

Strategies for Designing and Implementing a Faculty-Led Short-Term Classics-Themed Study Abroad Program

Since at least 2008 (when George Kuh published *High-Impact Practices*), education abroad has been recognized as an effective approach for increasing student engagement and deepening student learning. Many for-profit companies offer high-quality semester- or year-long study abroad programs, but students often prefer short-term programs led by faculty from their home institution for reasons of cost, timing, comfort, or relation of the program to their course of study. Yet not all institutions provide support for faculty to create and lead such a study abroad program; as a result, many faculty are hesitant to do so. And for those of us who teach material from the ancient world, there is another potential barrier: we study a past culture with no living representatives and whose language is no longer widely spoken, unlike most of our colleagues in other fields. This means a study abroad program about ancient Rome will necessarily require different considerations than a study abroad program about, say, the politics and economy of modern Cuba. To help overcome these barriers, this paper will provide suggestions to instructors for successfully designing and leading a short-term Classics-themed study abroad program based on the presenter's experience leading two month-long programs to Rome, in June 2015 and June 2019.

The suggestions provided fall into two distinct categories. The first of these is considerations in designing the program, considerations that go beyond the academic content but still influence students' on-the-ground experience. These include how to select a partner program provider; how to keep program costs down; how much student work should be completed before departing the US and how much should be done in-country; what value instructors add to the

experience (compared to what a student would get traveling on their own); and how to maximize student time in the classroom, on field trips, and in moving from site to site.

The second category of suggestions relates to implementing the program while abroad. These suggestions include weighing student and instructor family considerations; dividing labor between instructors; determining how much free time to give students; choosing how much guided learning to give students on field trips; and deciding what kinds of out-of-class non-academic learning or activities can be included.

Every instructor will, of course, have their own idiosyncratic needs for their program, but nevertheless, the goal of the paper is to reduce faculty apprehension about leading a program and to encourage more instructors to take students overseas when feasible. A secondary goal is to help faculty who have already taken students abroad think about ways to improve their program for the next time. This paper, then, will contribute in a small way to offering more potentially life-changing experiences for students, helping inspire student interest in Classics and ancient history, retaining students in our programs and institutions, and providing an opportunity for deeper inter-student engagements.