

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Lisa Carroll

VISIONS OF ITALY: EXPLORING CULTURAL HERITAGE ABROAD

The sun poured in through the open window and onto the statue I remember reading about in my undergraduate history courses. The she-wolf nursing Romulus and Remus, located in the Musei Capitolini, had come to be a symbol of the power of Rome. It conveyed information about the city's cultural heritage.

Thus began my journey in the Visions of Italy class offered by the Department of Library and Information Science. In late May and early June, nine students joined Dr. Renate Chancellor for two weeks in Rome and Florence. Five of us were from CUA: three of us were library and information science students, one was an undergraduate student, and one was a Ph.D. student in Semitics. There were also three library science students from Wayne State University and one from Simmons College.

Our group became tight knit quickly as we were thrown into a country brand new to us. We rode packed buses to places like the Musei Capitolini, the Vatican Secret Archives, the Vatican Library, and the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma. We marveled together at the beauty of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican Museums. We recapped our days over leisurely dinners of pasta, pizza, and wine.

The experience was unlike one you will get anywhere else. Because of the University's ties to the Vatican, we got behind-the-scenes tours of the Vatican Secret Archives and the Vatican Library. It was an odd feeling to breeze past busy researchers in the archives, gaining access to an area even they couldn't get into. We got to see up close the original document Henry VIII sent to Pope Clement VII seeking to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled so he could marry Anne Boleyn.



Lisa Carroll is pursuing the cultural heritage information management track of the M.S.L.I.S program. She just completed her first two semesters of the program and works as a Web content editor/producer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at Catholic University.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Lisa Carroll

We had wonderful guest speakers and tour guides. David Dawson-Vasquez, the director of the CUA Rome Center, gave us a detailed tour of St. Peter's Basilica. Crispin Corrado, an archaeologist and professor, brought the Roman Forum and Colosseum to life with her engaging teaching style.

In Florence, we were stunned at the presentation given to us by the librarians of the Museo Galileo. Out of all the libraries and museums we visited, the Museo Galileo was by far the most modern and advanced in their techniques. The librarians passed around beautiful manuscripts and books from their collections.

We all learned so much from our experiences and each other. In many ways, the museums and libraries of Italy are way behind in their efforts to modernize and make their collections digitally accessible, but their enthusiasm in sharing their cultural heritage was contagious.

The Visions of Italy course is currently offered every other summer. The schedule is balanced between classroom time, coordinated visits, and free time to explore. It's the experience of a lifetime and I would recommend it to anyone interested in adding some global perspective to their library and information science education.

