

# postcards from Italy

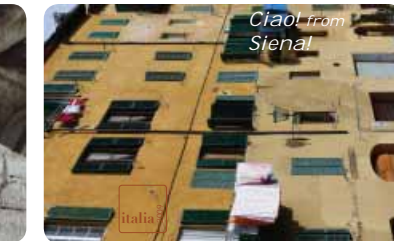


07 February, 2009

Ciao USA!

We traveled to Florence again this past week - this time by train. The train system here makes travel within Italy remarkably easy. In the morning the students, under the direction of Norma Blizard, spent over two hours sketching the interior of San Lorenzo. The clarity of reason of the church - apparent in plan and section - contrasted to the weather outside. Yet, in spite of the rain, following a brief visit to Mercato Centrale (where food, ritual, and exchange seem to merge together!), the students took the afternoon to explore various markets and public "rooms": from the Ponte Vecchio which bridges both the Arno and time, to the Mercato Nuovo which sits so perfectly within the urban fabric of the medieval city. The coffee was excellent!

This Wednesday: Siena. - ciao, Mark



13 February, 2009

Ciao USA!

The three hills on which Siena is founded give the city its character. Even the political divisions into neighborhoods (contrade) follow the features of the land. Unlike Florence, it seems as if Siena (which lost in the struggle for domination of Tuscany with its larger rival, Florence) has not changed since the 1500's. The narrow streets opened up into beautiful views of the city and its history came into focus at these times. The Duomo up above and the Piazza del Campo resting in the bowl between the three hills. The students were drawn into the Piazza and it seemed as if they were dancing! And the Duomo, known only through photographs and lectures, came alive! Perhaps we should have stayed an extra day. Check out our blog: [utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com](http://utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com)

Tomorrow: four days in Rome! - ciao, Mark



10 April, 2009

Ciao from Perugia!

This past Wednesday found [italia2009](http://italia2009) in one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in Italy! The Etruscan plan remains persistent: informing the medieval construction as well as providing the matrix for the renaissance additions and changes. We entered the city through the underground - a quarter of the city that was covered over as a foundation for a papal fortress (popolo's Salt War). The streets in the centro storico (historical center) reminded us of the etchings of Piranesi! We spent the early afternoon in the Art Museum adjacent to the Piazza IV November, entrancing! (an addition: the artwork was displayed beautifully! Later, we took the MiniMetro (by Jean Nouvel) to visit Aldo Rossi's piazza (and polemic argument) at Fontivogge, Perugia - a montage of medieval and contemporary, unified.

- ciao, Marco



01 february, 2009

- Jacques
- Allison
- Ricardo
- Amolobo
- Megan
- Brad
- Robert
- Maritza
- Kate
- Aaron
- Alexander
- Jessica
- Casey
- Alberto
- Dana



05 April, 2009

Ciao Studenti e Professori!

There are a scattering of moments when history and architecture, the city and the idea of the city, as well as practice and theory seem to mesh. Pienza is one of those times and places. Upon becoming Pope Pius II, Aeneas Piccolomini, through the architect and humanist Rossellino (noted for his work with Alberti on Palazzo Medici in Florence), restructured and renamed the small town of Corsignano. The results seem a stage set (and after all, a city is also a theater). Pienza remains intriguing: a reflection of early humanist / renaissance ideals and a working agricultural community. [Italia2009](http://italia2009) was entranced! And the local sheep's milk cheese is among the best we have had in Italy!

- ciao, Marco  
p.s. check out the new Pienza images on our blog: [utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com](http://utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com)



28 February, 2009

Ciao Studenti e professori a UTSA!

Assisi changed its moods with the sky and the quality of light. We ran along narrow streets, searching the alleys and the courtyards where gardens echoed paradise; we crossed busy piazzas and hid from the threatening rain; we drank espresso and spoke in the hushed voice of the Franciscan; we chased the late afternoon sun through Assisi and fell into the depth of the changing sky. Through all of this, the stones spoke, reflecting the light and resonating with their unique voice. We sketched and sketched and drank more espresso. In Assisi, we became poets.

check out our Assisi blog posting: [utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com](http://utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com)  
- ciao, Marco

This spring, Associate Professor **Mark Blizard** and Lecturer **Norma Blizard** are leading 14 students in a semester-long study abroad program in Tuscany, Italy. The program is based at the **Santa Chiara Study Center**, located in the hill town of **Castiglion Fiorentino**, a small town of 11,000 and only a one-hour train ride south of Florence. The Study Center is a renovated convent dating back to the 14th century and features dorms, a dining hall, and studio space all surrounding an interior courtyard. Students are immersed in the country's culture as well as the art and architecture of the Renaissance and medieval eras. For the entire semester, the students take a studio course as well as two other courses. Professor **Paolo Barucchieri**, Director of the Study Center, teaches a course on Arts and Civilization which all students are required to take. Professor Barucchieri also helps to conduct field trips and study tours to nearby Florence as well as Siena, Assisi, Pienza, and Urbino. The students recently took a four-day trip to Rome where they explored, took photographs, and sketched the significant architecture the city has to offer.

Blizard has been sending weekly digital postcards to the CoA about their travels throughout Italy. They are also sharing an abundance of photos in a blog at [utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com](http://utsa-italia2009.blogspot.com).