

Using Online Assessment of
Student Learning and Development to Facilitate
an Effective Study Abroad Program:
A Reflection of the Results

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Study Abroad Orientation

Online assessment course benefits:

- Provides new information on culture
- Prepares students/faculty for participation
- Promotes community-building prior to departure
- User-friendly medium of communication

Online Course Components

Blackboard Vista (formerly WebCT):

- Nine orientation course modules
- Student/faculty participant roster + ID photos
- Student/faculty blog & threaded discussions
- Field Trip Assignment
- Syllabus and other course materials

How does it work?

Study Abroad Course Participants will....

- Experience a virtual field trip taking them to the American Embassy in Italy as well as “pack” for their trip utilizing web-based programs;
- Learn to make decisions about what critical components (both physical and mental) are necessary for travel abroad;
- Earn “stamps” in their “passports” as they move from one assessment measure to the next in nine learning modules.

Online Assessment: Modules

Promoting Study Abroad:

“I met a lot of people in Europe. I even encountered myself.”

~*James Baldwin*

“The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.”

~ *St. Augustine*



Italy Education Summer 2008

Orientation: February-May

Travel: June 1-30

Course modules:

- Packing for travel
 - UNESCO
 - Eating well in Europe
 - Alcohol information & How laws affect you
 - Travel health & Safety
 - Santa Chiara Center
 - European etiquette
 - Learning the language
 - Krakow-Prague
- Spring Break 2008



Module 1: Packing for travel

GO!

A. When it comes to packing
(Example of file contents follows)

GO!

B. What to do about electrical
appliances

GO!

C. Generate a packing list for
your trip



A. When it comes to packing

“Lay out only what you absolutely need, then take half the clothes and twice the money.”

The online **Universal Packing List** (<http://upl.codeq.info>) will generate a customized list of suggested items based on your trip length, the expected climate, your planned activities, and other factors.

Packing

When it comes to packing, the less you have, the less you have to lose. Pack lightly. Lay out only what you absolutely need, then take half the clothes and twice the money.

The **Travelite FAQ** (www.travelite.org) is a good resource for tips on traveling light.

Luggage

If you plan to cover most of your itinerary by foot, a sturdy frame backpack is unbeatable. Toting a suitcase or trunk is fine if you plan to live in one or two cities and explore from there, but not if you plan to move around frequently. In addition to your main piece of luggage, a daypack (a small backpack or courier bag) is useful.

Clothing

No matter when you're traveling, it's a good idea to bring a warm jacket or wool sweater, a rain jacket (Gore-Tex® is both waterproof and breathable), sturdy shoes or hiking boots, and thick socks. Even in the summer in Italy the weather at high altitudes can be chilly, so when hiking the Alps or even Mt. Etna in the south, dress accordingly. Flip-flops or waterproof sandals are must-haves for grubby hostel showers. You may also want one outfit for going out, and maybe a nicer pair of shoes.



Module 2: UNESCO

GO!

A. UNESCO (United Nations Educ. Scientific & Cultural Organisation)

GO!

B. Find the UNESCO sites

GO!

C. List of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Italy (hidden)



Module 3: Eating well in Europe

GO!

A. Eating in Europe

(For Italy, but applicable to other European cultures)

GO!

B. Five differences between the European & American table (hidden)



Module 4: Alcohol information & How laws affect you overseas

GO!

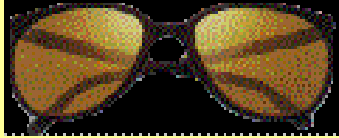
A. How foreign laws apply to you

GO!

B. A discussion about alcohol and Student Exchange

GO!

C. Drinking while in Europe (potential issues)



Module 5: Travel health & Safety

GO!

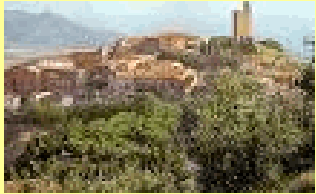
A. Female travelers

GO!

B. Centers for Disease Control
Travel health tips for students

GO!

C. Emergency contact list
(hidden)



Module 6: Santa Chiara Center

GO!

A. Getting to Santa Chiara

GO!

B. Group arrival in Rome

GO!

C. Independent arrival in Rome



Module 7: European etiquette

GO!

A. European manners –
Do's and Don'ts

GO!

B. Define personal space

GO!

C. Italian culture (presentation
from TAMU Study Abroad office)



Module 8: Learning the language

GO!

A. Learn Italian - podcasts

GO!

B. Annenberg Media Project
Learning workshops, Italian

GO!

C. Hello in many languages



Module 9: Krakow-Prague, Spring Break 2008

GO!

A. Krakow, Poland

GO!

B. Prague, Czech Republic

GO!

C. Pre-departure information

Assessment Tools Utilized in Course

- Assignments/quizzes built into nine orientation course modules
- Credited posting on assigned discussion topics
- Rubric for presentation – Field Trip assignment
- Post-orientation course assessments

Expected Outcomes of Online Course

- Learn new information on culture
- Encounter practical examples of travel issues
- Become familiar with travel-related institutions
- Develop allegiance among program co-participants
- Ask and find answers to pre-departure questions
- Enjoy building knowledge while building community

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