



# Ceiling Unlimited!

## Spring 2026 Newsletter of

### FSC's Study Abroad Office

## Greetings from the Study Abroad Office

When I was a Freshman at the University of Albany (SUNY), I was one of about ten students majoring in Mediterranean Archaeology, an innovative program that merged Classical Studies and Anthropology. One of my professors, who was part of an archaeological team investigating an Etruscan town in Tuscany, opened an invitation to join the project in the summer. You don't hesitate when fate cracks the door open like that, so a friend of mine and I jumped at the opportunity.

Those six weeks in Italy transformed my life. I knew that I would become an archaeologist and that I would explore the world as much as time and money permitted. In my Senior year I decided that, rather than go straight to graduate school, I'd spend a whole academic year studying at the University of Rome. By that time my Italian language skills were good enough for me to take archaeology classes alongside Italian students. It was a challenge, but I passed the classes and even got a perfect 30/30 in one of them. On top of that, I worked on an excavation on the Palatine Hill, where we uncovered the foundations of a hut dating to the time of Romulus. I literally revealed Rome's origin story with my trowel!

Those experiences didn't just give me stories to tell over drinks. They changed the

trajectory of my life. Both study abroad experiences set me apart from other people when it came time to apply to graduate school and, eventually, find a job. And I met so many fantastic people, some of whom are still good friends after all these years.

While working on my PhD, I moved to Italy, since that is where my research was based. I had the great fortune of remaining there for 15 years, working for the American Academy in Rome and teaching for several study abroad campuses. Eventually, I was hired full time at John Cabot University where I served as Dept. Chair of Art History and Studio Arts. I am proud to say that is still one of the strongest departments at JCU and is a testimony that we still need the Arts and Humanities in Higher Education. But that is another story...

Year after year, I witnessed the metamorphosis of hundreds of students from the USA. They all arrived to Rome wide-eyed and naïve with fresh haircuts and clean clothes, as I had years prior. By the end of their semester abroad, clothes worn to rags, they were more worldly, knowledgeable, and confident.

Italy was not the only place I came to know and love. In 2003, I was invited by a Romanian archaeologist to co-direct a project he was managing. Porolissum was a

Roman city with a fortress located one mile from what was the border of the Roman Empire. How could I refuse? Between 2004 and 2011, we led seven summer seasons of the Porolissum Forum Project. I created a field school, like the one in Tuscany I had joined when I was 19, and over the years nearly 100 students participated.

My explorations and interest in Southeastern Europe led me to direct the American Research Center in Sofia (Bulgaria) for a three-year term. Each year, we hosted a small group of graduate students from the USA and Southeastern Europe. We led them on excursions in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia, Greece, and Turkey. We financed several major cultural heritage projects and developed our own publication series.

Eventually, I returned to research and teaching, but what I really wanted was

to help students take that first leap abroad. I was very fortunate in the summer of 2024 to begin working at Farmingdale State College. In the last 18 months, I have met more than 300 students who are eager to study overseas. Fifty studied abroad during my first year here (Australia, Cyprus, England, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Scotland, and Taiwan). So far, in the 2025-26 academic year, FSC students have been to Australia, Brazil, Cyprus, Egypt, England, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. And in summer 2026, we are offering ten opportunities to study abroad (not to mention all the other SUNY programs).

For information about how you can study abroad for a semester, summer, or winter session, contact the Study Abroad Office at [studyabroad@farmingdale.edu](mailto:studyabroad@farmingdale.edu) – Eric C. De Sena (Study Abroad Manager)

## Summer 2026 Study Abroad Opportunities

Looking ahead to Summer 2026, we have created Faculty Led Programs in thirteen countries on three continents! **Business students** can study in **Finland** with prof. Betty Feng (BUS 395) or in **Greece** with prof. Antigoni Papadimitriou (BUS 390). Both programs involve visits to companies where you will meet business leaders and be able to observe operations. **Engineering and Business students** can join prof. Khosro Shirvani (MET 215) who will lead you to manufacturing companies and cultural sites in **Berlin and Amsterdam**. There is only one more place available for **Nursing in Nepal**, a clinical practicum (NUR 240) led by prof. Tesi Thomas. There are several programs open to all students with a focus on the **Liberal Arts**. For the second summer in a row, prof. Francesca Polo will teach a 4-week course STS 391 in **Lecce, Italy** where you will also take a course in Italian language with the staff of Libera University Mediterranea (total of 6 credits). Prof. Orla LoPiccolo will teach ARC 100 – Architecture and Culture in **Edinburgh and Dublin**. Prof. Sonia Zervakos will teach MLG 304 (French Culture & Civilization) in **France and Morocco**. Prof. Kwame Insaidoo Jr. will be a part of a four-week program hosted by the **University of Ghana**. One of the newest programs, HIS 319, is led by yours truly in **Transylvania**, where you will learn about the history and culture of this fascinating region of Romania. Naturally, we will visit sites associated with Count Dracula! And, for the second summer in a row, we will host a **program in Taiwan**: prof. Qing Ai will lead MLG 321 (Chinese Culture & Civilization) and prof. Michael Shenoda will lead MET 201 (Statics). Students can take either MLG 321 or MET 201; engineering students can take both courses.

LOCATION	PROFESSOR AND COURSE	DATES	COST
<b>Amsterdam &amp; Berlin</b>	Prof. Khosro Shirvani - MET 215 Mechanical Engineering	June 6-20	\$3740
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	Profs. Marya Carter & Brianna Gonzalez - Service Learning – THIS PROGRAM IS FULL!	May 23-30	\$1600
<b>Edinburgh &amp; Dublin</b>	Prof. Orla LoPiccolo - ARC 100 Architecture & Culture	May 26-June 6	\$3870
<b>Finland</b>	Prof. Betty Feng - BUS 395 Creativity & Innovation	August 1-16	\$3790
<b>France &amp; Morocco</b>	Prof. Sonia Zervakos - MLG 304 French Culture & Civilization - in development	late May - early June	\$3870
<b>Ghana</b>	Prof. Kwame Insaidoo Jr - University of Ghana course	May 31-June 27	\$3790
<b>Greece</b>	Prof. Antigoni Papadimitriou - BUS 390 Global Management	June 2-15	\$3790
<b>Lecce, Italy</b>	Prof. Francesca Polo - STS 391 Sustainable Innovation & ITA	July 5-August 1	\$5480
<b>Nepal</b>	Prof. Tesi Thomas - NUR 240 Nursing Practicum – ONLY ONE PLACE LEFT!	June 3-13	\$1665
<b>Taiwan</b>	Prof. Qing Ai - MLG 321 Chinese Culture & Civilization	May 30-June 11	\$2375
<b>Taiwan</b>	Prof. Michael Shenoda - MET 201 Statics (students can also take MLG 321)	May 30-June 11	\$2375 (\$3260 for 6 credits)
<b>Transylvania</b>	Prof. Eric De Sena - HIS 319 Transylvanian History and Culture	June 29-July 12	\$2940

\*\*\* Note: application deadlines for Summer 2026 programs (including \$500 deposit) is mid-February – early March, depending on the program; Fall 2026 applications are due mid-late March \*\*\*

# Experiences and Reflections of our Students

## Ashley Granger (Florence University of the Arts, Spring 2025)

My name is Ashley, and I studied abroad in Florence, Italy, last spring! I had an amazing experience and it was nothing short of life altering. I studied at Florence University of the Arts, where I took a Fashion Business course, two Crime and Mystery courses, and a Cultural Perspectives course, which involved weekly night-time city walks.



My schedule entailed two classes on Mondays and two classes on Tuesdays. Luckily for me, I had most of the week to explore museums and parks in Florence, and travel to other cities in Italy. My mother and brother were with me for the first couple of weeks, so we travelled a lot, indulging in food tours and tasting regional foods I had never heard of. Our days of sightseeing and tripping over the cobblestone streets were long, but never boring. Once my family

returned home, I experienced life on my own for the first time. It was a huge change, and I there were many new responsibilities. I was excited to explore the city on my own, and have some independence.

Over the course of my two and a half months overseas, I visited Rome, Venice, Siena, Potenza, Maranello, Pisa, Cinque Terre, and the Amalfi Coast. I spent my weekends staying overnight in a different city, trying new foods, buying souvenirs for my family and friends, and exploring the must-see sights with my roommates. Although I enjoyed each city I visited, I believe that Florence was the perfect city for me to live. The city was easy to navigate, and it quickly became a second home for me. Unfortunately, since I am nearing graduation, I will not be able to spend another semester abroad. But, thankfully, I will be traveling to Florence and Rome again this spring to visit a friend who is studying abroad! I am looking forward to revisiting two of the best-known cities of Renaissance and ancient ruins.

## Amy Koo (Taiwan, Summer 2025) "Scenes from Taiwan"

**Taipei:** The day-long journey from New York to Taipei was as exhilarating as it was exhausting. My travel mates and I had a quick night time snack upon arrival before drifting off to sleep. The first thing that caught my eye on the morning of my first day in Taiwan's capital city was the view of the Taipei 101 neighbourhood staring back at me from my hotel window. It was stunning! Second, I noticed how many people were commuting by motorcycle – they were

everywhere. To my delight, there was a 7-Eleven conveniently located right downstairs, which became my go-to breakfast spot for the next three days.



Led by prof. Qing Ai, we set out to explore Taipei's city streets for the first time. The streets were so clean! We visited Taipei City Hall, where we saw a large calligraphic inscription drawn from the teachings of Confucius, an ancient Chinese philosopher who emphasized morality, social harmony, and ethical governance. Sun Yat-Sen, a revolutionary leader and the founder of modern China, often quoted this text, including the phrase "the world belongs to the people", to shape his political ideals. This concept would help influence Taiwan's government.

We visited the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, a grand tribute to one of Taiwan's most influential figures. The architecture was striking to me. From the top of the grand staircase, we took in the whole view: traditional Chinese structures framed by Western-style gardens. The dominant colours of the Memorial Hall, blue and white, mirrored the national flag, which symbolizes liberty and democracy. Inside, behind the statue of Chiang Kai-Shek, three powerful words are engraved: "Ethics,"

"Freedom," and "Science." Lin Jiang Night Market, near our hotel, buzzed with the vibrant energy and street delicacies that Taiwan's night markets are famous for. I started with tanghulu, a traditional snack of skewered fruit coated in hardened sugar, and also tried the famous oyster omelette, stinky tofu, and a large bowl of mango shaved ice.



Next was Jiufen, a beautiful mountainside village known for its gold rush era during the Japanese colonial period. The winding alleyways of the town bustled with street food vendors, historic teahouses, and restaurants. Without even having to buy anything, I felt full from all the generous samples, especially the endless pours of Alishan Oolong Tea, which I loved. I tried the popular Sweet Taro Balls and the Ah-Zhu Peanut Ice Cream Roll as well. We eventually made it to the famous Ah-Mei Teahouse. As we sipped our tea, the ocean in the distance shimmered under the setting sun, while wisps of clouds passed gently over the mountains. If that wasn't enough, the teahouses around us glowed with lantern light.

**Tainan:** We woke up at 4 am to catch the high-speed rail from Taipei to Tainan. The

train was true to its name: smooth, fast, and efficient. As soon as we arrived in Tainan, I could feel the shift in atmosphere. Everything felt more traditional and more rooted in history, which made sense since Tainan is the oldest city in Taiwan.



Our first stop was the Confucius Temple, which happened to be hosting a graduation ceremony for students from Tainan University right inside the temple grounds. It was deeply ritualistic. For example, the professors were dressed in traditional robes, and that middle school students performed a dance that honours Confucius called "Liu yi." We climbed up a small shrine where we each received special pencils from the God of Literature, meant to be used only during exams for good luck and good grades. It was interesting to see that students had placed their resumes next to the God as well. Walking along the streets of Tainan, we passed through a very narrow alley and emerged just in time to see a parade of deities passing by, which I later learned was part of a religious procession from temple to temple. We encountered several more of these parades throughout the day. Every street and alley held a piece of history, and the air carried the weight of centuries of tradition. There were temples

and shrines everywhere we went – Tainan should really be renamed to Temple City!

And we visited Anping Fort, a historic coastal stronghold originally built by the Dutch as Fort Zeelandia during their colonial period. Later captured by Koxinga, a Southern Ming general, it became Fort Anping and played a key role in Taiwan's early resistance against colonial powers. Though neglected during the Qing dynasty, it was partially restored under Japanese rule, making it a fascinating site that reflects Taiwan's layered history.

**Hsinchu:** Hsinchu is known as one of Taiwan's leading cities in semiconductor manufacturing. Our visit to Minghsin University of Science and Technology (MUST) was both educational and eye-opening. Two professors greeted us and brought us to the semiconductor training centre on campus, where we got a first-hand look at the incredibly intricate process of chip-making, including wafer cutting and photolithography. I was amazed by how complex and precise everything was. We are constantly surrounded by microchips in our daily lives, but seeing the actual machines and processes behind them made it all feel real and tangible. The very phones and computers we use today likely contain chips made here in Taiwan.

Later, we had the opportunity to visit the TSMC Museum of Innovation, where we got a deeper look into Taiwan's global leadership in the semiconductor industry. The museum introduced us to the rise of integrated circuit chips (ICs) and the fascinating life story of TSMC's founder, Morris Chang. It was very interesting to learn how one man's vision turned Taiwan into a chip-making capital of the world. Although we couldn't access the upper floors, which is

where the actual semiconductor facilities are at, just knowing they were there fascinated me.

We met the students at MUST and introduced ourselves to their class, where we exchanged perspectives, hearing what they knew about Taiwan and sharing our own experiences and insights about America. The students were incredibly sweet and welcoming, making the cultural exchange a meaningful and memorable way to wrap up our time on campus.



We hiked the Fenqi Trail, which winds through the mountains and connects two temples. Along the way, we passed by WWII-era military bunkers and tunnels originally built by the Japanese, but later repurposed by the National Army for coastal defence. We came across a rest station, which is proudly decorated with patriotic signs and slogans. At one point, we went a bit off trail, and stumbled upon the largest durian I had ever seen and some of the juiciest mangoes I've ever tasted hanging from trees. Eventually, we found our way to Lianhua Temple just as the sun was setting, casting a golden glow over its rooftops. The scene felt peaceful and was a fitting end to our journey, as I savoured the last moments of Taiwan's beauty.

**Aika Suizi & Tenshi Vinas (Tokyo Metropolitan University, Summer 2025).**



In Summer 2025, we participated in a study abroad program in Japan hosted by Tokyo Metropolitan University. Because the program only lasted two weeks, we planned an additional two weeks to further explore this beautiful country. This extended experience broadened our perspectives, offering both cultural insight and real-world understanding. We travelled to Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Tokyo, Kanagawa, and Aichi. Each destination offered something unique, together providing a holistic view of Japan's history, culture, and modern life.

Entering this journey, we had two main goals: to expand our linguistic abilities and to reconnect with our Japanese heritage through everyday interactions. In our first days in Osaka and Aichi, we navigated Japan's complex public transportation system, which initially felt overwhelming. Asking for directions in an unfamiliar environment and even getting lost in Shinjuku Station tested our confidence. However, through persistence, we became more comfortable and independent. We practiced speaking Japanese daily with native speakers, whether at convenience stores or at car meets, and although we often made mistakes, we learned that perseverance encouraged openness and

connection. Over time, we gained the confidence to communicate with anyone, not just fellow students. These challenges taught us to embrace uncertainty, leading to meaningful relationships and lasting friendships.



Our second goal of reconnecting with our heritage proved to be especially meaningful. Experiencing Japanese traditions first hand allowed us to view them as part of our own family history, strengthening our cultural identity and fulfilling the true purpose of this journey.

Academic learning was an integral part of the experience. In Kyoto and Nara, visits to temples, shrines, and cultural landmarks illustrated how history and tradition are deeply interwoven into daily life. These experiences emphasized the importance of context in educational settings. In contrast, Tokyo and Kanagawa highlighted Japan's modern, fast-paced lifestyle. Despite this, cultural sites, particularly in suburban areas, remained carefully preserved, showing how simplicity and tradition can coexist even in bustling environments. Traveling across different

regions revealed both striking differences and shared values. During the program, field trips to places such as a tea house and a puppet theatre allowed us to analyse broader social trends and connections within Japanese society. In lectures, professors emphasized efficiency, attention to detail, and group cohesion, where shared goals were prioritized over individual achievement. This approach reflects Japan's collectivist culture. At the conclusion of the program, we presented our most memorable experiences and reflected on how they connected to the overarching theme of choice.

Months of planning resulted in far more than just a trip. The experience was truly life-changing in a way that broadened our view, pushed us beyond our comfort zones, and deepened our sense of identity. The personal growth we experienced throughout the journey strengthened our mindset. Each city introduced new challenges that required adaptability and resilience. We deepened our understanding of Japan's centuries-old traditions and customs while strengthening our Japanese language skills.

Education should not be limited to textbooks and classrooms; real-world cultural exchange is just as empowering. For us, global learning enriches both the mind and the heart, even from the smallest interactions. Through every challenge and conversation, we were reminded of cultural humility and patience, qualities that can develop into personal skills for everyday life. From the classrooms of Japan, we grew not only as students but also as more engaged global citizens. We will forever hold with us the lessons we learned and live life with more courage.

**Abby Morgan (Florence University of the Arts, Summer 2025).**

My name is Abby, and I am currently a junior at SUNY Oneonta. Last summer I studied abroad for six weeks at Florence University of the Arts.



I lived in apartment with 11 other students from all around the United States, and even from Australia! My apartment was in a great location, close to restaurants, shops, and where I had class. My roommates and I clicked early on and made me feel a sense of home instantly.

My day would usually start with a quick coffee on my way to school at a cafe on my street. Then I would walk to class. I took both the History of the Mafia and Social Psychology, which were such insightful courses. After class, my roommates and I would usually shop around, grab something for dinner, and end our night watching the sunset over the Arno River.

I was able to travel to many different regions of Italy and even made it to France! My roommates and I explored Tuscany, specifically Pisa, Siena, Monteriggioni, San Gimignano, and Castiglioncello. I visited Sorrento, Capri, Positano, and Pompeii as well. We also went on a five-day trip to the

South of France during our break in between class sessions. We stayed in Nice, but travelled to Monaco, Eze, and Menton. After the study abroad program ended, my parents and I visited Rome. All of these trips were places I only ever dreamed of visiting, and I feel so fortunate that I was able to see them for myself!

Florence offered an abundance of opportunities for me to grow as an individual, and I am so grateful for this experience. Being able to witness and partake in such a slow and patient culture was a very refreshing experience. The friendliness that Italians conveyed to their neighbours, customers, and strangers always caught me off guard in a way but inspired me. The relationships I built are my biggest takeaway. The random conversations I would have with cafe workers, the students I sat next to in class, and my professors all made my time so memorable.

I can wholeheartedly say that study abroad changed my life in so many ways, I came back a different person. The independence I gained, patience I learned, and confidence I built will stay with me for the rest of my life. Studying abroad pushed me outside of my comfort zone and taught me how to adapt, appreciate new perspectives, and fully immerse myself in a culture different from my own. I returned home with a deeper sense of gratitude, a stronger sense of self, and unforgettable memories that I will always cherish. I would encourage anyone considering studying abroad to take the leap, it is truly an experience like no other and one I will carry with me forever.

## Higia Saravia Aguilar (Summer 2025 in South Italy).

Last summer I studied abroad in Lecce, Italy for four weeks. It was an amazing experience that changed my life. A journey that went beyond my academics but gave me many profound life lessons.



My time abroad taught me to experience life in the present moment. I learned to savour the little things: my meals, the clear blue skies of Lecce and its quiet pauses around the city. Before class, my favourite ritual was to get a cappuccino at a cafe close to my apartment. I loved greeting the owner Marco and trying Lecce's famous pastry, a Pasticciotto, which soon became my favourite in Italy. I purposefully chose to get lost around the city and take the longer way back to my apartment. This gave me a chance to spend time with myself and shoot photos I found meaningful.

There are so many special memories from my time abroad, and so many of them are cherished recollections of the people I got to know. I explored the night life of the city with my friends. It was so fun getting to see how alive the night became and seeing so many people out, the street music playing and restaurants being packed. Getting pasta, gelato and sharing many laughs made me

realize that meeting people is the heart of every adventure we do. I got to explore many areas of Puglia, seeing more of the region's natural landscapes, people, and the stars, and feeling how the air changes compared to how it felt in the city was truly amazing.



As my study abroad trip was coming to an end, I realized I felt at home. I knew how to navigate the city pretty well and it felt surreal that my dream of one day visiting Italy had come true. I was so proud of myself for giving myself the opportunity to learn more about the Italian language and its culture. Studying abroad is far beyond visiting a new place but being open to experiences that last far beyond the journey. I'm grateful for everything I experienced and how much this study abroad trip has made me reflect on myself and the decisions I make. I hope to return to Italy soon and explore more of its authentic self.

### **Kayla Ramsewack (Florence University of the Arts, Summer 2025).**

I was very fortunate to study in Florence during the summer of 2025. I quickly found Florence to be an incredible place to live and explore. Everything from transportation to finding a great place to eat was extremely easy and accessible. I lived in an apartment with four other girls, all of whom were friendly and just as excited to experience the city. We clicked on our very first day, and despite having different class schedules, we spent a lot of time together. I also had the opportunity to explore Florence's sites and neighborhoods after class with a few of my classmates.

My classes were engaging and deepened my appreciation for the city. In one class, *Buontalenti's Florence: From Architecture to Gelato*, I learned about Bernardo Buontalenti and his lasting architectural contributions, many of which can still be seen throughout Florence today. During one class walk, our professor brought us to see one of Buontalenti's kneeling window designs, located just down the street from my apartment. It was fascinating to walk through the city while learning about its rich historical background. My other class focused on the genius of Leonardo da Vinci and further enriched my academic experience.

Outside of FUA, my roommates and I traveled to the Cinque Terre region, Venice, and a Tuscan winery with SmartTrips. We travelled on our own to Rome and Switzerland using the train where we joined classes such as pizza and wine making, perfume making, and chocolate making. I found it so easy to talk with other travellers as we were all learning from each other and sharing stories.

### **Aaron Levy (Taiwan, Summer 2025)**

Studying abroad in Taiwan and Hong Kong was one of the most eye-opening experiences of my life. The program gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in two places that are deeply connected yet distinctly different in culture, pace, and history. Moving between Taipei and Hong Kong helped me better understand how geography and tradition shape everyday life in ways you can't fully grasp from a classroom.



One of the most memorable parts of the experience was navigating both Taiwan and Hong Kong as part of a group. Exploring new cities together, whether finding our way through night markets, sharing meals, or comparing our impressions at the end of the day, made the experience feel collaborative rather than overwhelming. Being in a group allowed us to learn from one another's perspectives and pushed me to step outside my comfort zone in a supportive way. It reinforced the importance of adaptability, communication, and cultural awareness, especially when experiencing unfamiliar places.

Overall, studying abroad changed how I approach new environments and

global experiences. It taught me to be more adaptable and attentive to cultural nuance, while also reinforcing the value of community when navigating unfamiliar spaces. The experience strengthened my

curiosity about the world and left me with a deeper appreciation for learning beyond the classroom one that will continue to shape how I engage with people and places going forward.



## Meet Our Faculty Leaders

Ten FSC faculty members will share their interests and expertise in Summer 2026 by offering Faculty Led Study Abroad opportunities on three continents!

**Dr. Qing Ai** (Chair, Dept. Modern Languages) received her BA and MA from Peking University and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. She teaches Spanish, Mandarin, and a variety of culture, literature, and cinema courses in the related fields. A native of Beijing, Prof. Ai enjoys exploring worldwide cultures by traveling to different countries and regions. She studied abroad two times in Spain while in college, and is looking forward to exploring Asia again time with students next summer.

The cartoon selfie is based on a photograph taken at the Continental Divide, Costa Rica.



**For the second year in a row, Qing will lead a group of students in Taiwan, teaching MLG 321 – Chinese Culture & Civilization (May 30 - June 11, 2026).** Students will have the option of continuing the adventure to Tokyo for a few extra days in Asia.

**Francesca Polo** is a Visiting Assistant Professor at SUNY Farmingdale State College with a strong commitment to experiential learning and global education. She is passionate about mentoring students and designing programs that encourage cultural curiosity, academic growth, and personal development. Francesca invites students to join her this summer in Italy for a transformative study abroad experience that blends rigorous academics with unforgettable cultural immersion.



Francesca is excited to lead the second annual immersive summer study abroad course in Lecce in the heart of **Southern Italy**. The program combines academic coursework with hands-on cultural experiences that bring Italian language, sustainability, and local traditions to life. Students earn academic credit for two courses while learning beyond the classroom through guided excursions, cultural workshops, and everyday engagement with the local community, creating a truly immersive educational experience open to students of all backgrounds, and from any

SUNY institution. This is a 6-credit program (ITA at different levels and STS 391 – Sustainable Innovation), July 5 – August 1, 2026.

**Orla Smyth LoPiccolo** is a registered architect, professor, and former Chair of the Department of Architecture and Construction Management at FSC, where she has taught 17 courses since 2008. She earned her undergraduate and professional architecture degrees with honours from the Dublin Institute of Technology and Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland, and a post-professional degree in Architecture Urban Regional Design from the New York Institute of Technology. She also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Building Construction Management from New York University and is a Certified Passive House Designer through the Passivhaus Institut in Germany.



Professor LoPiccolo has professional experience in both the private and public

sectors, including architecture and construction project management positions in Dublin and New York, as well as over ten years of experience as an architect and Community Development Project Supervisor with the Town of Islip. She also served as an adjunct assistant professor in the School of Architecture and Design at NYIT for five years, teaching multiple architectural studio courses.

At FSC, Professor LoPiccolo has been an active contributor to campus governance and service, including the Applied Learning Review Board (Chair 2022–2023, member since 2016), the Executive Committee (Chair 2018–2022, member 2016–2022), the Public Art Task Force (former Chair), the Calendar Committee (former Chair), the Sustainability Committee, and the American Society for Engineering Education, Middle Atlantic Section (former Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer). As Department Chair (2017–2021), she oversaw three successful ABET re-accreditation visits, streamlined departmental processes to enhance student success, and strengthened professional partnerships that have connected hundreds of students and alums with employment opportunities. She has authored and presented more than 20 scholarly papers on innovative pedagogy, with a focus on spatial reasoning, sustainable construction, and service learning.

Professor LoPiccolo's teaching and leadership have been recognized through numerous awards, including the Phenomenal Woman Award (2018), Innovative Pedagogy Award (2017), SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (2018), and the American Institute of Architects Long Island Chapter Educator Award (2019). Most recently, she was named one of the 11 inaugural SUNY

Sustainability Faculty Fellows, a system-wide initiative that supports faculty who integrate climate and sustainability topics into their teaching and applied learning.

**Orla will lead a group of students in Edinburgh and Dublin for a class in Architecture & Culture – ARC 100, May 26 – June 6, 2026.**

**Eric Anderson**, A.I.A, is an architect and educator with more than thirty years in educational and non-profit facilities planning and management. He has overseen the planning and/or construction of over \$ 1 billion of capital improvement for non-profit and educational institutions. Institutional project responsibilities include engineering research facilities at West Virginia University, student residential and service renovations at WVU and Stony Brook University, academic and library facilities at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and campus master plans for the CUNY system. He is a registered architect in New York and West Virginia.



Currently, he is an Assistant Professor and Department Chair for Architecture and Construction Management at Farmingdale State College. Professional memberships include the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Engineering Education. He is an adviser to the student team that participates in the Associated Schools of Construction Region 1 Project Management Competition. Honors include 2002 Award of Merit from the Association of University Architects for Recovery of BMCC/CUNY from 9/11 Attack, 2015 Educator of the Year Award from the American Institute of Architects-Long Island Chapter, 2015 Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal from the Holy See for distinguished service to facilities planning for the Catholic Church, 2024 FSC Faculty Center Student Mentorship Award, and 2024 FSC Student Activities Club Advisor of the Year.

**Eric spent the Winter Break in Malta** preparing a course there – STS 395 Architecture & Global Connections. This will be offered in January 2027.

**Dr. Antigoni Papadimitriou** is an Assistant Professor of Strategy in the School of Business and a strong advocate for experiential, global learning. Originally from Greece, she studied business and economics and worked at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, later serving as a researcher at the University of Macedonia. Outside the classroom, she is a former basketball player and coach and has also competed as a racing crew member at the Nautical Club of Thessaloniki. She has extensive experience designing and leading international programs, including study-abroad initiatives at Lehigh University and the Duke University TIP program. Dr. Papadimitriou earned her, Masters form Baruch/CUNY, PhD in the

Netherlands, and completed postdoctoral research in Norway, bringing a global perspective to her teaching and research.



Her research explores how organizations and communities adapt to change, especially as emerging technologies like artificial intelligence reshape the way we work, lead, and make decisions. Her interests include behavioural strategy, AI adoption in organizations, organizational change, entrepreneurship in the creative industries, community development, responsible management education, and student engagement with AI. Grounded in organizational theory, her work often draws on stakeholder and social learning perspectives and uses mixed-methods research designs. She has received research funding from Lehigh University, Johns Hopkins University, the Research Council of Norway, and the Greek Ministry of Education, and her work has appeared in a range of academic journals.

**In summer 2026, Antigoni will lead Business students in Greece** (June 2-15) where you'll visit companies and cultural heritage sites.

**Dr. Jing Betty Feng** is Professor of International Business at the School of Business and the faculty leader for this exciting summer study abroad opportunity. With rich experience in global business strategy, creativity, and innovation research, and years of mentorship guiding students toward real-world success, Dr. Feng brings passion, expertise, and global perspective to this transformational journey. Her interdisciplinary approach equips students with tools to thrive in today's dynamic, international business environment.



**Betty is thrilled to lead a course for Business students — BUS 395: Creativity & Innovation — in Finland** (Helsinki & Vaasa), August 1-16, 2026. This two-week immersive experience starts in Helsinki, where you'll dive into Finnish design, innovation, and culture — from the iconic Oodi Library to traditional public sauna experiences. Then we'll head to Vaasa, an energetic university city known for sustainability leadership and cutting-edge business in renewable energy and circular economy. Here, you'll tour leading companies, explore cultural heritage sites, and participate in the University of Vaasa's Summer School on Entrepreneurship and Venturing — collaborating with international peers on real innovation challenges.

**Dr. Sonia Giuria Zervakos** is an educator with a deep passion for languages, cultures, and global migration. She holds a M.A. in Romance Languages: French and Spanish and D.A. in Hispanic Languages and Literature, with a focus on instruction and linguistics from Stony Brook University. She studied abroad at the Université de Pau and the Université de Franche-Comté, where she focused on phonetics, linguistic heterogeneity in the classroom, and the development of interdisciplinary projects. She also has conversational proficiency in Polish and Greek through academic study and family ties.



Her commitment to language and service has taken Dr. Zervakos to Latin America, where she volunteered as a translator with a Long-Island medical NGO. More recently, she has travelled to Thessaloniki, Greece, where she helped develop educational programs for refugees living in camps through a European NGO that provides critical aid and learning opportunities. She also mentored new volunteers in educational strategies and language-teaching methodologies.

**Sonia will lead students to France and Morocco this summer, May 27 – June 10, 2026, teaching MLG 304 – French Culture & Civilization.**

**Dr. Michael Shenoda** is the Chair of the Civil Engineering Technology Department, and he has been a faculty member and administrator in Civil Engineering and Construction Management programs across the country over the past 20+ years.



He has also been a practicing Civil Engineer in the public and private realms and he is a Licensed Professional Engineer. His interests are sustainability and transportation, although he has worked on consulting, teaching, and research across the Civil Engineering spectrum. He has led study abroad programs to Australia and Egypt in the past and he was a participant in a study abroad program to Russia within months after the collapse of the Soviet Union. **Mike is looking forward to helping to lead a fun and insightful program to Taiwan, while instructing Statics (MET 201 / CIV 106), this summer!**

**Dr. Khosro Shirvani** is an assistant professor in the Mechanical Engineering Technology at Farmingdale State College (FSC). His research areas include Tribology, Additive Manufacturing of Metals, Renewable Energy, and Engineering Education. Since 2011, He has worked on projects sponsored by The Boeing Company, the National Institute of Standards & Technology, and National Science Foundation.



Over the past 8 years, he has developed and taught novel hands-on skill-building courses with a focus on design, manufacturing and clean energy technologies. He was also involved in creating a certificate program in Wind Turbine Technology at FSC and authored a paper on developing wind turbine educational programs on the east coast. ("Developing a Premier Wind Turbine Technology Programs in the East Coast: A Novus Industry and Academia Collaborative Approach" at the 2022 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition). Prior to 2011, He served as an innovation consultant to turbine engineering and manufacturing companies where he provided and oversaw maintenance strategies for a variety of electro-mechanical and manufacturing equipment. Khosro is a member-at-large of the Volunteer Orientation & Leadership Training Academy of the American Society of

Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and was a 2018-19 ASME ECLIPSE Member of the Board of Governors.

**Khosro** is offering a course in Amsterdam and Berlin, June 6-20, 2026, that will be of interest to Engineering and Business students. MET 215 focuses on the management and logistics of manufacturing companies.

**Dr. Eric De Sena** is an internationally renowned archaeologist who brings to Farmingdale 20+ years of experience overseas as an educator and an administrator. He holds a BA from SUNY Albany in Mediterranean Archaeology, a MA in Art History from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a PhD from University of Bradford (UK) in Archaeological Sciences. As an archaeologist, De Sena participated or led projects in Italy on the Palatine Hill in Rome, Ostia Antica, Pompeii, Cetamura del Chianti, and many other sites; in Romania at Porolissum and Bozna.



While living in Rome, he was the Archaeological Laboratory Associate of the American Academy in Rome and a professor of ancient art and archaeology at John Cabot University, Saint Mary's College, and Duquesne University. He served JCU as Chair

of the Dept. of Art History and Studio Arts for four years, a position he used to develop short-term Faculty-Led programs in Italy, Romania, and Turkey. He directed the American Research Center in Sofia, which supported American and Southeast European scholars, published monographs, hosted lectures and conferences, and offered grants for cultural heritage projects in Bulgaria.

A passionate traveller, Eric has published two guide books: *Get Lost in*

*Travel: Transylvania* and *Get Lost in Travel: 90 Minutes from Rome*, both available from Amazon.

**Eric will lead a group of students to Transylvania (June 29 - July 12, 2026)**, a region where he led the Porolissum Forum Project and has introduced nearly 100 students to since 2004. The 3-credit course HIS 319 presents the history and cultures of Transylvania from the Roman era through the post-Communist period.



**Study Abroad Office** - Greenley Library, room 038G

<https://www.farmingdale.edu/study-abroad/>

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