

**Junior Journey – Italy (Rome, Sorrento, & the Amalfi Coast)**

**Instructor Information**

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**Course Description**

One hour. Pass/Fail (no letter grade). From the eternal grandeur of Rome to the sun-drenched cliffs of the Amalfi Coast, this journey traces the arc of Italian civilization—from the monumental ambitions of empire to the intimate rhythms of coastal village life.

In Rome, you'll walk through the corridors of history itself. Stand inside the Colosseum, where the roar of ancient crowds once echoed off travertine walls, and wander the ruins of the Roman Forum, the political heart of an empire that shaped Western law, language, and architecture. Climb the Palatine Hill, where emperors built their palaces overlooking the city they ruled. Then step into the Vatican, a sovereign enclave of artistic and spiritual power, where Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling—a masterwork that took four years to complete—still inspires awe five centuries later. In St. Peter's Basilica, you'll encounter the scale and ambition of Renaissance faith rendered in marble and gold. Between these iconic sites, Rome reveals itself in quieter moments: the baroque theatricality of the Trevi Fountain, the ancient engineering marvel of the Pantheon's oculus, the fashionable energy of the Spanish Steps.

From the capital, we travel south by high-speed rail, watching the landscape transform from urban sprawl to fertile plains to the dramatic volcanic coastline of Campania. Our base in Sorrento—a town perched on cliffs sixty meters above the Tyrrhenian Sea—offers the perfect gateway to one of the world's most celebrated coastlines. Here, the pace of life slows, the air carries the scent of lemon and sea salt, and every vista seems composed for a postcard.

We'll wind along the legendary Amalfi Drive to Positano, where pastel-colored houses cascade down steep hillsides to a pebbled beach below. This village, once a humble fishing community, has become an icon of Mediterranean beauty—yet its narrow alleys, artisan ceramics, and family-run shops retain an authentic charm that rewards unhurried exploration. Further along the coast, the town of Amalfi awaits, its cathedral standing testament to the days when this small harbor town commanded a powerful maritime republic. Above the town, terraced hillsides reveal the source of the region's liquid gold: the famous Amalfi lemons, whose fragrant groves we'll tour before rolling up our sleeves for a hands-on cooking class with local hosts. You'll learn the secrets of regional cuisine—from fresh pasta to limoncello—and sit down to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

One day is yours to chart your own Italian adventure. Explore the haunting streets of Pompeii, frozen in time by Vesuvius's catastrophic eruption in 79 AD, where ancient bakeries, bathhouses, and frescoed villas offer an unparalleled window into Roman daily life. Or venture to Herculaneum,

Pompeii's smaller but remarkably preserved neighbor, where carbonized wood and intact upper stories reveal details lost elsewhere. For those drawn to the source of the destruction, a hike up Mount Vesuvius leads to the crater's edge, offering panoramic views of the bay and a visceral reminder of the volcano's dormant power. Alternatively, catch a ferry to the island of Capri, playground of emperors and artists, where the legendary Blue Grotto glows with an ethereal azure light and the Gardens of Augustus frame views that defy description. Whether you're drawn to archaeological wonder, geological drama, or island glamour, this day invites you to pursue your own curiosity.

Our final evening brings us back to Rome, where we'll explore Trastevere—a neighborhood of cobblestone streets, ivy-covered trattorias, and vibrant piazzas that captures the soul of contemporary Roman life. It's a fitting farewell: a reminder that Rome is not merely a museum of antiquity but a living city where the ancient and modern intertwine seamlessly.

Throughout the journey, you'll savor the flavors that define Italian culture—fresh seafood pulled from the Mediterranean, handmade pasta dressed in simple perfection, creamy gelato on warm evenings, and the region's famous limoncello to toast each day's adventures. The costs of the trip include airfare, accommodation in three and four-star hotels (double or triple occupancy), all meals, travel within Italy on high-speed trains, local trains, metros, buses, private transfers along the coast, and a variety of professional tours at the sites mentioned above.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Analyze the historical and cultural significance of Rome and the Amalfi Coast by engaging with ancient ruins, religious sites, coastal towns, and regional traditions through guided tours, site visits, and structured journal reflections.
2. Assess the role of Italy's transportation infrastructure—including high-speed rail, regional trains, and coastal transfers—on tourism, regional connectivity, and economic development through guided experiences and structured journal responses.
3. Interpret Italian geography and natural landscapes—from urban Rome to the volcanic coastline and cliff-side villages of the Amalfi region—by documenting key observations from guided excursions and independent exploration, using structured journal entries to analyze their impact on local culture, economy, and tourism.
4. Explore Italy's rich culinary and agricultural traditions through hands-on experiences including a lemon grove tour and cooking class, analyzing how regional food production contributes to cultural identity, sustainable tourism, and local economy through journal reflections.
5. Synthesize personal insights, academic connections, and cultural observations by applying reflective writing techniques in a structured daily journal that examines specific themes related to Roman history, religious art and architecture, coastal geography, and regional traditions.

### Statement of Engaged Learning:

The entire course is experiential, i.e., completely "engaged," through daily tours and visits to sites of historical importance and other places of interest.

### Evaluation & Grading Scale

The class is pass-fail. You will be expected to reflect daily, on the day's experiences, in a journal to be turned in for grading. A complete journal (at least 70%) and willing participation in the trip's activities will result in a passing grade. Pass  $\geq$  70 Fail  $<$  70

### Attendance & Class Participation

Students must attend, engage in, and be on time for all tours, events, activities, meetings, etc. that are planned for this trip. Any student who is absent from any planned activity will not receive credit for the course unless that absence is excused (i.e. medical reason). Medical or other emergencies that would prevent participation should be discussed with the instructor immediately, when they occur.

### Required Journal & Vlog

In order to pass the course, students must submit a Journal and a vlog of their trip.

- **Journal (80% of grade):** Students will maintain a structured daily journal, which serves as the primary academic component of this course. Journal entries must be at least 500 words per day and should not only describe what happened but also analyze key themes from the day's experiences. Each entry should be written in standard English paragraph form using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. You should use the following journal prompts and themes:

Day	Location	Focus & Required Reflection Topics
Day 1	Arrival & Rome Introduction	First impressions of Italy. Compare Rome's architecture, transportation, and daily life to your home city. What historical or cultural aspects stood out during your initial exploration of the historic city center, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, and Spanish Steps?
Day 2	Rome: Ancient & Sacred	Reflect on the engineering and architectural achievements of the Roman Empire as seen at the Colosseum and Roman Forum. How does the Vatican, including the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica, represent the intersection of religious authority, artistic patronage, and cultural identity? What role has Rome played in shaping Western civilization?

Day 3	Travel to Sorrento	As you transition from a major urban center to a coastal cliff-side town, what differences do you notice in lifestyle, architecture, and infrastructure? Analyze how Italy's high-speed rail system connects diverse regions and contributes to tourism and economic development. How does Sorrento's geography shape its character?
Day 4	Positano	Analyze how small coastal communities like Positano balance tourism with preserving local culture and natural beauty. How do the geography, architecture, and economic activities of the Amalfi Coast differ from Rome? What challenges and opportunities does tourism bring to these communities?
Day 5	Amalfi & Lemon Groves	How does regional agriculture, particularly lemon cultivation, contribute to local identity, economy, and culinary traditions? Reflect on the cooking class experience and how food serves as a vehicle for cultural transmission. What role does agritourism play in sustainable economic development?
Day 6	Independent Exploration	Based on your chosen activity (Pompeii, Herculaneum, Mt. Vesuvius, Capri, or continued exploration of Sorrento), analyze the historical significance, geological features, or cultural aspects of your experience. How does independent exploration deepen your understanding of Italian history, geography, or society?
Day 7	Return to Rome & Trastevere	Synthesize your experiences from the week. How has your understanding of Italian culture, history, and society evolved? Reflect on Trastevere as a neighborhood that represents modern Roman life. What personal insights, academic connections, and cultural observations will you take home from this journey?

- **VLOG (20% of grade):** The second required submission is a vlog, of at least three minutes, containing pictures and video clips from your trip. Take a lot of photos and videos during the trip. Be intentional about this. Upon returning to FSC, you should use an online video maker to "glue" your selected photos and videos together with background music of your choosing.

You must submit both the Journal and a YouTube link to the Vlog by **11:59 pm on Sunday, November 1st**. Failure to turn in an acceptable journal and vlog will result in your failing the course.

## ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FALL 2026

Florida Southern College and Student Disability Services are committed to providing access and inclusion for students with documented disabilities to courses, facilities (including Residence Halls), and programs. Categories of disabilities could include, but would not be limited to, chronic health diagnoses, learning disabilities, and mental health conditions. If you anticipate or experience barriers to your college experience due to the impact of a disability, please notify the Office of Student Disability Services to discuss the eligibility process for establishing accommodations. You can reach FSC's Student Disability Services professionals through Asst. Dean for Student Support Dr. Sandy Calvert by e-mail at [disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu), in Carlisle Rogers Building, by telephone at (863) 680-4900, or by fax at (863) 680-4195. Our Student Disability Services professionals are available for both face-to-face and Zoom meetings, by appointment.

For more information on disability accommodations and access, please visit our website at <http://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-resources/student-disability-services.aspx>

**NOTE:** This trip involves quite a lot of walking, sometimes on rather steep hills and stairs. Students with mobility issues may find this trip inappropriate. Please discuss any such concerns with Dr. Pospichal and the instructor before signing up for the trip.

## FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE HONOR CODE

*"I will practice academic and personal integrity and excellence of character and expect the same from others."*

As an academic community, Florida Southern College is firmly committed to honor and integrity in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, as a member of this academic community, each student acknowledges responsibility for his or her actions and commits to the highest standards of integrity. In doing so through this Honor Code, each student makes a covenant with the college not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty, fraud, cheating, or theft. Further information on the Honor Code is available in the current Catalog.

*\*\*\*Your daily journal and vlog are the the primary sources of your grade. While you will likely have similar observations to those of others, your journal should be your own, individual effort, in your own words.*

## RULES OF THE TRIP

The following set of rules have evolved over the years and can be generally divided into two categories: cardinal rules and strong suggestions. Breaking any of the cardinal rules is grounds for being sent home immediately with no refund of the trip.

### Cardinal Rules

1. **Never, ever, ever travel by yourself.** Exploring on your own is STRICTLY not allowed. The minimum group size for exploring on your own is three students. If you plan to travel or

roam around in such a group, you must notify the trip director/chaperone on the WhatsApp group (see below). During your time away from the group, if one travel partner(s) needs to use the rest room, the other(s) must accompany them. If you are in a cross-gender partnership, the other partner(s) must wait outside the restroom. No exceptions will be made to this rule. Any time you leave the group, you must tell one of us about it and get our approval. That is any time you leave the hotel or other building, for any reason. We are responsible to know where you are and what you are doing at all times.

2. You must always be reachable – by phone - by your trip director or your chaperone.
3. **Your chaperone has equal authority to that of the trip director. End of story.**
4. WhatsApp will be used for group communication. Your phone must have a data plan, and you must have WhatsApp installed on your phone. We will have a WhatsApp group for this Junior Journey, and we will use this WhatsApp group to send details about events and meetups throughout the duration of our trip.
5. Harassment of any sort – bullying, racist or bigoted talk, unwanted touching or interference etc. will not be tolerated.
6. **This is a Class.** Junior Journey is a college class; it is not a free-time vacation to do whatever you want. During the day, you are officially "in class." That can be hard to remember when your assignment is to explore the Colosseum and Palatine Hill, to observe the wonders of the Vatican and Sistine Chapel museums, or even indulging in some of the best pizza Naples has to offer! But it is officially "class" time. You need to be present, in good mental condition (not hung over, not sleepy), and participating in the group activities each day. You also need to be on time each morning, ready to head out for the day's adventure.
7. **Behavior.** Please do not sleep, write notes to each other, listen to music, text, or engage in any other activity that may disturb others during tours, films, lectures, etc. Give your undivided attention and respect to tours guides, lecturers, and any other person you encounter during this experience. You represent Florida Southern College and are expected to act in an appropriate, professional manner at all times during this trip.
8. **Alcohol.** The legal drinking age in Italy is 18. Echoing the sentiments above, you are a student representing Florida Southern College. Drinking alcohol during the day (before dinner) is not acceptable. You are in class. With respect to the evenings, you do need to be very responsible -- as on a regular school night, going out to a pub and drinking until 4:00 a.m. is simply not reasonable nor acceptable. If the goal is to go out and get drunk each night, you should not go on this trip; it's simply not acceptable, will not be tolerated, will result in a failing grade, and may result in your being sent home.
9. The SAFETY of the people on this trip will always trump any other consideration. ALWAYS. If you engage in unsafe or risky behavior on this trip, whether or not it is codified above, you may be sent back to the US.
10. All students must purchase a [travel money belt](#) that can be discretely hidden underneath your shirt. When traveling, your passport must always be kept in this travel belt. Thieves are very active in Rome and in heavy tourist areas. They are experts at quickly cutting the straps of such belts and grabbing your money/passport before you know what happened. These should not be worn around your hip where it is exposed. Rather, the money belt

should be worn higher up on your waist, under your shirt, and is solely intended to store your passport and larger bills, which, in theory, should only be accessed within the privacy of your hotel room.

### **Strong Suggestions**

1. Take a photograph of your passport and any other identification you have and keep it on your phone.
2. If the hotel room has a safe, you should lock your passports within that safe during your local travel within the city. Carry your student ID and your US driver's license to serve as identification. When checking out of each hotel and going to a new city, remember to take your passports out of the safe and bring them with you.
3. Public bathrooms are not free to use in Italy unless you are at a restaurant or a hotel. Try to use the restroom before leaving your hotel. Carry change in case you need to use the restroom outside of the hotel. They normally cost 0.5 to 1 Euro. Many times, bathrooms might not be clearly marked. In case you need to ask for the location, say, "Dov'è (pronounced Doh-vay) il bagno?" Also, it is always a good idea to carry a small amount of toilet paper with you as most public bathrooms don't have toilet paper. PS. No, the second toilet looking thing in the bathrooms are not a secondary toilet. They are bidets!
4. When travelling on any public transportation, you must have your ticket validated at the punch card machine when entering the train/bus. Failure to do so may result in a fine of 50 euros per occurrence.
5. Remember to bring any prescriptions that you need along with you. Also carry a limited amount of Tylenol/Ibuprofen in case you need it.
6. While Italy is a safe and fun place to visit, be aware of your surroundings. Italy has its share of pickpockets (especially in Rome). Be extra careful while travelling on public buses and trains as these tend to get crowded and are a favorite hangout of thieves wanting to snatch a wallet or jewelry. These people are experts at their jobs, and you won't even realize that you have been robbed until much later.
7. Street "vendors" and salespeople will aggressively try to sell you items – some will even try to give you "gifts", such as a stitched friendship bracelet, and they will tell you it is "free" and a "gift just for you." Then, as soon as it is on your wrist, they will demand money. Do not even allow them to try this.
8. Do NOT accept drinks in bars from strangers. You never know if the drink would be safe for consumption.
9. You must bring respectful attire for the tour of the Vatican. **Entry will be denied if shoulders and knees are not covered.**
10. You will find Italians to either be very friendly or the complete opposite. What is essential to remember is not to act like the quintessential American who is loud, obnoxious, and expects everyone to speak in English. Most Italians do not speak English. You should have a translation app on your phone and should make sincere attempts to speak the local language.

## Helpful Advice

### 1) **What to Bring:**

- Bring two comfortable pairs of shoes. We will be walking a lot, upwards of 30,000 steps per day on the first two days of the trip. We will also be climbing plenty of stairs. Make sure you are comfortable with slightly strenuous activities.
- Light jacket and a raincoat/umbrella. The weather in Rome and Southeast Italy during October averages in the 60s (Fahrenheit), with highs in the low 70s and lows in the 50s. Rain can be expected. You will want to pack a light jacket and either a raincoat or umbrella. I strongly recommend waterproof boots/shoes (or the second pair of shoes mentioned above)
- A compatible adapter for your electronic devices (phone, tablet, computer). Italy uses 220v electricity, which means you'll want to make sure any adapters are rated correctly.
- Water bottle. Water in Italy is free, healthy, and readily available with one condition: you should know where to get this free water! Do yourself a favor and download the app mentioned at these sites:
  - <https://www.explore-italian-culture.com/drinking-fountains-of-rome.html>
  - Watch this video on drinking water in Italy:
  - <https://youtu.be/zKMK0nbYJV0>
- Lock for your luggage! We'll be arriving in Naples and then Sorrento several hours before check-in. While the hotels do offer free storage of luggage prior to check-in (or after check-out) if needed, it's certainly safer to lock the zippers in the hopes of avoiding anyone tampering with your belongings.

**2) Don't Over pack!** You MUST be able to handle your own luggage, carry it with you for considerable distances, and climb stairs with it. It's a nice balancing act of packing enough essentials while not over-burdening oneself with a massive/heavy suitcase.

**3) Spending Money.** For many, this is a once-in-a-lifetime trip. You will want to bring spending money, likely three hundred to five hundred Euros. What costs are covered? Airfare, accommodation, travel to the sites detailed in the tentative itinerary (below), three meals per day, tours of the Colosseum, the Vatican, and a surprise tour during the 2nd stop of our trip in the southeastern area of Italy. However, we will have one free day in Sorrento, where students may opt to sign a travel form and may then travel to visit other popular tourist sites, including Pompeii, Mount Vesuvius, or even the beautiful Island of Capri. A guided tour to such locations would usually be in the range of 100 to 200 euros. You will want spending money for this day as well as for other souvenirs.

**4) Offline Google Maps.** Prior to leaving FSC, you should open your Google Maps app on your phone and download an offline map of Rome, Naples, Sorrento, Positano, and Amalfi. You will be using Google Maps often while walking around, and there's no reason to eat up your data for this when you can download those maps ahead of time.

**5) Be comfortable and confident to explore in your small group of three – but be safe.** Once students have completed the activities planned for the day, they may explore on their own. This will include four to five hours in Rome, where you will have access to the City Sightseeing Hop-On-Hop-Off Bus, which takes you to major attractions throughout the city, including Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, and the famous Spanish Steps. The great

part of the Hop-On-Hop-Off Bus is that it gives you a lifeline of sorts, encouraging you to more confidently explore in your small groups, all while knowing you can easily hop back on this bus to get your bearings. This will also include our group day-trip to Positano, the evenings in Sorrento, and your complete "free" day in Sorrento.

- REMINDER: exploring on your own is STRICTLY NOT ALLOWED. You must be in a group of at least three students, and everyone must be reachable by phone.
- Rome, Sorrento, and the Amalfi coast are relatively safe areas, albeit densely populated with tourists and, by extension, a haven for pick pocketers.

Do not fear exploring in your group of three. Be confident. **BE SMART.** Trust your gut instinct. If something does not feel right, there is a good chance it is not right. **Leave. Call the Italy Emergency line 112** (the equivalent of 911). The public transportation areas are common targets for thieves and pick pockets. Termini station and the Circumvesuviana train, in particular, are quite common target areas.