

INSIGHTS

A look inside innovative programming with ACCENT



PARIS • FLORENCE • LONDON • MADRID • ROME • ISTANBUL



Global Perspectives on Health

A study of public health is a particularly salient point of comparison between London and Rome. London is home to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the ideal location to explore the impact of plague throughout history, the role of public health in urban planning, the National Health Service, and the community health issues associated with the diversity of postcolonial London.

Rome is also well-suited to provide an experiential program to students of the health sciences. Programs consider bathing, hygiene, and sexual health in Ancient Rome; pilgrimage and associated issues of diet and waste; the Vatican's historic and present role in healthcare management; Mussolini, guest workers, and malaria; mental health and the 1978 Basaglia reform; birthrate, aging, and immigration; and much, much more.

Making Connections, Giving Back

Michigan State founded its Rome summer program in 2009 for students of Sales Communication, a collaborative specialization with the College of Communication Arts and Sciences and the Broad College of Business. Italian case studies illustrate key concepts from sales, marketing, and communication courses and serve as an introduction to wider themes in contemporary Italian society. Since 2012, a volunteer component has challenged students to contemplate a more complete picture of Italian society, its most pressing social issues, and the institutions in place to respond to them.

In the first years of the volunteer experience, students prepared and served meals to the homeless with two organizations addressing hunger in Rome. This year, MSU began to work with the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center (JNRC), an organization that regularly hosts interns and volunteers from ACCENT semester programs. The fact that the local

staff and most of the refugee clientele spoke English meant that MSU students connected in a more immediate and meaningful way, introducing themselves and learning about the diverse factors that caused the refugees from Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan to seek assistance in Italy.

JNRC serves Rome's refugee population with breakfast and lunch programs, distribution of common sanitary and household goods, and volunteer-instructed courses in English, Italian, and basic computer skills. The Center also provides workshops for refugee-artisans to create and sell traditional crafts. In 2012, an ACCENT Santa Barbara City College student intern developed a sports league at the Center.

The Sales Communication Specialization at MSU is funded entirely by contributions from private corporations. As these stakeholders plainly place a high value on philanthropy, Jennifer Rumler, Managing Director of the Specialization and founder of



the Rome program, prioritized service in the development of the curriculum abroad.

In May 2015, MSU will expand the partnership with JNRC, returning with the Made in Italy program and also sending a group of alumni as part of the Spartans Without Borders initiative. MSU alumni will take part in a two-week service experience, working alongside undergraduates on projects that relate to their areas of professional expertise, including communication and marketing, health fields, and international law.

GlobalNews

- Students in the University of California fall semester at ACCENT Paris recently began a series of language exchanges with a new local partner, ISART Digital, a design and 3D animation school just steps from the Study Center in the 11th arrondissement.
- More than fifty students were in attendance at a recent lecture hosted at ACCENT Florence with cross-cultural psychology professor Christian Tarchi, *Why Having a Cappuccino After Lunch is Immoral: Understanding and Adapting to Italy and Italians*.
- ACCENT Madrid will host a reception on November 5 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of University of California Education Abroad Programs in Spain. The Study Center hosts UCEAP spring and summer quarter programs and in 2015 will host a pilot fall semester program.

Faculty Feature: US & UK Media Cultures

by Margaret Coffey, M.S.

Two countries with a common language and a fair degree of shared history: how much difference can there be in their media? More than you might think, as students from the University of Southern California in London find when they embark upon *Comparative Media in the US and the UK*.

First they have got to wrestle with the fact that the word “tabloid” means something different in the UK than in the US. The red top newspapers that we call tabloids in the

UK may share an obsession with celebrities similar to the tabloid magazines in the US, but there are some key differences.

Students are surprised to find that these tabloids also cover serious world and political news. They are even more surprised - shocked might be a better word - to come across The Sun newspaper’s Page 3 girl: a large photo of an almost nude young woman on the third page of the newspaper with the highest daily circulation in the UK.

This is one example of what media can tell us about cultural differences between two

superficially similar societies. The role of the BBC is another. Exposure to a highly successful public broadcasting service that plays a dominant role in so many aspects of UK life gives students ample scope for the quest to become critical media consumers that is central to their study.

Of course they notice the lack of advertisements, but that is just scratching the surface. We also explore the roles that history, geography, and methods of finance play in determining how media in the two different countries operate.

And we do this in London, the media centre of the UK, against a back drop of constant change. Traditional media on both sides of the Atlantic are struggling to adapt to the new world order created by the technologies like smart phones and tablets. New media are popping up all the time, giving us plenty to think about, assess, and discuss.



Communication & the London Olympics

High above London, students looked out over the 2012 Olympic development project across east London to the City and West End. The lecture, describing the role of communications and media in the Games, was set on the top floor of the Balfron Tower residential block. Just weeks after beginning their program at ACCENT London, it was clear to this group of USC students that their time in London would be nothing like a semester on campus.

Each fall, the students from the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism enroll in custom courses at the ACCENT Study Center. In addition to these experiential courses, the group takes part in a series of ACCENT-arranged visits that highlight the varied professional applications of communication in Britain.

The first of these experiences was the daylong workshop in east London, led by lecturers Michael Owens and Ralph Ward, both former senior urban planning professionals working on the Olympic project.

The day started at the Balfron Tower with a historic perspective on east London, an area heavily bombed during World War II. Students considered the 2003 pitch for the games, which focused not on London’s strategic and logistical preparedness, but on the potential social impact. Here it became clear that long before the Olympic flame arrived to London, the games were branded

as a social project – important for their role in a wider and existing regeneration initiative.

After this introduction, the group continued on to the edge of the Olympic Park to observe and investigate the visible legacy of the project in east London. There the students were then challenged to craft a fictitious bid for the 2024 Games in the city of their choosing.

ACCENT has lined up a number of these communications visits during the semester, including: media and law enforcement with the Metropolitan Police; brand crisis PR with the Cooperative Group; communication and charity with The Ace of Clubs; and an on-site meeting with journalists at The BBC.

FENDI: Inspired by Rome

“FENDI has always been inspired by Rome,” opened Rita Laino, Development Manager. For the audience of business students, it was FENDI itself that was poised to inspire. Each year, Professor Jay Lipe of the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota brings a group of undergraduates to Italy to compare mass market and luxury brand management in an international marketplace. When arranging company visits for the group, FENDI was a clear choice for ACCENT.

During a visit to the Rome headquarters of FENDI, Carlson students had exclusive access to the marketing team, learning about the company’s history and asking candid and thoughtful questions about recent strategic decisions. The speakers highlighted

the Fendi family’s reputation for quality in its first store on Via del Plebiscito, the impact of the five Fendi daughters who took control in the post-war years, and the importance of the collaboration with Karl Lagerfeld, a risk made in 1965 that revolutionized the brand and cemented its success.

A topic of particular interest to the students was FENDI’s licensing agreement with Safilo Group for the design, production, and worldwide distribution of FENDI eyewear. “The ability to compete will always depend on your willingness to innovate, to take risks,” explained the eyewear team. The balance between tradition and innovation was a theme in all of the day’s discussions; as it is throughout all Made in Italy luxury brands.



Photo: Lauren Dickinson, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota

In 2015, FENDI will move its headquarters to Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, better known as the Square Colosseum and built by Mussolini as part of the EUR expansion of Rome for the planned 1942 world’s fair. The company’s decision to occupy such an important landmark is further proof of its strong link to Rome and drive to innovate.

Sociology of Sport in Rome

Sport is a lens through which to study a number of complex issues: globalization, race, ethics, gender, commercialization, media, and more. In March, a group of University of Minnesota freshman spent their first college spring break exploring these topics in Italy.

Working together with the program leader Jo Ann Buysse, senior lecturer at the University of Minnesota, the ACCENT Rome team reached deep into personal and professional networks to build an engaging and experiential program.



Within hours of landing in Rome, the group was off exploring sport throughout history. They traveled through time to Ancient Rome, learning about a violent side of sport during a guided visit to the Colosseum. Professor Simon Martin, historian and author of *Football and Fascism: the National Game under Mussolini* and *Sport Italia*, then led the group through the monuments of Rome's fascist era, including Stadio Olimpico, exploring the role of sport in Mussolini's agenda and the creation of a masculine ideal.

The students met athletes and coaching staff from two professional teams, visiting the headquarters of SS. Lazio, one of Rome's top two professional soccer teams, and attending a Q&A session with basketball player Trevor Mbakwe, formerly a University of Minnesota Golden Gopher, then drafted to the Virtus Roma professional team.



The latter visit took place in the Palazzetto dello Sport, an impressive facility designed for the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. Mbakwe described his experience transitioning from university to professional sport and moving from Minnesota to Italy with his family. He candidly discussed his dreams and professional aspirations, relationships with his teammates, and his experience with race in Italy. After the conversation, students stayed to observe the team practicing.

A full description of the group's visit to SS. Lazio is featured on the ACCENT Blog (www.accentblogs.com).

ACCENT on INTERNSHIPS

Cherie Blair Foundation

Andrea Gonzalez is no stranger to hard work, having held various jobs to support herself and her family throughout high school and college. However, before her internship in London she had never worked directly in her academic field. She was particularly aware of that gap in her resume before studying abroad, since the quarter in London would be her last at UC Riverside before graduation.

Andrea interned fulltime for six weeks at the Cherie Blair Foundation. The internship under the mentorship of communication director Jillian Convey was an ideal marriage of Andrea's English major and Women's Studies minor, her true passion. "It was amazing to see it all come together in such a neat package," reflects Andrea, noting that her peers had the same feeling: "We were all over London doing very different things, but everyone felt so rightly placed and came home each day with a story."

The Foundation operates mentorship programs for female entrepreneurs in developing and emerging countries across the globe. Andrea worked in communication, writing copy for web and print, and speechwriting in preparation for Cherie Blair's speech at the

Cambridge Wireless Conference in late June, where she highlighted the importance of wireless technology in empowering women around the world.

"Jillian was a great teacher and mentor, giving valuable feedback on my writing to ensure that we were heard and that the message was clear and concise," said Andrea. "Everyone was very supportive of each other. The different program leaders were always willing to answer questions or have a tea."

Andrea is still in touch with her mentor and others from the Cherie Blair Foundation. She recently accepted a position as an Autism Behavioral Therapist in California, but hopes to prepare for the GRE and apply for a graduate degree in Gender Studies in the UK.

Movimento Cinque Stelle

Miranda Slaght was surprised to find her hand raised to correct her political science professor after only a few weeks in Rome. He had made, in her opinion, a generalization about Movimento Cinque Stelle (M5), Italy's radically new political movement. Taken aback, the professor asked Miranda where she got her information. "I work for them," she said.

Today, Miranda is a senior at the University of Minnesota, finishing a degree in History and Political Science and preparing for the LSAT. Last spring, she was M5's first non-

Italian student intern, writing English-language copy for the party's website and social media channels.

On her first day, after observing a live debate at the Italian Senate, Miranda's internship mentor Alessandro Canali walked her to the M5 headquarters and asked her to write an article introducing the movement to an English-speaking audience. "I thought to myself, 'I have no idea.' I'm a History major, so I write a lot of papers, but my first article at M5 made me realize exactly how little I knew about the movement."

Though overwhelming, that article was the perfect first assignment, serving as a crash course on M5 and introducing Miranda to the entire team. "I went from office to office asking people questions about the movement and their roles." She remembers Canali's comment after reading the first draft: "You left out a lot."

And while she admits that Italy seems like less of a "perfect paradise" after working inside the political system, she is glad for the experience: "It was eye-opening to learn about Italy's problems and political issues. The internship helped me understand Italy and Italians much more than my peers."

Miranda plans to write about the experience in her law school essay: "With so many people studying abroad, if you don't have skills to show from it, it is not worthwhile."

Faculty Focus: Graphic Design in London

by Dusty Crocker, Ph.D.

The inaugural study abroad trip for the Texas Christian University Graphic Design program was a big success. We spent three exciting and exhausting weeks in the heart of London packed with industry visits to advertising agencies and design firms. Our hosts at ACCENT London arranged our agency visits through their local network and the Study Center provided an excellent home base for our class meetings and final presentations. A couple of staff members from ACCENT even attended our final presentations and provided feedback to the students.

The students, of course, were thrilled to get a break from classroom activities to visit some of the better agencies and design boutiques London had to offer including Pentagram and JWT Worldwide. Each visit was better than the next and a wealth of information was shared. Between classroom activities and industry visits, ACCENT London arranged trips to the Design Museum and Museum of Brands as well as an evening visit to the West End and a performance of the musical *Matilda*.

The challenge of organizing and teaching a course abroad for the first time was initially a daunting one. However, ACCENT London provided the expertise, facilities, and organization needed to ensure the details were all taken care of and our trip was successful. London will definitely be on our agenda for Summer 2016, and ACCENT London will



definitely be our “go to” partner to help us match the excellent learning experience of our first trip abroad.

The Heart of Engineering

For over twenty years, ACCENT has hosted summer programs from the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. Campus faculty teach technical writing and upper level engineering electives, and each year Viterbi looks to ACCENT to develop a local elective. Past electives have explored the history of engineering and innovation in each host city. This summer in Rome, however, the students were pushed further afield to study communication.

The course, *Communication Italian Style: Popes, Politicians, and Popular Culture*, considers Italian case studies in communication from Machiavelli to Mussolini to Pope Francis. The dynamic course covers both communication theory and a survey of Italian history and culture, and pushes students to consider their own personal communication style – an essential, though perhaps less natural skill for engineers.

Professor Seán Patrick Lovett, Director of English Language Programming at Vatican Radio, explains: “As engineers, it’s enough to come up with a prototype that’s in your head or on your computer. In a world of business and marketing, that is not enough, unless other people understand why the prototype is useful, why they should invest in it. This course took them to a new dimension.”

Lovett believes that “communication is about balance and equilibrium, about heart and head and hands. Engineering is only about head and hands. You think it and you do it. Communication, to be effective, must pass through the heart. You have to feel it.”

A series of site visits brought students to the Capitoline Hill, the Doria Pamphili Palace, and St. Peter’s Basilica, experiencing the use of symbolism, color, and light. They discussed the symbolic value of numbers, which Lovett observed to be a foreign concept for the engineers, who simply thought of “two plus two as four, when for 2,000 years the number two has symbolized duality: sun and moon, good and evil. They had always seen two as a number. Communication taught them that two was a relationship.”

“Study abroad is essential for students of science and engineering,” asserted Lovett, “the fact of having their certainties broken down in this experiential and experimental dimension, to see things from a broader perspective, really takes them to a deeper level of their own humanity.”

Campaign to End FGM

Recent petitions have called on governments to act against the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), drawing significant attention in global media. Two groups with ACCENT London, studying sociology and communication, recently had the opportunity to hear from leading journalist Alexandra Topping on a campaign led by the *Guardian* against FGM.

The Guardian’s End FGM Global Media Campaign was launched in February 2014, aiming to use the power of the media to end FGM. The campaign’s main goal was for Michael Gove, the UK’s then Education Secretary, to write to every school in the UK about FGM before the school summer break, which is known as the ‘cutting season’.

Topping gave an overview of feminist communication tactics throughout the twentieth century; specifically how Suffragettes in London in the 1910’s used popular media to highlight their cause. A journalist herself, Topping explained how print media at the time was exclusively written by men, with the content also under male control. The Suffragettes originally tried to influence politicians and men in positions of power who were sympathetic to their cause; however there was no real desire to make change and a decision was made to employ more direct methods.

Topping drew parallels between those direct methods used by the Suffragettes and the way that modern feminist communication now operates. She described the main challenge for the Suffragettes as finding a way to organize, to use imagery, and to find leaders to head campaigns in different parts of the country. The students heard about how these challenges were also faced in the FGM campaign and the methods used by journalists to overcome them.

Look for the Next ACCENT Newsletter in May!

The next issue of *Insights* will highlight custom programming across all six ACCENT cities.

Visit our newsletter archives at:
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