

Fatto in Italia: Blending Tradition and Innovation_DRAFT_2016.10.06

University of Minnesota
Learning Abroad Center
Summer 2017 [proposed]
8 weeks [verify] 20 May - 8 July [verify]

Instructor: Gayla Lindt
3 credit studio
Tu/Th afternoons, 1:30-4:30 [tentative]

Prerequisites: foundational coursework in design or visual arts

Overview

Rome, Italy, represents a blending and layering of cultural influences over time from regions both east and west of the city. Creativity more often than not results from the chaotic meetings of different cultures, centuries of tradition and an endless ability of adaptation to new circumstances. These productive intersections suggest a dynamic approach to design, and Rome, Italy, is — almost casually and unconsciously — a virtuoso in this regard.

The goal of this studio course is to expose students to the productive intersection of ideas, using the city of Rome as the inspiration and context for interdisciplinary design work.

Interdisciplinary Work: This is an interdisciplinary studio course. Students from across the College of Design, including apparel, graphic, interior, architecture and landscape architecture, as well as students from other universities (with foundational skills in the visual arts and/or design) will be working together to realize a shared project goal.

Myriad Makers: Students in this course will be introduced to a range of people, places, materials and processes that comprise the "makers" in Rome. Designers, fabricators and craft-workers in ateliers, workshops and studios all around Rome are making designed objects and working in myriad media, including, for example: glass and ceramic arts; bead work and jewelry; fiber arts, textiles, weaving; hat, dressmaking and apparel design; furniture design; photography and printmaking; metal working, etc.

Idea Lineages: Students in this course will explore the blending of tradition and innovation in the material production of ideas. Students will consider both processes and materials as part of an historical past, contemporary present and imagined future, and design an exhibition that tells a compelling story about this lineage of materialized ideas.

Student Learning Outcomes

This course contributes to each of the seven learning outcomes for undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota, as well as some Liberal Education requirements (Global Perspectives +AH/Humanities).

Certainly, the vibrant context of Rome and the nature of study abroad itself will contribute to an awareness of diverse perspectives. As an interdisciplinary design studio, this course will directly engage questions, issues and opportunities that arise when many disciplinary perspectives are brought to a single project. Likewise, students will be challenged to extend traditional, disciplinary-based ways of working and communicating into meaningful work and communication with others outside of their own discipline. As such, this course will address these SLOs most fully:

- [4] Understanding diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.
- [5] Communicating effectively.
- [6] Understanding the role of creativity, innovation, discovery and expression across disciplines.
- [7] Acquiring skills for effective citizenship and lifelong learning.

Course Learning Objectives

The goal of this project-based, studio course is to expose students to the productive intersection of ideas using the city of Rome as the inspiration and context for interdisciplinary design work.

By the end of the semester, students will:

- **have practiced** operating as an individual designer (with specific skills, perspectives and ways of working) in an interdisciplinary team of designers working toward a shared project goal;
- **have practiced** extending and adapting discipline-specific ways of communicating in order to understand and be understood those outside of one's own discipline;
- **have a better understanding of** how design thinking operates across disciplines in shared and unique ways;
- **have a better understanding of** exhibit design as a process of curation, choreography and storytelling related to artifacts;
- **have a better understanding of** the world of "makers" in Rome, their shared and unique languages, people, places, materials and processes;
- **have considered** the traditions of making generally in light of forward-leaning, innovative possibilities for the material production of ideas;
- **have explored** more specifically one tradition of making in Rome, and reinterpreted or re-presented this tradition in an innovative and compelling way;
- **have developed self-awareness** around the design process and design thinking (i.e., a knowingness about when and how to operate in loose or rigorous, divergent or convergent, analytic or synthetic ways of thinking and/or modes of production)
- **have developed self-awareness** around interdisciplinary teamwork (i.e., a knowingness of one's ability to contribute, communicate, lead, follow and problem-solve as needed for the effectiveness of the team as a whole)

Methodology and Course Calendar

This studio course will be a combination of individual exercises and group assignments, including self and peer assessments; field trip observations and reflections; in-class presentations, discussion and exercises; and a team project (with students working

interdisciplinary design teams of three or four). A summary document and/or digital archive of student coursework is required at the end of term.

This course is divided into four phases: 1. Document, 2. Reflect, 3. Express, 4. Apply

1. Document

In this phase students will be exposed to the craft clusters of Rome through field trips and will document their observations in textual and visual formats.

Students may have field trips on their own, outside of class, with guidance from the instructor.

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 [dates]	Introduction and orientation In Class Activity: Self Assessment (Strengths/Skills) assessment Issue: Field Trip Report Assignment Field Trip 1	In Class Activity: Self Assessment (Strengths/Skills) assessment Field Trip 1 Report DUE In Class Activity: Field Trip 1 Debriefing
Week 2 [dates]	Field Trip 2	Field Trip 3
Week 3 [dates]	Field Trip Reports 2+3 DUE In Class Activity: Field Trips 2+3 Debriefing, Journal Checks Issue: Mind Map and Reflection Paper/Collage Assignments	[see phase 2. Reflect]

Potential Field Trips (more to be added):
Need to repopulate this section for Rome.

Assignments:

Field Trip Reports: Students are expected to document their observations for each trip as a report. A field report is a short statement, not more than one page, which gives a quick overview of observations from the field trip.

Journal/Sketchbook: It is important that students take notes and make field sketches whilst they are in the field. Notes could include material presented by designers/masters, plus own reflections or questions about people, places, materials and processes. Students are expected to demonstrate careful, curious observation and exploration of ideas

In Class Activities:

Self Assessment (Strengths/Skills): Students will complete a hard and soft skills assessment at the beginning of the semester. The goal of this exercise is solely to build self-awareness about

when, where and how to employ individual strengths, areas to improve, and how and when to collaborate with others in a productive way to balance one's strengths.

Field Trip Debriefings: Students will share and discuss their experiences (focusing on people, places, materials and processes), comparisons they would make with the U.S. context, comparisons with other field trip locations. Students will pause to consider the “field of ideas,” i.e., what they have been individually and collectively observing during their field trips and relative to their experiences in the city.

Mind Map: At the end of all five field trips students will individually develop a mind map of their overall experience and knowledge they gathered by being immersed in the field. This activity will enable students to visualize connections and comparisons they have made across disciplines and cultures.

2. Reflect

This phase is all about student’s personal reflection about the immersion in the field and another culture. Students are expected to question the effect of the overall experience on their specific design field and present this in paper and collage format and share with classmates.

Week 3 [dates]	[transition phase 1: Document to phase 2: Reflect]	Reflection Presentations Due: Reflection Paper, Reflection Collage Team Assignments In Class Activity: Team Building Exercises Assigned: Design Proposals
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Assignments:

Reflection paper: Students will write a reflection paper citing their reactions, feelings and analysis of field trip experiences within the context of their own design discipline.

Reflection Collage: This can be in a video format capturing sketches, photos, recordings and sounds students gathered during their stay in Rome.

In Class Activity:

Reflection Presentation: Students will present their reflections to their classmates and invited reviewers

3. Express

In this phase students will be assigned to teams and asked to develop a design proposal to apply their acquired knowledge to a specific design embodiment. Each team will develop three design proposals to be discussed for selection with the instructor. Once a design proposal is selected teams develop a roadmap plan to develop/prototype the design embodiment. Students will be asked to consider

-using a traditional maker-process with an innovative, contemporary or disruptive material
 -using a traditional material with an innovative process (e.g., using digital software/fabrication of parts, crowdsourcing or ...)
 to develop their design proposals.

Week 4 [dates]	Design Proposal Selection In Class Activity: Roadmap Plan	Due: Design Proposals In-class presentation and discussion of Proposals
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Assignments:

Design Proposal: Teams develop a document that details what they propose to make by using their new knowledge developed through immersion in Rome’s craft clusters. Teams are expected to create three alternative design proposals for discussion with the instructor. Final design proposal selection will be made under instructor’s guidance.

In Class Activity:

Roadmap Plan: Once teams settle on a design proposal they develop a roadmap plan to make/prototype the design embodiment and present it in three weeks time and assign roles and responsibilities to each team member

4. Apply

Week 5 [dates]	Design: Teams ideate about the design embodiment they will prototype/make Assigned: Final Presentation Guidelines Work in studio/group desk crits	Assigned: Self Assessment (Strengths/Skills) Work in studio/team pin-ups Prototype/Make: Teams prototype/make the design embodiment
Week 6 [dates]	Present: Teams present their project to classmates and to invited reviewers In Class Activity: Peer Review Assessment	Due: Prototypes Final Presentation Self Assessment (Strengths/Skills)

Assignments:

Final Presentation: Students are expected to tell the story of the whole process of how they applied understanding of craft processes to a modern design embodiment. Final presentation can be a mix of digital (video, image renders, software modeling, screenshots, etc.) representations of the process and physical representations of design embodiments.

Self Assessment (Strengths/Skills): Students repeat self-assessment and compare their design consciousness and individual strengths with the beginning of semester.

In Class Activity:

Peer Review Assessment: Students will be asked to critically evaluate the work of their peers, as a collaborator in one's own group and as a project reviewer for other groups. The goal of this exercise is to develop one's awareness and ability to evaluate contributions relative to stated intentions, and project development relative to the assignment goals, and then to provide feedback to others in a meaningful, productive way

Workload

At the University of Minnesota, one credit represents minimally 15 instructor contact hours (class time) and represents, for the average University undergraduate student, 90-120 hours of academic work outside of class. Professional norms and the nature of design studio activities may require more than this average. For this six-week studio, students can expect 10 instructor contact hours. Average students in this six-week studio course should expect an average minimum of 15-22 hours of effort outside of class each week in order to earn an average grade, i.e., to meet minimal course expectations. This represents university policy and College of Design norms for studio work. The nature of instruction for study abroad may require flexibility in terms of how and when minimal instructor contact hours are met, and/or can mean considerably more instructor contact time. Workload outside of class should reflect these conditions.

Grading

Design projects will be evaluated by self, peers, guest reviewers and the instructor, with the instructor determining the grade for each student. Exercises and each phase of the Exhibition Proposition Project will be variably evaluated for creativity, idea development, rigor, clarity (verbal and visual), care and craft in making/representations. See each exercise/assignment for specific evaluation criteria. Note: No grade will be awarded to a student until his/her team's digital archive has been submitted to the instructor.

15 % — Self and peer assessments [authenticity, demonstration of meta-thinking about participation and critique]

20 % — Journal/sketchbook/field trip reflections [demonstration of careful, curious observation, exploration of ideas]

15 % — Exhibition Project Proposal [rigor, clarity]

25 % — Exhibition Project at Interim Review [broad exploration, idea development, rigor]

25 % — Exhibition Project at Final Jury [idea synthetically developed, rigor, clarity, care/craft]

A — Represents outstanding achievement relative to course requirements.

B — Represents achievement significantly above course requirements.

C — Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

D — Represents achievement worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet course requirements.

F — Represents failure to minimally meet course requirements.

Required Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class, however, students may be asked to read texts as ideas, issues and questions emerge in the class in order to fully participate in discussions, the exercises and project assignment. These readings will be readily available online or supplied by the instructor.

Required Materials and/or Course Expenses

Laptop and camera expected; analog tools for making; materials available while in Rome ... [?]