The ACM Florence Fall Student Handbook is intended to help prepare you for your semester in Florence and to give you an initial sense of what to expect academically and personally while you are there. It is revised each year based on comments from the previous program participants to include more current information and contains information on various logistical arrangements for your trip. It is, in effect, a reference tool that provides you (and your parents, to whom a copy will also be sent) with the information you need as you make arrangements to participate in the program. It is important that you read it carefully as preparation for the telephone orientation session and raise any questions you may have either in that orientation session, or individually with the ACM Program Associate, Amanda Dooley, or the Director of International Study Programs, Carol Dickerman. You should also take it with you when you travel to Florence, as it contains important contact and schedule information, as well as information about academic and other arrangements for the program.

Program Overview
The ACM Fall Florence program provides an immersion in Italian arts and culture, of both the present and the past. Taking advantage of the extraordinary legacy in Florence, Renaissance art and culture is the focal point of the academic program, with almost daily site visits integral to classroom teaching. To an extent not possible in the classroom, students view works of art in situ, and are also challenged to understand them in the context in which these works were created. An elective studio art class allows students to gain an appreciation for the creative process, while Italian language classes, homestays, and interaction with Florentines on a daily basis provide immersion experiences for program participants. At the end of the program, students should have a working command of Italian sufficient to live independently in Italy, an understanding of the creative process that is grounded in one of the most richly productive moments in history, as well as the ability to analyze paintings, buildings, and other works of art, whether in Florence or elsewhere in the world.

Italian art and culture, in both the present and the past, are at the center of the ACM’s Fall Florence program. In addition to the required Italian language course, students choose from among course offerings in Renaissance art history, Italian culture, and studio art. The program begins in late August with an academic orientation comprised of a four-week intensive Italian language course, lectures on aspects of contemporary Italy, and introductory meetings/background readings for the elective classes. With the exception of the Italian language course, all courses are conducted in English. Florence itself is the laboratory for the
program, and site visits are an integral part of the courses. The program also includes two weekend excursions, to Venice and Rome.

When students first arrive on site, they are housed in the Pensione Ottaviani, a short walk from the Santa Maria Novella train station. After the first week, students will be placed with Italian host families with whom they will live for the duration of the program. While some or all members of the host family will likely speak English, the host families provide a wonderful opportunity for students to practice their Italian and to learn about Italian customs and mores. Breakfast and an evening meal will be provided by the families.

II. Calendar

The following dates are a necessarily spare outline of the program calendar. Although you’ll be taking several field trips throughout the semester, dates for those trips have not been finalized and are not listed here. You’ll receive a more comprehensive schedule from the program staff when you arrive in Florence.

A note on having visitors: while it’s fun and important to be able to share your new surroundings with friends and family, please keep in mind that the program will require you to manage a workload comparable to what you’d experience on your home campus. Visits will be more enjoyable for both you and your guests if you don’t have class and homework assignments on your mind. We ask, therefore, that parents or friends avoid visiting while the program is in session.

Arrival in Florence Sunday, August 30, by 7:00 pm
Orientation & language classes begin Monday, August 31
Venice Trip Saturday, September 19 – Monday, September 21
Rome Trip Saturday, November 7 – Tuesday, November 10
Fall break Friday, October 16 – Sunday, October 25*
Classes end Friday, December 11
Departure from Florence Saturday, December 12

Plan to arrive at the Pensione Ottaviani in downtown Florence by 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 30. Later that evening you’ll meet the program staff and other students in the lobby and have dinner together. Meeting times and
places will be posted in the hotel. Language classes begin the following morning at 9:00 a.m. That afternoon you’ll join the program staff for an orientation to the city and the program. During orientation you will be matched with a host family.

If you plan to arrive in Florence earlier than August 30 or to stay on after classes end, you’ll need to arrange and pay for your own meals and accommodations. One option to consider is the Pensione Ottaviani: reservations made through the ACM office will allow you to stay at Ottaviani for a student rate of approximately $35 per night, a modest price for a room in downtown Florence. To make a reservation, contact Amanda Dooley or Heather Everst in the ACM office no later than August 1. (adooley@acm.edu, heverst@acm.edu, 312-263-5000).

*During the Fall break, your room with the family is paid for throughout the break, but meals will not be provided. That is, the last meals before the break will be dinner on Thursday, October 15 and breakfast the following morning; the first meal after break will be dinner on Sunday, October 25.

III. Academics

The Florence program will be different from your home campus in terms of academics. Writing and doing research are central to the program, just as they are on campus. Yet without the resources of your college library, unlimited internet access, or your usual study spots, you may find it challenging to do research and write. Although you won’t have all the same resources you may be accustomed to on campus, you’ll have a unique opportunity in Florence to use the city as a source of information: museums, architecture, newspapers, historical sites, and living, breathing Italians will all, in one way or another, contribute to your research. The Florence program also has a small, focused library of about 1,000 books to help you with your research. The program staff, too, will be valuable resources to you. Remember that what you take away from the program at the end of the semester will depend completely on your own curiosity and personal initiative.

In order to fit in field trips, site visits, lectures, and other activities, courses in Florence are highly structured and may meet for longer stretches of time than on your home campus. Also, you’ll likely find that the material from one course dovetails with material presented in your other courses. Philosophical ideas presented in one course, for example, may provide a background for understanding the artworks discussed in another. Some of your classes will be taught almost entirely on site, in essence allowing you to do primary source research on both well- and lesser-known works. Keep in mind that participants in this program generally come from a wide range of academic backgrounds and interests. If you feel that a subject of interest to you is being taught at too basic a level, or with the assumption of greater prior knowledge, talk to your instructors. They are always willing to discuss your questions, suggest supplementary readings, and help you focus or pursue your interests.

You’ll take four classes while you’re in Florence. Italian language is required for all participants, and the three remaining classes are electives. Each of the four courses is worth four credits, for a total of 16 semester credits. With the exception of studio art, classes meet at the Linguaviva Scuola d’Italiano, an independent language school that teaches Italian to students from all over the world. Italian classes are taught solely in Italian by Linguaviva staff, and the school has made space available to ACM for the elective courses taught in English by ACM faculty. The classrooms serve as a study area when not in use. Since the students live all over the city, Linguaviva is often a central meeting place.

At the beginning of the program, Linguaviva staff will administer a placement test to evaluate your level of proficiency in Italian and assign you to the appropriate class. If you haven’t had any instruction in Italian or prior experience with
Romance languages, you’ll probably be placed in the beginning class. In any case, the test is only for placement purposes and has no bearing on your eventual grade in the language class, so do your best, but don’t stress over it.

You will be studying Italian at Linguaviva for a total of 122 hours, and you’ll complete about 75% of those hours in September. Classes are held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:40 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the afternoons in September there will be orientation sessions, lectures on aspects of contemporary Italy, and some introductory meetings for other classes, in which you will be assigned background reading. After September, language study continues less intensively, and you will spend most of your time in your elective classes. Italian classes will meet for two hours, three times a week, and your other classes will each meet for five to six hours per week. With the exception of the language courses, all classes are conducted in English.

Program Courses
In addition to the Italian course, you will enroll in three of the elective courses listed below. You will need to submit your course selections to the ACM office prior the traveling to Florence. The course enrollment form will be sent out from ACM in late July as an e-mail attachment, and you should fill it out and return it to ACM as quickly as possible. (Students who neglect to return the form will be placed into courses by the ACM.) Under normal circumstances, taking more than one course from the same instructor is not allowed. There are occasional exceptions to this, such as when a student needs specific courses to fulfill requirements for a major. Requests for such exceptions must be submitted in writing with the course enrollment form.

Even if your enrollment form is the first to arrive in the ACM office, please keep in mind you aren’t guaranteed your top three choices. This program has a small overall enrollment and a limited number of course options, each with a limited number of spaces. You may find that you’ve been placed in a course you ranked fourth or fifth. Some courses will naturally appeal to you more than others, but even so, try to keep in mind that all the elective offerings, while different in content, endeavor to give you a deeper understanding of Florence and its histories.

Italian
Instructors: Linguaviva Staff
Required, 4 credits
Instruction emphasizes spoken colloquial Italian and is most intensive during the first four weeks so that students may quickly acquire conversational ability. Classes are taught completely in Italian. The Linguaviva instructors are not just language teachers but also rich sources of information about Italian culture.

Florentine Family Palaces and Funerary Chapels
Instructor: Janet Smith
4 credits
Over the centuries Florentine families have owned two principal homes, one for the living and another for their dead. Huge palaces line the narrow streets with formidable stone facades which proclaim the status of the family and shield it from indiscreet eyes. Their funerary chapels stand shoulder to shoulder along the walls of neighborhood churches, behind wrought iron grates which keep out intruders but allow the visitor to admire elaborate fresco cycles, marble and porphyry tombs and personalized altarpieces. Prayers offered on these altars would help the souls of the dead relatives to confront the punishments of purgatory and climb the Dantesque mountain towards heaven. Family coats-of-arms prominently adorn both abodes. We also will look briefly at the third family dwelling – the country villa. This course will study four centuries of these manifestations of family history and pride in terms of religion, politics, economics, gender, sociology and, of course, art history. The artists involved will be familiar ones: Giotto, Brunelleschi, Masaccio, Donatello, Botticelli,
Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo. The families, too, are well known: Medici, Strozzi, Bardi, Pazzi, Corsini – to name a few. Almost all the classes will be on-site. At the end of the course students will do power point presentations of their particular topic of research.

The Politics of Art in Renaissance Florence  
Instructor: Gail Solberg  
4 credits  
Major monuments of the Florentine Renaissance, notably those of a religious nature, were sponsored by groups or individuals whose aims were to a large degree political. This course looks at a variety of material asking where political motivation lies. We start with the layout of the city then focus on conspicuous buildings, including the cathedral, major churches, and civic structures, particularly the town hall. Next we move inside to look at the subdivision of large spaces, such as the various areas of a grand religious edifice, and their still smaller units which are family chapels. Finally we scrutinize single objects or décor such as fresco cycles, altarpieces, and tombs to discover the implicit (political) messages embedded in the visible forms. The course presents architecture, painting, and sculpture with a heavy emphasis on the latter two media. It privileges the 14th century background to great developments in the 15th century, arguing that the much-noted political brokering of the famous Medici family was based on patterns of behavior and art sponsorship established earlier.

Italian City-States: Ancient Rome and Renaissance Florence—the Society, Economics, and Politics of Historical Transition  
Instructor: Ed Burke  
4 credits  
The course explores in a broad but focused survey the society, economy and politics of the city-states of Rome of the first centuries BCE and CE, and Florence of the 14th and 15th centuries, as both republics faltered, suffering transition to centralized rule. Among our concerns will be the social fabric of the two city-states, who ranked where in the social hierarchy, what were the rules that informed and shaped public behavior. A parallel concern will be the economy—who possessed what wealth, by what means, and to what ends. And congruent with these there is the issue of politics—not only who ruled and by what institutions, but how and why change in governance took place, as in both city-states political power came to be narrowly concentrated, in Rome in the hands of the “princeps” Augustus Caesar, and in Florence in the Medici. The course will highlight parallels and contrasts in the histories of two of the West’s most important city-states. The texts to be explored are varied. Beyond secondary studies, we will rely on the observations, critiques and impressions provided by contemporary eye-witnesses: poets, political pamphleteers, historians, letter writers, essayists, and philosophers, and we will examine as well contemporary visual texts—coin, sculpture, painting, and architecture—to see what light these shed on the dramatically changing political and social ideologies.

The Strange Art of Sixteenth-Century Italy  
Instructor: Janet Smith  
4 credits  
The second half of the fifteenth century, a period of relative peace in Italy, was followed by political and religious upheaval which had serious consequences for art. The apocalyptic sermons of the Dominican reformer Savonarola, during the early 1490s, and the 1494 invasion of Italy by the French king, Charles VIII, initiated the new era. German and Spanish troops under the emperor Charles V wreaked a devastating sack on the city of Rome in 1527. The religious reform movement became so strong in northern Europe that it threatened the foundations of Catholicism. A series of popes had to rise to the Protestant challenge.
At the beginning of the 1500s Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo competed for center stage, but after 1520 Michelangelo was left to dominate the rest of the century. Other prominent artists were Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino, Bandinelli, Cellini, Ammannati, Vasari, Parmigianino, Titian, Tintoretto and Giambologan. All had to reconcile the humanist world of classical ideas and models with reformed Catholic beliefs. This struggle is particularly evident in Michelangelo but affects most of the art of this tormented period, characterized by self-reflection. In some cases art became temporarily detached from content—“art for art’s sake”—and in others it took bizarre forms in masks, grotesque designs, weird garden sculptures. It was always full of flair and often deliberately ambiguous. The course will meet predominantly on site. Student presentations will investigate this fascinating artistic period.

**An Historical Construct – Women of Rome and Renaissance Florence**  
*Instructor: Ed Burke*  
*4 credits*

In both ancient Rome of the late Republic and early Empire and Renaissance Florence, the “images“ we have of and about women have been created for us largely by men, and typically the images, whether written or visual, were intended to serve as affirmation of a male ideology.

The course looks to explore the phenomenon of the constructed image of women in two of Italy’s most socially sophisticated city-states. There will be multiple levels to the analysis. An early concern will be defining the character and ideology of the ascendant male culture: setting the context. Within this world, we will explore what society dictated the official role of women to be—what were the constraints imposed by laws, what normative social rules confronted women, and what duties were women expected to fulfill. In juxtaposition to the analysis of established expectations we will investigate how women actually lived, conforming and not conforming within the constraints, and what praise or opprobrium they earned as a consequence. In the effort to get at the complex reality of women’s lives in Rome and Florence, we will also employ a variety of modern theoretical models, differing analytical perspectives, to help unpack and better understand the constructed image of women.

Beyond the theoretical literature, the primary texts to be examined include inscriptions, poetry of various types, fiction, history writing, letters, sculpture, and painting.

**Studio Art: Drawing the Human Figure**  
*Instructors: Cecil Studios Staff*  
*4 credits*

This course will teach a historic technique for drawing from a live model, from casts of famous statues and from the city itself. Live models will be used for full figure drawing and casts for portraiture. Classroom instruction will take place in the Charles H. Cecil Studios, the most historic Florentine atelier still in active use (www.cecilstudios.org). Students will also work with sketchbooks around Florence. Enrollment is limited to 12 students.

Students should not make plans that will prevent them from meeting their academic obligations to the program. Make-up classes and exams are arranged only at the discretion of the instructor; unexcused absences could result in lowered grades. Please keep in mind when you make reservations to come home, the program will end at noon on the last Friday of the semester. No arrangements will be made to take exams earlier than scheduled.
Credit and Grades

It is your responsibility to consult your college registrar about grading, course credit arrangements, and course registration policies for off-campus studies. Checking with your registrar and advisor is particularly important if you expect any of your courses in Florence to fulfill school or departmental requirements. During the first week of the program, students will be asked to indicate whether they wish to have letter grades recorded on their transcripts or the pass/fail option. The grade choice form will briefly describe the rules for each ACM college, but if you need to be certain how the courses will appear on your college record, it's your responsibility to learn about your college’s policies ahead of time. **Once the grade choice form has been submitted, you will not be allowed to make changes**, so make sure you are clear on policies for awarding credit at your college. You also need to make sure you have fulfilled courses for your major and other requirements at your institution.

If you are not an ACM student, you should make the necessary arrangements in advance with your own college registrar. You will still fill out the grade choice form to confirm the arrangements you've made and to let the ACM office know which courses you're taking.

At the end of the program, grade recommendation forms will be sent to your college registrar, and the 16 semester credits will be converted into your college’s credit system.

So that your academic progress is not impeded by a semester off campus, be sure to consult your registrar about registration and housing for the spring term following your return. In most instances this can now be done on-line, but you will want to confirm the arrangements for doing so before you leave campus in the spring.

### IV. Preparing to Go and Arrival

**Passport & Visa**

As you know, you need a valid passport and a visa to study in Italy. ACM facilitates this process by taking students’ passports and visa applications to the Italian consulate in Chicago; this must be done within 90 days before travel to Italy. ACM will provide you with the visa application form and instructions for completing it. It must be completed and returned to the ACM, along with your passport, photos (see below), and a U.S. priority mail envelope by **June 1, 2009**. ACM will then take these materials to the consulate, and they in turn will issue the visa and return your passport to you via priority mail within three to four weeks. Please be sure to send your visa materials and passport to ACM via some form of trackable mail (U.S. priority mail, Fedex or a similar service), and note too that the Italian consulate requires a U.S. priority mail envelope for returning your passport to you. You’ll receive additional information about the visa process, including an application form and a sample for completing it early in May.

If, for some reason, you are unable to send your passport to ACM by June 1, you will need to apply for your visa through whichever Italian consulate has jurisdiction for your home state. ACM will provide you with a letter verifying your acceptance in the program, but it is your responsibility to inform yourself about the other requirements for your visa. (Visa requirements, as well as consulate hours, can vary from one consulate to another.)
Passport-size Photos
As part of the visa application, students send five passport-size photos to the ACM office: one for your visa, three for your residence permit, and one for your Linguaviva ID. (You may need more if you plan to visit countries in Eastern Europe that require visas for entry.) You can get these photos taken at most Walgreens and Kinko’s stores, or in a photo booth. Photos should be in color, approximately 2"x2", and on photo-quality paper. They should show your full face against a white background, and should not be more than six months old.

Even if you have access to a photo-quality printer, you should get at least one set of photos professionally printed. To save some money, it’s acceptable to scan the professional set and print more copies on your own. If you decide to go the do-it-yourself route, please make sure all your photos meet each of the aforementioned criteria. We can’t accept black-and-white photos, photocopies, school pictures, etc. Photo booths are scattered throughout Florence, so you can have more pictures taken there if you need to.

Residence Permit
In the week after you arrive in Florence, you will go with the Program Director, Janet Smith, to the post office to apply for your residence permit. This document, called the permesso di soggiorno, grants official permission to live in Italy. In order to successfully obtain your permit, you must present the following items to the Italian authorities:

- Your passport, containing your student visa, and the letter of support from ACM (Janet Smith will give you these letters in Florence)
- Three passport-size photographs (which you’ll send to the ACM office as part of your visa application)
- Proof of financial support. This can be a copy of a credit or debit card in your name, or a copy of your or your parent’s bank account statement.
- Proof of health insurance. Ask your insurance provider to write a letter that clearly lists all of the following:
  1. Your name and policy number.
  2. A statement that the period of coverage coincides with the total duration of your stay in Italy. A statement that your plan covers emergency medical care and hospital stay in Italy, Europe, or regardless of geographical boundaries and with no deductible.

Italy has nationalized health care, so while Italian citizens do not pay for medical care, the government wants to make sure foreigners can reimburse the government for care they receive in Italy, and for this reason the Italian authorities will ask for proof of health insurance that covers hospitalization in Italy. Many American insurance companies are not in the habit of producing a letter with the international stipulations dictated by Italian law, but will supply one when you make clear exactly what you need. Procuring a workable letter depends, of course, on your policy covering you in the way the local government requires. Experience proves that this will take some time, so act now—contact your insurance company as soon as possible. If you are not covered to the extent that Italian law requires, if your insurance is not good in Italy, or if you arrive without the required letter, you’ll have to buy a supplemental insurance policy, called Assitalia, at a cost of about €40.

Discuss your health insurance with your parents before you leave so that you fully understand what coverage you have and how to go about making a claim. Many students wind up paying for a supplemental policy because their insurance letter did not adequately address the criteria outlined above. As Janet Smith put it, “You have to imagine an official who knows only a limited amount of English reading through hundreds of these insurance policies every day. All he wants to see is the name of
the student, the dates the insurance covers and that it covers hospitalization in Italy. If there is nothing that says the insurance works in Italy, or at least outside the United States, he puts the application in the reject pile."

Please send the letter from your insurance company and your proof of financial support to the ACM office by August 15. ACM will forward these documents, along with the passport-size photos you submitted with your visa application, to the program site in Florence prior to your arrival. See pp. 13-14 for more information on health insurance.

Travel Arrangements
You should make your travel arrangements so as to arrive at the Pensione Ottaviani in downtown Florence by 7:00 pm on Sunday, August 30. In making your travel plans, you may wish to make some comparisons before finalizing your arrangements; we suggest that you consult various websites like Kayak, Orbitz, and Expedia; a travel agent such as STA Travel which specializes in discount travel for students; and/or a travel agent in your home town. Another possibility is Ms. Georgia Oswald, a travel agent whom ACM has used for many years; she can be reached at 800-842-0059 or gmoswald@verizon.net. When you make your flight reservations, be sure to factor in enough time to make connections between planes and/or trains so that you’ll arrive in Florence safely and at a reasonable time.

We encourage you to find another program participant to travel with using the student list, which includes email contact information. An added advantage of traveling with other participants is that you’ll have someone to help keep an eye on your things when you go to the bathroom or to get a snack.

If you fly into Florence:
Generally, flying all the way to Florence is the simplest and most convenient of all these options, but it may also be a more expensive option. Your itinerary will involve catching at least one connecting flight somewhere in Europe, from Amsterdam or Paris, for example. You’ll then catch a connection to Florence, to Amerigo Vespucci Airport, located about three miles outside Florence. This is the point at which to splurge on a taxi from the airport into the centro—you’ll probably be a bit jetlagged and also will have all your luggage with you. The taxi ride takes about 20 minutes and costs about €20. (You’ll be charged extra for your bags, and this additional cost will be added in to the fare shown on the meter.) There is also a bus service (Volabus run by Sita/Ataf) that will take you from the arrival terminal in the airport to the Florence station square, a short walk from the Pensione Ottaviani. At €4 the Volabus costs less than a taxi, but if you have a lot of luggage it’s definitely worth taking a taxi from the airport.

If you fly into Rome:
Arriving in Rome is usually a few hundred dollars cheaper than flying into Florence, and the train ride from Rome to Florence will treat you to some breathtaking views of the Italian countryside. When you arrive at Fiumicino Airport, follow signs to the airport train station. At the bigletteria, or ticket window, buy TWO tickets: a ticket for €11 to Stazioni Termini, the central train station in Rome, and a ticket for €33 to Firenze SMN on the Eurostar train, which will get you to Florence in under two hours. When you ask for your ticket to Florence, ask for the first Eurostar leaving Termini after your train from the airport arrives.

The train from the airport does not have assigned seating, so after you validate your ticket at the end of the track, just get on any car that has space. You’ll arrive on the far side of Termini station, and should walk in toward the main part of the station until you’re at the head of the tracks. If the platform, or binario, is not printed on your ticket, look for your connecting train information or visit the information window. The track numbers and departing information for each train are posted on an
illuminated board hanging above each platform. Seats are assigned on the Eurostar train, and your ticket will be printed with a *carrozza* (car) number and a seat number. The *carrozza* number is displayed on the side of each train car.

When you return to the U.S., you may need to stay at a hotel or hostel in Rome the night before your flight leaves, since it can be difficult to get from Florence to Rome before noon. One inexpensive and comfy option is the Alessandro Palace (www.hostelalessandropalace.com), at Via Vicenza 42, a five-minute walk from Stazione Termini. To get there from the train station, follow signs toward Via Marsala. Turn left on Via Marsala, right on via Vicenza, and walk a few blocks until you reach number 42 (on your left). The first train from Termini to Fiumicino airport leaves at 5:52 am (buy your ticket the night before!).

**If you fly into Pisa:**
To fly into Pisa, look for a USA-London-Pisa routing or Delta’s direct flight from New York (JFK) to Pisa. When you land, you can easily take a train from Galileo Airport. Buy a ticket at the Information booth to the right of the exit from customs. Then, without going outdoors, walk from customs to the opposite end of the airport passenger terminal and down a corridor to the railroad platform. Signs mark the way: a FIRENZE Santa Maria Novella (SMN). Trains leave almost every hour from the airport, and more frequent service is available from Pisa’s central train station. You can check the schedule from Pisa to Florence at Trenitalia.com The trip from the Pisa airport to Florence takes a little over an hour. The last train leaving Pisa for Florence is at 11:03 pm.

**If you fly into Milan:**
Flying into Milan and taking the train to Florence should be a last resort because it involves one of the most complicated plane-to-train connections. On your return trip to the U.S., plan to spend a night in Milan, as it’s impossible to get a train to Milan for any flight that leaves before 2 p.m. If you’re transiting through Milan by catching a connecting flight into Florence you’ll have less of a problem, although you need to be sure that your arriving flight and connecting flight leave from the same airport. Otherwise, you may wind up changing airports to catch a connecting flight to Florence. Milan has three airports: Malpensa for intercontinental flights, Linate for Italian and some European flights, and Bergamo Orio al Serio for some budget airlines including RyanAir.

From Malpensa International Airport in Milan, an Airpullman bus meets international flights 8:00 a.m. to midnight. It costs approximately €4 and takes 60 minutes. Get off at the Milano Centrale train station, not Garibaldi. Do not take the Nuova Malpensa Treno Express, which goes into the center of Milan and does not stop at the Centrale Station.

From Forlanini-Linate Airport, SEAV (orange signs) operates a coach service to Centrale every 20-30 minutes. Purchase tickets from the driver. The ride will be about 45 minutes. The coach will stop at the Garibaldi train station also; you should go to Centrale.

From Orio al Serio you can take the Autostradale bus to Centrale station for about €7. Trains leave every 30-45 minutes; travel time is about an hour.

For more information about trains in Italy, please see the following page.

**Passport Control & Customs**
When you first arrive at an Italian airport, you will be directed to the *Immigrazione e Controllo dei Passaporti* (Italian immigration officials) for a passport and visa check. There are sometimes different lines for foreigners entering Italy and
citizens of the EU, so check the signs to make sure you’re in the right one. Once you’re waved through passport control, you’ll proceed to the baggage claim area and then to Customs, where you may or may not be asked to stop. When cleared by the Italian officials, head to the lobby area of the airport, near the bus and taxi loading area. Airport officials will speak English, so if you need help, don’t be afraid to ask someone.

Currency

After you pass through customs, you’ll need to get some euros for your trip into Florence if you haven’t done so already. It’s a good idea to have some euros on hand before you leave for the program, but you’ll find that most points of entry have ATMs, banks, or currency exchange offices conveniently located as you pass through customs and immigration. As of April 2009, the exchange rate for dollars to euros was roughly $1.40 to €1.00. (€ is the graphic symbol for the euro.) You can use euros throughout most of Western Europe, with the exception of Britain, Denmark, and Switzerland.

Trains

Train tickets can be purchased at the Biglietteria (main ticket office). Check out the official site of Italian Railways at Trenitalia.com for train schedules, stations, special offers, etc. Italian train tickets are good for two months after you purchase them, but you need to validate your ticket just before you get on the train. This is called convalidare in Italian. Look for a yellow or gold colored box about 15″ x 20″. You stick one end of the ticket into a slot at the top of the box and the date and time are printed on the ticket. If you fail to validate your ticket, before getting on the train, you can be fined about $30.

There are several types of trains. With a few exceptions, the trains which travel within one region—like Tuscany—charge only the base ticket price called a biglietto. IC (Intercity), EC (EuropeanCity), and EN (EuroNight) trains charge a supplement or supplemento. An even faster and fancier train called ES (Eurostar) costs even more. Some EX (Expresso) and IR (InterRegional) trains now need a supplemento. Remember to ask for secondo classe because it is not worth paying more for a first class ticket. Check the schedule before you buy your ticket and specify which train you are taking, so they give you the proper ticket.

For overnight trains, you can reserve a sleeping shelf called a cucchette which costs about €15 in addition to the biglietto and supplemento. The trip from Rome to Florence takes about one and a half hours on the Eurostar; the trip from Milan takes over three hours. Non-Eurostar trains can take up to twice as long as Eurostar trains, so the faster trains are generally worth the extra money. During the middle of the day trains leave at 30 past the hour from Rome and on the hour from Milan. Trains are less frequent early in the morning and late at night.

Keep an eye on your valuables and suitcases at all times when you are traveling. Beware of gypsy children trying to pick your pockets, particularly in train stations, churches and other places frequented by tourists. They travel in groups and getting rid of them may require some aggressiveness or physical action on your part. Above all, do not keep your money or your passport in exterior pockets and hold other belongings tightly. Pickpockets on buses are also very common.

Communications

E-Mail and Computers

There are six computers at Linguaviva for ACM students to use to write and print papers. Currently, four of them connect to the internet. Be aware that Linguaviva closes fairly early in the evening, which means that from dinnertime onward you
won’t have access to the program computers. There are several internet cafes within walking distance of Linguaviva, and with your Linguaviva student ID you can get discounted rates. Students will need to register for the service and are responsible for paying an hourly rate for the time they spend online.

Past students on the Florence program recommend bringing a laptop if you have one. Linguaviva has a wireless internet connection, so you can use email and the internet at school from your laptop. With an adapter, you can plug your computer in at school or in your room at home. You will not have access to your host family’s phone line for dialup internet use, however, and they are unlikely to have a wireless connection. Before you go, be sure to check the battery life and other functions on the computer, and have any repairs taken care, because computer repair is slow and very expensive in Italy.

If you bring your laptop, please keep in mind that you need to take adequate precautions to keep it from being stolen, as indeed you would at home. You will want to make sure that it is insured, likely through your [American] family’s property insurance policy, as ACM does not provide insurance coverage for personal property.

Telephones and Cell Phones
Do not bring your U.S. cell phone with you to Italy, as it will not work outside the U.S. (unless you have a more expensive model of phone which can connect to multiple networks). Most past participants have opted to either “rent” one of the program cell phones or buy an inexpensive cell phone in Italy and purchase minutes for it. It’s a simpler process than in the U.S.—unlike most cell phone companies at home, you are not required to sign a service contract in Europe, there is no monthly allowance for minutes, and you don’t get a bill. Instead, you buy a cell phone in Florence, and then purchase a certain number of minutes, similar to using a calling card. When those minutes run out, you simply pay for a recharge. There are three principal servers in Italy: Tim, Wind, and Vodaphone. You should compare prices when you arrive, since many telephone stores offer special packages. The program has a few cell phones available for rental, for €10; you might also check with a former program participant on your home campus about buying his or her Italian cell phone.

You may receive telephone calls at the Pensione Ottaviani or the home of your host family, but you should plan on making calls to the U.S. only from your cell phone or from a pay phone if you have a credit card. This is a courtesy to your family, because in Italy the phone company frequently makes the mistake of billing callers for collect calls. Receiving bills for an ACM student’s transatlantic calls has been very distressing to both host families and the proprietors of the hotel.

To call the U.S. from Florence, dial the international calling code (00) + country code (1 in the U.S.) + 3-digit area code + 7-digit number. To call Florence from the U.S., dial the international calling code (011) + country code (39 in Italy) + city code (055 in Florence) + number. Calls within Florence must begin with the city code (055).

When making international calls, remember to account for the time difference:

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Money
The amount of money you’ll need in Florence depends upon your plans, tastes, and habits. Most members of last year’s group spent between $2,000 and $4,000 (including food for lunch), but if the exchange rate drops, you might have to
budget for more. We recommend being prepared to spend about $3,000, but only you know your spending habits. You’ll need to adjust this figure to fit your own lifestyle and budget. Your major daily expenses will include lunch, email, and personal necessities. (For information on how much you can expect to spend for personal needs such as shampoo, a newspaper, or a movie ticket, please see the Cost Information Sheet included in your acceptance packet.) On program-sponsored field trips to Rome and Venice your breakfast and dinner will be provided for you, just as they are in Florence. The program also provides bus passes for students who live too far from Linguaviva to walk comfortably to school. Those who live within easy walking distance of the centro will not receive a bus pass. We recommend that you bring $150 extra in case you need to visit a doctor or dentist’s office, and keep this money aside from your spending money until the end of the program.

You’ll need more money if you plan to travel on your own before, during the program break or after the program, or if you plan to buy a lot of gifts and other things to take home with you. Be sure to budget for the cost of your travel, accommodations and meals during the program break. If you decide to stay with your host family over the break you will be responsible for the cost of meals during this period. You can arrange to pay your family for meals or eat out.

Credit and Debit Cards
Using debit and credit cards is the safest and most convenient way to handle your money while you’re abroad, and it is recommended that you bring one of each type. ATMs on the PLUS and CIRRUS networks are available throughout Europe, and can be used to withdraw currency from your American account. ATMs almost always offer better exchange rates than banks and currency exchange offices. Before the program starts, consult your bank and credit card provider to make sure that your cards will work in Italy and wherever else you plan to go. As well, inform them that you will be spending a semester in Florence so that they won’t block activity on your card, thinking it was stolen. In the unfortunate event that your card actually is lost or stolen, make sure you know the procedure for obtaining a new one while you are overseas. It’s a good idea to bring some money in traveler’s checks as a backup in case of such circumstances.

Traveler’s Checks
If you purchase traveler’s checks in U.S. dollars, you’ll need to change them into euros in Florence. Although past students have brought all their money in traveler’s checks, last year’s group relied solely on ATMs all semester and kept a few traveler’s checks as a backup. Since American Express offices offer the most economical rates for exchanging checks, you might want to bring American Express traveler’s checks, which are available in euros, in addition to American dollars. Airport currency exchanges tend to offer a less favorable exchange rate than banks do, and they will sometimes tack on additional fees. Hotels, shops, and small money-changing offices are typically the most expensive way to change money. Where you choose to change your money will determine how much you have at your disposal, so be discriminating.

Cash
All airports will have ATMs, and for a fee of one or two euros you can withdraw some cash as soon as you arrive in Europe; this is probably the smartest option in terms of getting a good exchange rate. Still, you might want to purchase some local currency before you leave home so you won’t arrive in Europe, possibly tired and a little disoriented, without money for a taxi, bus, or train ride into town. If you decide to buy euros in the U.S., buy only enough to tide you over for the first few days. Foreign currency can be purchased in the U.S. at any bank with an international banking department and at some airports. Don’t keep more than €50 in cash in your wallet at a time.
Getting Money from Home

Program staff will not be able to cash checks for you, so you will need to arrange for enough funds to cover you for the semester—in the form of funds transferred into a checking account at home, a credit card, cash, or a combination of these. We highly recommend that you bring an American Express, Visa, or MasterCard with you. If you run out of money, having a credit card or American Express provides the easiest solution for emergency funds. If someone at home has an American Express card, they can transfer money to an American Express office in Florence for a small fee. If you have an American Express card, you can cash personal checks for small amounts; with a Visa or MasterCard you can receive a cash advance. If you use the American Express offices in Europe, schedule your errand for when the office first opens or right after the afternoon re-opening to avoid long lines.

Students on the program in the past several years have relied on debit and ATM cards almost exclusively to obtain euros for daily expenses. (For information on what expenses you can expect to have, please see the Program Expense Chart for the Florence Fall program included with your acceptance materials.) ATM machines are readily available throughout Florence and the rest of Europe, and you should have no problem withdrawing funds from your U.S. bank account. Before you leave for the program, however, you should notify your bank that you will be abroad and confirm that your PIN will still be valid. (If you neglect to do so, you may find that your bank, fearing that your card has been stolen, will freeze your account after several withdrawals.) You will also want to check on the transaction charges your bank may levy. While the exchange rate is typically good when using an ATM or debit card, you may find that transaction fees such as to discourage multiple withdrawals of small amounts.

While ATM and debit cards work well, this should not be your only means of getting money—ATM and debit cards can get lost, stolen, or eaten by cash withdrawal machines. You should also bring along some hard currency in dollars—perhaps $100 and $200—and a credit card. These can be useful in emergencies or if you travel outside of Florence. Visa is more widely used than other credit cards, but you should not plan to use it with the frequency that you likely do in the U.S., as many small businesses in Europe will not accept it.

Medications and Other Medical Preparation

As part of your preparation to go abroad, please read carefully information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about medical conditions in Western Europe. The website is: www.cdc.gov/travel/destinationItaly.aspx. You should share this information with your doctor or the physician who signs your Medical History form and your parents. You will want to make sure that any recommended vaccinations are up to date.

If you take one or more prescriptions drugs regularly, you will want to be sure you can continue this medication while abroad. Speak with your physician about the possibility of obtaining a supply to take with you. (And please make sure to keep it in its original container, and in your carry-on luggage.) If you cannot get a supply to take with you, you will want to see if this medication can be obtained in Italy and to have the generic name. Most drugs are available in Italy, although they may be compounded somewhat differently. You should not plan to have drugs (of any kind) sent to you while abroad.

Insurance

All ACM program participants are required to carry insurance for major medical expenses, including hospitalization and physicians’ fees, during the study abroad period. In addition, as a student studying in Italy and as part of the process of registration for the residency permit (permesso de soggiorno), you will be required to provide evidence of health insurance coverage equal to (or better than) that available through an Italian policy called Assitalia. If you are not able to obtain such a letter from your U.S. insurance company, or if your American coverage is not comparable to
that provided by Assitalia—which provides complete coverage for emergencies and in-hospital treatment—you will be required to purchase Assitalia when you first arrive; the cost is approximately €40 for six months’ coverage. Assitalia is not valid for travel outside Italy, however, and does not cover routine doctors’ visits.

To supplement your U.S. health insurance coverage and Assitalia, ACM provides all ACM program participants with the MEDEX Travel Card. Among its benefits, the MEDEX Travel Card includes insurance coverage for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. For a complete list of benefits provided by the MEDEX Travel Card, please see: www.medex.com.

Like all travel insurance policies, the coverage provided by MEDEX is supplemental, or secondary, to any other coverage that you may have. In other words, if you are covered by another insurance policy (e.g., a personal policy, a college/university policy, or a policy maintained by your parents) then that policy is your primary policy. Prior to departure, you should contact your primary insurance carrier concerning coverage for accidents, illnesses, hospitalization, physicians’ fees, and liability cases that occur outside the U.S. In addition, all students should verify whether (and under what circumstances) the coverage will continue while they are abroad and how they can be reimbursed for medical expenses. Each student is responsible for the costs of any medical care received while participating in the program.

If you discover that your American insurance policy will not be valid abroad, you will need to purchase a supplemental policy. Your supplemental coverage should start on or before your departure date and extend through the date you return home. You must purchase your insurance plan in full before you depart for your study country. ACM recommends also that you continue your U.S. coverage even if it will not provide full coverage while you are abroad—some U.S. carriers may consider diseases or injuries that occur while abroad pre-existing conditions and decline to cover follow-up care.

While abroad, you should have your primary and/or supplemental insurance carrier and policy information readily available.

Remember, medical insurance does not cover personal property. Insurance coverage for loss or theft of personal property may need to be purchased in addition to one’s medical insurance.

Some travel international insurance providers include:
Cultural Insurance Services International: www.culturalinsurance.com
HTH Worldwide: www.hthworldwide.com
MEDEX: www.medexassist.com
Travel Guard: www.travelguard.com

Mental and Intellectual Preparation
Over the summer you will receive a list of books you’ll need for your courses in Florence, and it’s recommended that you buy them in the U.S. before you go, from a site like amazon.com. You also will be asked to read one or two books before the program starts. Meanwhile, start to do some general reading about Florence, Tuscany, and Italy. Most libraries have collections of travel guides that can answer questions you have about customs and culture in Italy and what to see and do while you’re there. You’ll make many discoveries on your own, but a good travel guide and map can help you get your bearings in an unfamiliar city and reduce the time it takes to start feeling at home. Take weight and bulk into consideration if you purchase a travel guide, since you’ll be carrying it on your person.
Spend some time in the art history section of your college or public library looking at books on some of the art and historical sites you will see in person when you get to Europe. Try to read at least one history and one art history book from the reading lists below. Try Italian novels in translation for recreational reading, too.

Make a special effort to keep up with current events in Europe and North America. Past participants have remarked that their European friends were well informed about politics and interested in American current events. You may be asked your opinion on many international current events as well, so it helps to stay apprised of what’s going on in the world. Newspapers with good international and domestic coverage include The New York Times and The Guardian. Also useful are general news magazines such as Time, Newsweek and The Economist. All of these publications are available online as well as in print.

**Travel Guides**

*Blue Guide: Florence*, by Alta Macadam  
*Companion Guide to Florence*, by Eve Borsook  
*Florencewalks*, by Anne Holler  
*Fodor’s Italy*, by Matthew Lombardi  
*Frommer’s Italy*, by Darwin Porter and Danforth Prince  
*Lonely Planet Florence / Lonely Planet Italy*, by Damien Simonis

**Art and History of Florence and Italy**

Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*  
Eve Borsook, *The Companion Guide to Florence*  
Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*  
Martin Clark, *Modern Italy 1871-1982*  
Peter d’Epiro and Mary Desmond Pinkowish, *Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World*  
Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*  
Anne Holler, *Florencewalks*  
George Holmes, *The Oxford History of Italy*  
Christopher Hibbert, *Florence: The Biography of a City*  
Mark Roskill, *What is Art History?*  
Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*

**Fiction, Plays, Poetry, Lighter Non-Fiction**

George Eliot, *Romola*  
E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View*  
Barbara Harrison, *Italian Days*  
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Fawn*  
D.H. Lawrence, *Etruscan Places and Sea and Sardinia*  
Mary McCarthy, *Stones of Florence*  
Tim Parks, *Italian Neighbors, A Season with Verona*  
Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author and Enrico IV*  
Beppe Severgnini, *La Bella Figura; A Field Guide to the Italian Mind*  
Alexander Stille, *The Sack of Rome*
Also look for novels by Italian authors Italo Calvino, Carlo Cassola, Giuseppe Lampedusa, Carlo Levi, Elsa Morante, Vasco Pratolini, and Leonardo Sciascia.

Films
*Under the Tuscan Sun* · *Il Postino* · *Otto e mezzo* (8½) · *Pani e Tulipani* (Bread and Tulips)
*LIFE* is Beautiful · *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* · *Tea with Mussolini* · *The Best of Youth*

Online Resources
www.acm.edu/florence – ACM Web site and links
www.linguaviva.it – Linguaviva Scuola d’Italiano, your Italian language school and the ACM program headquarters
www.cecilstudios.org – site of the studio art course in Florence

Travel & safety info
www.travel.state.gov – Travel information from the U.S. Department of State
www.tsa.gov – Transportation Security Administration site, listing items permitted and prohibited aboard an aircraft
www.studentuniverse.com – Discount travel for students, recommended by past participants
www.cdc.gov – Centers for Disease Control; health information for travelers

Tourism
www.lonelyplanet.com – Lonely Planet online
www.firenzeturismo.it – Agencia per il Turismo di Firenze (Tourism Agency of Florence)
www.trenitalia.com – Italian Railways site
www.hihostels.com – Hostelling International site
www.worldcitizensguide.com – resources for international travelers

Online news sources
www.bbc.co.uk – BBC online
www.corriere.it/english – Corriere Della Sera’s Italian Life section (in English)
www.lanazione.it – Florence newspaper La Nazione (in Italian)

Packing Considerations
Past participants have provided valuable advice about how to pack for Florence, and many will tell you that one of the first things you’ll learn there is that you can live and be happy without a lot of stuff. **Pack light!** There is literally nothing you can forget, run out of, or discover a need for that you can’t get in Florence or live without for four months.

Program alumni recommend bringing one small or medium-sized suitcase, plus a backpack for field trips and weekend traveling. Backpacks, large gym bags, army surplus duffles, or other bags with shoulder straps are a good option. Large suitcases are **not** practical. You need to be able to carry your own bags, and it’s a good idea to pack and practice

**Students say…**

“Keep a journal—you’ll be so glad you did. Names, places, even experiences are often forgotten.”

“Stress the importance of traveling light! It’s true: the less, the better.”

“It is very cold in the museums and churches in winter, so come prepared. **Layer.**”

“Bring what’s comfortable. I tended to dress nicer in Florence than I do on my home campus. I wanted to buy things here, even though they are expensive. It’s so much fun to adapt one’s dress to the way Italians dress, or at least not to appear blatantly American (makes life simpler). Also, I didn’t bring enough warm clothes; it’s not hot summer weather for very long.”
carrying your bags around for ten- or fifteen-minute stretches, up and down stairs, around the block, etc. If you’re buckling under the crushing weight of your belongings, reassess and figure out what you can leave behind. Keep in mind, too, that you will leave Italy with more than you brought, so allow some space for those extra acquisitions. If you plan to do any travel before or after the program, bear in mind that you’ll have to keep all your luggage with you. Airports in Europe no longer have lockers where you can store luggage, nor does the ACM program.

The baggage limit for transatlantic flights on most airlines is 2 pieces of checked luggage (Note: there won’t be room to store more than two bags in your living space). Each bag should weigh no more than 50 pounds, and its total dimensions (length + width + height) cannot exceed 62 inches. In addition, each passenger is allowed one piece of carry-on luggage that cannot exceed 22 pounds or 45 inches in total dimensions. If you exceed the weight and/or size limits for baggage, you’ll be charged an additional fee. To avoid extra fees, check with your airline in advance. Don’t lock your checked luggage until it has been sent through the X-ray machines at the airport, as airport personnel may ask to search it. Before you travel, verify your airline’s luggage restrictions. Some airlines are now starting to apply a surcharge for checked baggage and all charge additional fees for baggage exceeding the weight limit set by each individual airline.

The baggage limit on flights within Europe is more stringent. On most intra-European flights you are allowed one piece of checked baggage, with a limit of 20 kilos, or 44 pounds, and one piece of carry-on luggage.

To increase the odds of your luggage reaching Florence when you do, make sure at check-in that each bag is correctly tagged not only with your name and address, but with the destination airport’s three-letter code as well. Before departure, itemize your bags’ contents and their worth. Inside each bag, pack a copy of your itinerary, and include your name, address, and phone number. When you arrive, if your bags are damaged or fail to arrive, file a written report with the airline before leaving the airport.

We strongly recommend that you carry your money, passport, and any valuables in a money belt beneath your clothes while you’re traveling. You can get one for under $10 at specialty travel shops or discount stores like Target or Wal-Mart. It’s an unfortunate truth that petty thieves and pickpockets are common in larger European cities, especially on trains and in train stations. Do not presume that you will be immune to this, and do take precautions to prevent it. In the recent past, one student’s purse was stolen off her shoulder in the centro of Florence in broad daylight. In her purse she was carrying, among other things, her passport, driver’s license, credit cards, and several hundred euros in cash. Protect yourself against theft. Buy a money belt and use it at all times when you’re traveling.

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Celsius → Fahrenheit conversion

Carry on anything you’ll need immediately upon arrival. Check the Transportation Security Administrations website for the latest carry-on luggage restrictions (www.tsa.gov). Never put prescription drugs or valuables in your checked luggage. To avoid a delay at customs, carry medications in their original packaging. You might also ask your doctor to write a spare prescription using the drug’s generic name, since brand names may vary from country to country. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair.
Clothing
You’ll need warm-weather clothing to get you through the end of summer, cold-weather clothing for the beginning of winter, and clothes for the months in between. In September you can expect hot and humid weather for most of the month. October will most likely be cooler, but pleasant, with the possibility of some rain and cold weather. November usually means a mixture of chilly fall and mild winter weather. It doesn’t get as cold in Florence as it does in the Midwest, but it does get into the 30s (°F) and it is rainy and damp in winter months. Past participants emphasize the need for warm clothes; many have had to buy winter coats in Florence. Although it’s unusual for temperatures to be very low until December, most Italian apartment buildings don’t begin heating until November 1. You may be chilly indoors even when it’s not that cold outside.

Try to bring clothes that will layer well and adapt to different seasons and situations. If you know you’ll wear something only once or twice during the semester, leave it home. Wash-and-wear clothing is recommended, since dry cleaning and laundromats are expensive. You might expect to do more washing by hand than you normally do. Some past students have brought along a collapsible plastic hanger or clothesline for drip-drying and a small sewing kit for simple clothing repairs. You save some space in your luggage if you tightly and smoothly roll your clothes instead of folding them (your clothes will arrive in a more wearable condition, too).

Comfortable walking shoes are essential; rubber soled gym shoes are best. Since so many classes in Florence are held on site, you will often be walking outside in rainy weather and should choose shoes accordingly. You also will need a warm coat or jacket for outdoors and sweaters for the cool indoor temperatures. Churches in Italy are not heated and you will be spending hours in these buildings, which can be cool even in the summer. Many churches and other buildings don’t allow shorts, even in hot weather. Other public buildings, such as galleries, theatres, etc., are also quite cool by American standards. A raincoat with a zip-in lining would be practical, or a jacket to wear over sweaters. Sweaters are versatile for traveling—they work with jackets on frigid days or without jackets on mild ones. Sweaters also have the advantage of being able to survive stuffed into a corner of a backpack or suitcase. Bring your jeans, of course, and one or two other pairs of pants. You should have casual clothes for everyday use and one dressy outfit for special occasions. Bring an umbrella and gloves.

Personal Items
It isn’t necessary to bring a full semester’s supply of toiletries and/or other personal care items. Recent participants recommend bringing travel sizes when possible, since smaller products conserve space in your luggage. (Don’t forget the 3 oz. size limits on liquids in carry-on luggage now in effect for all air travel.) Plan to bring a two-week supply of the toiletries and personal items you’ll need in Florence (e.g. shampoo & conditioner, soap, moisturizer, toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, tampons/pads, etc.). You can buy more once you start to get acquainted with the city, and most major American brands are available in Europe. One thing you should buy before you go, however, is sunscreen, which is very expensive in Italy.
Miscellaneous Items

Bring a journal so you can record your impressions and experiences. Photographs will show you what things looked like, but a journal will remind you how they made you feel. If you have artistic tendencies, a sketchbook also will allow you to record your impressions more personally than a camera.

Avoid bringing electrical appliances. If you find a hairdryer or electric razor absolutely necessary, you can purchase either fairly inexpensively in Florence. If you bring an appliance from home, keep in mind that the voltage in Europe is 220, so in addition to a voltage converter, you’ll need an adapter to change the shape of the plug for the appliance. You can get both in Florence (Janet Smith will tell you where to go). Because utilities in Europe are very expensive, take cues from your host family when using heat, water, and electricity; try not to use your hairdryer, take hot showers, etc. more often than Italians do themselves.

Your Italian family will be interested in your family and home, so you might want to bring along some snapshots. If you have favorite foods, Italians (like everyone) would probably love to try something new, so bring along some of your favorite recipes.

Suggested Packing List

In your checked bag(s):
- comfortable walking shoes
- slippers
- waterproof coat/jacket
- hat, scarf, gloves, umbrella
- sweaters/turtlenecks
- shirts/t-shirts
- jeans/slacks (1 or 2 pairs of each)
- one or two nice outfits
- underwear (approx. 10 pairs)
- warm socks (2-3 pairs)
- lightweight socks (3-4 pairs)
- pajamas
- swimsuit
- towel
- small bag for day/overnight trips
- small portable radio / CD player & CDs
- watch/travel alarm clock
- camera and film/memory card
- electrical converter/adapter
- extra contacts/eyeglasses
- sunglasses
- small flashlight
- collapsible drying line
- sewing kit
- toiletries
- sunscreen
- insect repellent
- pictures from home
- favorite recipes
- all required textbooks
- travel guide

In your carry-on:
- this handbook
- prescription medication for the entire semester + copy of Rx (see p. 25)
- journal
- laptop (optional) and lock
- portable USB drive
- toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss
- eyeglasses/contacts
- change of clothes in case of lost luggage

On your person:
- money belt, under your clothes
- your passport and visa
- credit/debit cards, traveler’s checks, cash
V. Host Country Information

When you arrive in Italy, you may be struck by the extent to which art and aesthetic presentation are part of daily life and not reserved only for museums and palaces. Store window displays, articles for daily living, and food in markets all reflect a highly developed sense of design and the value placed on artistic presentation. This is equally true for the ways in which Italians present themselves to others; putting forth one’s best appearance (fare bella figura) is a manifestation of the importance of style. Nor is this simply a modern phenomenon: during the Renaissance, for example, it was important to dress and behave as befit one’s status. One of the first activities of new rulers who assumed power (conquered, inherited, or usurped) was to order clothing, furniture, works of art, and other trappings of wealth and power commensurate with their new status. The opposite of a good presentation, una bella figura, is appearing sloppy and unkempt, characterized in Italian as brutta. Flip-flops, shorts, and hoodies are all brutta. One can say much the same for many Italian television shows.

Italians also have an instinctive distrust of and cynicism toward authority, and would regard Americans’ tendencies to be law-abiding and trusting as naïve in the extreme. While Italy today is relatively homogeneous linguistically and has a strong central government, local and regional attachments endure. For Florentines, this means pride not only in being Florentine, but also in their identity as Tuscans and northerners. The Northern League, or Lega Nord, attracts votes from those who feel that their taxes are wasted by the central government and that a disproportionate amount of national resources are expended in the southern areas of the country, which it sees as backwards. Some Lega Nord extremists even espouse secession from the rest of the country.

Florence is more than a museum of the Renaissance; it is a modern Italian city with approximately 600,000 residents, with all of the facilities and many of the problems one associates with large metropolitan areas. It is a relatively prosperous area of Italy, a country whose quality of life has been ranked eighth in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2005. (The U.S. ranked 13th; the rankings are based on such factors as health, family and community life, political stability, and material well-being.) Your semester in Italy provides an opportunity not only to learn about Italy during the Renaissance but also to observe modern Italian life in all its fullness and complexities and to consider the continuities between these two periods.

VI. Cultural Norms and Expectations

By design, an off-campus program is unlike life on your home campus. In addition to the obvious differences—what and when you eat, for instance, or the number of showers you’re allowed each week—you may also encounter subtler, more elusive cultural contrasts. A big part of living abroad is recognizing and adjusting to your new cultural environment. You may need to adapt to new social protocol as you establish friendships with Italians, and to political viewpoints you may not have heard expressed at home. Americans sometimes find it difficult to adjust to some Italians’ attitudes towards women and minorities, for example. Adapting to new and different cultural practices and belief systems certainly doesn’t mean you have to abandon your own, but being aware of and attuned to cultural contrasts can help smooth the transition to life in another country.
There will undoubtedly be days when you find it all overwhelming and crave the comforts of home—things you may realize you took completely for granted before. Communicating in a foreign language can mean that even basic speech requires effort, and you might sometimes start to feel tired and irritated with your environment and people around you. But keep trying! It takes courage and commitment to remain open to so much newness, but the extra effort and greater sensitivity required of you while you’re in Florence will be richly rewarded.

Italy is not the U.S. and you may find yourself puzzled, or even annoyed, by various Italian customs and practices. It’s obviously impossible for ACM to tell you in advance everything you will experience or feel while in Italy, but there are some differences in behavior you may want to know about in advance. Here is a very incomplete list of some of the cultural contrasts you may encounter:

- Conceptions of personal space are quite different in Italy. You may find that people stand closer to you than at home, especially in public areas and on public transportation.
- Italians value courtesy and politeness. On buses, for example, you will find Italians readily giving up their seats to the elderly, mothers with children, and invalids. And in waiting for the bus, while you may be taken aback by the lack of a line, you’ll find that people get on in an orderly fashion without pushing or shoving. Even if you haven’t studied Italian before, start immediately to use small courtesies in Italian (please, thank you, etc.). You’ll find that it’s appreciated.
- Italians communicate more easily with strangers than Americans do, although in a less casual way.
- In shops, merchandise is often kept on shelves behind the counter, and a sales person shows you what you ask to see rather than allowing you to sort through the stock yourself.
- It is normal to exchange “buon giorno” or “buona sera” when entering shops or cafes and “arrivederci” and “grazie” when exiting.
- Smoking is banned by law in all enclosed spaces (including restaurants and theaters) unless they have a separate area with continuous floor-to-ceiling walls and a ventilation system. The smoking ban is one of the toughest in Europe.
- It is optional to tip in restaurants, taxis, at the hairdresser’s, or the barber’s.
- Do NOT eat on public transportation and in public buildings except in cafeterias and designated areas. Italians do not bring snacks and lunches to meetings.
- Play the anthropologist: observe Italian behavior on the street and in your family and try to adapt. Italians come in all shapes, sizes, and attitudes, like any other group. Sooner or later you will likely encounter a discourteous, pushy, or aggressive person. Try not to take it personally.

Students say...

“The city surprised me in that it is a busy metropolis, just like any other city. I had some preconceptions of Florence that I think were rather glorified, and when I finally settled into the way of life here, it was hard to get used to crowded streets, packed buses, and the constant frustration of dealing with everyday situations in another language and another context.”

“Florence is by no means the paradise I expected it to be. It’s difficult to separate in my mind the art and the city (especially when I see the Duomo decaying from auto emissions), but perhaps I shouldn’t anyway.”

“Put your culture on hold for awhile and simply accept a new way of life. It’s easy if you try.”

“Urge future students to have confidence in themselves, their preferences, their decisions. Too often, I got intimidated by all the talk of others: all the travel and thrills and fun, and wondered whether I was taking full advantage of my time here, only to discover, to my surprise, that I did make some good choices and accomplish something. Future students should be urged to trust their instincts: if you don’t go out to restaurants all the time in the States, don’t feel obligated to go out and blow a lot of cash just because you’re in Italy. If you’re used to being alone, don’t hesitate to forgo some of the ACM socializing to allow yourself some solitude and time to THINK. You can do it! Tanti auguri!”
**Student Conduct and Discipline**

Enrollment in an off-campus study program obligates you to conduct yourself as a responsible member of that program. While on an ACM program, any behavior by a student that discredits the student or the program, as determined by the program rules and the program director, may result in disciplinary action. The program director reserves the right to discipline or dismiss a student whose conduct is in conflict with the best interests of the program and in violation of its rules—either academic or social. Also, the director of the program has the authority, in consultation with the ACM Chicago office, to remove a student from the program because of a medical or psychological crisis or any other serious situation that might arise. Life-threatening events, serious involvement with the police, unscheduled loss of contact with a student, and incidents having the potential for serious public relations consequences may also warrant dismissal.

**Alcohol**

One significant area of difference between Italy and the U.S. has to do with consumption of alcohol. While there is not the rigid enforcement of a drinking age in Italy, you will also find that Italians seldom drink to become intoxicated. Rather, alcohol is consumed in moderation on social occasions and with meals. Public drunkenness and rowdy behavior are frowned upon. Moreover, over-consumption of alcohol poses specific difficulties for women: Not only are women who are publicly drunk in Italy looked upon as “loose,” they also put themselves at risk for sexual assault and other unwanted attentions. Please keep in mind that your judgment is likely to be impaired with alcohol, and that you may lose the ability to evaluate situations with the same caution and sensitivity you would normally use. Remember that you may not be aware of or able to read the various social signals that are being given.

**Drugs**

Anti-drug laws in Italy are very severe and, contrary to what is generally believed, enforced with considerable rigor. In Italy you are subject to a minimum sentence of three years for use or possession of illegal drugs. You can be arrested for suspected possession, suspected use, knowledge of possession or use not reported to the police, and on these charges you can be held incommunicado, without bail, for an indefinite period of time. Any accusation of an ACM student by the narcotics police could have severe repercussions on the program, the staff, and the students. Therefore, the possession or use of any illegal drugs may result in immediate dismissal from the Florence program. If you are arrested because of suspected involvement with drugs, the ACM program staff and American Consulate will be able to do very little to help you.

**Program Regulations**

You will be expected to conform to the behavioral standards of the country you are in, which, as mentioned before, are more rigid than ours. You will be registered with the American consulate and the Italian police. Remember that you are in Europe to experience a different kind of living, and that some of the attitudes, assumptions, and customs of Italians will differ from your own. Your attitude, cooperation, and flexibility will make the difference in the quality of your experience abroad and will be especially important to the success of your stay with your Italian family.

**You may not acquire or operate any kind of motorized vehicle while you are a participant in the ACM program.** You will probably find, as do many Florentines, that public transportation and your own two feet are the most efficient means of getting around.
**Culture Shock**

No matter how much you prepare for your time abroad, however, there will be surprises, both good and bad. As one study abroad student said, “It doesn’t matter what you expect—it won’t be what you expect.” It’s not unnatural to go through a period soon after you arrive when you’re desperately homesick and everything Indian looks more foreign than you can bear.¹ Often labeled as “culture shock,” these periods pass; for some, they come and go quickly, while for others, they may last longer.

**Distinctive Features of Culture Shock**

- Culture shock does not result from a specific event or series of events. Instead, culture shock comes from encountering different ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing which threaten your basic, unconscious, belief that your encultured customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are right.
- Culture shock does not strike suddenly or have a single principal cause. Instead the cumulative effects build up slowly, from a series of small, difficult-to-identify events.

**Sources of Culture Shock**

- Being cut off from familiar cultural cues and patterns, especially the subtle, indirect ways you normally express feelings. All the nuances and shades of meaning that you instinctively understand and that make your life comprehensible are suddenly taken away.
- Living, studying or working over an extended period of time in an ambiguous situation.
- Questioning values that you had considered absolute may conflict with your moral standards.
- Continually experiencing situations in which you are expected to function with maximum skill and speed, but without adequately explained rules.

As indicated earlier, culture shock progresses slowly. Your first reaction to different ways of doing things may be, “How quaint!” When it becomes clear that these differences are not simply quaint, you may dismiss them by pointing out the fundamental similarities of human nature. After all, “People are really basically the same under the skin, aren’t they?”

**How to Counteract Culture Shock**

- Find out as much as possible about your host country. One of the best antidotes to culture shock is knowing as much as possible about your environment.
- If you have not already done so, consciously look for logical reasons behind everything in the host culture which seems strange, difficult, confusing or threatening. Even if your reasoning is wrong, it will reinforce the positive attitude that logical explanations do lie behind things that you observe in the host culture. Look at every aspect of your experience from the perspective of your hosts. Find patterns and relax interrelationships; all the pieces will fit together once you discover where they go. Relax your grip on your own culture a little in the process. You cannot lose your culture, any more than you can forget how to speak English, but letting go a little bit may open up some unexpected avenues of understanding.
- Do not succumb to the temptation to disparage the host culture. Resist making jokes and comments which illustrate the stupidity of the “natives,” and do not hang around Americans who do make them. They will only reinforce your unhappiness. Every American enclave has a number of people who cannot adjust to the country and

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sit around waiting for more Americans to indoctrinate on the “stupidity of the natives.” Avoid these people like the plague! The sickness they are attempting to spread is far worse than any culture shock you will ever experience.

- Identify a sympathetic and understanding host national (a member of your host family, a neighbor, another student, a friendly acquaintance) and talk with that person about specific situations and your feelings about them. Talking with Americans can only be helpful to a limited extent, because your problem lies with your relationship to the host culture.

- Above all, have faith in yourself, in the essential good will of your hosts, and in the positive outcome of your experience.

**Coming Home: Reentry & Reverse Culture Shock**

Reentry into your home culture can be both as challenging and as frustrating as living overseas, mostly because our attitude toward going “home” is that it should be a simple matter of getting resettled, resuming your earlier routines, and reestablishing your relationships. However, research worldwide has shown that reentry has its own set of special social and psychological adjustments. The following list of ideas may help make your reentry easier for you and for those at home.

- **Prepare for the adjustment process.** The more you consider what is to come, and know about how returning home is both similar to and different from going abroad, the easier the transition will be. Anticipating is useful. As one psychologist put it, “Worrying helps.”

- **Allow yourself time.** Give yourself time to relax and reflect upon what is going on around you, how you are reacting to it, and what you might like to change. And give your family time for the same.

- **Understand that the familiar will seem different.** Just as when you arrived at your off-campus site, you will be more aware of how your home looks when you go back. You will have a heightened sense of awareness that will last just a short time. You will have changed, home will have changed, and some things will seem strange, perhaps even unsettling. Take advantage of that time by writing your perceptions on paper. Look at it later, and think about why you noticed the things you did, and how your perceptions changed because of your experience in another culture.

- **Be sensitive to those around you.** Upon returning everyone will ask about your trip, then they listen for a few minutes and talk about their new car, or about cousin John’s wedding party. After a while they do not ask at all! Much frustration in returnees stems from what is perceived as disinterest by others in their experience and lack of opportunity to express their feelings and tell their stories. Showing an interest in what others have been doing while you have been on your adventure overseas is the surest way to reestablish rapport. Being as good a listener as a talker is a key ingredient in mutual sharing. Learn to give short responses, focusing on just one or two ideas about what you did while you were off campus. Save your long discussions for a few select people who have a basis for understanding your experience.

- **Reserve judgments.** Just as you had to keep an open mind when first encountering the culture of a new foreign country, try to resist the natural impulses to make judgments about people and behaviors once back home. What works in one situation may not work in another. Pick ideas that will work well for you, and disregard those that will not. Mood swings are common at first, so try to remain flexible and keep laughing. Respond thoughtfully and slowly to avoid quick answers and impulsive reactions.

- **Beware of comparisons.** Making comparisons between cultures and nations is natural, particularly after residence abroad; however, a person must be careful not to be seen as too critical of home or too lavish in praise of things foreign. A balance of good and bad features is probably more accurate and certainly less threatening to others. The tendency to be an “instant expert” is to be avoided at all costs.
Remain flexible. Keeping as many options open as possible is an essential aspect of a successful return home. Attempting to re-socialize totally into old patterns and networks can be difficult, but remaining aloof is isolating and counterproductive. Try to achieve a balance between maintaining earlier patterns and enhancing your social and intellectual life with new friends and interests.

Find support and move on. There are lots of people back home who have gone through their own reentry and understand a returnee’s concerns. Keeping in touch with the friends you made abroad can be a source of comfort. You can also help yourself by thinking about the future and the next challenge or goal that you may want to achieve.

VII. Health and Safety

While studying off-campus offers new educational opportunities, it also can present challenges and risks that are different from those on your home campus. Just as you prepare for a new mode of learning on the program, you also should think about living in a new environment that may contain new kinds of risks and will not have the same support systems or forms of assistance you have turned to on your home campus or in your home town. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare for the ACM Florence Program.

Health and Medical Care
Health will be a special concern while you are living in an unfamiliar place without access to your regular physician or health service. While you are in Italy, you need to be aware of your health and your responsibility for monitoring medical concerns, whether new or ongoing. The challenges of adjusting to a new culture are an important part of what you will be experiencing in Italy. Adjusting to this new environment can be especially difficult when you are away from friends, family and college faculty or staff that you know well. You will have days that are exciting and rewarding and also days when everything seems strange and exhausting. Program staff, host families, and new friends can help you recognize and talk through these pressures, and staff can also recommend counselors if you feel they might help.

In Florence you will use the Tourist Medical Center or be referred to English-speaking doctors and dentists recommended by the American consulate. You will be expected to pay the medical expenses and seek reimbursement from your insurance company afterward. Before you leave home, be sure you know which expenses qualify for reimbursement and how to file a claim. You should take a medical claim form from your insurance company with you. You will be expected to pay for any medical expenses at the time of treatment and seek reimbursement from your insurance company afterwards.

Traffic and Personal Travel
On the Florence program you will be living and studying in a larger city than most of you do on your home campus. In Florence, you will be commuting between your home and the Linguaviva each day by public transportation. You will also be coming home at night from program sponsored events or socializing with your friends. You will need to become aware of different traffic patterns and practices. Public transportation is widely used and apt to be crowded. Your host family and program staff can advise you about how to ensure your safety as you travel around Florence. In a few parts of Italy, it is probably better that women do not travel alone. In general, however, traveling alone in Italy is as safe as or safer than in most places in the United States.
You should be mindful of your personal safety as you travel independently around Europe on free weekends or during the break. You should inform your host family of any travel plans and inform program staff of your itinerary and your expected time of return.

**Crime and Random Violence**

Florence is a relatively safe city and Italy is a hospitable and secure country. Like any place in the world, however, Florence and other parts of Italy have some crime and random violence. We encourage you to travel with a partner or in a small group. Women need to be particularly careful, especially returning home at night. Follow your host family’s advice about coming home at night, and follow more than your usual precautions until you learn to read street signals or cultural signs that might be warnings. In your home country, you know what the potential danger signs are; you should take special care until you learn the comparable signs in Italy.

Keep an eye on your stuff! The following excerpt from *Let’s Go: Italy* explains some common scams:

> In large cities, **con artists** often work in groups and may involve children. Beware of certain classics: sob stories that require money, rolls of bills “found” on the street, mustard spilled (or saliva spit) onto your shoulder to distract you while they snatch your bag. **Never let your passport and your bags out of your sight.** Hostel workers will sometimes stand at bus and train stations to try to recruit tired and disoriented travelers to their hostel; never believe those who tell you that theirs is the only hostel open. **Pickpockets** abound in Rome, Naples, and other urban centers, especially on public transportation. Also, be alert in public telephone booths: if you must say your calling card number, do so very quietly; if you punch it in, make sure no one can look over your shoulder. (2007 edition, p. 21)

There are several simple rules that can help you avoid being a victim of a crime:

- Familiarize yourself with the European monetary system and count your change.
- Put your wallet back in your purse or pack before leaving a shop.
- Carry purses and other bags across the body and hold firmly to them; carry them away from the street side of the street.
- Carry only as much cash as you need or can afford to lose.
- Do not draw attention to yourself as an American—dressing more like an Italian (avoiding flipflops) can help, as can not speaking English loudly when in a large group of students.

**Gender Relations and Sexual Harassment**

In the same way you have learned how to judge your behavior with the opposite sex in the United States, you need to become accustomed to new guidelines and warnings when you’re in Italy. American movies have created an impression of free and easy sexual relations between Americans. An open approach to strangers in the street or in a bar or “sexy” clothing can be read as a sign of promiscuity, and to a greater extent than in the U.S., casual flirtation can be misinterpreted as a come-on, especially when alcohol is involved. Some past participants have found that “toning down” their dress and behavior helped to ward off unwanted attention or advances. Even these strategies, however, may not discourage Italian men from making comments about your appearance or following you on the street. Italian women have learned to deflect these comments, and as you gain confidence in the language, you too will learn how to handle uncomfortable situations.

ACM policy prohibits sexual harassment by program staff and students, as is spelled out in the section at the end of this handbook. Each student is entitled to participate in the program without having to put up with harassment or an
uncomfortable situation. Any problems should be immediately reported to the program staff, whether it involves another student, program staff or faculty, host family, or a setting outside the program. It may be possible to help you identify a way of stopping the harassment or it may be necessary for you to get out of that setting.

Consult with Staff
You will face tangible risks in Florence, just as anywhere else. Part of what you want to learn on this program is how to recognize dangers and danger signs that are different from those you know at home. In most cases you can learn how to recognize and avoid these risks. In some cases you will learn to avoid them. In any case, let people know if you are feeling concerned or unsafe. Program staff, host families, and others can help you learn to manage the risks in Florence, just as they can help you learn to understand the history and culture.

VIII. Program Arrangements

ACM in Florence is affiliated with the Linguaviva Scuola d’Italia, and their facilities serve as the program center. Classes will meet here (when not meeting on site), and students may also wish to use it as a place to meet each other. There is also a computer lab, with several machines with internet connections and also a wireless connection for students who bring their own laptops. The center also houses a small library of ACM course-related books and other materials.

Mail
While you are in Florence, you should not receive mail at your host family’s residence. Instead, please ask your family and friends to send mail care of Linguaviva. Staff will be there to accept the post during business hours, and you can pick up your mail everyday on your way to class. You can also send and receive faxes at Linguaviva (sending faxes costs €2 for the first page and €1 for each additional page). Private fax services are also available in Florence.

Receiving Packages
Italian Customs charges a flat fee on all incoming packages containing books, used items, or things for which no value is declared in the shipping documents. If a value is declared on the package, however, you (the receiver) will be charged 20% of the declared value for customs fees, plus an additional 20% for value-added tax. One recent participant received a box of books from home with a declared value of $200, and subsequently was forced to pay €40—more than $50—to get the package out of customs. Ask family and friends sending you a package not to send anything expensive or valuable (e.g. a CD or MP3 player, computer equipment, or camera) and to declare the package’s contents worth nothing. Also, be sure your family does not send you anything that will arrive after you’ve left Florence. Airmail packages sent from the U.S. take about two weeks to arrive, and packages sent by sea take up to three months. Finally, be sure to bring all the prescription medication you’ll need for the entire semester, because it is very difficult to send medicine through customs.
IX. Housing Arrangements

When you first arrive in Florence, you will be staying at the Pensione Ottaviani, getting acquainted with staff and other program participants.

Pensione Ottaviani
Piazza degli Ottaviani 1
50123 Firenze, ITALIA
phone: (011 39) 055 239 6223
fax: (011 39) 055 293 355
email: pensioneottaviani@hotmail.com
Web: www.pensioneottaviani.it

The Pensione Ottaviani is located at number 1, Piazza degli Ottaviani in Florence, and you can walk there from Santa Maria Novella station in about five minutes. The pensione will accept early reservations and offers ACM students a discounted rate (comparable to hostel rates). If you plan to arrive in Florence before August 30 and would like a room reserved for you at the Pensione Ottaviani, please contact Amanda Dooley or Heather Everst in the ACM office (adooley@acm.edu, heverst@acm.edu, 312-263-5000) at by August 1st. The pensione charges for reservations canceled less than two days before your scheduled arrival. If you will be arriving at the pensione late in the evening, be aware that the doors will most likely be locked when you get there. If this is the case, knock loudly on the door and wait for the night porter to let you in. He may be asleep, so keep knocking if there’s no answer and don’t be alarmed if you have to wait for awhile to get inside.

From Santa Maria Novella Station to the Pensione Ottaviani:
After stepping off your train, follow the crowd to the main platform of the station, where you’ll see a McDonalds, an ATM, and a food court. Turn left and exit the station by the Farmacia (pharmacy). To your right there should be a stairwell leading underground. Also to your right, beyond the traffic, spot the large church with a round window and green-and-white striped marble arches to the left. This is Santa Maria Novella church. To get to the church you can either:

a) carefully make your way along the streets to the striped arches (portico), or

b) go down the stairs next to you and follow the underground tunnel straight to the striped arches (portico). Do not turn right down the shopping center at the bottom of the stairs, but continue straight down the tunnel. The tunnel has a few exits, but stay to the right and follow it as far as it will go, and climb the flight of stairs at the end. At the top of the stairs and to your right you’ll see the portico.

From there, follow the arches along Via degli Avelli into the Piazza Santa Maria Novella beyond the church. Straight across the piazza is another portico with much larger, rounded arches. The street to the left of the portico is Piazza degli Ottaviani. Make your way toward the portico and head down the street next to it. You should see the blue neon “Pensione” sign above the first big door on your right. Across the street from the pensione are a newspaper stand, a bank, and a bar. If you pass a sporting goods store you’ve gone too far and the little piazza has become a street called Via dei Fossi.

Host Families
During the first week of your stay in Florence you will be placed in an Italian home, and a contact list for all host families will be distributed to your parents at that time. There are generally two ACM students to a household, and you’ll share a room; singles are available only if there is an odd number of women and/or men. Some or all members of your host family will be able to speak English.
Most Florentine residents do not live in the historic city, and you will probably need to commute from your host residence to the centro for classes at Linguaviva on a daily basis. The commute is generally between 15 and 30 minutes by bus or on foot. ACM students enjoy a great deal of diversity in their living situations. You may be placed in a multigenerational household with everyone from babies to grandparents, or you might live with an older woman or a couple with extra space in their apartment. As you might expect, most large Florentine families don’t have an abundance of space to host students, so the number of families with small children who can accommodate ACM students is limited. Give some thought to the kind of situation that might work best for you, and be ready to express your preferences to the program staff once you arrive in Florence.

Breakfast and supper will be provided by your host family, and if you have any special dietary restrictions, be sure to let ACM know in advance so that Janet Smith can take this into account in making housing arrangements. Breakfast is usually fairly simple—coffee and bread or a pastry, for example—but the evening meal is another thing entirely. Italians are known for taking time every day to savor meals and enjoy the company of friends and family, and dinner can often linger on for an hour, or two, or more.

Here are a few tips for living with an Italian family:

- It’s very common in Italy to wear slippers inside the house, so bring a pair with you. Because many of the apartments have cold marble or ceramic floors, your Italian mother will probably expect you to wear slippers inside the house. You might be considered impolite if you walk around in bare or stocking feet.
- Many more Italians than Americans smoke, and while your Italian family will not smoke in front of you, we cannot guarantee a smoke-free home for everyone. Cats are popular pets in Italy, so if you are allergic to cat dander you should let us know.
- Please be sure to inform your family in advance if you will miss a meal or if you plan to be away for the weekend.
- Ask your host family if friends and your [American] family can call you there, but also plan on using your cell phone for calls you make yourself. (The Italian phone system charges for minutes used and does not list individual phone calls on its bills. Your host family will, in all likelihood, prefer you to use their phone only for incoming calls.
- If you plan to stay with your host family during the program break you need to ask their permission beforehand. The cost of meals during this period is your responsibility; you may decide to take meals with your host family, or you may prefer to eat out instead.

Please note that during the Fall break, your room with the family is paid for throughout the break, but meals will not be provided. That is, the last meals before the break will be dinner on Thursday, October 15 and breakfast the following morning; the first meal after break will be dinner on Sunday, October 25.

**X. Program Activities**

Courses offered in the Florence Fall program are expressly designed to take advantage of the wealth of cultural resources in Italy, and thus classes will often meet on site: at the Uffizi or Bargello museums, for example, at the Duomo or Santa Croce church, or at the Boboli Gardens. Your course syllabi will outline the various course-related site visits that are planned. As with the classes held at Linguaviva, you are expected to participate (and be on time for) these site visits. In addition, two weekends are set aside for program-sponsored excursions to Rome and Venice. These two excursions are also part of the
academic fabric of the program, and the costs of transportation, hotels, entrance fees, and some meals are included in the program fee.

XI. Personal Travel

While you may wish to use weekends to visit towns in and around Tuscany, we recommend that you plan to travel further afield during the week-long break that comes midway through the semester. And rather than make plans for this before you travel to Italy, it’s often more interesting to wait until you’re in Italy, have met other program participants, and can plan to travel with others on the program.

If friends and family from home plan to visit you while you’re in Italy, encourage them to come during this week-long break when you will have time to show them around Florence and perhaps travel elsewhere in Italy with them. It is not appropriate to miss classes in order to guide or travel with visitors from home.

XII. ACM Program Rules and Policies

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), is a consortium of 14 small liberal arts colleges in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Colorado. ACM’s programs reflect the academic standards and policies of its member colleges, and the standards and rules in the paragraphs which follow are applicable for all of ACM’s off-campus study programs.

Tuition, Program Fees and Refunds

As outlined in the separate sheet on Program Payment Policies included in your acceptance materials, each ACM college has its own arrangement for setting program prices, and you should consult with the Off-Campus Study Office on your campus to confirm what those arrangements are. For all ACM participants in the program, the general policy is that ACM bills your home college for all of the program costs except the $400 deposit and your college in turn bills you (and your parents). Non-ACM participants should speak with the study abroad offices on their home campuses about billing arrangements and discuss with the ACM Program Associate how this will be handled. Whether you are an ACM or a non-ACM student, it is also important that, if appropriate, you inform your Financial Aid office that you will be participating in this program and confirm that your financial aid will apply to program costs; you may also wish to ask if your financial aid package will change to reflect program costs, including the price of the plane ticket. (Program-specific costs are outlined in the Chart of Program Expenses for India on the opposite side of the Program Payment Policies sheet.) In addition, we also recommend that you verify that any scholarships you are currently receiving will, as with financial aid, continue while you are participating in the program. It is also useful to be clear about how and when any financial aid and scholarship moneys will be released to you; we recommend that you make arrangements to have them paid into an American bank account or sent to your parents or legal guardians to handle on your behalf. In any case, you should NOT have them sent on to you while abroad.

Once you are admitted into the program, you will need to reserve a spot on the program by returning to ACM the Reply Form (the pink sheet in your acceptance package), along with a $400 non-refundable deposit. This $400 deposit allows ACM to set aside a spot for you on the program, and it must be received within 15 days of your acceptance.
If you withdraw from the program at any time before the program begins, you will lose the $400 deposit and will be charged for any unrecoverable expenses already incurred on your behalf. If you leave a program once it has begun or are sent home for cause (please see the Study Abroad Contract), the program fee cannot be refunded. Tuition refunds will be calculated based on your home school’s policies. And finally, please be aware that you are liable for any expenses for medical care as well as damage to hostel, hotel, or other housing during your time on the program and that ACM will bill you for such costs. Your grades and credits from the program cannot be sent on to your college’s registrar until all outstanding bills are paid.

ACM Off-Campus Grading Policies

Students from non-ACM institutions should consult the home campus registrar’s office for grading policies in effect on his or her own campus.

Beloit College
All courses (including internships) must be taken for letter grades. Grades will be recorded on the transcript for all programs, but only domestic programs will be calculated in GPA.

Carleton College
Letter grades will be included on transcript but not calculated in GPA. No more than one course per semester may be graded on a S/CR/NC basis.

Coe College
Internships are S/U only. Other courses must be taken for letter grades unless a student chooses the S/U option before mid-term of the program in accordance with the S/U grading policies stated in the Coe College catalog. The letter grade is reported and the Coe College Registrar converts the letter grade to a S/U. In order to convert to an S, the grade must be a “C” or higher.

Colorado College
No restrictions on grading options except that all grades recorded on the Pass track must be verified by the letter grade. Letter "G-track" grades will be calculated into the overall GPA. Grades of any “D” or “NC” will not transfer for credit.

Cornell College
Letter grades will be annotated on transcripts but not calculated in GPA. Only grades of “C” or higher will be accepted. Short term courses taught by Cornell faculty are exceptions to both of the preceding statements; these courses are graded in accordance with Cornell’s standard grading policy.

Grinnell College
Only off-campus courses for which students earn a grade of “C” or above will transfer to Grinnell as earned credits. Grades below “C” will be posted to the transcript with the grade received and zero earned credits. No courses may be taken on a pass/fail basis, regardless of individual program policy. Grinnell students may not take “incompletes” on off-campus study regardless of the policy in effect on their program. Courses in which incompletes are taken will not be recorded on the Grinnell Transcript even if completed at a later date.
Knox College
Credit is granted for only those courses receiving letter grades. Grades received for courses taken off-campus are not factored into GPA.

Lake Forest College
Students may choose to receive a grade of CR (credit for C- or better), D (no plus or minus), or F (Fail) in any course they take. Students choosing this option, or changing back to regular letter grades, must give written notification to the Registrar before the end of the first two weeks of the semester. Prior approval of the student’s advisor is required. Internships will be graded Credit/D/F.

Lawrence University
Courses taken on a non-letter grade basis will not be credited toward a major unless the Subcommittee on Administration and the major department give special permission and may not exceed the usual limit of S/U options (1 per term for students who have earned 54 or more units; maximum of 4 on record at any one time).

Luther College
All courses must be taken for letter grades. Only grades of a “C-” or above will transfer for credit; grades will not be calculated into overall Luther GPA.

Macalester College
All courses taken on approved study away programs are counted towards the student's Macalester grade point average, unless taken on the S/D/NC grading option. Students may take one course per semester on the S/D/NC grading option.

Monmouth College
All courses must be taken for letter grades.

Ripon College
All courses must be taken for letter grades. Students wishing to utilize the S/U option must make those arrangements with the College Registrar prior to the program, or during the first half of the program.

St. Olaf College
Grades from St. Olaf-sponsored off-campus programs are recorded on the student’s official transcript, but do not count in the St. Olaf grade point average or toward the 24-graded-course requirement. See catalog for additional information.

ACM Policy on Sexual Harassment
I. Policy
It has been and remains the policy of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) that sexual harassment of students and employees is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in discipline or dismissal of students or discipline and discharge of employees. However, allegations of sexual harassment are serious and may be extremely prejudicial to the alleged offender. Accordingly, allegations not made in good faith may subject the complainant to disciplinary action.

II. Sexual Harassment Defined
Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical behavior of a
sexual nature when (1) submitting or refusing to submit to such conduct is used as a basis for any decision affecting an individual's academic status or employment, or (2) such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

III. Grievance Procedure
Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment has recourse to informal and formal grievance procedures designed for the purpose of investigation and resolution of such allegations. Informal grievance resolution is encouraged although not required prior to initiating the formal grievance procedure.

As a preliminary matter, any student who believes that she or he has been sexually harassed should report the incident promptly to any of the following:

- Director of the program in which the student is enrolled or other appropriate local staff or faculty member
- Director of International Study Programs at ACM Chicago office, Carol Dickerman
- Director of Chicago Programs, Sally Noble
- Vice-President of ACM, John Ottenhoff

Assistance in presenting a grievance may be obtained from another employee or student. However, attorneys or other third persons may not participate in any facet of the grievance procedure unless ACM and all interested parties otherwise agree.

Informal Procedure
An informal procedure is designed to resolve sexual harassment allegations without having to invoke the formal grievance procedure. This can be initiated through contact with any of the staff named above. The goal is to resolve the problem through discussion with the student, the alleged offender, and any other relevant persons. The student and/or staff member grievance officer may elect to terminate the informal procedure if it appears that no progress is being made in resolving the dispute and initiate a formal procedure.

Formal Procedure
1. Students who wish to lodge a formal complaint must sign and submit it in writing to any staff members named above within 120 days of the alleged harassment.
2. Thereafter, the President of ACM (or if the President is the alleged offender, the Chair of the Board of Directors) shall assign a grievance officer to investigate the complaint and report his/her findings to a grievance board comprised of the President, the investigating grievance officer, and one other grievance officer selected by the President. No employee accused of harassment may serve on the grievance board.
3. The investigation shall include interviews with the complainant, the alleged offender, who shall be informed of the allegations against him/her, and other relevant persons. The grievance board may supplement the investigating officer’s investigation by itself conducting interviews and reviewing relevant evidence.
4. Within 21 days after the investigation concludes, the grievance board shall decide by majority vote whether the complaint allegations are supported by substantial credible evidence. It shall then inform the complainant and alleged offender of its decision.
5. Any disciplinary or other corrective action resulting from a violation of this policy shall be determined in accordance with ACM disciplinary procedures.
IV. Third Party Harassment
Any student who has been sexually harassed by a third party (i.e., vendor, guest speaker, internship setting) should report the incident promptly to any grievance officer who will then investigate and attempt to resolve the problem.

V. Confidentiality
All complaints and investigations of sexual harassment shall be handled in a confidential manner and shall be disclosed only to persons having a legitimate need to know. Grievances and documents will be maintained separately from other student files.

VI. Non-Retaliation
Complaints made in good faith under this policy shall not result in any adverse action against the complainant, nor shall any person who participates in good faith in an investigation be treated adversely because of such participation.

Nothing in this policy precludes an individual from pursuing any legal remedies available to him/her.

ACM Policy on Personal Abuse
Personal abuse, whether oral, written, or physical, exceeds the bounds of appropriate discourse and civil conduct. Harassment of another because of his/her race, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religion, expression of opinion, or other personal characteristics is prohibited. ACM students who engage in such behavior may be disciplined and/or dismissed from a program.

ACM Policy on Dual Relationships
A dual relationship is one in which the faculty/staff member has both a professional and a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. This includes relationships which appear to be mutually consensual. However, the inherent inequality of power between student and faculty/staff creates an unacceptable conflict of interest in a supervisory, educational or advisory context. For this reason, dual relationships between faculty/staff and students who participate in the same program should be avoided. If a relationship nonetheless develops, the faculty/staff member is expected to remove him/herself from supervisory or advisory responsibility for that student, or face disciplinary action.

ACM Policy on Discrimination
The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, race, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.
### Basic Italian Expressions

Following is a brief list of useful Italian words and phrases that may help you during your first few days in Italy. The Fodor’s Web site ([www.fodors.com/language/](http://www.fodors.com/language/)) also offers useful Italian phrases and includes links to sound files to help your pronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In English…</th>
<th>In Italian…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Basics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Per piacere; per favore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Grazie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you very much</td>
<td>Molto grazie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (apology)</td>
<td>Scusi; mi scusi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (may I get through?)</td>
<td>Permesso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sorry</td>
<td>Mi dispiace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning / good afternoon</td>
<td>Buongiorno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Buona sera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good night</td>
<td>Buona notte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello (formal)</td>
<td>Salve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good-bye (formal)</td>
<td>Arrivederici</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello / good-bye (informal)</td>
<td>Ciao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you soon</td>
<td>A presto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you later</td>
<td>A più tardo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleased to meet you</td>
<td>Piacere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is</td>
<td>Mi chiamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am</td>
<td>Sono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is my friend (m)</td>
<td>È il mio amico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is my friend (f)</td>
<td>È la mia amica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Come sta?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine, thanks, and you?</td>
<td>Bene, grazie, E Lei?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am an American student (male).</td>
<td>Sono uno studente americano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am an American student (female).</td>
<td>Sono una studentessa americana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am studying in Florence.</td>
<td>Studio a Firenze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am going to Florence.</td>
<td>Vado a Firenze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am from Chicago.</td>
<td>Sono da Chicago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir</td>
<td>signore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madam / Mrs.</td>
<td>signora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss / Ms.</td>
<td>signorina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you speak English?</td>
<td>Parla inglese?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question words</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Chi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td>Che cosa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Perché?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Quando?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Dov’è?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>Come?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much?</td>
<td>Quanto?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where can I change some dollars?</td>
<td>Dove posso cambiare dei dollari?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…this check?</td>
<td>…questo assegno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the bank open?</td>
<td>È aperta la banca?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, it’s closed.</td>
<td>No, è chiusa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a currency exchange nearby?</td>
<td>C’è un ufficio camio qui vicino?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much is the dollar worth today?</td>
<td>Quanto vale il dollaro oggi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What time is it?</td>
<td>Che ora è?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s one o’clock.</td>
<td>È l’una.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five minutes ago</td>
<td>Cinque minuti fa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When does it begin?</td>
<td>Quando comincia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding your way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is / Where are…</td>
<td>Dov’è / Dove sono…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the bus to the center of town?</td>
<td>l’autobus che va in centro?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ticket office?</td>
<td>la biglietteria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the toilets?</td>
<td>i gabinetti?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the restaurant?</td>
<td>il ristorante?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can I get there?</td>
<td>Come ci si arriva?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where can I find this address?</td>
<td>Dov’è questo indirizzo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think I’m lost.</td>
<td>Penso di essermi smarrito.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s straight ahead.</td>
<td>Sempre dritto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn right</td>
<td>Giri a destra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>A sinistra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In front of</td>
<td>Davanti a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next to</td>
<td>Accanto a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>Dopo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near</td>
<td>Vicino a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the Pensione Ottaviani?</td>
<td>Dove la Pensione Ottaviani?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the train station?</td>
<td>Dove la stazione?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ticket window</td>
<td>La biglietteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The no-smoking section</td>
<td>Lo scompartimento non fumatori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Binario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From what platform does the train leave?</td>
<td>Da che binario parte il treno?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d like a second-class ticket.</td>
<td>Vorrei un biglietto di seconda classe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this seat taken?</td>
<td>È occupato questo posto?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Things to See & Do**

You will visit some of these places as part of the program. This list simply suggests a number of places to visit on your own. It is by no means exhaustive. You should buy a guide book which will help you locate these places and suggest other sites of interest.

**Chapels**
- Medici
- Pazzi
- Rucellai

**Churches**
- Baptistery
- S. Maria del Fiore
- San Gaetano
- San Lorenzo
- San Marco
- San Salvatore al Monte
- Santa Croce
- Santa Maria Maggiore
- Santa Maria Novella
- Santa Trinita
- Cloister of S. Maria Novella
- Forte Belvedere
- Fresco by Perugino (S. Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi)

**Gardens**
- Boboli Gardens
- Forte Belvedere
- Piazzale Michelangelo

**Museums**
- Accademia
- Anthropology & Ethnology
- Archaeological
- Arte Moderna
- Bardini
- Buonarroti
- Davanzati Palace
- Cathedral Opera del Duomo
- Firenze com’era (Hist. of Florence)

- Horne
- House of Dante
- Innocenti (deli)
- Laurentian Library
- Medici
- National (Bargello)
- Opera del Duomo
- Palatina
- San Marco
- Santa Croce
- Scienze (History of Science)
- Uffizi

**Palaces**
- Altoviti
- Antella (dell’)
- Antinori
- Bargello (sculpture museum)
- Cocchi Serristori
- Corsi
- Corsini
- Gianfigliazzi
- Gondi
- Guicciardini
- Lardarel
- Medici_Riccardi
- Minerbetti
- Nonfinito
- Porte Guelfa
- Pazzi Quaratesi
- Pitti
- Rucellai
- Signoria (Palazzo Vecchio)
- Spini_Ferroni
- Strozzi