CONTACT INFORMATION

**Director:** TBD  
Cell in Florence: 347 86.58.832 (for emergencies only)

**Associate Director:** Monica Ginanneschi  
mginanne@smith.edu  
Cell in Florence 347-82.29.933 (for emergencies only)

**Sede’s Address:** Smith College in Italy  
Piazza Signoria, 4A  
50122 Firenze   ITALY  
Tel/Fax: 055 23.81.397  
Tel/Voicemail: 055 23.816.74

**Director’s Address in Italy:** TBD

To call Italy from the US, first dial the international and country codes: 011 39. Remember that Italy is 6 hours ahead of the East Coast. Noon in Northampton is 6:00 PM in Italy.

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**Smith College:** Office for International Study  
Wright Hall  
Smith College  
Northampton, MA 01063  
Tel: (413) 585-4905  
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**Dean for International Study:** Rebecca Hovey  
rhovey@smith.edu

**Asst. Dean for International Study:** Lisa Johnson  
ldjohnso@smith.edu
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015-2016

The Smith Center (SEDE) in Florence is closed in July and August.

Final dates for the Italian universities are not available until you arrive in Florence because the academic calendars are set late in the summer.

Students arrive in Florence: Thursday, September 10, 2015
First meeting: 10 AM, Friday, September 11, 2015
Placement in host families: Friday afternoon, September 11, 2015
Welcome Weekend: Saturday, September 12; group lunch and activities
Orientation classes begin: Monday, September 14, 2015
Orientation classes end: Thursday, October 1, 2015
Orientation exams: Friday, October 2, 2015

Fall Semester at Sede begins: Monday, October 5, 2015
First Semester at the University of Florence begins: Monday, October 12, 2015 (presumed)
Last Day to drop/add Sede courses: Friday, October 16, 2015
Last Day to change grading option to S/U Friday, December 4, 2015
Christmas Break: Friday, December 11 – Wednesday, January 6, 2016
Classes resume at Sede: Thursday, January 7, 2016
Fall Semester at Sede ends: Thursday, January 21, 2016
Fall Semester Exams at Sede: Monday, January 25 – Thursday, January 28, 2016

Group Excursion to Sicily: Saturday, January 30 - Friday, February 5, 2016

Spring Semester at Sede begins: Monday, February 8, 2016
Second Semester at University of Florence begins: Beginning of March
Last Day to drop/add Sede courses: Friday, February 19, 2016
Last Day to change grading option to S/U Monday, April 11, 2016
Spring Semester at Sede ends: Thursday, May 12
Spring Semester Exams at Sede: Monday, May 16 – Wednesday, May 18
Final Exams at University of Florence: End of May – Early June (PRIMO APPELLO)

The Director's supervision of the group ends with the close of the academic year, after the last examination is given, normally no later than June 15th.

Italian National Holidays

Tutti i Santi: Sunday, November 1, 2015
Immacolata Concezione: Tuesday, December 8, 2015
Anniversario della Liberazione: Monday, April 25, 2016
Festa del Lavoro: Sunday, May 1, 2016
Festa della Repubblica: Thursday, June 2, 2016
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Care studentesse,

You are about to embark on what will be an unforgettable experience. Experience tells us that this year will change you in wonderful ways: you will grow, and become more confident, more open minded, more resourceful, more mature. In order for this to happen though, you have to make sure that you embrace this journey with a positive attitude. Be aware that a lot of adjustment needs to happen before you can become comfortable in a different culture. Be curious: ask questions, talk to people, try the food that you’ve never had before. Be active: explore your new environment; observe the people and situations around you. This experience will be successful if you are determined to get the most out of it. If you look for all that is positive, and not dwell on finding what is negative or seeing things in a negative way, you will be a great deal happier and your experience will enrich you. What you must not do is expect everything to be just as it is on the Smith campus. (Experience has taught us that those who won’t leave behind the familiar environment they have grown to take for granted end up both frustrated and frustrating.) Learn, grow, have fun, and become the best you can be! And join your predecessors, whose love for Florence, and Italy, endures for the rest of their lives.

Your directors

😊😊😊 See you in Florence on September 10!! 😊😊😊
Scan all your documents (passport, credit cards etc.) and store these copies in a safe place. If you ever lose the originals, it will be much easier to replace them if you can show the copies.

**Visas**

The Office for International Study will coordinate a group visa application during the summer. Passports with visas will be returned to students in late July or early August. Students who cannot participate in the group visa application are responsible for obtaining their own visas.

**Permessio di Soggiorno** (Residence Permit)

All details are coordinated by our Associate Director, Monica Ginanneschi who makes sure all material is ready and accompanies the students to the *Questura*.

In order to apply for a residence permit after arrival in Florence, you will need to present the following items to authorities.

- your passport with visa
- the *Attestato Consolare* and acceptance letter from Smith, returned with your passport and visa
- health insurance letter in Italian
- notarized original “Parents’ Financial Support Statement” and “Bank Financial Guarantee” (at [http://www.smith.edu/studyabroad/florence_accepted.php](http://www.smith.edu/studyabroad/florence_accepted.php)) plus 2 copies
- 8 passport photos

**Packing: What to bring to Florence?**

Fall weather in Florence is variable: bring clothing and shoes for rainy and cold weather. It starts to get cold in late October. Interior heating in homes and offices does not start until November and it is kept lower than in the United States. Warm indoor clothing is needed, and slippers for cold marble floors. Clothing may, of course, be purchased in Florence where there is good shopping, but it is rather expensive (unless you shop at the many open markets). Winters are much less severe than they are in New England; it rarely snows in Florence. However, it is damp, and wearing different layers of clothing is a good idea. Bring a raincoat or a rain jacket and good walking shoes or boots. *See Part B for more advice about packing.*
Carry-on luggage:

In addition to the documents above, pack the following in your carry-on luggage:

- about €100 cash for immediate expenses upon arrival
- essential medication
- basic toiletries and a change of clothes, in case your luggage is lost
- your laptop, if you are bringing one and an adaptor for Italian outlets.
- Remember that carry-on liquids are limited. Liquids and gels must be in individual containers of 3.4 ounces (100 milliliters) or less and placed inside one clear, quart-size, plastic, zip-top bag. Containers should fit comfortably into your bag, and only one bag is permitted per passenger. If you need to bring more than 3.4 ounces of any liquid or gel substance, it should go into your checked luggage.

Shipping

Shipping is NOT a good idea. If you need to bring extra luggage it is easier and cheaper to pay the fee to the airline for an extra suitcase.

If you must ship personal belongings to yourself, be ready to pay $100 or more in taxes and customs fees in Florence, and to go to Customs at the airport to pick up and clear your items.

Do not ship any medicine, including over-the-counter products, such as aspirin, vitamins, and contact-lens solution or energy bars to Italy. Inclusion of any medicinal substances will cause problems with Italian customs. Do not ship electronics.

Please note that surface shipping takes about one to two months. Any package shipped from a non-EU country is subject to a 30% tax on its declared value. Let your family know that if they plan to send you any packages, the declared value of the package should be as low as possible and you will still pay to receive it.

ARRIVAL IN FLORENCE

You are responsible for making your own flight arrangements so that you arrive in Florence on Thursday, September 10th, before 6 PM. From the airport or train station, make your way to Hotel Maxim (see below), where you will spend the first night. In the afternoon of September 11th, students will move in with their host families.

Flying into Florence or Pisa is recommended because these airports are very convenient to the city. You may find less expensive flights to some of the cities listed below, but be sure to take into account other transportation expenses required to get from there to Florence (train, bus, shuttle, etc). These costs often make flying elsewhere more expensive.
You may consider coordinating your travel in small groups, so that you arrive in Florence with other students. It is more fun (and reassuring!) to travel and arrive with others, and you can share a cab from the airport or train station to the hotel.

If you wish to arrive in Florence before September 10th, you are responsible for making your own lodging arrangements at your own expense. It is recommended that you make reservations as soon as possible and no later than mid-June. See Section 11 for lodging suggestions near the Sede for yourself, or for friends and family that may come to visit you during your time in Florence.

**Directions from Major Airports in Italy to Florence**

**Florence:** Most convenient arrival point because you can take a taxi or a bus directly into town. A 20 minute ride in a taxi costs approximately €35-40. (Taxis charge a starting fee + miles + number of bags.)

**Pisa:** Also convenient, since the train leaves very frequently and directly from the airport. It arrives at the central station in Florence (Santa Maria Novella or SMN). The 70-minute train ride costs €7,10, and the taxi from the train station about €10-15. There are trains from the Pisa airport almost every hour, sometimes twice an hour. There are also busses outside the station that take the same amount of time (depending on traffic!) and cost approximately €5.

**Bologna:** Also convenient. The new service Appennino Shuttle runs every 2 hours directly from the airport to downtown Florence. The bus ride lasts 90 minutes, total cost €19. For more information [http://www.appenninoshuttle.it/index_x.asp](http://www.appenninoshuttle.it/index_x.asp). The Aerobus leaves frequently from the airport (€6,00) and goes to the Central Train Station in Bologna. Trains to Florence from Bologna are frequent, but they are mainly fast trains (Eurostar) that cost €25 and take 37 minutes. Intercity Trains (IC) to Florence (no reservation necessary) are cheaper and still take only about an hour. They are less frequent: please check [http://www.trenitalia.it](http://www.trenitalia.it) for train schedule and cost of tickets.

**Rome:** Take the train from the airport to the main train station (approximately 30 minutes and €14) and then a 90-minute train to Florence (€45). There are no trains from the airport to the train station in the evening after 9 p.m., only taxis and a bus.

**Milan (Malpensa Airport):** Take a 45-60 minute bus or train ride from the airport to the train station (Stazione Centrale or Stazione Porta Garibaldi approximately €5). Then a train trip of one hour and forty five minutes with the new high speed rail (approximately €53) to downtown Florence. There are also a few direct trains to Florence from Malpensa Airport.
**Lodging**

Smith provides lodging at Hotel Maxim on September 10th. **Hotel Maxim is at Via Calzaiuoli 11**, and is a two-minute walk from the Sede. You will be assigned to a double or triple room upon arrival. Unpack, relax, explore!

When you arrive in Florence at either the airport or the main station, take a taxi to the hotel. The distance is walkable from the station, but when first arriving with all your luggage you will find a taxi most convenient. The cost of a taxi from the train station is about €10-15. The director and associate director will be stopping in at the hotel to greet students as they arrive on September 10th.

Hotel Maxim provides internet access to guests free of charge; students can use this to contact their families. It is possible to make international calls to the U.S. from the hotel, but it is very expensive. You can give the **hotel telephone number (011-39-055-21.74.74)** to your parents and have them call you. If they purchase an international calling card online, they can call land lines in Italy for as little as 2 cents per minute. If you have an *iPhone* make sure to turn off data roaming before leaving the USA. You can use your smartphones with WIFI. Apps like Whatsapp, Skype and Viber allow you to make free calls to the USA (when in WIFI range).

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**FEES AND EXPENSES**

The comprehensive fee paid to Smith College includes:

- all tuition and fees related for instruction and enrollment at the University of Florence;
- a three-week linguistic and cultural orientation;
- housing with an Italian family from September 11th until two days after the student’s last final exam, except during the Christmas and Easter holiday periods;
- breakfasts and dinners with the host family, and a monthly stipend for lunches;
- annual bus pass for public buses within Florence;
- accommodations, transportation and meals on program excursions, including a 6-day trip to Sicily;
- use of a cell phone (students pays all charges and must return undamaged cell phone at the end of the year);
- *Ina Assitalia* Insurance (government required hospitalization coverage valid only in Italy);
- study abroad medical insurance;
- medical evacuation and repatriation coverage.

Students must budget for personal expenses including international travel, books and supplies, phone calls, medical expenses and personal travel.
Spending Money: The amount of money you will spend on small necessities, phone charges, entertainment, and travel will depend on your lifestyle. Florence is an expensive city. It is recommended that students budget $5,000 minimum for spending money and for holiday travel. If you are interested in obtaining subscriptions for concerts, theater, or opera, please ask the Associate Director soon after your arrival in Florence.

Books and supplies: Past students report spending €50 to €100 per semester on books, course packs and supplies.

Banking: It is very expensive for a student to open a bank account in Italy, and thus Smith recommends against it. Students are advised to access their U.S. bank accounts via ATMs. See Section B for advice about accessing money.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Language Pledge

By accepting the offer to study on a Smith College program in Florence you have made a commitment to speak Italian at all times: at the program center, during excursions and other program events, with the Directors and Associate Director and with the other program participants. This will have significant and immediate effects on your language skills – and, by extension, on the quality of your experience abroad. Whatever your own attitude towards the language pledge may be, you should honor those who wish to abide by it by doing so yourself.

Orientation Program: September 14 – October 2, 2015

The Orientation is designed to prepare you for your year in Florence, both academically and socially. Through small group activities with students from the University of Florence, you will explore and get to know the city, learn about concert and opera subscriptions, theater bookings, etc. and become acquainted with the homes and neighborhoods where they will live for the year.

- **Orientation I (2 credits)** will consist of a three week inter-disciplinary approach to Italian society, with courses in Italian language and culture, cuisine, history and art history. Classes will begin on **Monday, September 14** and meet regularly five days a week at the Sede. Field trips to points of interest in and around Florence are an integral part of the orientation program. This course is taken for a letter grade, and will included quizzes, short papers, oral presentations, exercises and an exam.
**Academic Year: October 5, 2015 – end of May, 2016**

In the fall semester, students take four courses at the Sede, and audit a course at the University. In exceptional cases, very advanced students (such as those who have previously lived in Italy) might be able to take a course for credit at the university in the fall. In the spring semester, students take two or three courses at the Sede plus one or two courses at the University. Tutors will be available to coach students on oral exam preparations for University courses.

**Introduction to the University, 2 credits, graded S/U – Fall semester** involves auditing a course at the University, taking notes and writing a weekly diary and a final report. Diaries will be collected weekly by the director. Reports will be submitted to the Director at the end of the course. This component of Orientation is graded S/U, carries 2 credits, and runs the entire fall semester. **And we take this very seriously.**

**Sede Courses**

Each Sede course meets twice a week for a total of three hours, and includes midterm examinations, short papers, and a final examination. In some cases, a longer paper may be required. All courses are taught in Italian by Italian professors.

The following courses will be offered at the Sede in 2015-2016:

**FALL SEMESTER**

- Italian Stylistics (ITL 240) – required for all students.
- Art History (mainly Medieval and Renaissance)
- Sustainable Food
- Italian Social History

**SPRING SEMESTER**

- History of Fashion and Costume
- Survey of Italian Literature II (ITL 251) – required for all students.
- Immigration and New Italian Identities

The year-long Pistoia internship counts for 4 credits. Students interning in Pistoia will take one less class in the Spring.

**University of Florence Courses**

Some University of Florence courses are limited to students enrolled in a specific degree program. However, there is a wide choice of classes that can be taken outside of a degree program, i.e. as single courses (corsi singoli). In the past students have taken courses offered in a variety of Departments such as Humanities, Political Science, Physics, Mathematics, or Biology.
The website for the University of Florence is www.unifi.it. Course topics change every year and specific information will be available only immediately before (i.e., 10 days at best) the new semester begins. In addition, the website is hard to navigate, so this is not the best source of information about courses.

**Pistoia Early Childhood Center Internship**

A limited number of internships are available in the Pistoia Early Childhood Centers. The program is organized by the Pistoia Public Education Department. Students selected for the internships will travel to a school in Pistoia once a week, (a 45 minute train ride from Florence) to participate in children's activities and discussions with the teacher.

Prospective interns should have some background in early childhood education or in psychology.

A sample of recommended courses:

Edc 231: Foundations and Issues of Early Childhood Education (Domestic and international models of early childhood education and care -- very much based on approaches from Pistoia and Reggio Emilia)
Edc 238: Introduction to the Learning Sciences (highly recommended)
Edc 235: Child and Adolescent Growth and Development (recommended)
PSY 160: Child Development

Selected interns will meet with supervising teachers and begin attending the school in which they will be interning after the beginning of the fall semester, sometime in October. The internship continues in the spring semester and carries 4 credits. The internship can take the place of a Sede course in the spring, but not a University course. The internship course is graded, and requires a presentation and a major research paper turned in to the director of the program at the end of the spring semester.

To apply for the internship, interested students should send a letter describing their background, any previous experience in the field and why they are applying to participate in the internship program with a resumé to: Professor Susan Etheredge of the Department of Education and Child Study as well as to current Smith in Florence Directors, Giovanna Bellesia and Victoria Poletto. **The application deadline is May 4, 2015.** Students will be informed as to whether they have been accepted by June 15th.
Credit

Smith policies require that you take at least 16 credits per semester while abroad (normally these convert to four 4-credit courses). This, with two credits for the orientation session, and 2 credits for Orientation II (auditing University courses) will result in a total of 36 credits for the year. With the permission of both the Director and the Dean for International Study, you may earn up to 38 credits for the year. Only in extenuating circumstances, requiring the permission of the Director, the Dean for International Study, and the Class Dean, may you carry fewer than 16 credits in a semester. (You will still be expected to complete 32 credits for the year.) No courses are awarded more than four credits unless approved by the Dean for International Study.

Grades

Grades earned during each term abroad are recorded on Smith College transcripts. For Smith students these grades count in the calculations of the grade point average, for Latin Honors, and for membership in Phi Beta Kappa. (Other colleges and universities may treat study abroad grades differently. If you are a guest student, please consult with your home institution.)

Grade Conversions for Italy

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Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading Option

While enrolled on your Smith program abroad you are expected to take all courses for letter grades. In order to request taking a course with the S/U option, you must:
a) confirm with the appropriate department chair that the course will count in the major, if indeed it is a “major” course;

b) seek, prior to the ninth week of the semester, permission to do so from the Director, the Dean for International Study, and the Class Dean. Please remember that at Smith College a maximum of 16 credits taken S/U may be counted towards the degree.

If approved, you need to download the S/U application form from the Smith College Class Dean’s webpage, sign it and ask your Director (as instructor and adviser) to also sign. The form then needs to be faxed or scanned/emailed to the Office for International Study. The form is available at: http://www.smith.edu/registrar/documents/ChangeofGradingOption.pdf

Guest students must confirm with their home school advisers that the S/U option is acceptable.

Extensions

In extenuating circumstances, the deadline for work due may be extended beyond the end of the semester with the approval of the Director and the Dean for International Study, with notice to the Class Dean. The Director and Dean for International Study will determine a specific date and time for submission of the material.

Advising

The Director, in consultation via e-mail with your on-campus adviser, serves as your major adviser while abroad, helping you to select and then approve your courses. It is your responsibility to ensure that courses taken abroad will count towards your major (if you intend them to be). The Director will work closely with you to facilitate these conversations. Prior to departure, please consult with your major adviser, make sure that she or he will be available during your time abroad (and if need be find the names of his or her replacement), and be prepared to provide the Director with your adviser’s e-mail.

Attendance

You are expected to attend all classes and take all scheduled exams. Classes are generally held Monday through Friday; some Saturday sessions are possible. Unless group excursions are planned, Saturdays and Sundays are free days for travel and individual plans. You may not begin official vacations early or extend them beyond the given dates.

Music Performance and Studio Art Courses

Music performance courses and studio art courses are normally not offered at European universities. Music majors and studio art majors should consult with the Director, who will attempt
to find suitable alternatives, although in certain areas options are limited. For music majors and minors, and for studio art majors, lesson and studio fees are often covered by the program.

Language Courses and Independent Study

Credit is *not awarded* for a beginning modern foreign language course. Given the value placed on study within the local academic context, students may not plan on arranging independent study or special studies.

Smith College Policies

Unless otherwise indicated in this handbook, all Smith College policies published in the Smith Bulletin apply to the Smith programs abroad.

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**SMITH ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

The regulations and requirements of the Smith College Academic Honor Code apply to all students on the Smith College programs abroad. The Smith College community at home and abroad maintains that any evasion of the *spirit* of the Academic Honor Code constitutes a violation of the Code.

The Smith College Academic Honor Code is found at:  

The Honor Code requires you practice intellectual honesty in all oral and written work. You may seek the advice of a faculty member or a tutor regarding written work; you may seek assistance from friends and native speakers about a limited number of specific linguistic problems. You may *not* submit work that is not your own. You may *not* submit work that has been translated, rewritten, or significantly revised by a third party. When quoting from secondary sources, you must follow the format suggested by the relevant instructor; in case of continuing doubt, you may consult with the Director

Examples of specific infractions of the Honor Code particularly relevant to students abroad include:

- the submission of a paper that is not your own work;
- the submission of a paper for more than one course;
- the use of outside sources—websites, secondary materials, another student’s findings—without proper attribution;
- receiving extensive and assistance from a member of a host family or a friend;
- using translations or published notes *without specific permission* from the instructors;
• Unless specifically authorized, you may not read in translation a work that has been assigned in a language other than English. If you have any doubt about any question of intellectual honesty, please consult the Director.

Suspected infractions of the Honor Code should be reported to the Director. In cases of clear violation, the Director will inform the Dean for International study and the case may be referred to the Dean of the College.

LIVING IN FLORENCE

Housing

Students will all live in private homes, in a variety of family situations. Students may not live in any other housing arrangement while studying on the Smith in Florence program. Life in a host family calls for a maximum of resourcefulness in understanding and adaptability ("When in Rome..."). It is important to realize that living with a family is not at all like living in a dormitory, in a hotel, in a student apartment, or even in your own family home.

You will need to walk a fine line between being a part of the family and being a guest in the family’s home. You must remember at all times that Italians greet one another politely when they enter a room and when they leave (and this is true even when you enter or leave a store or a coffee bar!), and that it is much better to “interrupt” someone to say “buongiorno” or “arrivederci, grazie” than to remain silent because you don’t want to be intrusive. People may not say anything about what they interpret as churlishness or coldness, but they will be offended! It is also good to get into the habit of thanking your host families, and an occasional gift—e.g. an inexpensive plant or a flower or a card—will warm your host mother’s heart.

Be sensitive to people’s boundaries and comfort zones, criteria concerning "privacy"—for which no Italian word exists, hence it's known as "la privacy"—which may be different from what you are used to. Italians tend to be much more physically demonstrative than some non-Mediterranean cultures. Folks are also much more likely to talk about physical ailments and medical conditions, and in some instances about money, than Americans. BUT sex, people's sex life, sexual orientation, etc..., are PRIVATE areas. They are not likely to share such information with you unless you become very close.
Remember, while host families are reimbursed for the expenses they incur in feeding and housing you, no amount of money can pay for welcoming you into their lives, being concerned about you when you are not feeling well, and sharing their intimate space with you. The more open and flexible and friendly you are, the happier your experience will be. The rewards come in a deep understanding of and appreciation for Italian language and culture, and many students have formed lasting bonds of friendship with their host families.

Students will meet their families on the Friday afternoon of orientation. You may wish to bring a small gift for your family with you. Since you won’t know what kind of family you will be living with, a generic gift such as a mug from your hometown or a Smith canvas bag are ideal.

During the three-week Natale break (winter break) and ten-day Pasqua break (spring break), students usually travel, which gives their host families a welcome break. Students CANNOT remain in their host family placement during these breaks. They MUST make alternative plans. Students who need to remain in Florence during all or part of these breaks must communicate with the Director by July 15th, 2015 to discuss alternative housing arrangements.

Housing, room and board are provided for two days after each student’s final exam. The Director's supervision of the group ends with the close of the academic year, after the last examination is given, and, normally, no later than June 15.

Meals

Students eat breakfast and dinner with their families, and receive €170 per month from Smith to cover lunches.

The Sede

The Smith program center in Florence is known as the Sede. The Sede is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 00 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, and is closed during program vacations, including the summer. The Sede has offices for the Director and Associate Director, classroom space, a computer room, a student lounge space, and a small kitchenette for student use. There is also a wide selection of Italian dictionaries and language resources, as well guidebooks left by previous students.

Receiving mail

Please have packages and mail sent to your attention in care of the Sede: Smith College Junior Year Abroad, Piazza Signoria 4a, 50122 Firenze, Italy.
Cell Phones

Students receive cell phones from the program, but students are responsible for the cost of calls. Each phone will be set up with €25 worth of calls which students will have to reimburse the program in Florence. Students are responsible for purchasing their own calling time. In case of loss, theft or damage to a Smith phone, the student will be required to pay for a new phone. Cell phones will be distributed during the first meeting on September 11 and MUST be returned no later than June 15, the official closing date of the program, whether or not a student leaves Florence by that date Students remaining for Blumberg fellowships or Praxis internships must purchase their own phones for the summer. Phones can be purchased for as little as €30. Receiving calls and text messages is free in Italy, but calling an Italian cell phone from the USA is very expensive. (Calling cards can be purchased online in the United States to call land lines in Italy for as little as 2 cents a minute, and about 15 cents a minute for calls to cell phones, although most families and friends communicate through skype, the cheapest and most convenient option)

Computers and internet access

Students are advised to bring laptops, if they have them. The computer room at the Sede has four desktop PCs with internet connections and a printer for student use during open hours. The Sede also has a wireless internet connection. The University of Florence does not offer any computer facilities to its students, and host families have internet service at home. MAKE SURE you have the correct PLUG to connect your charger.

SUGGESTED READINGS

General Culture/Traveling:
McCarthy, Mary. The Stones of Florence & Venice Revisited. HBJ Books, 1963. (very dated but interesting if read critically and has excellent photographs by Inge Morath).

Art History:
Chastel, Andre.  *Arte e Umanesimo a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico*

**History:**

**Literature:**

**To keep your language skills sharp:**  Make every effort to continue to use and study Italian during the summer in preparation for your year in Florence: listen to the Italian TV news (RAI) on cable or go to [http://www.rai.it/dl/rai/guidaTv.html](http://www.rai.it/dl/rai/guidaTv.html), read Italian books and newspapers whenever possible.

**Books:**  Excellent source to buy Italian books on the Internet: [www.internetbookshop.it](http://www.internetbookshop.it).  If you have a KINDLE you can download Italian books!

**Movies:**  To learn about Italy in the last 50 years watch this wonderful movie:

*La meglio gioventù* (Marco Tullio Giordana, 2003) and check all available films in Netflix, in your library or on line.
RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATIONS

The following establishments in Florence are recommended for yourself, or family and friends. Youth hostels in Florence are located too far from the Sede and are not recommended.

Hotel Maxim

Via Calzaiuoli, 11 (a two-minute walk from the Sede) (Tel 055 - 21.74.74), near Piazza del Duomo. Recently renovated. Friendly manager, quiet, clean rooms all with bathrooms. Small breakfast included. Reservations by fax 011 39 055 283729.  
[www.hotelmimaxfirenze.it](http://www.hotelmimaxfirenze.it)

Hotel Cristina

Via Condotta, 4 (a two minute walk from the Sede) (Tel. 055 - 21.44.84), near Piazza della Signoria. Small rooms. Singles only available without bath. No breakfast included. Reservations by phone 011 39 055 21.44.84 or fax 011 39 055 215518.

Short-term apartments offered directly by owners:  
http://www.homelidays.com  
http://www.vrbo.com

Bed and Breakfasts close to the Sede:

Dei Mori  [www.deimori.it](http://www.deimori.it)

Cimatori B & B  [www.cimatori.it](http://www.cimatori.it)

Not really close to the sede, but lovely and in a very Florentine area: Emily’s Room  
[http://www.emilysrooms.it/](http://www.emilysrooms.it/)

TripAdvisor ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)) has very detailed and updated reviews on the best places to stay!
REAL TIPS FROM REAL STUDENTS

On living with a host family:

- Flexibility is important but it's also important not to be too flexible or you end up feeling oppressed, and coming from an Italian family I can say it's a very unnatural and alienating thing to avoid arguments all the time. Be curious about your family and ask a million questions, and always be respectful of their living space, giving plenty of forewarning and asking for permission before you invite friends over.

- Be patient and be gracious! It's always better to ask before doing things instead of just assuming that something that might be ok in your own home is also ok in the home of your host family, like not wearing shoes in the house or having friends spend the night.

- Do the best you can to develop a friendly relationship with your host family. It will make a difference in your general satisfaction with life in Florence. Of course it doesn't always work out to be a super close relationship, but the main thing is to practice your Italian with the family, show your gratitude, and try to have an interest in their lives. Be comfortable. Don't ever be afraid to ask questions about everyday boundary issues or house rules that might seem vague or unclear. You will most definitely have embarrassing experiences, so go into it head on and don't be ashamed.

- If you are used to political correctness and to a culture that perceives disagreement and debate as hostile, you may misunderstand what is going on in your host family, for instance when a vocal political discussion or friendly banter sounds to you like a quarrel. Italians enjoy arguing loudly about politics, soccer, how to prepare the best ribollita (a typically Florentine soup). Sometimes they will take a "devil's advocate" position just to liven things up. Before you assume that people are "fighting" or that a remark is "racist" or "insensitive," try to keep an open mind and understand where they are coming from. If you still feel uncomfortable, or offended, or just disagree, do not hesitate to explain why, and to have a discussion.

On learning Italian:

- Just listen to people. The best thing I did to improve my Italian was observe locals anonymously on the bus, in stores and at the university, picking up on things that drop magically from speech when an Italian addresses a foreigner or stranger. Obviously this doesn't give you practice in speaking the language, something that you have to tackle in one setting or another, but like listening to music it ingrains the theatricality of the sounds and gestures into your brain and you find yourself conveying meaning to people just through rhythms even if you're not forming the words quite right.

- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. I myself spent the first semester too afraid to speak more than 3 sentences to people. Then I realized how foolish I was to be afraid. It's okay to make mistakes, in fact I find that you remember most the mistakes you've made where someone's corrected you; you'll never make that mistake again (or at least try your best not to). I was also very nervous about how my accent was, until a friend gave me the best advice. He told me that my accent is my own, that it's a history of my own personal experience with the
language, and that I shouldn’t be ashamed but instead I should be proud because it is my own interpretation, my own relationship with the Italian language.

On making friends:

- **Making friends =** doing things you like to do normally. Dance, go to the gym, volunteer, etc. and you will make friends. Don't be shy either, just get over it and go for it. You've only got a few months!!!

- **To make friends and have a life, you must get out into the city.** It depends on you . . . being stuck inside talking on the computer is not a life and definitely not a way to make Italian friends. I spent a lot of time going to see live music, primarily jazz, tango, and blues, my favorites to hear. Most of my friends were musicians or were in the music circles in some capacity, much like my friends in America. I found my niche rather easily after a few months of wandering around aimlessly.

- I had a good friend that I made outside the Smith program who was German and together we met a lot of kids at the university but I think that if I were with another American that might not have happened because we were always speaking Italian with these people. We met these university kids just by talking to anyone we thought was interesting on the street. Talk to people, talk to people.

- **Meeting Italian friends was very difficult for most of the girls on the program, because it is easy to want to stay in your comfortable group of American friends.** It is so worth it to meet students, though. The girls who branched out and met up with other international or Italian students were able to speak the language better by the end of the year, knew the city and the culture better, and were more satisfied with their experiences at the end. As for where to meet people, that is tricky. Most girls met Italian friends through former Smith in Florence friends or through host family siblings. If you don't have someone to introduce you to Italians, it seems nearly impossible. But you just have to be willing every day to try new things and branch out. Don’t be timid that your Italian is not very good. The friends I met were very forgiving and understanding. Most of them were learning other languages so they could relate to the language difficulties.
Cultural Adjustment

by Bill Hoffa [printed with permission]

Many travelers go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement, overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. As this initial sense of "adventure" wears off, they gradually become aware of the fact that old habits and routine ways of doing things no longer suffice. They gradually (or suddenly) no longer feel comfortably themselves. If this happens to you, as it is likely to, you will feel like the outsider you in fact are. Minor problems may quickly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may find yourself growing somewhat depressed. You may feel an anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, a kind of psychological disorientation. You will indeed be experiencing what has come to be referred to as "Culture Shock." Such feelings are perfectly normal, so, knowing this and with a bit of conscious effort, you will soon find yourself making adjustments (some quite subtle and perhaps not even noticeable at the conscious level) that will enable you to adapt to your new cultural environment.

There is no clear-cut way of dealing with culture shock. Simply recognizing its existence and your accepting vulnerability to it is an important first step. As long as you know in advance that you will probably fall victim to culture shock at a certain level, you can prepare yourself psychologically to accept the temporary discomfort and turn it into an advantage by learning from it. Remember that you are not the only one experiencing occasional frustration, irritability, and depression, etc. Falling victim to culture shock, in other words, does not imply the existence of any psychological or emotional shortcomings on your part. As Robert Kohls says, "Culture shock is in some degree inevitable... and is the occupational hazard of overseas living through which one has to be willing to go through in order to enjoy the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth."

Undergoing culture shock is in itself a learning experience that you should take advantage of. It is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.
PROGRAM FEES AND BILLING

The program fee for all Smith programs is the same as the Smith comprehensive fee. Expenses not included in the fee are your own responsibility (see Part A: Fees and Expenses). Such expenses include US-based primary health insurance (see Health Insurance section below), international airfare, books and supplies, passport and visa fees, and personal expenses such as medical expenses, toiletries, phone calls, entertainment, personal travel, and dining out.

Smith uses a paperless E-bill system; paper bills are not sent by mail. You or the authorized user whom you designate will receive automated emails when new billing statements are available, approximately one month before payment is due (on August 10 for the fall semester, on January 10 for the spring semester). Please see the Student Financial Services webpage “Guide to Fees and Payments” for more information about billing and payments at http://www.smith.edu/finaid.guides/feesandpayments/.

Guest students whose home institutions pay part or all of their study abroad costs are responsible for understanding these arrangements, and for giving “authorized user” status to the appropriate person at the home institution.

FINANCIAL AID

With rare exception, financial aid is available to Smith College students who wish to participate in a Smith College study abroad program on the same basis as it is to students who wish to study in Northampton. Application for financial aid must be completed before May 1. For questions about Smith financial aid as it relates to study on a Smith Program Abroad, please visit Student Financial Services at http://www.smith.edu/finaid/jya.php.

Smith College does not provide financial aid to students from other institutions. If you do not attend Smith but wish to participate in a Smith program, please discuss the matter with the financial aid office at your own institution.

For your time you will be abroad, you ought to consider giving financial Power-of-Attorney (POA) to a parent or trusted friend, so that she or he can take care of financial transactions at home, such as signing financial aid applications, on your behalf.
Insurance

You are covered by a number of different insurance policies that will provide coverage while on your program abroad, while traveling, and upon your return.

Primary insurance: As a student on a Smith program abroad, you are required to carry US-based primary health insurance, and will be automatically enrolled in the Smith College student health insurance plan through Gallagher Koster. If you have another primary health insurance policy that provides comparable coverage, you may waive coverage from Gallagher Koster at https://www.gallagherkoster.com/. However, if you are an international student at Smith, you must purchase the Smith College student health insurance plan via Gallagher Koster.

Supplemental study abroad insurance: As a student on the Smith College program, you will also be covered by a supplemental international medical insurance policy from Gallagher Student Health and Special Risk. This cost of this supplemental “Study Abroad Accident & Sickness Insurance Program” is included in the program fee. The policy provides 100% coverage for office visits, and prescription drug coverage at 80% for the period of the program (with certain specified limits). This Gallagher Koster plan will serve as your primary health insurance policy during your time abroad. Expenses not covered by this plan should be submitted to your regular, US-based health insurance provider.

While abroad, you are responsible for paying your own medical bills, for requesting reimbursement by submitting your receipts to the appropriate parties, and more generally for coordinating your health insurance benefits with your US-based health insurance company.

You and your family should carefully review the Gallagher Koster plan and be familiar with the coverage it offers. The plan may be downloaded at www.gallagherkoster.com/studyabroad. Policy documents will also be sent to you, via e-mail, prior to your departure for the program.

Other Insurance and Services: All students are covered by a Travel Accident Policy as well as a Travel Assist policy which provides emergency medical evacuation and repatriation coverage. For details, see https://www.fivecolleges.edu/riskmgmt/intltravel/student_intl. Benefits are coordinated through the Five-College Director of Risk Management via the Director of your program.

- Smith College is not responsible for personal injury or for damage to or loss of personal property. If you want liability, luggage, or other personal insurance, please arrange coverage with your agent before leaving the US.
- Additional health insurance coverage is provided in some program locations according to local law or university regulations. See your program specific section for details.
**Prescription Drugs:** It is your responsibility to thoroughly investigate, well in advance of departure, the availability abroad of the medications you need to maintain good health. In some cases, medications routinely prescribed in the US are illegal in other countries and you may not be able to bring those medications through customs.

Ask your doctor if your medication can be disbursed in quantity, and if so, obtain a supply well before departure. If possible, bring a supply of your medications sufficient to cover your entire time abroad and pack this in your carry-on baggage. If you do take a prescription medication, please also bring a copy of the prescription written legibly in generic terms. As noted above, check the host country’s laws regarding that particular medication, as drug laws vary greatly. If your medication is not available abroad, discuss with your doctor the options regarding other medications.

If you need help with these questions, please call **AIG/Travel Assist**
Toll-free number: 877-244-6871
Overseas collect: +1 715-346-085
Email: travelassist@aigbenefits.com
Policy Number: GTP 9144090

**Medical Care**

Health care providers in Europe generally do not directly bill US health insurance companies. You must therefore count on paying your bill at the time of service and on seeking reimbursement from Gallagher Koster’s claims company. (The process is explained in the plan brochure.) Reimbursement checks in US dollars are sent only to US addresses. As stated above, you are responsible for managing your own health insurance claims. The Director and Associate Director will be happy to assist you, but cannot file claims in your behalf.

Because the insurance plan operates on the basis of payment first, reimbursement later, you must discuss with your family, before leaving for the program, how to handle reimbursement checks. (Please be reassured that reimbursement is assured and is usually prompt.) In case of an emergency shortage of cash, you may request a temporary loan from the Smith program office. You may arrange for the partial payment of the loan by indicating that the claim be reimbursed directly to Smith College. This is indicated as an option on the Claim Form in the policy documents you will receive.

If your loan is not paid by the beginning of the following academic year, a financial hold will be placed on your Smith account.

**Health and Wellness Abroad**

You should visit your doctors and dentist for routine appointments before departure. If you have a chronic condition, have mental health needs, or take prescription medication, please discuss with your doctor managing your health abroad—in particular how to obtain your medication, what to do if it does not work properly, or if new conditions arise, or old problems resurface. If you have
medical issues, you should bring with you a copy of your medical history, and you should sign a release with your doctor or with Health Services at Smith College in order to facilitate transfer of your records to a care provider abroad.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring a second pair of glasses or extra lenses, and a copy of your vision prescription as well.

Each program center maintains a list of doctors (general practitioners and specialists, dentists, and English-speaking psychotherapists and psychiatrists) from whom students have received good care in the past. Ask your Associate Director for the list of medical providers.

RELATIONSHIPS

The idea of a once-in-a-lifetime foreign romance is charming. But you should be cautious about entering into a relationship while abroad. Each country’s cultural values and rules regarding dating and relationships are different from those you are accustomed to. Please take the time to figure them out before beginning a relationship. In Europe, for example, the things that constitute solicitation, dating, and a relationship are not what you are familiar with. Americans tend to smile at strangers as a sign of politeness. To others, a woman who looks one in the eyes or smiles is making an explicit invitation. You should of course attempt to gain sensitivity to the new culture in which you will be living. But if ever you feel that your personal safety is threatened, forget your cultural sensitivity and remove yourself from an uncomfortable situation. In a cross-cultural relationship, it is perfectly appropriate to share with your partner your own standards of discretion. In all relationships, you should always practice safe sex.

STUDENT SAFETY AND CONDUCT ABROAD

Be smart about personal safety. Use common sense. Do not walk alone at night, drink to excess, accept drinks from strangers, or leave with someone you have just met. Use the buddy system; pay attention to what is going on around you. Avoid demonstrations and large crowds. Take cues from people around you and listen to advice from locals about which areas to avoid.

Theft is the most common crime experienced by students abroad. Students have been pick-pocketed, mugged, and robbed of unattended items such as jackets and laptops. Safeguard your personal belongings. Leave your passport at home (and carry a photocopy with you); carry only the cash you need for the day. If you must carry a lot of cash, or your passport, use a money belt. Do not carry your passport or other valuables in a purse or backpack that can be easily stolen. Be very careful with the key to your residence: replacing the locks at either a host family’s home or a university residence is no small feat and is extremely expensive. If you are a victim of a crime, or
theft, let the Director know. He or she will provide support and offer advice about reporting to local authorities.

Memorize at least one phone number, such as that of the program office, and learn to use the public telephones in case you lose your cell phone. Make copies of your passport and other important documents such as your residency permit, visa, credit card, debit card, etc.; leave one copy at home with your family, and one copy in your room in Europe. This will be essential if you need to replace your passport or cancel your credit card.

**Smith College strongly urges students not to rent or operate motor vehicles while abroad.**

**Emergencies**

- In the event of a medical emergency, seek medical treatment and contact your Director.
- In the event of a large scale event such as a natural disaster or a terrorist attack, contact the Director to let him or her know where you are and that you are safe. Then, if possible, contact your parents: they will inevitably have heard a report of the incident and will be worried about you. The Director will be in contact with the Office for International Study at Smith, and will contact your family, if necessary.

**Laws of the Host Country**

As a student on the Smith College program, you are also bound by the laws of your host country, just as are local citizens. You are *not protected* by US law or the laws of your home country. This applies to everything from drug possession and alcohol restriction to currency exchanges, dress codes, and drunken driving. It is not unusual for violators (foreign or domestic) to receive *prison sentences* for crimes, or to be held in a prison *for several years* while awaiting trial. If you are an American, you are used to hearing politicians speak about “the most powerful nation on earth.” That does not always sit well with our foreign friends. If you violate their laws, America will be powerless to exonerate you.

If you are arrested, it is therefore unlikely that the US Embassy, your family, or Smith College will be able to arrange for your release. Your embassy can notify your family and help arrange for legal representation in conformance with the laws of the host country. You might do well to read the US Department of State web page on assistance to US Citizens arrested abroad, at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1199.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1199.html)

**Alcohol and Drug Policy**

If you are of legal age *in your host country*—the question of “legal age” is complex, but in Europe, if you are over 18, you are “legal”—you may consume (but not abuse) alcohol. If you chose to do so, please remember that you are at all times responsible for your actions. Smith College prohibits the
illegal distribution of alcohol to students who are not of legal drinking age in the host country, and
prohibits the unlawful use of alcohol in any of its facilities and at any of its activities abroad.

Possession, use, or distribution of any substances that are considered by host country law to be illicit
or illegal drugs is prohibited. Please be aware that the possession of drugs is often dealt with very
harshly by local and host country law enforcement.

Any alcohol or drug infraction will be considered a grave violation of program policy and may result
in a serious sanction, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Student Conduct

As a student on a Smith College program, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner
compatible with the program and its reputation, with local laws and regulations, and with Smith
College’s own regulations. The Smith College Code of Student Conduct is found at:
http://www.smith.edu/sao/handbook/socialconduct.php

In cases of academic or personal misconduct, you should know that the Director has the right and
responsibility to implement a range of sanctions and in severe cases, in consultation with the Smith
College administration, to require withdrawal from the program. In the case of involuntary
withdrawal from the Smith College, no credit will be granted and no fees will be refunded.

MONEY AND BANKING ABROAD

To obtain cash abroad, you may wish to use an ATM card linked to your US checking account. Most
US banks charge transaction fees for this service, but ATMs do offer the most favorable rates of
exchange. Be sure to budget for these fees. You should not carry large amounts of cash, but you
might consider making one withdrawal of 60 €, for example, rather than two of 30 €.

Ask your own bank how much they charge for cash withdrawals overseas and whether they limit the
amount you can withdraw per day or per transaction. The Bank of America, with several branches in
Northampton, waives its ATM fees for banks in the Global ATM Alliance; you might wish to open an
account here. On the Bank of America website there is useful information about making payments
overseas:

You should in any case sign up for online banking so that you can manage your US account from
abroad. You should notify your bank and your credit card company that you will be abroad for the
year, make sure that your PIN will work internationally (ATM machines often have only numbers,
not letters), and write down your various access codes in a safe, private place. You will want to
instruct your family how to make deposits to your US account, for health insurance reimbursements or in case of emergency.

We also recommend having a credit card as an alternative financial resource. While most Europeans use debit cards for everyday transactions, credit cards can be useful for major purchases such as airline and train tickets. (Visa and MasterCard are more commonly accepted in Europe than American Express.) Most credit card companies permit cash advances from a bank or an ATM machine (if you have a PIN), but interests rates for such advances are extremely high. Before leaving, after informing your credit card company that you will be in Europe for the year, you should arrange for online statements, as at your bank, in order to manage your account and make payments from abroad.

Please read the specific information regarding money that is provided in the material for your own program.

**Exchange Rates and Budgeting**

Fluctuating exchange rates make advanced financial planning difficult. To allow for fluctuation, you should slightly overestimate the expenses you are likely to incur while abroad. Bookmark an exchange-rate calculator such as [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com) and become familiar with current rates, keeping in mind that what you see online are usually bank-to-bank rates, which are more advantageous than what you will experience. You will soon be able to think in euros, and will be able to forget about dollar equivalencies. If possible, try not to focus too much on the price of specific, small items; attempt, rather, to modify your spending habits in order to remain within your budget.

Life in Europe, generally speaking, is more expensive than it is in the US—but this does depend on personal spending habits. As a rule, you should understand that in Europe you will spend at least as much per week as you do in the US.

You should think, now, about making travel plans on some weekends and during vacations. Past students reported spending from 300 - 500 € per week on food and lodging while traveling in Europe—not including the cost of transportation.

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**TRAVEL PLANNING**

You are responsible for booking and paying for your travel to the program site abroad. Most flights from the US to Europe leave in the evening and arrive early the next day; be sure to book your travel in order to arrive at the program site on the correct day! If you arrive before the official beginning of the program, you must make your own arrangements for accommodations.
If you are eligible for an airfare stipend, Smith College will notify you in May of the exact amount, which will be sent via check or direct deposit. Most airfare stipends cover approximately one-half the cost of the average ticket to the program location.

Purchasing a round-trip ticket with a return date more than eleven months after the date of purchase is usually not possible. There are various ways to handle this problem.

- purchase a round-trip ticket with the latest return date possible, then change the return date well in advance of the original departure date, and pay the fee for the change. STA Travel (www.statravel.com) offers a low change fee and good student rates, but it is always wise to check on the latest policies.
- purchase two separate one-way tickets. Usually one-way tickets are outrageously expensive, but some airlines do offer competitive one-way rates.


You must not plan to travel until the dates of your academic commitments are firm. In many cases, examination dates vary by course and are not posted until mid-semester. As a student on a Smith College program, you are required to take all scheduled exams, unless you have specific permission not to do so, and you may not leave the program your academic commitments have been satisfied.

Packing for Study Abroad

- **Pack light.** You need to take less clothing and fewer personal items than you think. You can buy almost anything you need in Europe, though prices will be somewhat higher than those you’re used to.
- **Take no more than two moderately sized pieces of luggage and a carry-on bag** for weekend trips. You must be able to carry all your luggage by yourself, possibly up and down stairs, and on cobbled streets where wheeled suitcases become unwieldy. Before leaving, check your airline’s restrictions concerning the size and weight of luggage, and their fees for excess baggage. Label your luggage inside and out with your name and the address of your program’s office.
- If you simply cannot fit your belongings into two pieces of luggage, you will probably find it most reasonable to pay excess baggage charges than to ship items via the post office or FedEx. Shipping personal belongings is not recommended because it may require you to pay taxes and customs’ fees and to retrieve your things at a faraway airport. If you must ship items, please be sure to list the contents of the shipment as “used personal effects.” Never ship laptops or electronic devices, medications, vitamins, food supplements and energy bars.
- Europe is becoming more Americanized, but you should know that Europeans still tend to dress up more than Americans. For instance, no European wears pajamas to class! Rather than multiple pairs of jeans, you might want rather to bring only one pair, and to diversifying your wardrobe with trousers and skirts (especially if you plan to pursue an internship or volunteer work).
• Pack items that work together and can be layered. You are also likely to do more walking in Europe than you do at Smith: be sure to bring comfortable shoes.

Personal Travel While Abroad

When planning to travel outside of your host city (on breaks, on weekends), please inform your Director and send him or her your itinerary so that, in the event of an emergency, your whereabouts are known.

Thanks to a number of low-cost airlines in Europe (RyanAir, EasyJet, AirBerlin, etc.), the cost of air travel is now competitive with rail travel, although rail passes can still be a great bargain. Eurail passes must be purchased outside of Europe. If desired, you could have a friend purchase one and send it to you.

The French National Railway (SNCF) also offers competitive passes (Carte 12-25), something that is especially attractive if you’re planning to travel in France during weekends and vacations. University-organized trips are also cost-effective, and a great way to develop friendships with other students.

Above and beyond the cost of transportation, students report spending from 300 - 500 € per week on food and lodging when traveling in Europe during breaks and holidays. If you plan to travel, you should build these costs into your budget.

Visits from Family and Friends

If your friends and family plan to visit you, please encourage them to come only after you have settled into your new life, at least two months after arrival. Past students have enjoyed visits from their family during the winter holiday break; families often plan spring-time visits, when their student has really settled into life abroad, the weather is nice, and travel is less expensive.

Please ask your visitors to arrange their own accommodations. Host families cannot and should not be asked to accommodate overnight visitors.

Additional Pre-Departure Resources

You should register with the US Embassy in your host country and get more advice for student travelers: http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov
For more safety tips, and a “Know Before You Go” video: http://www.saraswish.org/
For a cultural training resource for study abroad: http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/
For more on adjustment and culture shock: http://www.studentsabroad.com/cultureshock.html
GRANTS AND INTERNSHIPS

As a student on the Smith College program, you are eligible to apply for an International Experience Grant. You may also apply for a Blumberg Traveling Fellowship, specifically designed for Smith students to conduct four-week summer research projects in their host country or region. For more information, see http://www.smith.edu/studyabroad/grant_blumberg.php.

Many students remain in Europe after the academic year to pursue an internship. Some of the Smith Program Abroad centers have contacts, but you should be prepared to do the legwork necessary to find an internship. You may use your Praxis funds to support an internship abroad. And the Director may also have at his or her disposition other possible sources of post-academic-year support.

RETURNING HOME

Smith students:

- **Housing:** You must carefully watch your Smith e-mail account in February for information about next year’s housing. With regard to housing, students abroad follow the same timeline as students on campus. You will have to submit your House Decision Form online, and your House Choice Form (if you choose to leave your current house); you will have to communicate with your housing proxy in advance of the housing lottery. See http://www.smith.edu/sao/reslife/lottery_getstarted.php, and, if you have any questions, please contact the Housing Coordinator.

- **Registration:** You will receive a registration code and instructions via your Smith e-mail account.

- **Evaluations:** As a student on the Smith College program, you are required to complete an online evaluation of your experience. Some programs require additional evaluations in loco. Smith students who fail to complete their evaluations will have registration holds placed on their accounts.

- **Grades and Transcripts:** Once the Director of the Smith College program has obtained all your grades, he or she will send your transcript and an accompanying grade report to the Office for International Study at Smith in Northampton. Both Smith Center and local university courses and grades will appear on your Smith College transcript and be available via BannerWeb. For Smith students, Smith program study abroad grades are included in the calculation of the GPA.
Guest Students:

- **Registration and Housing:** Please remain in touch with the appropriate offices on your own campuses for instructions regarding housing and registration for the return to campus.

- **Evaluations:** You are also required to complete the online evaluation of the program. The Office for International Study at Smith will work with your study abroad offices to ensure completion of the evaluations.

- **Grades and Transcripts:** As a guest student, you will receive an official Smith College transcript at your home address; a transcript will also be sent to the college office you specified in your application. To request another official transcripts in the future, contact Smith College’s Office of the Registrar, at [http://www.smith.edu/registrar/transcript.php](http://www.smith.edu/registrar/transcript.php).
Photo by Leda Grossman – Smith in Florence 2010-11
Just as you will have had to brace yourself for a period of psychological disorientation when you leave the USA, you should know that after your time abroad, you may also have to prepare yourself for a parallel period of readjustment when you return “home.” Why? Simply because, if you have had a full experience living and learning overseas, you are likely to have changed some, while you have been away, so the place you return to may itself appear to have changed, as indeed it might have. Even though these changes are seldom huge, and may not be apparent to others, you are likely to be very aware of them, and this can be confusing, all the more so because it is unexpected.

Immediately after your return, you can probably expect to go through an initial stage of euphoria and excitement. Most people are overwhelmed by the sheer joy of being back on their native turf. But as you try to settle back into your former routine, you may recognize that your overseas experience has changed some or many of your perceptions and assumptions, your ways of doing things, even what it means to “be yourself.” You might have become, in a sense, a somewhat new person. After all, that is what education is all about! But this intellectual and personal growth means that you can expect a period of disorientation as you adjust to the “new” environment at home.

The re-adjustment period is usually rather short-lived, since “home” will never be as “foreign” to you as the foreign environment you adjusted to overseas. Also, your experience of dealing successfully with culture shock abroad will have provided you with the psychological tools for dealing with the challenges of readjustment. Obviously, the more you have changed—often a by-product of the time you were away and how deeply you immersed yourself—the more difficult it will be to have things go back to a previous notion of normality. However, if you are aware of the changes (and seek to learn from them), smooth adaptation is more likely.

As a means of readjusting and staying in touch with the international scene, you may want to consider contacting students who have been abroad, who are currently abroad, or who are thinking about going abroad. There are many ways of maintaining contact with friends you made overseas, foreign and domestic, and also of remaining in touch with the culture you entered and now have left—via letters, e-mail, phoning, magazines, books, etc. and other means. Discussing things and sharing experiences with others is almost always worthwhile. Remembering what it was like for you to have been, for a time, a “foreigner” should inspire you to try to get to know the international students on your campus or others from “minority” backgrounds, who may themselves be feeling some of the same social dislocation and alienation you once felt when you were overseas. The key is to build on the cross-cultural coping skills you now possess and to find conscious ways of integrating your new “self” into your evolving personal and academic life, not seeing it as a “dream” or something irrelevant to your future.