers of a changing climate.

--Maggie Mulvaney

Terra Madre starts with the ideas of sustainability and biodiversity, which means land and production, then getting to food and flavor. Terra Madre practices glocalism, which seeks to support local environments and structures to form global impacts. In the context of these two authors, socialized landscapes are environments that promote a connection to food, land, or both. These environments could have been previously socialized for another purpose but have been reorganized to promote growth. These spaces are often intentionally cared for, allowing people to explore agriculture and





gardening, but the space also provides materials, such as food or flowers for enjoyment. This includes private spaces or public spaces.

--Matt High, Documenting Socialized Landscapes

Being able to absorb new ideas and adapt them into the fabric of the city is crucial for the development of a city, and a key component of a socialized environment. In "People and Nature," author Moran says that "Not all people in developed society behave destructively towards the environment..." and "...human and political economic systems, like ecological systems, resist changing their patterns until there is overwhelming evidence that something fundamental has changed which requires a shift in the structure and function of the system, if it is to survive" (Moran 2006:16). Human intervention in an environment is not always a negative thing, in fact sometimes it is the opposite. Interrupting old belief systems and ways of life, especially in cities with as extensive a history as Rome, is often crucial for that city's survival. For years, Rome has not only been at the forefront of architectural ingenuity, but it has also been a pioneer of modernizing an ancient city while simultaneously being able to preserve its history. This is another key component of Rome as a socialized environment, that in addition to the literal creation of the city, Rome has an extensive history of its citizens actively engaging in the betterment of the city and its modernization through a millennia. These thousands of years of prioritizing historic preservation while still undergoing reconstruction, and being able to reach a balance between the two, is one of the reasons that Rome has such a unique human environment dynamic. There is an understanding of Rome as an ancient cultural center, which means people treat the environment with a reverence that isn't seen in many other places.

--Ryan Brady, Documenting the Socialized Landscape

above: Students visiting food workshop (Ph: Phoebe Flannery)

left: A tree in the gardens of Palazzo dei Normanni, Palermo (ph: T. Rankin)





above (from student media posts):

The proximity and height of the buildings lining the streets of Rome provide essential space, shade and connection that help to create a walkable city. With intense heat, buildings that create shade can help conserve energy by cooling down streets that make them more accessible to walk on.

– Jocelyn Gonzalez, U. of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

left: Students visit the Colosseum (ph: W. Fincham)



OCL_210

Sustainable Rome

“In chemistry, in physics, in technology, we have laboratories. The laboratory is where you develop an experiment, and then you take the experiment to the breaking point so that through this failure, you learn about the subject. Well, we should do the same thing with those urban problems which are the most complex, the most demanding.” – Paolo Soleri, *The Urban Ideal*

The course looks at Rome as a laboratory for urban sustainability in an increasingly urban world. It is estimated that in the 21st century, cities will produce around 90% of world population growth, 80% of its wealth and 60% of energy consumption. In the urgent clamour to redesign urban environments we looked not only at technological solutions and “smart city” strategies but also traditional approaches to improving social, economic, and environmental conditions. Adapting to an urban planet in the age of climate crisis will necessitate a critical awareness of social inequalities as a basis for socially responsible actions. Thus the course is both technical and ethical in scope.

After a general introduction to Italy and its regional traditions the course turns to contemporary issues of sustainability related to urban space, social equity, energy, mobility, waste, water and agriculture. Lessons are devoted to urban challenges and solutions such as transit-oriented development, renewable and distributed energy, the sharing economy, urban agriculture, the success of the Mediterranean diet, and more.

Overall, we investigate ways in which design and management of the built environment and its dynamic flows can contribute to, or impede, the development and preservation of local culture. To paraphrase French



above: The railroad system plays a crucial role in the sustainability of Rome. Having access to such a vast railroad system allows people travel both short and long distances while emitting less Carbon Dioxide than a plane ride or individual car rides. Since there are so many trains at many times and traveling to many places, the convenience of train travel makes it appealing to more people, in turn making it easier for the general population to partake in sustainable travel.

– Phoebe Flannery, U. of Illinois, Urbana Champaign above right:

The obelisk in the center of Piazza del Popolo is an excellent example of how Rome combines beauty with sustainability. The obelisk uses the latest generation LED light to combine a solid light force with the best color while being sustainable. The LED light helps ensure there is limited wasted energy.

– Alex Barnosky, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

right:

The area around the Theater of Marcellus is a public walkway at the ground level of Ancient Rome. The walkway has several signs written in Italian and English, explaining the history of the excavation. The ancient building houses some apartments for a few wealthy individuals, emphasizing a distinction between a public historical walkway and private housing.

–Matthew High, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

philosopher Paul Ricoeur, how can we take part in universal civilization without abandoning local cultural knowledge?

As the course is taught on-site in Italy it inevitably introduces students to Italian vocabulary related to cultural and environmental sustainability. It also engages students in contemporary Italian society through international exchange activities aimed at broadening students' understanding of local culture.

Assignment: Media Posts

To demonstrate their full attention and curiosity about the course material each week students captured images and combined them with thoughtful captions.

Posts were to represent sustainability-related urban situations uncovered during the course or during students' independent explorations. For example, a photo might demonstrate how food is consumed in the city, how people live that experience, the ways in which they acquire and prepare it, the company they keep, how they cook and eat, their preferences and practices which reveal a larger economic, social, cultural and political world. Other valid post topics were those that show the intersections of sustainability and ethnicity, gender and class, food hybridity, innovation and creativity, heritage and change, or juxtapositions of global and local.



right:

Unique to the Eternal City, *nasoni* are simultaneously convenient and symbolize Rome's commitment to sustainability. The constant flow of water allows for purity as it expels particles and other impurities. *Nasoni* also improve social welfare insofar as it guarantees clean drinking water to all who dwell in the city.

–Tanner Tattan, Hobart and William Smith Colleges



below right:

Here are four polished brass grave markers in the Jewish Ghetto in Rome. These are called "stumbling stones" (English translation) as they were meant to be looked at as you watched where you stepped so as to not stumble over them. These markers specifically mark the place and time where local Jews were taken and on what day they were killed.

–Bode Lonergan, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

below:

Rome is filled with many streets, many of which are dirty. This litter exists due to human ignorance and lack of care for our environment. Because of this, street sweepers (as depicted above) come through to clean up the streets. Their efforts allow for the city to stay clean.

–Jackson Acker, Hobart and William Smith Colleges



right:

Pictured is Il Trattore Cooperative Sociale, a farming cooperative located in Rome. This photo highlights the cooperative's farmland cultivated in a green and lush sanctuary in a bustling urban city. Not only does Il Trattore emphasize social justice and provide resources for disabled and marginalized people, but the cooperative additionally acts as a refuge from the Roman urban sprawl.

– Margaret Mulvaney, Hobart and William Smith Colleges



above:

With over 120 Farmer's markets, Rome has a direct producer to consumer production line. In which without chemicals and pesticides, the produce is sold in a more sustainable way. Due to the setting, the farmer takes a bigger share of the profit than it would by providing to supermarkets.

– Jose Tello Galicia, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

below right:

While walking through the markets in Palermo Sicily there was an overwhelming abundance of fresh seafood. Not only does eating locally help the local business owners, but it is a great way to sustainably live due to there being fewer harmful impacts on the environment.

– Katherine Murray, Hobart and William Smith Colleges



below:

Students participated in Retake service learning activity (Ph: R Grady, M. Gilbert)

bottom:

Class visit to Pigneto neighborhood and Ex-SNIA (Ph: S. Lepak)

right: Video poster for research documentary on subject of public green space (work by S. Lepak, J. Gonzalez, P. Flannery, University of Illinois, Urban Champaign)

Assignment: Documentary Video

As the principal assignment for the course, students are required to carry out research and analysis regarding one or more of the seven themes addressed by the course. Students choose a specific focus applying the assigned theme (i.e. "urban fabric") to the geographic destination of a specific class site-visit (i.e. Piazza di Spagna), widening the research to cover comparable cases, historic transformation, and other relevant material on a case-by-case basis.

Throughout the course students use video to consciously document the research and interview local stakeholders concerning the topic of the investigation. The final part of the research project consists in production of a short but carefully-crafted documentary video regarding the research.

The work-in-progress was presented as an in-class student-led "work-in-progress" discussion and a poster to promote their work).



a documentary by Stephanie Lepak, Jocelyn Gonzalez and Phoebe Flannery

public screening: 7 December 2023, 17:00



Vicolo Sforza Cesarini, 3A (Piazza dell'Orologio) Roma



above:

Students learning about urban farming at Hortis Urbis (Ph: T. Rankin)



top right:

Biking in the Parco della Caffarella (PH: Rankin)

lower right:

On exploration of one of Rome's many green neighborhoods, San Saba (Ph: T. Rankin)

below: walking in Palermo's pedestrian zones (Ph: T. Rankin)





above: Stills from student video
Verdant Vistas: Roman Green Spaces as Opportunity Catalysts for Experiential Education
 by Emma VanGorder, Jose Tello Galicia, and Tanner Tattan

above right: Video Poster by Jackson Acker, Alex Barnosky, and Ryan Brady.

Pedestrians and Efficient/ Effective Modes of Travel through Rome

Thesis: Rome is a large city in which each individual citizen has their own unique way of travel; However, some methods are less sustainable, less effective, and less efficient, so which methods of travel are most seen and most effective amongst the citizens of Rome.

below right: Still from documentary by Bode Lonergan and Michael Gilbert

Reimagining Wine; The Everchanging World of Wine and Sustainability

Thesis: The future of winemaking is transforming towards sustainability and innovative packaging. The wine industry is evolving, emphasizing the significance of eco-friendly packaging options such as cans, boxes, and bottle refilling, while shedding light on the vital role sustainability plays in the production and consumption of natural wines.



a documentary by Jackson Acker, Alex Barnosky, and Ryan Brady

public screening: 7 December 2023, 17:00



Vicolo Sforza Cesarini, 3A (Piazza dell’Orologio) Roma





“Siamo andati in un gruppo di circa nove per vedere la partita della Roma contro il Lecce. L'atmosfera era incredibile e lo stadio è esploso quando Lukaku ha segnato quel secondo gol.”

— William Fincham, University of Edinburgh



Italian Language Courses

This course helped students hone their abilities to communicate in Italian and built their knowledge of Italian grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. At the same time, students were introduced to the rich culture of the city of Rome and to contemporary Roman life. In addition to our classroom meetings, each week we met various locations in and around the city, giving students the opportunity to practice their developing language skills in context. We visited cafés, markets, neighborhood shops and cultural centers, and more, meeting and chatting with locals along the way.

– Prof. Courtney Quaintance, Italian Language Coordinator



top: “Eccoci a VinoRoma a studiare vino. Che vita!” (Ph: C. Annear)

above: Photo and caption by Prof. Chris Annear “C’è una statua dell’uomo che ha provato avvisare i Troiani del cavallo di Troia. Penso che vuole scappare delle turiste.”

opposite page: Students attend a Rome soccer match in their free time (Ph: Phoebe Flannery)



“Arte e graffiti in una strada romana”
– Maggie Mulvaney



“Un uomo che lavora nelle strade trafficate, senza paura”
– Alex Barnosky



“I had the fulfilling and unique opportunity to work at social cooperative farm Il Trattore. Located a bit way away from the city center in the natural reserve Valle dei Casali, the cooperative practices biological agriculture while providing work-training opportunities to disadvantaged populations and organized environmental education activities to school groups and offers access to fresh produce to the surrounding community and institutions. Not only did this allow me to explore more of the city, but it also turned out to be one of the best experiences of my time here in Rome (dare I say of my life!). I have cherished my time at Il Trattore, where I helped with a variety of tasks- from harvesting the season’s vegetables, working on upkeep of the land, preparing and leading environmental education tours/workshops, crafting social media posts, aiding in the storefront sales-point and administrative tasks, etc. Here I was exposed to what social cooperatives are, what they do, and how they operate. Each day brought something new- I learned about and participated in activities regarding social farming, agricultural practices, biological agriculture, fresh and 0-kilometer foods, and more. One of the most profound aspects of my internship experience was meeting and working alongside a diverse array of amazing coworkers, who in addition to being great mentors, also became dear friends!”

—Steph Lepak, U. of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

INT 101

Academic Internship

Academic Internships organized through the Borromini Institute offer a structured learning experience in the field. We provide a supportive and collaborative environment combining observation, research, and practical skills acquisition to help students in developing skills, and academic insights in new settings, languages and cultures.

Student Work

For my internship placement I worked with **Ginko Agency**, a marketing company that partners with Google to construct websites to be more accessible and to run efficiently for the brand in question. I worked in conducting secondary research into Ginko's own brand as well as private health sector brands as they were trying to create a campaign to better attract this target audience as customers. During my time in Ginko Agency, I conducted secondary research developing a questionnaire to better understand other competitors and to understand gaps we can fill in terms of private health marketing. I worked part time in the office loft and part time remote. In addition to conducting research, I used prior knowledge from my advertising major to create a creative brief to follow through with the campaign. Working with a company developing an ad campaign allowed me to experience real life advertising work, as well as be able to transfer the concepts I had already learned in university into hands-on experience.

–**Jocelyn Gonzalez**, U. of Illinois, Urbana Champaign



Working with **Baobab Experience** is an opportunity that I am beyond grateful for that has provided me with a whole new perspective. Baobab is an association that provides assistance to migrants and refugees as they leave their home countries and enter Europe, Rome in particular. Baobab gives the migrants and refugees access to food, clothing, shelter, medical care, English lessons, as well as legal and employment assistance. I worked closely with migrants, both by providing food as well as assisting the legal team as they provide citizenship advice. I learned so much about how the legal system often keeps migrants at a disadvantage. I have a renewed understanding of the struggles they face and a skillset I can use to help minimize these struggles. I would've never thought that an internship assisting migrants would also benefit me in terms of both personal and career growth, but Baobab has provided me with this and so much more.

–**Phoebe Flannery**, U. of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

above: internship students at first meeting (Ph: Lu Yuan)

opposite: Steph Lepak on her internship placement at Il Trattore (PH: S. Lepak)



Program Excursions

Like all Borromini Institute programs we had a rich calendar of excursions around town, out of town, overnight and longer.

In September, as part of our Human Rights Lab programming, the Borromini Institute organized a week-long trip for our University of Illinois and Hobart and William Smith College students into Italy's deep south. We began in the Calabria region, headed into the island of Sicily, and concluded with an overnight ferry into the bustling city of Naples.

In late October we headed North, visiting Bologna and its foodscape and stopping for a night in Venice, where our students were able to visit the Biennale and reflect on the equilibrium between fragile ecosystems and human activities.

Finally, just a couple of weeks before the end of the program, the group went east for a final day trip into the mountain villages of Abruzzo.

opposite page: Students participate in local festival in Riace, Calabria (Ph: L. Yuan)

below: the rooftops of Castelvecchio Calvisio, Abruzzo (Ph: T. Rankin)

middle: Students contemplating and discussing the work of practitioners from Africa at the Venice Biennale (Ph: T. Rankin)

right: Arriving in Naples after an overnight ferry ride from Sicily (Ph: T. Rankin)

lower right: Students learn to make pizza in Naples. (Ph: T. Rankin)





Arrivederci

We invite all of our students, now alumni, to keep in touch with your new friends in Italy and come back to visit.

Follow us on social media @gustolabinstitute @borrominiinstitute and share with us your own photos and thoughts from the experience at programs@borromini.institute.



opposite page:

top: Group at Palermo's Arab-Norman palace La Zisa (Ph: L. Yuan)

middle: Overlooking Calabrian town of Bova (Ph: L. Yuan)

bottom: Students contemplating Greek art in Reggio Calabria (Ph: L. Yuan)

back cover: Student Alex Barnosky photographing Venice (Ph: Bode Lonergan)

