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I tell everyone that studying abroad was the best thing I've ever done. I don't regret a single thing about it, except I wish I could have stayed longer. I am a junior at UMB studying psychology and art, but I chose to focus on art while abroad, because what better place to study art than Italy? That decision turned out to be an excellent one. I took Photography, Painting, and Figure Drawing classes, in addition to an intermediate Italian class. The classes I took weren't especially academically challenging, but they certainly were not easy or worthless. There were creative and cultural demands that made up for a lack of traditional academic scripts, which made these classes incredibly valuable to me. I had a mix of Italian and American professors, but because John Cabot is an American university in Rome, all of my classes were taught in English, although my Italian class was held primarily in Italian. I certainly would not say that I am fluent in Italian, or even particularly proficient, but taking a class while I was there was something I would highly recommend. I

furthered my grammar and vocabulary skills, but my professor, a native Roman, also exposed us to colloquial phrases and cultural traditions and expectations I otherwise wouldn't have been exposed to, as well as introduced us to the Roman dialect, which can be quite different from general Italian.

Although I really liked my Italian class, my studio art classes were some of the best parts of my experience there. Italy is full of incredible and inspiring things, and having a structured creative outlet for everything I was experiencing was incredibly valuable. I had never taken a photography class before, but getting instruction in it helped me capture really incredible memories that are both meaningful and beautiful.

The bond you form with people in situations like those are incredible. I made some really incredible life long friends that I am infinitely grateful for. I would recommend studying abroad anywhere to any student; it's a world-widening, invaluable, and incredibly humbling experience. Being beholden to such beauty and change makes you feel very small and insignificant, and that is one of the most valuable experiences someone can have; to recognize your true size and value. It leaves you forever changed. **For a student looking for incredible food, culture, and beauty, I would suggest Rome be at the top of your list. Pieces of me now belong to each new friend I made there and each place I explored, and even though those pieces will remain scattered around the world, I've never felt happier or more whole. Beyond the experience itself, Rome was the beginning of incredibly meaningful friendships, a life of adventure, and a journey of self-discovery.**

