



University of
New Haven

Overtourism and Cultural Heritage in Italy: Florence as a Case Study

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: CUL364

Subject Area(s): Cultural Studies, Sustainability

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Credits: 3

Course Fees: None

Course Description

Cultural heritage represents one of the most significant tourism resources in Florence, attracting millions of visitors annually to its UNESCO-listed historic center and numerous other cultural landmarks. However, the growth of tourism has become a subject of concern and debate among local communities, as the city center and its heritage assets struggle to accommodate escalating demands.

This course provides an analysis of the impact of tourism and overtourism on Florence's cultural heritage, situating it within contemporary debates and practices. It explores the social, economic, environmental, and physical transformations the city undergoes in response to the expanding tourism industry. Furthermore, the course critically analyzes the promotion and management of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage as tools for tourism development, as well as their role in shaping visitors' perceptions of the city.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to:

- Identify cultural heritage and its relation to tourism.
- Analyze the spatial transformation of the city of Florence due to tourism.
- Examine heritage consumers in Florence and the impact of over-tourism on local culture
- Explore sustainable tourism practices in relation to cultural and environmental resources in the city.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: TBC

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

Class Presentation- 10%

Mid-Term Exam - 25%

Field Research Project – 20%

Final Exam- 25%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the CEA CAPA Engagement Policy, and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded.

Class Presentation- 10% (outline 5% and presentation 5%)

Students are expected to prepare one oral presentation on a preassigned topic that is related to the Field Research Project. Students first present an outline (5%) on which they get feedback from their peers and the instructor; then they are expected to complete the oral presentation that introduces their research topic, research question, methodology, and results. This can then be developed further and may be discussed in the Field Research Project.

Mid-Term Exam - 25% & Final Exam- 25%

The midterm and final exams are composed of three parts: 1.) A multiple-choice section where students are asked to recognize important terms, concepts, and historical milestones learned during the semester, 2.) A short answer section, and 3.) An essay section where the students write about themes covered in class.

Field Research Project – 20%

Starting from the first week students walk around the city of Florence guided by the instructor to read, with a critical lens, tourism and its impact on the city from different points of view. The field research project is an in-depth essay to deal with the topic chosen by the students and presented in class

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

- City center tour.
- Museum visits.
- Mercato centrale and mercato Sant'Ambrogio.

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course, but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required

Abden, Lisa. "Overtourism and the Rise of Bans and Fees in Cities Like Barcelona and Greece." *The New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/01/28/travel/overtourism-bans-fees-barcelona-greece.html.

Alberti, Francesco. "Life Between Monuments: Local Identity and Global Tourism in the Neighborhood of San Lorenzo in Florence." *Cities' Identity Through Architecture and Arts*, edited by Mohareb N., Cardaci A., Maruthaveeran S., and Cavalagli N., Springer-Nature, 2022, pp. 251-264.

Al-Jazeera English. "'Uffizi Museum Reopens: Florentines Enjoy Break from Mass Tourism.'" *YouTube*, uploaded by Reuters, 3 Aug. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmejYkZHlk.

Babu, Anu. *The Escape Route: Greenway Project: An Alternative Tourism for the Emerging Issue of Mass Tourism in Florence*. Master's thesis, Politecnico di Milano, 2023.

Birindelli, Pierluca. "Cultural Experiences in Florence and Italy: The Grand Tour Narrative in the 21st Century." *Società Mutamento Politica*, vol. 10, no. 20, 2019, pp. 191-205.

Capocchi, A., et al. "Overtourism: A Literature Review to Assess Implications and Future Perspectives." *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 12, 2019, article 3303. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123303>.

Comune.Fi. "Florence is Alive." *Enjoy Respect Firenze*, www.enjoyrespectfirenze.it/it/florence-is-alive/. Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.

Davies, Jonathan. "A History of Florence, 1200–1575." *The English Historical Review*, vol. 125, no. 516, Oct. 2010, pp. 1235–1236. *Oxford Academic*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/ceq259>.

Del Bianco, Corinna, and Laura Montedoro. "Cultural Tourism Pressure on Historic Centres: Its Impact on Public Space and Intervention Strategies for Its Mitigation. Florence, Italy, as a Case Study." *Contemporary Housing Architecture in City Space*, e-ISSN 2543-8700, 2023, 80-86 doi:10.4467/25438700SM.23.006.17807.

Euronews Travel. "Florence, Rome, Venice: Italian Cities Are Cracking Down on Overtourism in 2025." *Euronews*, 24 Feb. 2025, www.euronews.com/travel/2025/02/24/florence-rome-venice-italian-cities-are-cracking-down-on-overtourism-in-2025. Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.

FP Explainer. "'Too Many Tourists': What Steps Is Italy's Florence Taking to Make City 'Liveable' Again?" *Firstpost*, 19 Mar. 2025, www.firstpost.com/explainers/italy-florence-overtourism-10-step-plan-13835130.html.

Jean, Sabrina. "The Historic City: Perceptions and Modes of Localisation in Florence, Italy. A Method of Analysis and Interpretation." *Polígonos. Revista de Geografía*, vol. 11-12, 2002, pp. 211–218.

Kowalczyk-Anioł, Joanna. "Rethinking Tourism-Driven Urban Transformation and Social Tourism Impact: A Scenario from a CEE City." *Cities*, vol. 134, Mar. 2023, article 104178. DOI, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.104178>.

Sharp, Christopher. "Italian City Being Overrun by Tourists Now Facing 'Unsustainable' Levels of Visitors." *Daily Record*, 18 Sept. 2023, www.dailyrecord.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/italian-city-being-overrun-tourists-34142240.

The Florentine. "Overtourism in Florence? A Call for Sustainable Practices." *The Florentine*, 29 Aug. 2024, www.theflorentine.net/2024/08/29/overtourism-in-florence-a-call-for-sustainable-practices/.

The Florentine. "Florence Announces a Ten-Point Plan to Combat Overtourism." *The Florentine*, 13 Nov. 2024, www.theflorentine.net/2024/11/13/florence-announces-10-point-plan-combat-overtourism/.

Recommended

Dickie, John. "Imagined Italies." *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, edited by David Forgacs and Robert Lumley, Oxford UP, pp. 14-16.

Timothy, Dallen J. *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: An Introduction*. Channel View Publications, 2011.

Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	Course Overview. Students' perception of main themes of the course (cultural heritage, Tourism and overtourism, sustainability, sustainable tourism, etc.)
Activity	Lecture and discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reflection about first impressions in Florence.

Session 2	
Topics	Cultural heritage in Florence: an overview. From the cradle of the Renaissance to UNESCO World Heritage site
Activity	Lecture and discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davies, Jonathan. Pp. 1235–1236

Session 3	
Topics	From the Grand Tour to Overtourism: travelers to tourists
Activity	Lecture and discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birindelli.pp. 191-205. Capocchi.

Session 4	
Topics	Historical Florence city center and its inhabitants: transformed or deformed city?
Activity	Walking seminar in the old city and outside Students choose the topic for the oral presentation
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kowalczyk-Anioł, Joanna. Sharp, Christopher.

Session 5	
Topics	Historical Florence city center and its inhabitants: transformed or deformed city? Continued
Activity	Lecture and discussion Oral presentations
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean, pp. 211–218. Del Bianco and Montedoro.pp.80-86 Al-Jazeera English.

Session 6	
Topics	Museums transformation in Florence: “Uffizi Museo diffuso”
Activity	Guest lecture

Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts will be provided
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Session 7
Mid-term Exam

Session 8	
Topics	Museums transformation in Florence: “il polo museale” in Tuscany
Activity	Visit to Museo Archeologico and San Marco museum
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Texts will be provided by the instructor

Session 9	
Topics	Intangible heritage and local identity: the impact of overtourism
Activity	Walking tour to the leather market and in class lecture
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alberti, Francesco. pp. 251-264.• Babu, Anu, chapter two.

Session 9	
Topics	Management of the historic center’s heritage: between rhetoric and actions
Activity	Guest lecture
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Florentine. August 2024.• Abend Lisa

Session 10	
Topics	Overtourism and the environment: ethics, policies and stakeholders
Activity	Walking seminar and lecture
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alberti, Francesco. pp. 251-264.• Del Bianco and Montedoro.pp.80-86• Comune.FI

Session 11	
Topics	Overtourism, environment and cultural resources: ethics, policies and stakeholders
Activity	Lecture and discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Euronews Travel.• The Florentine, November 2024.

Session 12	
Topics	Towards sustainable tourism: actions and stakeholders
Activity	Lecture and discussion
Readings & Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Florentine, August 2024.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP Explainer. • Comune.Fi.
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Session 13	
Topics	Florence old city a 'shared heritage for the humanity': who are the inheritors?
Activity	Debate Field Research Project
Readings & Assignments	Students are invited to reflect, in the light of what have been discussed, on how the cultural heritage of Florence can be best protected and shared among locals and visitors.

Session 14
Final exam review

Session 15
Final exam

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration. These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.