

Reflection Paper: Italy

Traveling is one of the most valuable experiences in our life. It contains lots of exposure, experience and personal development. It is an excellent opportunity to come into close contact with a distinct culture in their day-to-day life and return home with plenty of wonderful memories. During our trip, not only we were faced with new traditions and a new history, but we were able to explore and connect with other group members as well as locals. It was a challenging experience that allowed us to live with different personalities and conditions even though it was only for a short period of time. The different lifestyle and social environment made us expand our social skills and become friends with one another even though our interests of why we attended the trip on the first place, were different. To me, this trip had mainly academical porpoises but along the way I realized that being part of the team was equally important.

To further my knowledge about architecture, this trip represented the perfect opportunity as Italy is known like a must-see destination for architecture students. By walking through sites, buildings and getting the full experience I realized how fulfilling is to learn something in class and then see it in real life. I got the chance to visit some of the most incredible buildings such as the Colosseum, the Pantheon and the Florence Cathedral and I was fascinated to see how beautifully, well thought and well-constructed they were even though built with just modest materials like concrete and stone. The style created during this time is still dominant even nowadays. They built in a simple way that was efficient and a full

representation of their beliefs. For example the temples were in the middle of the city to attract attention; oriented towards the East (rising with the sun) to honor the Gods. Besides helping me academically, this trip helped me develop personal skills that will help me interact better with others. Being immersed in an entirely new cultural setting it was scary at first, but it is also was an opportunity to discover new strengths, abilities, and meet new friends. As a future architect, this trip was a learning experience and it is my hope that in the future I will incorporate the same philosophies in my own designs. Furthermore, as leaving Montgomery College and becoming a new student of University of Maryland, my goal is to further my knowledge on Italian culture and architecture by taking a full semester abroad. This trip served as a preview of what to expect in Italy.

Our trip to Italy was a combination of great culture with rich and astonishing history. It was a pleasure to meet local citizens that were always friendly and welcoming. Among others, as tourists we had the opportunity to explore different types of restaurants with traditional food. Everywhere we went, I got the impression that Italians were very relaxed people that lived one day at a time. For example while having dinner no one would rush you to leave by bringing the check before you asked for it, or the coffees and restaurants were usually full every time of the day. Another thing that impressed me was how proud Italians were of their history, treasures and their country. Our tour guides, waitresses and hotel receptions were so happy to share with us a piece of history to emphasize how special Italy is. Experiencing the Italian culture even for only ten days was a moving experience.

Italy was the perfect trip to end my Montgomery College experience and start a new challenge as a student at University of Maryland. This trip was the best little trailer of a semester abroad in Rome. This experience taught me that the trip gets more and more interesting if you do it with friends or in a group. Not only we learned so much about the fascinating history and architecture of Italy but we were able to become close friends with each other too. As an architect but also as a person who loves traveling, this trip gave me the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge about art and architecture but also enjoy the culture and traditions of the country.