

Student's Research Adventure - 2012

Nicholas Nelson in Italy



After a year of hard work due to an intense class schedule which included physics, genetics, physiology, metabolism, nucleic acids, biochemistry lab and research along with working off campus 20-25 hours a week, my brain was ready for a vacation. I decided to fulfill a lifelong dream of studying abroad in **Italy**. With its laid back lifestyle, good people, great food, and even better wine it was the perfect place to escape, however briefly, from my chaotic world of school and work. For six weeks I studied Ancient Roman art and archeology as well as the Italian language. We traveled throughout Italy to Rome, Venice, Siena, Florence, and Naples to name a few.



Missing luggage, new transportation system (i.e. trains), and, of course, the language barrier always lead to adventures. Needless to say my trip started off a bit rocky

like most trips do. I ended up having to spend my first night in Rome after my luggage was lost for a short amount of time which caused me to miss the last train to Orvieto where I was staying. The next morning I attempted to catch a train to [Orvieto](#) ^[1]... three times. I eventually made it to Orvieto but not without learning some very valuable lessons in my first 12 hours abroad: Never assume that your bags will come in time to catch a train and always follow your gut when it comes to finding which platform you are supposed to be.

The trip got much better after my arrival to Orvieto. I met my professors, friends, and host family and got acquainted with the small town on the hill. During the week, my time was spent in class, doing homework, and spending time with friends on the town while weekends were dedicated to traveling the country. My favorite day trip was to [Siena](#) ^[2]. I can't tell you why, exactly, but when we arrived I had this feeling. A feeling of satisfaction, of comfort, and as I explored the town the more I liked it. That day I created a new dream, to live in Sienna, possibly own a vineyard, and enjoy the Italian lifestyle.



While many people decide to spend their summers doing research or taking summer classes, or simply returning home to rest after a long, hard school year, I decided to explore my liberal side. The side that does not get to show very often as it is usually masked by the overpowering, theory based, fact driven science side. I believe traveling teaches a lot, not just about the world and its many different cultures, but teaches about who you are as a person. It pushes you to extremes, out of your comfort zone, and you must adapt to the environment. It was by far one of the best summers of my life, expanding my cultural knowledge, knowledge about myself and how far I can be pushed without crumbling. Because of the great people I met, fantastic monuments, museums, and of course churches, and new found strength in myself, I would certainly recommend traveling abroad during your college years, not only to Italy, although it is my preferred place of travel.

[Undergraduate](#) ^[3]

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Links:

[1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orvieto>

[2] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siena>

[3] <http://www.chem.arizona.edu/taxonomy/term/11>