

Global Journalism in Bologna, Italy

Travel Writing: Storytelling about Places

Practice working as a travel writer

Develop travel stories for your professional portfolio

Publish your work in university and professional publications

June 18 - July 3, 2022

Syllabus and Schedule

Program Overview

Benvenuti! Get ready for our two-week adventure in one of the world's greatest cities, where you'll have a chance to practice working as a travel writer.

Our challenge: to get a taste of the life of a travel writer, while developing stories you can feature in your professional portfolio.

Working with University of Bologna interpretation and translation students, Rutgers students will be organized into teams, and will have an opportunity to write and shoot a travel story of their choice.

Classes will meet weekday mornings, around two modules: basic Italian, and travel writing.

After lunch, you'll put your morning studies into action: you'll go out reporting with your teammates, accompanied by your interpreters, and sometimes by your professor or assignment organizer.

Arrival weekend will be devoted to orientation, and to local excursions and visits within the city. Your second long weekend – Friday, Saturday and Sunday – will be free for travel within Italy.

You may not leave the country during the program.

Learning Outcomes

In this class, you will learn how to:

Write stories in several styles, both travel “service” pieces targeted to magazines and newspapers, and nonfiction stories of place that typically find homes in books and writerly journals;

Incorporate photos and video into your stories -- sought-after abilities in today's hyper-competitive publishing arena;

Choose compelling subjects and destinations, and develop writing techniques that will make your stories stand out;

Pitch editors, do standout research and reporting, and deal with ethics issues, such as who covers travel expenses.

You'll also learn about:

How to tell stories through written and visual journalism

How to work as a member of a team

How to navigate in Italian culture

How to work with an interpreter

Enroll in the JMS Global Media Specialization

This course counts toward the JMS specialization in Global Media. Undergraduate students who pass three qualifying courses can have the Global Media specialization noted on their degree. All JMS courses that take place partly or entirely abroad, such as Media and Struggles for Democracy, which travels to Guatemala; Global Media Abroad, which visits Paris and London; and Writing the Mediterranean, which takes students on reporting trips to Italy, Spain and Turkey, also qualify.

Learn more about the specialization here

<https://comminfo.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/journalism-and-media-studies-major/curriculum/specializations> To enroll, please see an advisor in the SC&I advising office.

PROF. MARY D'AMBROSIO -- Travel writing/program director
mary.dambrosio@rutgers.edu

PROF. LUIGI VALERI -- Program organizer luigi.valeri@gmail.com

PROF. BEATRICE SPALLACCIA – Our University of Bologna host
beatrice.spallaccia@unibo.it

The City

Elegant Bologna is known as “la dotta,” for knowledge, “la grassa,” for its extraordinary food, and “la rossa,” for its leftist politics. This gorgeous university city is magnificently located in one of Italy’s most exciting regions, with Florence, Venice, Rome, Milan, the Italian lakes and the Adriatic coast all a short train or bus ride away.

The surrounding Emilia Romagna region is also well worth exploring: it’s home to some of Italy’s top food destinations and restaurants; to the luxury car empires of Ferrari, Lamborghini and Maserati; and to the sophisticated Renaissance cities of Parma, Ferrara and Ravenna, known for their palaces, artistic heritage and bike-friendly medieval lanes.

Field Trip

On June 23, we'll take a working field trip to nearby Parma, to learn about the city's world-renowned cheese, prosciutto and balsamic vinegar culture – possible fodder for your current and future stories.



Here be dragons. The supposed medieval mapmaking practice of painting scary sea monsters into unexplored regions was more legend than fact -- but terror of the uncharted world was real.

The Assignments

Working in teams, you'll be assigned a story of your choice, and will develop it under the guidance of your professors.

Each story should include 1) a reported and written piece of up to 1,500 words, which incorporates four to six interviews; 2) three to six captioned photographs, or a video of up to three minutes, to help you tell your story; and 3) social media features and hyperlinks, as appropriate.

Please feel free to consider these assignments minimums. You may also wish to blog, and/or to write articles for student or professional publications back home.

Readings

Articles and book excerpts keyed to each class will be posted on Canvas. They include:

Cultivating Loneliness, by Robert D. Kaplan

The Travel Section: Roads Not Taken, by Thomas Swick

Innocents Abroad (excerpts), by Mark Twain

Dispatches from Europe to the New York Tribune, 1846-1850, by Margaret Fuller

The World of Venice, by Jan Morris

Roman Fever (excerpt), by Edith Wharton

The Pillars of Hercules: a Grand Tour of the Mediterranean (excerpt), by Paul Theroux

The Art of Eating Well (selections), by Pellegrino Artusi

On Italian Time (Travel & Leisure), by Mary Morris

36 Hours in Bologna (The New York Times), by Evan Raid

Please also bring a small Italian-English dictionary, such as Langenscheidt's Universal Dictionary, or download a dictionary or translation app.

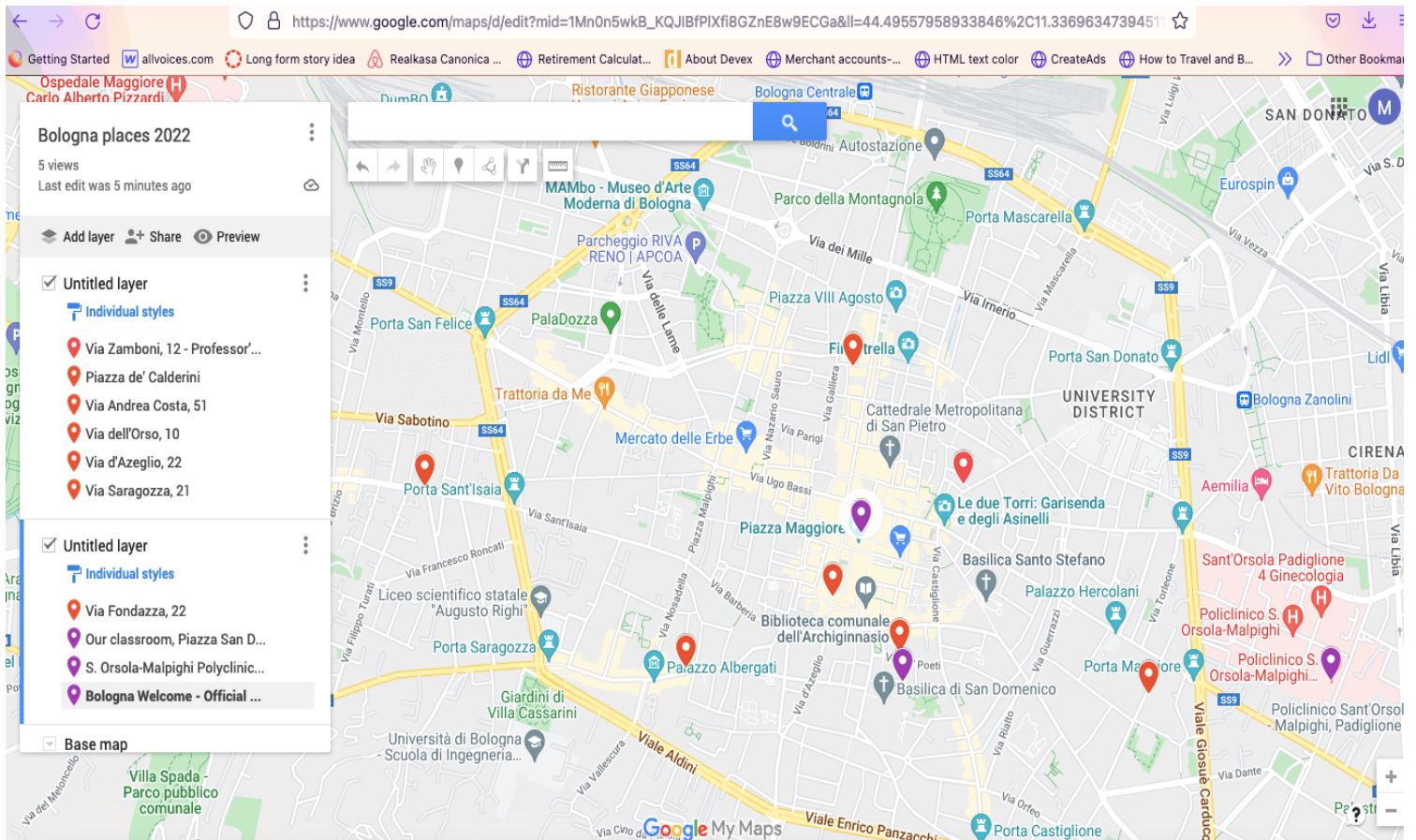
Class Meeting Site and Times

Classes will meet at:

San Domenico Classrooms

Piazza San Domenico, 13
Bologna

Getting from your AirBnBs to class: The San Domenico Classrooms are very centrally located, within a 15-minute walk from all of our lodgings. Please refer to the map below.



Classes will run Monday through Thursday, from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and comprise two modules:

Italian Language and Culture (Offered by a Cultura Italiana professor). Basic conversational Italian. Meeting and greeting; conversational and business phrases; using the phone; social and journalism etiquette; Bologna topics and controversies.

Travel Writing (Prof. Mary D'Ambrosio). You'll get on-the-ground training in how travel writers find, report and write their stories, and guidance in developing fresh and attention-grabbing story ideas. You'll also learn how to work with interpreters, and how to incorporate photographs or video, and social media features, into your work.

In the afternoons, you'll go out to report your stories, with your team members and your interpreter. Your professor will rotate among student teams.

Feel free to assist other teams with their stories, or to join another group when yours doesn't have an interview scheduled. There's no limit to the number of stories you can tackle: consider your group's main assignment a minimum.

Deadlines and Practices

Students must attend all classes, and are expected to complete all assignments.

All assignments must be turned in on deadline, unless your professor approves an extension.

Students may not miss, or arrive late to, any classes. Two or more missed classes can lower your grade by a full letter.

The only reason to miss class is for a medical emergency or illness, or – only with permission of your professor – if you have a conflicting assignment that could not be scheduled for another time.

All stories must be followed by source lists, and source contact details.

It goes without saying that we:

- 1) Don't make up characters or amend quotes
- 2) Don't copy or plagiarize, meaning take printed material from elsewhere and use it in your story without crediting it.

Any fabrication or plagiarism is grounds for an "F" in the course.

Grades

60 percent of your grade will be determined by the quality of your project; 25 percent by your performance in the two course modules (Italian language and culture, and travel writing); and 15 percent by the quality of the two best social media posts.

Assignment	Percent of Grade	Due
Article, with photographs or video	60 percent	Draft: June 29, 11:59 p.m. Final: July 10, 11:59 p.m.
In-class work (including readings, participation & attendance)	25 percent	
Two best social media posts about something you've learned	15 percent	

Generally, the grading standards are:

A= Excellent! The work is publishable with only minor changes.

B+ = Well-written, with appropriate use of facts. The article may need additional material,

but is free of factual errors, and has no more than three grammar or punctuation errors.

B = Generally good work. Solid writing, but the lead needs work and the story may need more research and detail.

C+ = Acceptable. Awkward phrasing and numerous syntax, grammar or punctuation errors that distract from the article's strengths. More reporting may also be needed.

C = Average. Multiple organizational, writing and/or reporting problems. Contains factual errors or insufficient information. Many spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Unimaginative or trite content.

D = Poor work. Shows minimal or no effort.

F = Completely unacceptable.

Academic Conduct

Disruptive classroom behavior (including arriving late and not completing assigned readings and exercises) or engaging in plagiarism will seriously jeopardize your standing in this class. Plagiarism, (the use of ideas, words, images, graphs, etc. other than your own, without appropriate attribution), will result in an automatic "F" and possibly further disciplinary action. Ignorance of the rules is no excuse. Make sure you understand how to properly attribute work for printed and online sources. You are responsible for reading and understanding the Rutgers policy on academic integrity located at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Rules For Our Time in Bologna

1. For liability reasons, you must stay within Italy during the dates of the course (June 18-July 3). Please restrict your travel outside the country to before or after the course.
2. No program participant may rent or drive an automobile. Only public transportation and commercial transportation services, such as trains, buses, subways, taxis and car services may be used.
3. All program participants must keep their cell phones with them and charged at all times to ensure that they can reach the program leader and the program leader can reach them, if necessary.
4. Program participants should travel in the company of at least one other program participant, with larger groups encouraged at night. Each person will be assigned a "buddy." We are all responsible for making sure that every person in our program *always* has someone to accompany him/her when they have to go somewhere or meet with someone for an interview; when going out at night; and when traveling on weekends.
5. All program participants are required to behave in a mature, professional and appropriate way at all times, never forgetting that they are representatives of Rutgers University and the United States of America while traveling with this

program. **Any program participant found to be engaging in disruptive, damaging, or illegal behavior of any kind, or who is arrested by local authorities for legal or behavioral violations, may be sent home immediately.** This includes any use of illegal drugs and the excessive use of alcohol such that it causes disruption to our program, causes lateness or absences from class, or creates problems or disruptions for the participant's roommate or classmates.

6. **Note: Any student sent home for disciplinary reasons will automatically receive an "F" in the course.**

Communications

All students must have a handheld communication device; must keep it on and charged; and must maintain an active calling and email plan, throughout the program. For professional and social communications, we'll create a group in WhatsApp, the most widely used form of mobile communication in Europe.

Please download the WhatsApp app to your phone before leaving the United States.

If you haven't already done so, please send me the phone number you'll use in Europe.

Social Media Posting

The most successful professional journalists post extensively on social media, to build and expand the audience for their work.

I've therefore assigned you to make at least one social media post per day. The posts, about "something you've learned," should be accompanied by a strong visual, ideally your own photo or video.

You may post on 1) Twitter 2) Instagram or 3) Facebook, or all three (TikTok doesn't count for the purposes of this assignment).

Please always use the hashtag:

#assignmentbologna2022, and tag

@rutgerscomminfo

These may differ from the kinds of personal social media posts you routinely create and circulate.

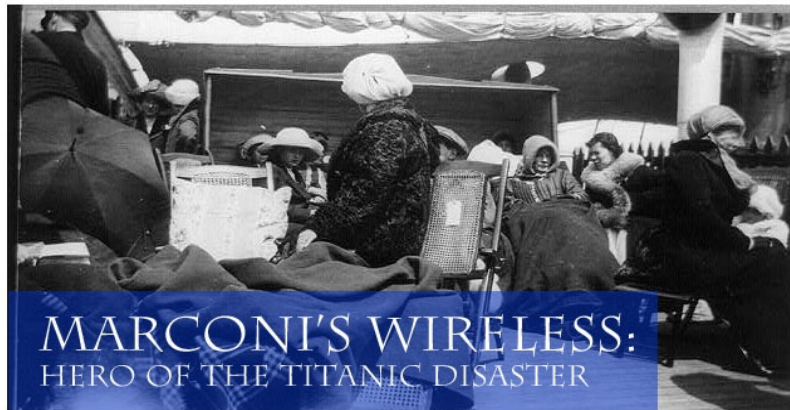
Rather, posts should focus on your work, your observations, and your learning experiences.

Ask yourself: what kinds of posts would be of most interest to other readers, or social media users? What unique discovery could you share?

Powerful illustrations – by convention, your own photos and videos – boost reader interest dramatically – so please be on the lookout for these.

At the end of the course, you'll be asked to turn in your two best social media posts.

The will be evaluated and graded, and will constitute 15 percent of your grade.



Bologna's hero of the Titanic. Father of radio and Bologna native Guglielmo Marconi was responsible for ending the isolation of ships at sea, and his radio technology, placed on ships starting in 1902, saved lives. The radio operators aboard the Titanic were Marconi employees; their signals for help reached the ship Carpathia, which arrived in time to rescue the 706 survivors.

Provisional Schedule (subject to change!)

Friday, June 17

Depart from the United States

Saturday, June 18

9:20 a.m. Group flight arrives. After you exit customs, proceed to Caffè La Vecchia Bologna, on the ground floor of the airport arrivals building, on your immediate right as you exit into the main airport. A program representative carrying a "Global Journalism in Bologna, Italy" sign will meet you there.

If you are not taking the group flight: You should either plan to meet us at Caffè La Vecchia Bologna at the airport by 9:30 a.m., or take a taxi directly to your lodgings.

How to take a cab: Get into the back seat of the cab, hand the driver the address for the dorm, and insist he or she use the meter. The cost should be about €20 (about \$23), paid upon arrival.

10:30 a.m. (or after all on the group flight have gathered): Depart by bus or taxi for your lodgings. Check in.

2 p.m. Lunch on your own or in informal groups

Afternoon: Unpack, shop for basic food and living items.

4 p.m. Meet in front of the Bologna Welcome tourism office <https://www.bolognawelcome.com/en> in the Piazza Maggiore for an informal tour of the area and the university quarter, with Prof. D'Ambrosio and assignment organizer Luigi Valeri. We'll stop for coffee at Antico Café, and later move on to an "apertivo" in the city, likely Café Zamboni, at Via Zamboni, 6. Before departure, we'll make sure our WhatsApp group is set up, and ready to use.

Sunday, June 19

Breakfast at home

10 a.m. **Bike ride around the city and its environs, with a stop for lunch**

Meeting place: TBA

Social media postings.

WEEK 1

Monday, June 20 The Project Begins

9:30 a.m.– 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** -- An introduction to Bologna

10:40 – 1 p.m. **Travel Writing**

Welcome & course overview.

What is travel writing? Analyze several examples of travel writing, and identify the forms. 1) journey/experience/essay 2) service 3) destination 4) travel business 5) novel events/activities readers can experience 6) specialty travel, such as outdoor, adventure, nature, student, retirement and family.

Please read for tomorrow (June 21)

The Road Not Taken
Cultivating Loneliness
The World of Venice
36 Hours in Bologna

How reporting in Italy differs from reporting in the United States. A discussion of similarities and differences in reporting styles. A brief comparison of media laws. A story from my own experience. Ways to approach field reporting in Italy.

Story planning and brainstorming.

Social media postings.

1 – 2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own

2:30 – 6:30 p.m. Field reporting

Interpreter meetings & orientation.

Meet with your interpreters, and firm up your interview plans. Finalize story assignments and angles. Conduct warm-up interpretation exercises.

Tuesday, June 21

9:30 a.m.– 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** – 1. Meeting and greeting. 2. An overview of the history, politics, and cultural life of the city.

10:40-1 p.m. **Travel Writing**

Stories about journeys and places. Developing a narrative. The lower case “i.” Using your five senses to transport the reader. Making your story sing. What to include and what to leave out. Using quotes, color, anecdotes and detail. Showing instead of telling.

Discussion of assigned readings.

People and their voices. The best travel writing often has other people in it. How to find such “characters,” speak with them, and include them in your story.

In-class assignment: Describe one intriguing street, block or shop, and to evoke it for readers who live far away. To write well, see well. Acquiring the camera eye. Finding and using telling detail. Return to classroom and write a 300-word vignette evoking that place and/or, depending on available time, bring it with you tomorrow.

Social media postings.

1 – 2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own

2:30 – 6:30 p.m. Field reporting

Meet with interpreters. Begin work on your stories.

Possible evening trip to the nearby medieval village of Dozza, named one of Italy’s “Borghi piu Belli.” Write a 300-word description of the village for a hypothetical assignment for National Geographic magazine, and bring it to class tomorrow.

Wednesday, June 22

9:30 a.m.– 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** – Key words and phrases

10:40 – 1 p.m. **Travel Writing**

The art of the interview. A discussion of interviewing strategies and techniques. Steps to preparing for interviews, and what to do when there's no time to prepare. The difference between a news and a profile interview. Pros, cons and uses of tape recorders.

Voice, quotes and dialogue. Making your story sing. Getting humans into your story. Optimal use of quotes & anecdotes. The effective finish.

A discussion of photography techniques. A briefing on how to caption and ID your photos.

Review Dozza narratives.

In-class reporting exercise: Interview a class partner about an important travel experience (not necessarily on this trip, but on any trip). Write 3-6 paragraphs describing it, and bring the results to Monday's class. Each reporter should write his or her own piece.

Social media postings.

1 – 2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own

2:30 – 5:30 p.m. Field reporting

Meet with interpreters; go out on assignment

Thursday, June 23

Group reporting trip to Parma!

During our trip, your team will be assigned to:

1. Conduct one 15-minute interview with an English speaker (and summarize it)
2. Undertake a photo scavenger hunt, and file images of a) a beautiful scene b) an iconic image of the city c) an action shot d) something delicious
3. Bring these assignments to class on Tuesday (June 28)

Social media postings

Friday, June 24 through Sunday, June 26

FREE FOR TRAVEL within Italy, or touring the city

Students may not leave the country during the program.

Events starting this weekend, and happening over the next week:

Cinema Ritrovato, a festival devoted to restored old movies from around the world, **in Bologna from June 25-July 3** <https://festival.ilcinemaritrovato.it/en/>

Artusi Festival, celebrating the father of the Italian cookbook, **runs in nearby Forlimpopoli, from June 25-July 3** <http://www.festartusiana.it/>

WEEK 2

Monday, June 27

9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** – numbers and directions

10:40 a.m. -1 p.m. **Travel Writing**

1. Making your story sing.
2. Great beginnings: writing commanding “ledes”
3. Dealing with reporting challenges: what issues have you encountered so far in the field?

Social media postings

1 p.m. -2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own

2:30 p.m. -6:30 p.m. Field reporting

Meet with interpreters; go out on assignment

Tuesday, June 28

9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** – typical expressions

10:40 a.m. -1 p.m. **Travel Writing**

Structuring the travel story. How to incorporate links, social media and visuals.

Discuss last week’s travel experience writing, and Parma interview and photo scavenger hunt assignments

Social media postings

- 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own
- 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Field reporting -- Meet with interpreters; go out on assignment.
- 7:00 p.m. Giuseppe Verdi's Otello is playing at the Teatro Commuale on June 24, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30. Meet in front of the theater, in the Piazza Verdi, at 6:30 p.m.
<https://www.bolognawelcome.com/en/events/cinema-and-theater/otello-giuseppe-verdi-en>

Wednesday, June 29

- 9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** – Italian music
- 10:40 p.m. -1 p.m. **Travel Writing**
 Managing your travel writing career: where to find travel writing jobs, assignments and internships
- 1 p.m. -2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own near school
- 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Field reporting -- Meet with interpreters; go out on assignment.
Social media postings.
- 11:59 p.m. **Draft story packages due on Canvas.** I will comment, and return them to you with suggested revisions.

Thursday, June 30

- 9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** --review
- 10:40 p.m. -1 p.m. **Travel Writing**
 Draft discussion and revision. Consultations with your professor.
- 1 p.m. -2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own near school
- 2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Field reporting -- Meet with interpreters; go out on assignment.
Social media postings.
- 8 p.m. Evening salon (with snacks!): Discussion of the work of great travel writers

Friday, July 1

- 9:30 a.m.– 10:30 a.m. **Italian Language and Culture** – final exam
- 10:40 p.m. -1 p.m. **Travel Writing**
Story presentations (15 minutes per team)
- 1 p.m. -2:30 p.m. Lunch on your own near school
- 2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Home to pack.
- 6:30 p.m. Goodbye dinner, with interpreters, faculty and friends
– location TBA

Social media postings.

Revised final stories are due July 10, at 11:59 p.m.

Saturday, July 2 **Optional social trip to the Artusi Culinary Festival** in nearby Forlimpopoli (paid for by the program)
<https://www.forlimpopolicittartusiana.it/en/forlimpopoli-a-town-of-events/festa-artusiana/>

Sunday, July 3 **Group flight home**

8 a.m. For those flying home: Meet in front of the Bologna Welcome office, to be picked up by taxi (those taking the 10:45 a.m. group flight should be at the airport by 8:45 a.m.)

Group return flight info:

July 3: Lufthansa 283 (operated by United Airlines) leaves Guglielmo Marconi airport in Bologna, Italy at 10:45 a.m., and arrives at Frankfurt International Airport at 12:15 p.m. Change planes, and depart on Lufthansa Flight 402 to Newark International Airport at 1:25 p.m. Flight 402 arrives at Newark airport at 3:55 p.m. You are responsible for your own transport home.

If not taking the group flight, or if you need to go to the airport at a different time:

You can take a taxi to the airport, for about €20, or \$23. Sit in the back seat, and insist the cabbie use his or her meter. If you have trouble, ask an airport official to intervene when you arrive. If you are taking a train to other parts of Italy, or Europe, bus #11 or bus #30 will take you from the dorm to the Bologna train station.

Buon Viaggio! Best of success in all that comes next!

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