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Italian immersion class a rare opportunity to study abroad

An ancient Etruscan church will serve as a classroom for Rogue Community College’s unique Italian language immersion experience this fall.

Located in the historic Etruscan city of Terracina, the church is just one setting in which RCC students and other participating community members will learn and practice Italian. Set for Sept. 2-23, the class will enable participants to live with Terracina locals and learn basic Italian while exploring the city, which is on the Tirrenia Sea between Rome and Naples.

Participants will spend the morning in class and participate in cultural and historical outings during the afternoon. Italian host families will provide lodging and breakfast. Leading the trip will be RCC instructors Monica Rountree and Dorcas Herr. Both have extensive travel and language teaching experience. Rountree is a native speaker of Italian and Spanish, and Herr is an experienced study abroad program director.

“Imagine waking up to breakfast in an Italian kitchen where you chat and sip coffee with an Italian family,” Herr said. “You walk into the old town to your morning class in the old church, (Chiesa del SS. Salvatore), marveling at its neoclassical Roman columns. In the afternoon, Terracina and its environs are your classroom,” she added.

“Students will be amazed by their increasing ability to communicate with their host families and their friends, the fishermen at the ports of Terracina and the island of Ponza, the shopkeepers and craftsmen,” Herr continued. “This off-the-beaten path interaction with the locals is the hallmark of the Terracina experience.”

The area is rich with attractions: Renaissance art masterpieces, ancient Etruscan architecture, and the rolling hills of Tuscany. The Roman Temple of Jupiter sits above the old town high on the cliff over the sea, and the nearby mountainous national wildlife sanctuary draws naturalists, botanists and biologists. Marine biologists are attracted by the underwater life at the island of Ponza and anthropologists by the Roman and Etruscan ruins in and near Terracina. The ruins of Pompeii and the monuments of Rome also are near enough to be visited during a free weekend, Herr said.

RCC’s relationship with organizations and individuals in Terracina makes the study abroad opportunity affordable, despite the rising value of the Euro, Herr said. The cost is $2,995 for three
weeks. That includes ground transportation between Rome and Terracina, orientation, a host-family reception, lodging with an Italian family, breakfast daily, tuition and fees, books, weekly guest lectures, admission to all scheduled museums and sites, cultural activities, a cooking class, farewell dinner, experienced faculty and leaders and all local taxes. Students may opt to receive four college credits at no additional charge.

The study abroad opportunity is limited to 24 persons; spaces are filling fast. Those interested are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. More information is available at http://studyabroad.roguecc.edu or by calling Wolfgang Runzi in Jackson County at 245-7570 or Lutz Kramer at 956-7170 in Josephine County.

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