In the heart of Tuscany, the landscapes and cityscapes of Florence, Italy, have inspired some of the greatest artists in history. Today, the city is a kind of crossroads not only to Italy but all of Europe, attracting visitors (and residents) from many cultural backgrounds. Studying in Florence will give you the chance to be in a very cosmopolitan atmosphere, and at the same time be situated safely among fellow students from Washington State. As you get to know the area and become more practiced in the Italian language, you will meet local residents as well as other students who have chosen to study abroad.

The WCCCXA instructor will work to create a personalized experience for you. Whether you are an artist, a painter, a botanist, a geologist, a footballer, a hiker, an avid reader, or all of the above, your field trips and class lessons will be suited to your needs and interests, as you travel to soccer matches and museums alike! And remember, your instructor is a student in Italy, as well. You will learn from each other, study the Italian language, and be inspired by your work in the classroom and beyond. The WCCCXA group will become a true community of scholars, making your experience an adventure, a joy, and a comfortable entrance into new terrain and another language.

The WCCCXA study abroad in Florence program is a well-established, comfortable, and exciting way to have an incredible cross-cultural experience. The courses in geography are taught by a faculty member who literally will know where you are coming from, as he has lived and taught in Washington State for over 20 years.

Your third class, the Italian language and culture course, will allow and encourage you to enter the culture of place and make many new acquaintances, from ancient and modern art to the people you meet in class and in the galleries you visit on field trips. Opportunities will be available to attend poetry readings and musical events, and to dine in local cafés, where you will meet others and exchange tales of your time abroad.

Florence, Italy, is an extraordinary place. Some have visited this enchanted Mecca of Renaissance art, literature, music and culture. Others dream about traveling to Florence. As a student in the WCCCXA program, you will have a chance to meet new friends, travel the countryside, study geography, language and culture, and discover your unique connections to Florence—a center of learning for more than 600 years.

**Included**

- Accommodation in apartments in the Historical Center of Florence. Students will be in twin rooms with typically four WCCCXA students sharing a two-bedroom apartment.

- Orientation program in Florence including a meeting with AIFS staff, student information packet, local area information, welcome dinner and half-day guided walking tour of Florence.

- Use of the AIFS student services office and access to the AIFS Program Coordinator.

- Weekly program of subsidized cultural activities including such activities as walking tours, cooking classes, wine-tasting lectures, ballet, soccer matches, a day trip to Pisa, concerts and film nights.

- Guided day trip to Siena and San Gimignano.

- Museum pass for each student valid for the duration of the program with unlimited entry to the Uffizi Gallery, Accademia, Bargello, Pitti Palace, San Marco Museum and Medici Chapel.

- Membership with borrowing rights to the British Institute Library in Florence.

- Free wireless Internet access in the Study Center during class hours Monday to Friday plus free wireless Internet in the apartments.

- $50 non-refundable application fee.

- Student medical and program fee refund insurance policies.
Fees and Deadlines

Based on an enrollment of 25 or more participants, for the services specified above, the fee per person is $6,725.

This fee excludes airfare, a $250 refundable damage deposit, optional medical insurance upgrade ($65) and optional personal effects coverage ($90), passport or visa fees if applicable, meals other than those indicated on the itinerary, personal expenses, any WCCCSA tuition or administrative fees, textbooks, additional field-trips or excursions required by the WCCCSA faculty and anything not specified.

For a supplemental fee of $495 students can purchase an optional meal plan consisting of 25 vouchers for either lunch or dinner in local trattoria in Florence.

These fees are guaranteed not to change as a result of fluctuations in the $ exchange rate.

Application Deadlines:

Wednesday, December 29, 2010
(for students purchasing the group flight plan)

Tuesday, January 25, 2011
(for students choosing to make their own flight arrangements)

Optional Transportation Package

On a space-available basis, students may purchase the optional transportation package consisting of round-trip airfare (Seattle – Italy – Seattle) and round-trip transfers overseas between the airport and the housing in Florence for an additional $TBC excluding mandatory additional U.S. government and airline-imposed departure taxes, fees and fuel surcharges of $TBC (subject to change) for which students will be billed separately.

A minimum of 10 participants must purchase the flight for it to be offered.

Financial Aid

Many students are eligible to apply for financial aid, grants and loans to assist with the costs of the Florence program. Early application is essential. Contact your home institution's financial aid office promptly if you are interested in this possibility. Be sure to identify yourself as a potential Florence program participant. Additional information on minimum payments due and payment deadlines can be found on the program application.

Faculty

George Walker

George Walker has lived with his wife and family in Kirkland for over 20 years, moving here from northeast England, his place of birth. He began his post-high school studies at the College of the Venerable Bede on the beautiful campus at the University of Durham, and his post-graduate degree is from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He feels extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity of teaching at Bellevue College since 1989. He enjoys working with wonderful students from all over the world. George is currently Program Chair of the Geography Department and regularly teaches both on-campus and online courses. His personal interests include listening to music, watching soccer and cycling and trying to keep as fit as possible.

Of course being a geographer, George loves to travel and has visited Canada (many times), Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Bolivia, Peru, Egypt, Jordan, Japan, Pakistan, and much of Europe, including Switzerland, where he lived for a period of time. He also recently spent two months in Argentina and Uruguay with his younger son. He looks forward to visiting and teaching in Tuscany.

Courses

Geography of Weather, Climate, Vegetation and Soils

The course will investigate the dynamic patterns and processes of weather, climate, vegetation and soils and the interactions of these systems with humankind. The course material will create a desire to understand the intricacies of these systems and inspire a deeper appreciation of these components of Geographic enquiry. For intimacy with a landscape inspires respect for that landscape, in all its splendor and in all its shortcomings.

Geography of World Affairs

This course will focus, from a geographical perspective, on a range of contemporary issues that are of major significance to the continued development of life on Earth. There will be an emphasis on case studies from Europe in general and Italy in particular, together with a comparison between these regions and the U.S.

The course will consider a series of major contemporary cultural, environmental, political and social issues of global significance from a geographical perspective. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the interaction of such processes and the contribution that geographical enquiry can make to an appreciation of different cultures as well as a sensitivity to, and concern for, landscapes, people and the environment.
Medical Insurance

AIFS provides each student with a group insurance policy issued by the Insurance Company of the State of Pennsylvania. The policy provides two distinct types of coverage:

1. Before the program begins, AIFS will refund fees paid by students unable to participate on the program because of covered injury or illness or quarantine in a travel area. However, a fee is retained from the amount paid which includes a $100 processing fee, the $50 non-refundable application fee and a $210 insurance premium.

2. Once the program has begun, the plan covers the cost of medical treatment abroad up to a maximum of $10,000 per sickness or accident and with a daily hospital charge limit of $300. There is a $50 deductible per incident for medical claims against this policy.

These two categories of insurance are mutually exclusive. That is, the policy does not cover medical expenses before the program begins, nor does it refund any portion of the AIFS program fees once the program has begun.

The insurance also covers costs associated with changing the return flight if a student is unable to complete the program due to accident, illness or quarantine in a travel area. It offers 24-hour travel assistance in case of an emergency, legal assistance, medical transportation and emergency cash transfer in case of theft or loss. Full details of the coverage are provided to students with their final invoice for payment of the balance of their program fees.

Optional medical insurance upgrade and personal effects insurance

A medical insurance upgrade provides a maximum $60,000 per sickness or accident with a daily hospital charge of $300 ($50 deductible for each accident or illness). Optional personal effects insurance covers loss or theft up to $1,000, subject to a maximum of $100 per item ($500 for electronic devices) and a deductible of $100 per incident. Students are advised to arrange additional insurance for special items. Bicycles, jewelry, cash and computers are not covered. Expensive or irreplaceable items should be left at home.

AIFS Refund Policy

All notification of withdrawal must be made in writing via fax or certified mail. Registration, Partnership Programs, AIFS College Division, River Plaza, 9 West Broad Street, Stamford, CT 06902-3788. The fax number is 203.399.5597. Postmark date or date of fax transmission is considered date of withdrawal. All withdrawal statements must be signed by the applicant, or they will not be processed.

If a student's application is not accepted by AIFS, a refund of all payments is made, less the $50 non-refundable application fee and any non-refundable deposits paid by the student or by AIFS on the student's behalf. If a student withdraws on or before Friday, January 7, 2011, a full refund will be made less $150, including the $50 non-refundable application fee, plus any non-refundable deposits paid either by the student or by AIFS on the student's behalf.

If a student withdraws after Friday, January 7, 2011, but on or before Tuesday, February 1, 2011, for any reason except medical coverage by the AIFS Fees Refund and Medical Insurance Policy, the $450 deposit fee is forfeited, along with any non-refundable deposits paid either by the student or by AIFS on the student's behalf.

If a student is forced to withdraw from the program because of medical reasons after final fees have been paid but before departure, a refund will be made through the Fees Refund and Medical Insurance Policy, less a $100 processing fee, the $50 non-refundable application fee and the $210 insurance premium. The policy requires written proof of medical reasons provided by your physician.

Students withdrawing voluntarily for any reason after Tuesday, February 1, 2011, including withdrawals because of medical reasons not covered under the medical refund policy, receive no refund of fees paid unless they are able to provide a qualified replacement. In this case, they receive a full refund of all payments made less the $150 processing and cancellation fee and any non-refundable deposits. Replacement students must pay in full at the time of application. Flights cannot be arranged for replacement students applying after Friday, January 7, 2011. Once the program has started, students withdrawing receive no refund under any circumstances. This refund policy is necessary because the booking of facilities in Italy requires substantial non-refundable payments and commitments by AIFS in advance.

For more information on how to apply:

Go to www.wcccsa.com, and make an appointment with the study abroad coordinator on your campus:

Bellevue College
Carol McKee
cmckee@bellevuecollege.edu
425.564.4038

Cascadia Community College
Kristen Johnson
kjohnson@cascadia.edu
425.352.8415

Edmonds Community College
Jesse Aspree
jesse.aspree@edcc.edu
425.640.1037

Everett Community College
Joy Fitzpatrick
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425.388.9220

Grays Harbor College
Cal Erwin-Swoboda
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360.538.4078

Green River Community College
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Shoreline Community College
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South Seattle Community College
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South Puget Sound Community College
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AIFS Partnership Programs