I saw a HUGE earthworm (10x size of normal ones) crossing the path. It was about a foot long. I was mesmerized by how big it was. The girls behind me were unimpressed... their loss.

I found out there is a campus cat! But we can't let him come inside...

“Death Valley”

Via Natalia (dorm, cafeteria, common room)

DEATH VALLEY

Via Ulivi (classes, library, gardens)

Seriously, this isn't an exaggeration...
First Weekend

SAT June 01

Ponte Vecchio

Galileo Museum

Local artists painting on the street

Watercolors ... my favorite!
Street art I bought and hung on my bulletin board above my bed.

I love all the local artists who paint and sell their work in the squares and on the streets.

Please don't judge my cats, I know they look rough... laugh at them with me!
I went on a vespa and wine tasting tour in Chianti. It was so beautiful and driving the scooter was so liberating. I felt so independent and free as a 20 year old female traveler zipping up and down those Tuscan hills!

Chianti ~ the countryside ~

Once we got to the wine tasting part, we saw an old woman waving from her window. When we started taking photos of her, she told her cat to pose and they posed together. I aspire to be like her!
WEEK 3

I have never consumed so much pasta and gelato in my entire life! These are highly realistic self portraits of my current state:

The best gelato I've ever had is the chocolate orange from Gelateria La Carraia.
ROMA

June 7-9

I saw the Colosseum

Stefano took a group to the Foro di Augusto to see a light & projection show about the history of it. The projections rebuilt the original structure on the ruins. It was beyond magical and amazing!

CINECITÀ (has its own page because I loved it so much)

PIZZA RESTAURANT RULE #1 (I kind of like it!)
no phone allowed! they want you to talk with your friends. our waiter yelled at one of us for having it on the table.
It was hot and the sun was blazing so the 1 euro fan from the flea market was a life saver!

Vatican City & The Sistine Chapel
(disorganized, hot, and crowded... wish I could have appreciated it more)

Bosco Sacro

a unique garden where "getting lost" is encouraged

AND I FOUND ANOTHER HUGE WORM!
Rome's Hollywood Studios, created/built by Mussolini's son in 1937. It's still an active studio, which can be rent out, and frequently used by many directors including Martin Scorsese.

Huge green screen with pool used for boat/harbor/water scenes.

This giant head was in the main grass area of Cinecittà. It was used in a movie but our tour guide didn't say which one.
Lucca Day Trip

Famous for its intact Renaissance-era walls

The third weekend of every month, Lucca has an antiques market. I found these old hotel room-key keychains - they were cute!

DA ROSEO (LUNCH)
Cheese plate with honey = AMAZING!

Biking around Lucca's walls and seeing a new city from a different perspective.

I did 3 loops around the city = ~7.8 miles biked!
New Friends - Josh, Jordan, Sutton & Sam
Parma had 2 old theaters. This one, and one made of wood. (And the stage was actually slanted.)

Teatro Rigio di Parma

Concert in the main square was a bunch of old men jamming out.

Fun! Not my scene so I left after a few songs.

I was really craving a hamburger so I got a gourmet cheese burger and a side of fried zucchini!
Mantova is Stefano's home! We tried their famous Pumpkin Ravioli— which tasted yummy but kind of like cookies. It was sweet!

Shrine of Grazia

A church where paper maché people from kings to peasants are displayed very intensely but creepy. The crocodile was hanging on the very top of the ceiling in the church.
Sirmione
Lake Garda – June 29th

I went with Josh & Jordan to the tip of the peninsula and spent half the day at Jamaica Beach. It was so peaceful and zen. A true happy place with some good pals.
I wonder where that tradition came from... probably from a man...

It amazes me how these old buildings are still standing & strong.

Elena
Casa di Giulietta

June 30th

Roméo et Juliette

Giulietta's balcony

touch her books for good luck
Finals Week!

Oh right, I almost forgot I'm at school!

In my essay, I talk about:

- Why Florence was a travel destination for women travelers (and why Lucy and Frances came to Italy)
- The differences in the foreign gaze in the 20th & 21st centuries
- Why women come to Italy... to gain independence, seek clarity, find love, and become EMPOWERED!!!

My final paper for Cinema & Literature is a comparison between *Under the Tuscan Sun* & *A Room With a View.*
My Italian final consists of a multiple choice exam and a final task. For the final task, the whole Elementary Italian class has to sing two songs at the talent show after the farewell dinner. Both of the songs are so catchy and get stuck in my head easily...

I imagine the song being sung by little, talented earworms - worms that are in my ear.
NYU Florence was such an amazing program that I am so grateful to have been a part of. These six weeks went by so fast but I have learned so much and made so many memories. I will miss the city, the beautiful sights, but most of all the people. I made so many lovely friends and memories with them. As I am sad to depart, I am grateful for my time there. I am excited to continue my adventure and keep learning and growing. I'm keeping this reflection brief because the full version is long and sappy. Grazie e ciao Italia! (you will always have a special place in my heart)