Why Study Italian?

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Benvenuti! Studying Italian will open a gateway for you onto one of the world’s most beautiful languages and one of its richest cultures. Because of the history of the country, Italian is not just the language of Italy but of the world. It is the spoken language in the Vatican City, headquarters of the Catholic Church, and is still spoken in many Italian emigrant communities around the world. Italy itself has become an important magnet for immigrants from all continents, many of whom bring back their Italian experience to their home countries. You too can become a part of this growing international Italian-speaking community.

Il programma. The University of Washington offers a complete Italian program with the possibility to major, minor or double major in Italian. Our language courses are offered both during the academic year and in intensive and accelerated classes in the summer, allowing students to progress rapidly in their language learning. Study abroad is essential to what we do, and we offer a yearly spring program in Italy in which students study with a faculty member from UW while living and eating with Italian families, as well as a summer program focused on studying Italian cinema and making one’s own film in Rome. You can have these experiences already in your first year of Italian. Because we are a mid-sized program students have lots of individual access to their professors and develop a strong sense of community with their peers, and many belong to our student-run Italian Club.

Cultura. Dating from the period of the ancient Etruscans and Romans, and including the magnificence of the great masters of the Renaissance and Baroque (Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Bernini), Italy possesses one of the world’s most important artistic and historical patrimonies. UNESCO estimates that over 60% of the entire world’s art treasures are in Italy! In our culture courses students study literature, history, art, fashion, opera, film, politics, and commerce, and acquire a deep understanding of the rich complexity of Italian culture that is only possible in a program in which you can speak the language. How special is it to be able to read Dante’s Divine Comedy in Italian or experience a film such as Fellini’s La dolce vita in Italian!

Economia. Italy is also a country of business, international organizations and innovation. It has the eighth largest economy in the world and is a leader in high-end crafted products that carry the prestigious Made in Italy label. It is famous for its food products and slow food culinary traditions, clothing, eyewear, high-end design, automobiles, electronics and more. Milan is a world capital of fashion and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has its headquarters in Rome. An estimated 7,500 American companies do business with Italy and more than 1,000 U.S. firms have offices there. And numerous Italian companies have close links to the Seattle area, or as in the case of the automaker Lamborghini, ongoing collaboration with the UW. Our program introduces students to this other Italy and offers experiential learning experiences such as internships with our partner organizations both here at home, with the Seattle International Film Festival for example, or in Rome, with the United Nations General Assembly simulation and the Italian Society for International Organization, with a focus on immigration research. We also have global cooperation agreements with the Universities of Perugia and Rome (La Sapienza) which include student exchanges. We are committed to the transferability of what our students learn in the classroom to their careers and we support and strongly encourage our students to participate in College to Career programs offered at the UW.
Futuro. Do you want to be a true global citizen with a deep knowledge of a foreign language and culture, have the opportunity to study or work abroad, gain skills for work in an international context, and eat great pasta all at the same time? Sign up for Italian. You won't regret it.

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