

Course Descriptions & Bios, Florence 2024

Kirsten Swinstrom

Santa Rosa Junior College

Kirsten Swinstrom fell in love with studying biology as a student at Santa Rosa Junior College. She later obtained her undergraduate degree in Biology at UC Santa Cruz followed by a Master's Degree in Marine Science and then a PhD in Biology from UC Berkeley. Her research interests include animal behavior, evolution, and conservation biology.

Kirsten now teaches biology and zoology at Santa Rosa Junior College. Kirsten's travels have taken her throughout the US, to Europe, Canada, Mexico and French Polynesia. In 2019 she taught study abroad in Barcelona, Spain. It was such an incredible experience for her and her students that she wanted to do it again as soon as possible! She is very excited to explore the Mediterranean environment with you in Florence!

BIO 12: Basic Concepts of Ecology

3 units, CSU/UC transferable. Grade or P/NP.

The Italian peninsula is a hot spot of biodiversity with the highest concentration of animal and plant species in Europe. But like many places in the world, this biodiversity is threatened. In this class we'll learn the basic concepts of ecology with a focus on the current biodiversity crisis along with past extinction events. Some activities and field trips include: doing a bioblitz (identifying as many species as possible in a short amount of time) at the Boboli gardens behind the Pitti Palace, touring La Specola, one of the oldest natural history museums in Europe and home of the famous Medici family collections, visiting Fondazione Scienza e Tecnica, and exploring the zero-kilometer food culture in Tuscany.

BIO 13: Human Biology

3 units, CSU/UC transferable. Grade or P/NP.

This course presents topics from biology dealing specifically with humans. Topics include cellular biology, genetics, anatomy and physiology, evolution, and human impacts on the environment. In this class we will learn how the human body works and we'll talk about the Italian approach to health and the environment and compare them with our own issues in the United States. Florence provides a unique opportunity for studying anatomy and physiology. Leonardo da Vinci grew up in Florence. While da Vinci was most famously a painter, he was also fascinated by the human body and made incredibly detailed and accurate drawings of human anatomy. He even made important discoveries on the workings of the heart and the causes of heart failure 500 years before anyone else. We'll have the opportunity to walk in da Vinci's footsteps to visit the 13th century hospital where he first studied anatomy in the 1500s and visit the world's largest and best-known wax anatomical collection at the Museo la Specola. We'll talk about what he got right (a lot), and what he got wrong, when it comes to the human body.

BIO 14: Current Issues in Biology

3 units, CSU transferable. Grade or P/NP.

In this course students will be introduced to the core principles of biology through the study of current issues. Topics include ecology, evolution, anatomy, physiology, genetics, and molecular and cell biology. As an example, one topic may be genetically modified foods (GMOs). GMOs have been banned in Italy but used extensively in the US for many years. Recently, Italy has started to consider allowing some genetic modifications. We will talk about what genetically modified foods are, how they are made, why some countries ban them, and why the potential change of heart in Italy. Of course, our research into this issue will require us to eat lots of Italian food! Other issues may include: climate change, pandemics and the immune system, the microbiome, stem cell research, and many others. Three or four topics will be chosen closer to the class start date depending on current events. Our field trips will depend on the topics chosen but we will have many options.

Nancy Olsen

Los Rios Community College District

The first time I traveled outside of the US, I was giddy with experiencing so much that was new and—simultaneously—terrified of making an idiot of myself in a foreign place. If I'd had someone to guide my transition, how much easier and less anxious I would have been!

Since that time, I've visited over 20 countries and loved every minute of it (well, mostly...things happen that are unplanned but always end up as great stories and funny memories!).

That's why I am so VERY excited to live in Florence alongside you and your classmates and to experience this delightful city through your eyes as well as to calm your fears and help smooth out any rough edges that come from living in a new country.

I can't wait to show you how enriching it can be to take on a new view on life, and to see the US and your place within it from the outside. Travel is one of the most sensory of learning experiences, and leaving your home country is an unforgettable way of discovering the world.

I hope you'll join me and many other northern Californian students in this great adventure.

Here are the courses I will be teaching in Florence, Italy. None of these classes has a prerequisite and so they're open to ALL students:

ENGLT 308: The Graphic Novel and Manga

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

What a fun set of graphic novels we'll read! *Thermae Romanae* focuses on an architect who brings Japanese-style bath houses to ancient Rome. *Arte* takes place in 16th century Florence and features a female protagonist who hopes to become an artist and join the great Renaissance in progress. In *The*

Fifth Room, the arrival of a series of foreign exchange students allows four roommates to show off Italian culture and customs. Finally, you'll get to choose the love story you read: *5,000 Kilometers Per Second* or *Snapshots of a Girl*.

ENGLT 345: Mythologies of the World

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

In this course, you will study the gods of Greek and Roman mythology and their role in the founding of Florence and its ancient artifacts. The course paper will center on mythological figures and their material counterparts housed in Florence: Luca Giordana's painting of "The Rape of Persephone" in Florence's Palazzo Medici; the statue of Hercules fighting the Centaur Nessus, which is housed in the Palazzo Vecchio; and the Venus de' Medici in the Uffizi Gallery.

ENGLT 380: Introduction to Shakespeare

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

"Shakespeare in Italy" is the topic of this introductory course. Shakespeare's sonnets were heavily influenced by the poetry of Italy (the very terms "sonnetto," "stanza" and "sestina" are Italian in origin), so you'll read a sampling of Petrarchan sonnets alongside Shakespeare's own to examine the influence of the Italian poet (as well as visiting the statue of this Renaissance-era humanist in the Uffizi Palace!). We will also read either *All's Well that Ends Well*, a comedy and Shakespeare's only play set in Florence, or *Othello*, a tragedy set in Venice. You'll vote on which play we'll read!

Jessica Marshall

San Mateo County Community College District

Jessica Marshall is a Professor of Anthropology at Cañada College, and has taught for 19 years. With a passion for taking students abroad, she has taught Anthropology in Egypt, Italy, and Australia. Her research interests are in contemporary objects made to keep traditions alive. She holds a BA in Anthropology, a BA in Photography, and a BA in Journalism from California State University Sacramento, and an MA in Visual Anthropology from the University of Kent in England. She completed her PhD coursework in Interdisciplinary Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. Before teaching, Jessica worked as an archaeologist and lived and traveled extensively around the globe. Twenty-seven years ago she was a community college student in the same AIFS program in Florence that she will now be teaching in.

ANTH 110: Cultural Anthropology

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

The birthplace of Humanism, Florence is the ideal place to vest our studies of Cultural Anthropology through our everyday experiences living in Florence. We will take a field trip to The National Museum of

Anthropology & Ethnology, one of the most important anthropology museums in all of Europe, as well as the Stibbert Museum which houses a large collection of arms and armour.

The course is an introduction to the various customs, traditions, and forms of social organizations in both Western and non-Western societies, in which Italian culture will be the focus. Multicultural perspectives are examined for such topics including culture shock, subsistence methods, belief and religious systems, linguistics, art, kinship systems, marriage and family systems, technology, war, politics, and cultural change due to internal and external forces.

ANTH 125: Biological Anthropology

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

No student of Anthropology can ignore the importance of biological classification to the development of evolutionary thought, and Florence is where biological classification was first conceived. Even before Linnaeus outlined the kingdoms and orders we use today, the herbarium at the Botanical Museum at the University of Florence established the first rules for biological classification in 1563, and it's still open to students! We'll visit La Specola, one of the first science museums in Europe that has many animals stuffed that are now extinct. A great collection of the amount of diversity within species found around the world, this special museum also exhibits wax models of some of the first dissections of the human body. One of my favorite museums in the world is the History of Science Museum (Museo Galileo), which houses the telescope that Galileo used to reframe the trajectory of modern scientific thought. And we'll have the opportunity to see that telescope!

This course is an introduction to the science of Biological Anthropology. Topics to be covered will include the field of anthropology; the scientific method and development of evolutionary thought; genetics and inheritance; natural selection; principles and mechanics of evolution; evidence of evolution; modern human variation; living primates; and the fossil evidence for human evolution.

ANTH 200: Ethnographic Film

3 units, CSU/UC transferable. Grade only.

Introduction to the use of film by anthropologists as a research tool. Students view and evaluate a series of films depicting different cultures from around the world made by anthropologists, with a focus on Italian Cinema and Italian film makers. The neorealism movement with its birth in Italy, and Italian filmmaker contributions to Visual Anthropology will set the foundation of the course. We will also take a field trip to the local theater, and compare this experience to home.

John Corbally

Contra Costa Community College District

Prof. Corbally moved to the US alone the week he turned 18, having left high school at 15 in working class England. After laboring on construction sites for five years, he spent a decade as a sales and

marketing manager, coordinating international logistics for international supply chains. Wishing to teach following the events of 9/11, he completed a B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in history within 9 years. He now spends most of his time teaching, while also writing or working to improve his pedagogy, or as they say, androgogy. :-) His professional focus is on helping less-privileged students get to college, finish their bachelors, to relish in the life of a mindful, educated adult, and thrive thereafter.

Prof. Corbally recently authored/co-authored a three-volume World History series for Bloomsbury Academic Press (from 1490-1750, 1750-1914, and 1914-present). He plays soccer, piano and guitar, getting injured periodically in all three. He has a daughter in college and a son at home and loves going to concerts with both.

HIST 141 – History of Western Civilization since the Renaissance

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

This course presents the history of western civilization from the 16th century to the present time. Emphasis will be placed on how the institutions and dominant attitudes of modern civilization emerged, by tracing political, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual developments from late medieval to contemporary times. The development of modern Europe will also be explored. This class will cover areas of Italian life and culture, beginning with the Renaissance and following the path of intellectual events through to the present. In this course, we study the different historical features of various “Renaissances” in southern and northern Europe. We will explore the rise of individualism, dissent and secularism, all of which were comparatively lacking in Italy.

The main units of this course include the Reformation, the formation of the modern bureaucratic state, scientific revolution, enlightenment, industrialization, nationalism, imperialism and authoritarianism. We will visit museums such as the Uffizi and Galleria dell’Accademia, to highlight how a country of central importance to art, music and literature can also be one that, through historical contingencies, takes a path toward imperialism, low literacy, fascism and warmongering.

HIST 142 – Contemporary European History

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

This course is a study of political, social, economic and cultural developments in recent European history - from the late 19th century to the present. Students will examine the international influence of Europe in recent history with special emphasis placed on Italy as it fits into the century. We will explore European ideologies, the origins of wars, the ongoing effects of conflict, and progress toward coexistence. We will visit the Casa del Fascio - This building on Via della Condotta that the Fascist Party used as headquarters in Florence during the 1930s.

Though few would wish the Allies to have lost the wars, this does not mean we should not understand why the ‘bad guys’ acted so. This is particularly relevant to Italy, as Mussolini was a central inspiration for Hitler and fascism was an Italian ideology (and in counterpoint, the likes of Gramsci would shape western democratic leftist views to the present). The construction of history, patriotic mythology and

feel-good nationalist rhetoric will be central issues in this course, comparing Italy to other nations and analyzing how the 20th century demonstrates the inherent dangers of nationalism.

HIST 181 – World History since 1500

3 units, CSU/UC transferable.

This course surveys world history from 1500 CE to the present, with an emphasis on the dynamic interaction of cultures and societies around the globe. The course considers the social, political, economic, cultural, and intellectual forces that shaped the major societies and less influential ones. The course examines the legacy of these forces worldwide and their contributions to present-day circumstances, including ongoing tensions between tradition and modernity. Specifically, it transcends nationalist versions of history to connect the histories of people worldwide through the methodology of World History.

The connection between the ‘arts’ of the Renaissance and the ‘science’ of industrialism and imperialism is often missed and will be a central theme of this course. In addition, the fact that Italy was an early progenitor of many ‘modern’ European ideas, which were then fragmented and reverted to tradition which in turn led it to its authoritarian path in the 20th century, will be an important question for students to grapple with. Since science is so central to the narrative thrust of this course, we will visit the Da Vinci Museum and explore the conditions in which men like him could innovate, comparing early modern scientists – of which there were many – in India, Africa, Asia and the Arab world.