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## Travel Changes You

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## Travel Changes You

**UM journalism professors reflect on impact of Italian study abroad on Ole Miss students**

SEPTEMBER 2, 2022 BY LAREECA RUCKER

**FaTvLiErCoSMPrSt**



Several of the Ole Miss students who participated in the School of Journalism and New Media's study abroad trip to Italy gather for a group photo in Florence. Photo by Mark Dolan

OXFORD, Miss. – Each night in his Florence apartment, Mark Dolan opened the shutters of the screenless windows and let the cool air rush in as he fell asleep to the sound of people talking on the cobblestone streets four stories down.

"Many of them (were) leaving the bars, some laughing, others arguing, and though I don't speak much Italian, I understood much," the **University of Mississippi** professor said. "Their voices would rise amid the terra cotta tile roofs."

Getting used to the rhythms of Italian life changed Dolan, his three colleagues and the 52 Ole Miss students who participated in a study abroad program in Italy this summer.

Dolan, an associate professor of multimedia journalism in the UM **School of Journalism and New Media**, taught an 8 a.m. photography class called "Smartphone Storytelling" that covered shooting and editing with iPhones and using layering and masking techniques to produce images that could be journalistic or fine art.

"It's a kind of immersion in a place, and then you realize you've only scratched the surface," Dolan said. "... After the first photo assignment, much of the challenge was how to escape the clichés – the wine glasses, motor scooters and espresso cups. ...

"To attempt this in a country so visually rich was rewarding professionally. ... The cities we inhabited became expansive classrooms, these actual ancient cities of Renaissance – Florence, Venice, Rome."

Dolan said he hopes the experience enriched his students.

"Being in college is the perfect age to stand on your own in a world that is utterly different from everything you know – and to be responsible for yourself and the deadlines within what were often 12-hour days," he said.



An instructor teaches Ole Miss journalism students about grape varieties in the region during their stay in Florence. Photo by Mark Dolan

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OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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### Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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### Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

"You come to understand yourself, paradoxically, by being outside of yourself. It's a wonderful moment of change, of becoming, a hugely empowering experience."

The group spent three weeks in Florence, with side trips that included San Gimignano, Chianti, Pisa and Venice. After leaving Florence, they spent four days in Sorrento and a final week in Rome with a stop at Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii.

R.J. Morgan, associate instructional professor of journalism and integrated marketing communications who taught a course called "Writing With Voice" was impressed by how students articulated their sights, sounds and emotions when experiencing many strange-but-beautiful settings for the first time.



**The Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence is near where Ole Miss students attended classes during a summer study abroad trip organized by the School of Journalism and New Media. Photo by Mark Dolan**

"Having the ability to slow down and pay attention to the world around you at a deep enough level to be able to write about it is a useful skill both professionally and personally," he said. "The more details you're trained to notice and observe, the more vivid and lasting those memories will be."

Christina Sparks, instructional associate professor of IMC, taught "Brand and Relationship Strategies." Students learned how brands are positioned and marketed differently in different countries.

"They discovered new brands, as well as current brands," Sparks said. "One example is Nutella. It is an Italian brand that is well-developed in Europe but marketed differently in the U.S."

Students also explored cultural communication considerations of global brands and presented their research to the class.

"You get to know them and have the opportunity to be a part of their expanding perspective and deeper learning experience as they explore different cultures and develop broader thinking," she said.

Jason Cain, interim IMC program coordinator and assistant professor of integrated marketing communications, taught a class called "Global Communication Systems." He enjoyed witnessing students navigate Rome.

"It's a big city that just so happens to be built into and on top of a very old city," Cain said. "Many students find it quite daunting, and a lot of them never quite get over the culture shock."

"However, many of them do, and by the last couple of days, have really dug themselves into what I believe is one of the prettiest cities on Earth."

Cain said he hopes students realize people are both different and similar, which creates opportunities and complications in global communication. He hopes students grow from stepping outside their own experiences and that the trip made them curious and hungry for more adventures.

"There's no doubt a level of privilege involved in being able to travel around the world," he said. "I'm constantly trying to find ways to make it more accessible for more students because I feel that, for those who can, when you are put in a situation where you are in a place long enough to be something more than a tourist, I think it changes you."

Cain said he was changed by traveling abroad and has witnessed the same growth in students.

"I hope at the end of the day, they better comprehend that there are people in all these places all over the globe not so different from them, with their own hopes, dreams and fears," he said.

In fact, one Sunday in Rome, Dolan attended Mass with Pope Francis at St. Peter's Basilica. While in line with a family from Wichita, he learned he needed a ticket. So a priest from South Korea took off his backpack and generously gave Dolan the extra one he had.

"The family held my place in line, and I ended up on the front row," Dolan said. "There I was on a floor consisting of tiny mosaic tiles from the 1600s – no pews, folding chairs – and getting to hear a living pope. Awesome."

To learn more about this study abroad trip, the courses offered and the School of Journalism and New Media's future adventures, visit <https://omjabroad.squarespace.com/about>.

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**Ole Miss student Ben Johnson (right) shares a meal with classmates during their stay in Italy for a study abroad trip this summer organized by the School of Journalism and New Media. Photo by Mark Dolan**

