

I would like to say that I learned more in this small, 3-week trip than I have learned my entire freshman year at UGA, and I am so grateful for it.

This trip also inspired me to look at things from a new perspective. Like with the gardens, there was meaning behind why every gardener added or created new things to their garden and it was the job of the visitor to try and figure out why the gardener thought the way he or she did. I've begun to find myself looking for the deeper meaning behind why certain things are the way they are. I've created so many life-long memories from this trip and I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to go.

Seeing these places through my own eyes makes it unique to me, and I feel like I am a better version of myself after this experience.

I never expected to have the greatest three weeks of my life and end up crying at Powerscourt and my flight home because it was ending

The trip has made me so much more comfortable in my own skin and allowed me to be more confident in doing things I would not typically do

I not only reflect on each culture and my experience at each place, but I also reflected on myself. My introspective perception induced by the gardens helped me assess things about myself that I had not examined before. I learned about who I am, who I want to be, and how I need to change in order to grow. I learned how important education is to truly appreciate life. I learned the examination is key to living a most fulfilling life. I have been to Europe before, but I did not know as much about each place the first time I visited. The information provided on this study abroad made each place so much more significant to me this time around.

Most important lesson this trip taught me was that my view of the world is not the only view, or even the best view; and that there is always something that I can learn from someone else.

It is about that moment when you finally realize that you are standing in places that people have travelled to for hundreds of years, in places that people had been building on for thousands of years.

As an art historian we do not study gardens, but the beauty and iconography within this place opened my eyes to how encompassing the term "art" can be.

Not only were we learning about these topics; we were living them! I think I had expected to be a passive learner on this trip because unfortunately, more often than not, that's how we learn here in the classroom. We rarely get to experience what we're learning about firsthand, and there is only so much we learn from books and powerpoints. On the Grand Tour, the world was our classroom, and we were active participants in history. In 100 years, the guest book that we signed at Principessa Rita Boncompagni Ludovisi's casino in Rome will be placed in the archives with all our names in it.

What I gained from this experience is a love for traveling and an appreciation for world history.

For one, the first goal was to learn about the progression of garden design in Europe and what it feels like to see these places first hand. This goal is definitely achieved! Experience is irreplaceable, and I know the things I saw on this trip will stay with me forever, both for my career inspiration and general perspective of the world.

This (Mount Stewart) is the epitome of someone personalizing a space, incorporating what they love, what they've read, their virtues, and their creativity

Another lesson I learned on the trip was to complain less! Knowing that everyone in our group was tired and hungry and their feet hurt made me suck it up when I wasn't feeling my best. I was really impressed by how little the group complained about things like hunger and lack of sleep. Their positivity made me realize how nice it is to be around a group who doesn't complain! From now on, I plan to try and complain less in order to create a more positive environment for both myself and the people around me.

I learned how to better work with a group. There were times when our group got lost roaming around a big city or simply couldn't decide what to eat for dinner but we always had to make a group decision. Sometimes I didn't always agree with everyone but I learned to live with not always doing things the way I like to do them. In a group with as many different personalities as we had, it made for some clashing ideas of what the best way to things was. However, I think we all learned to go with the flow and focus on making sure the group was having a good time rather than just ourselves. This is an invaluable lesson not only for social reasons but for the future in jobs when I might need to work with a group.

I learned from this that loving is listening; what I mean is it's better to listen to someone, ask questions, try to understand who they are, and enjoy learning from them in order to show your love for them. By listening to the natives of the countries we visited and the other students on the trip, I learned about their culture and lifestyle in a way that couldn't be taught in a textbook or text message.

Lastly, I learned to stop and enjoy life. In the past, I would have just quickly walked through these sites not even stopping to learn more. By the end of the three weeks, I was like an investigator and wanted to know more at every corner. I am so thankful for this experience and could go on forever about how much it changed me. The arts and Garden study abroad trip truly shaped me into a better human being and I am forever grateful.

We were challenged to think about who our muses are in life and how we can pay a tribute to them in the gardens we create. Many times people don't tribute people while they are still alive but instead wait until they pass away. We should find ways to honor them when they can see it. This garden (Mount Stewart) was an inspiration because it proved that there really are no rules on how to construct a garden perfect in your eyes.

While I have always been curious and have always craved new knowledge and experiences, this trip helped me learn that it is okay to step out of your comfort zone. It is okay to get lost. Without getting lost and trying to find your way back, you never know what you are capable of. This study abroad helped me see that I am capable of much more.

Kilruddery had a lot to offer if you looked for it. One could easily walk into the theater and think nothing of it except possibly "What a nice place to listen to some music or see a show". But no, we were traveled, cultured, experienced Grand Tourists at this point. We had been to Paestum and stood in their amphitheater; the surrounding walls brought back feelings of being encapsulated by the height of Versailles' hedges. We had been initiated. This was no longer just a garden theater.

Doing an exercise like this (favorite plant) really helps a person gain insight into the lives of other people simply by knowing what kind of flowers they enjoy and their reasons for liking them

I had more of a spiritual experience visiting gardens like Mount Stewart than churches we visited

The hardest thing for me to get over while studying and traveling abroad was the fact that people in all these different countries were still so similar to people I have interacted with my whole life. Whether walking down a busy city street or picking up food at a highway market, the only thing that would have clued me in to what country I was in was the language spoken. I did not realize I had this preconceived idea of what other countries would be like until I was in each country. One of the biggest lessons I learned was that humanity is universal. Cultures may be different around the world but people are not.

There is a sense of peace and something calming that makes you think differently, or more in depth about your own life.