

Hannah Machado '20

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As a Political Science and International Affairs double major, I knew that I wanted to study abroad in a place that has a rich culture, has the ability to enhance my current understanding of politics and society, and could give me a hands-on learning experience. On top of that, as a requirement for my International Affairs major, I had to learn a language for my planned country of study. Italy's preserved history, roots in the foundations of government and politics, and intricate cultural facets made it the obvious choice for me.

Six semesters of Italian language, countless hours planning my academic schedule ahead, and many visits to the Global Education Center shifted my focus away from the traditional Rome or Florence experience to a program that could give me the language practice and intimate cultural experience that I wanted. The affordability, proximity to Rome, and program size ultimately made me choose Viterbo, Italy. As a first-generation student with little travel experience, I was intimidated of the study abroad process. However, after visiting an info

session, being in contact with the GEC advisors through appointments and emails, and going through the step-by-step UNH Approved Program checklist, I can say that the process was so much easier than I had anticipated. Additionally, the accessibility to education abroad scholarships through UNH and USAC made that semester the most inexpensive one during my time at UNH.

I loved my time abroad because Viterbo gave me the most authentic Italian experience that I could have asked for. Viterbo is a medieval city, lined with cobblestone, with history in every single nook and cranny. One of the classes I took for a Humanities Discovery, Medieval Italian History, entailed walking around the city and taking field trips to nearby places and then having a discussion about the stories behind what we observed. The contemporary Italian lifestyle combined with an ancient landscape was so unique to itself. Additionally, the central location of Viterbo allowed me to travel to cities and towns throughout three different regions in Italy, as well as six other countries outside of Italy. Before this semester, I had never been to Europe and had only been on a plane a handful of times. After my semester in Viterbo I have become more confident, independent, and am now finding ways to incorporate more travel into my personal life and career path.

My advice to any student considering an international study is: do not be afraid to travel off the beaten path! Try and identify what you would like to achieve from your study abroad experience and be open to options that are different compared to what you've heard people do. For me, it was mastering a language and having an authentic cultural experience. If you have your heart set on something, great- pursue it! But if you are on the fence and are open to something different, there are countless, unexpected possibilities waiting to be sought.