



LEC
TRIP TO ITALY 2023
ALBUM

BY DR. BASILE, PAOLA



LAKE ERIE
COLLEGE



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- *Thank you so much Dr. Basile for organizing this trip, and for encouraging me to continue my Italian studies! This was an unforgettable opportunity that brought new memories and friends that I will cherish forever.*
- *It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to travel to Italy with my Lake Erie College classmates on the cultural school trip. Each day provided an abundance of cultural discoveries, culinary delights, and new friendships... It surpassed my expectations, and I cannot wait to go back! The memories in Italy will always hold a special place in my heart.*
- *Our trip was so magical in so many different ways. It truly felt like a movie... This has been an incredible experience and opportunity that I will forever cherish.*
- *This Enriching Journey through Italy: Exploring Culture, Cuisine, and Nature was a transformative adventure that broadened my horizons, deepened my understanding of different cultures, and left an indelible mark on my heart.*



May 20

Departure from the airport of Cleveland for Rome with United Airlines. Arrival early in the morning in Fiumicino (Rome). Our private bus (for the entire trip) is waiting for us.



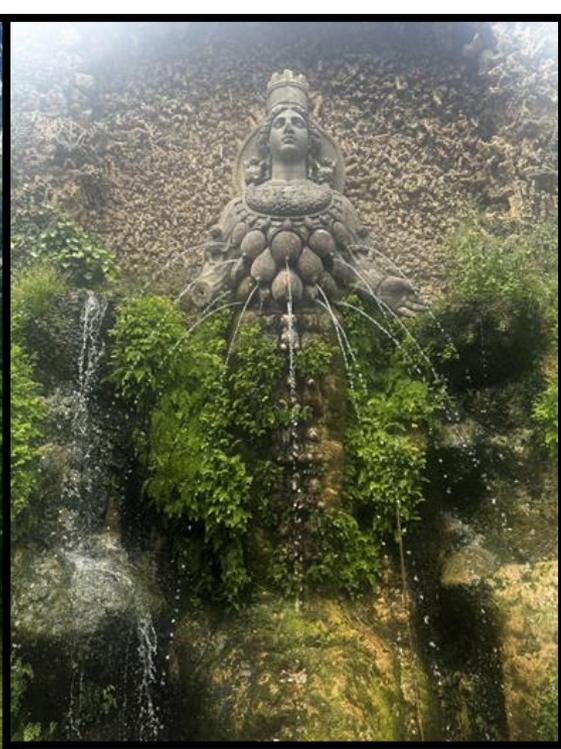


May 21: Bus trip to **Tivoli** where we had a quick lunch (Roman Pizza, *Suppli*, Potato Croquettes, and the students tried their first Italian cocktail: Spritz!



After lunch, we went to visit **Villa d'Este** in Tivoli: a UNESCO world heritage site. The gardens of the Villa d'Este are among the earliest and finest of the Italian *giardini delle meraviglie* and symbolize the flowering of Renaissance culture. With its impressive concentration of fountains (500!), nymphs, grottoes, troughs and pools, cascades, plays of water, and music, it constitutes a much-copied model for European gardens. A magic place filled with beauty, myths, genius, and peace. One fountain periodically surges to splash unsuspecting visitors; a water organ fountain plays music at set times; a long row of 100 different "face" fountains offers an intimate place to take a stroll... The rooms of the Palace d'Este built on the ruins of an ancient Roman villa (stunning!) were ambitiously decorated under the tutelage of the stars of the late Roman Mannerism, such as Livio Agresti, Federico Zuccari, Durante Alberti, Girolamo Muziano, Cesare Nebbia and Antonio Tempesta.









May 21: after visiting Villa d'Este, we had a bus tour through the beautiful Tuscan countryside and arrived at our first hotel in Arezzo (Tuscany). We first had a great dinner at our hotel "Minerva" (4 stars): pappardelle al ragu, the famous Florentine steak, roasted potatoes, a great meringue dessert with hot melted chocolate on it, and of course Tuscan wine!





After dinner, we had a night walk in the city of Arezzo. **Arezzo**: located in southeastern Tuscany, clearly visible on a hilltop at the crossroads of four valleys. The area houses many artifacts, its ancient origins are verified by the stone tools and the so-called Man of the Elm who was discovered here, dating back to the Paleolithic era. The original foundation of the city was Etruscan, *Aritim*, and dates from around the 9th century B.C. It quickly became one of the most pivotal centers in Tuscany, playing an important role over the centuries due to its strategic position along the Roman Via Cassia. Arezzo boasts a wide range of sites to see including fortresses, monuments, churches, and museums which all offer visitors a chance to step back into history. There are even the remains of a Roman amphitheater!

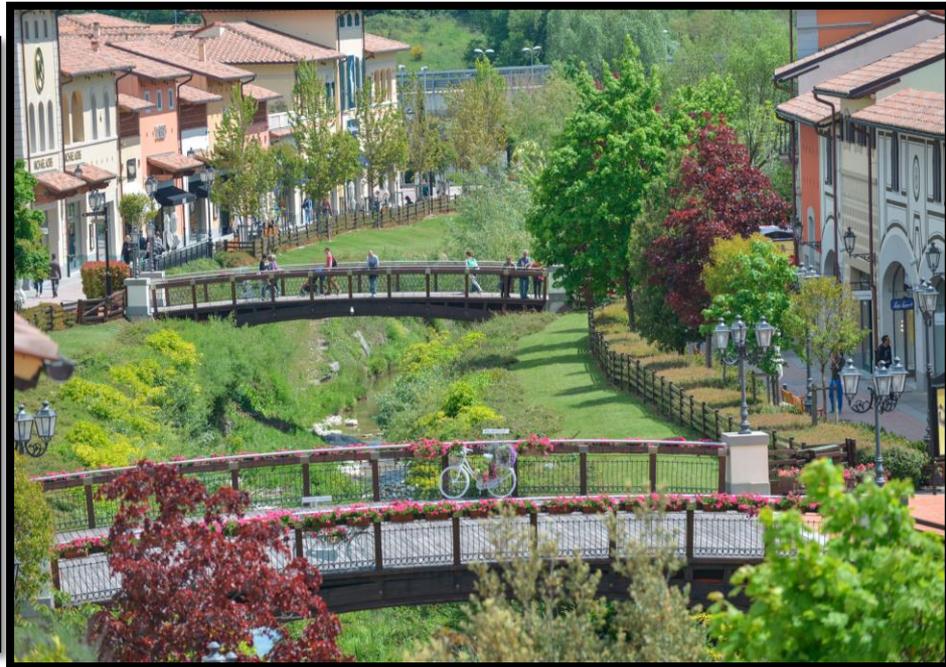


View from our hotel



May 22: Breakfast at our hotel, and then bus tour to our first destination for the day, the beautiful outlet “Il Barberino” for some shopping....









After shopping, we got back on our bus for a trip to Peschiera del Garda (in the Veneto region, in the North). Our hotel is in front of lake Garda. WOW! **Peschiera del Garda** offers its visitors visible signs of every historical era through which it has lived: from the age of pile-dwellers (stilt-house inhabitants) during the Roman Age, and from the early to late Medieval years in which the Scala Family ruled, to the Venetian era, then the Napoleonic Empire, to the Hapsburg rule, when Peschiera was one of the four fortresses of the Austrian *Quadrilatero*, at the time the most powerful defensive system in Italy, and finally to the Italian Risorgimento (1800s). Today its historic center, with its shops, cafes, restaurants.... is a great place for shoppers and foodies. It is completely enclosed in high Venetian walls, a buffer between the town and the waters that circle it completely, and that endow it with its pentagonal form.



Photo from our hotel.

After a nice shower, it is time to go exploring Borghetto sul Mincio! Our bus is waiting for us, to take us to Borghetto where we will also have dinner.





Borghetto sul Mincio is one of those places that seem unreal. Like a fairy tale. You arrive here crossing the Visconteo bridge and you discover a tiny village basically lying on the Mincio river, a perfect place for a romantic getaway: stone houses, some ancient watermills, the view of on the melancholic ruins of the medieval bridge and the medieval castle appearing among the trees on the hill. It offers great restaurants and bars, and they claim to have the best tortellini! We had *Aperitivo* first, and then dinner at “Il Gatto Moro”. Students ordered a variety of different dishes on the menu... It was another great dinner!







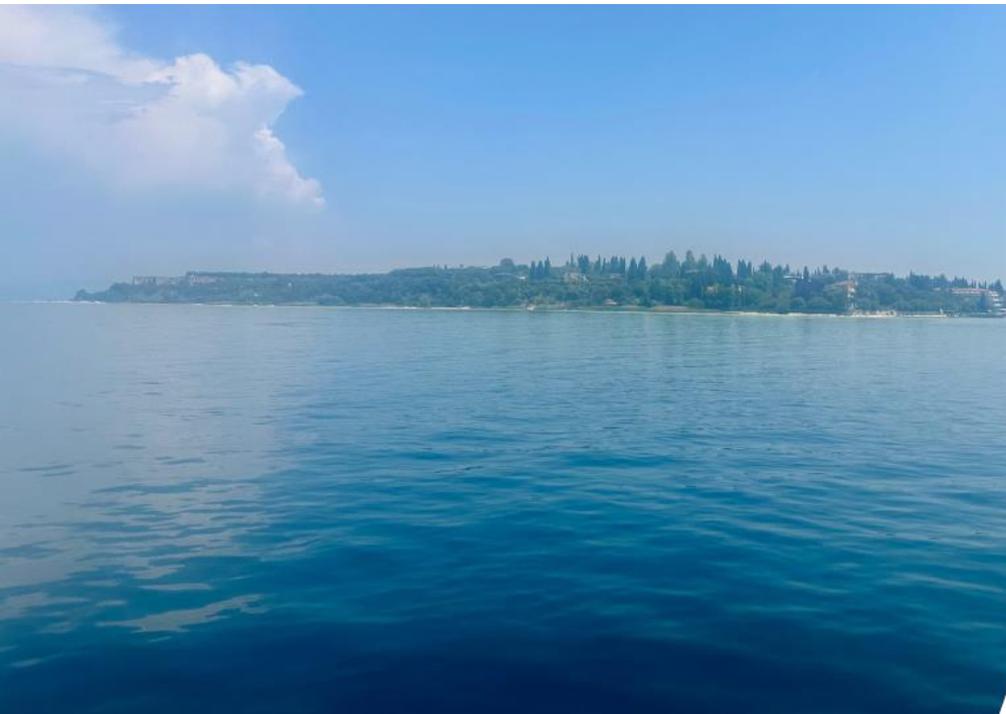


May 23: Breakfast in front of the lake!





May 23: ferry trip to Sirmione. Sirmione is a resort town on the southern edge of lake Garda. It is known for its Rocca Scaligera, a medieval castle (built in the 12th century) overlooking the lake, for the ancient Roman *Grotte di Catullo* (Roman Villa built during the first century AD), for its wonderful natural thermal baths, and for its restaurants, cafes, shops... Just below the ruins of the Roman house of the poet Catullus, is the rocky Jamaica Beach, very much loved by the students, also because of the great cocktails they offer! It was such a beautiful sunny day!











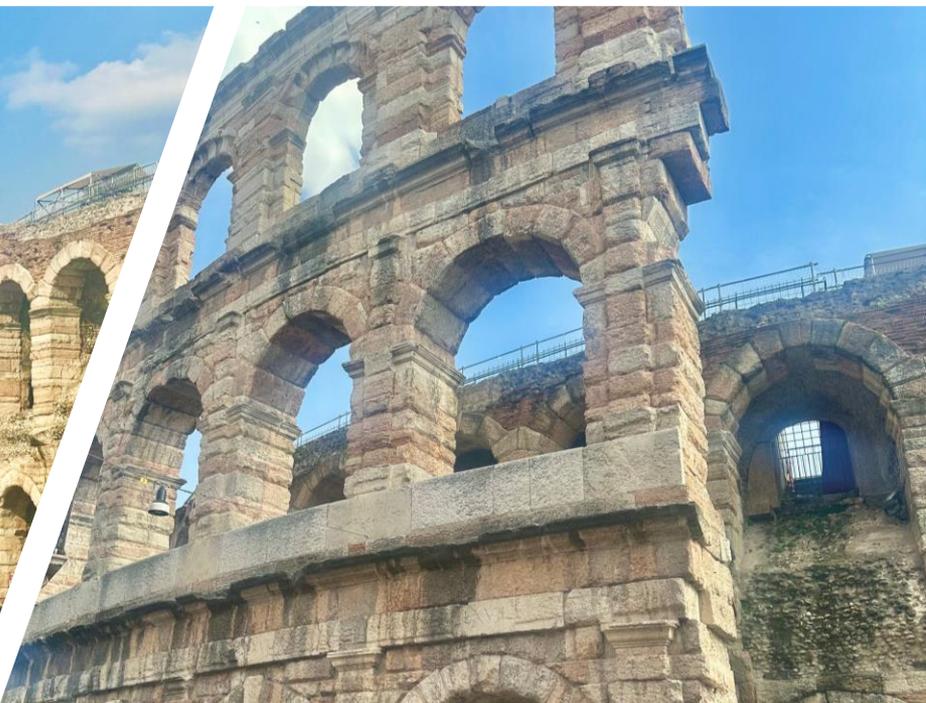


Back to Peschiera del Garda. We are quite hungry....
It's time for some pizza!
And we got free limoncello!





May 24: Bus Trip to **Verona**. Best known for its Shakespeare associations, Verona attracts a multinational gaggle of tourists to its pretty piazzas and knot of lanes, most in search of Romeo & Juliet.... But beyond the heart-shaped kitsch and Renaissance romance, Verona is a bustling center, its heart dominated by a mammoth, remarkably well-preserved 1st-century Roman amphitheater, that still offers musical and cultural events. Add to that countless churches, a couple of architecturally fascinating bridges over the Adige river, regional wine and food from the Veneto hinterland, great shopping, and some impressive art. The city is, of course, a UNESCO world heritage site.











dear *Juliet*

Giulietta abita qui, scrivile!

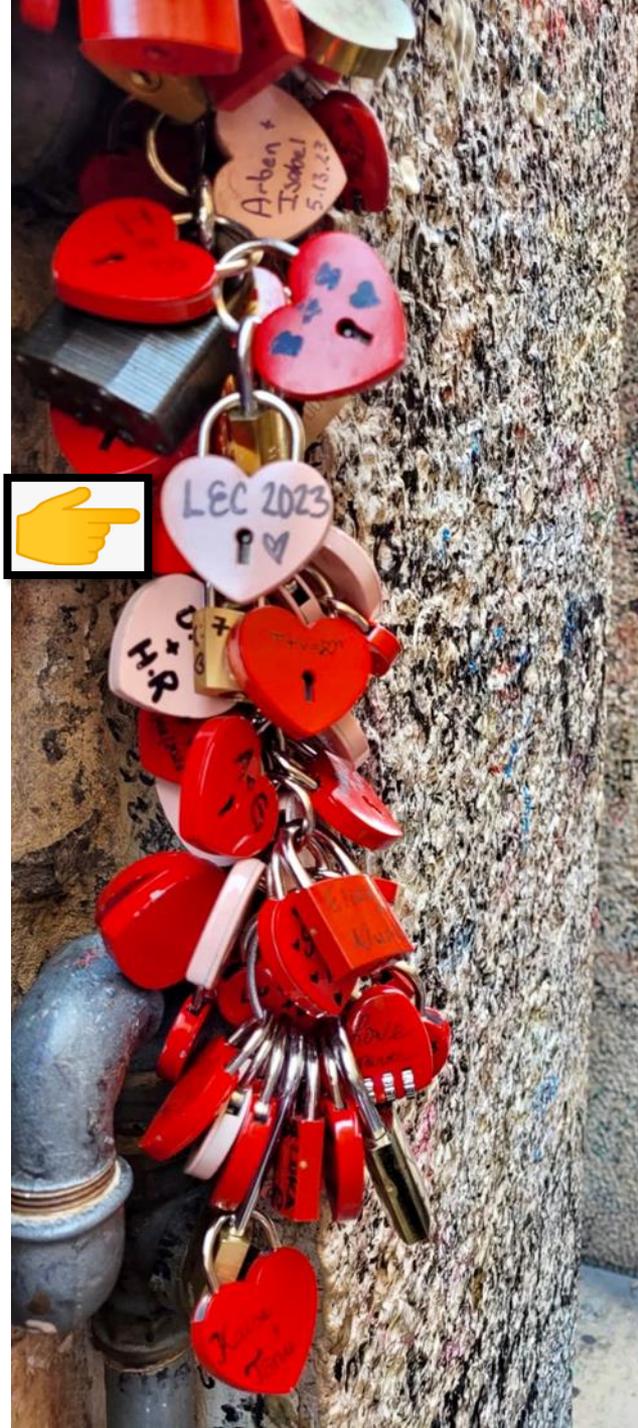
Julia wohnt hier, schreib ihr!

Juliette habite ici, écrivez-lui!

Juliet lives here, write to her!

Julietta vive aquí, ¡Escríbele!













May 25: Bus Trip to Malcesine. **Monte Baldo** (a mountain range in the Alps) by cable car, for a spectacular view of lake Garda and a nice walk/hike on the mountain!









After a wonderful hike on Monte Baldo, and a cappuccino, hot chocolate with whipped cream, some food, snacks at an altitude of 2,000 meters, we got back in our bus for our next destination: the city of Trento.

Here are two photos of lake Garda from the bus, *on the road* to Trento.

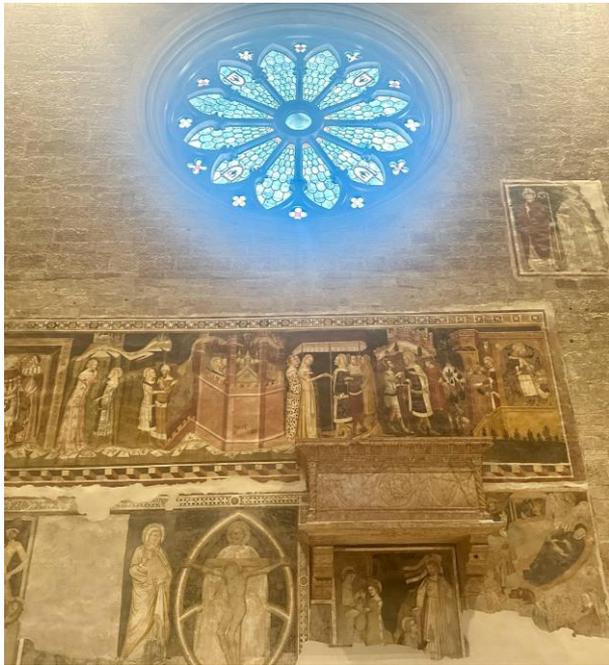




Trento lies in a wide glacial valley called the Adige valley just south of the Alps foothill range Dolomite Mountains, where the Fersina River and Avisio rivers join the Adige River. The city contains a picturesque Medieval and Renaissance historic center, with ancient buildings such as Trento Cathedral, and the Castello del Buonconsiglio (13th-century castle). Although its location at the junction of the trading route from Venice up the Val Sugana with the road over the Brennero Pass made it an important city since Roman times, its place in history was assured when the **Council of Trent** met and deliberated here from 1545 to 1563.









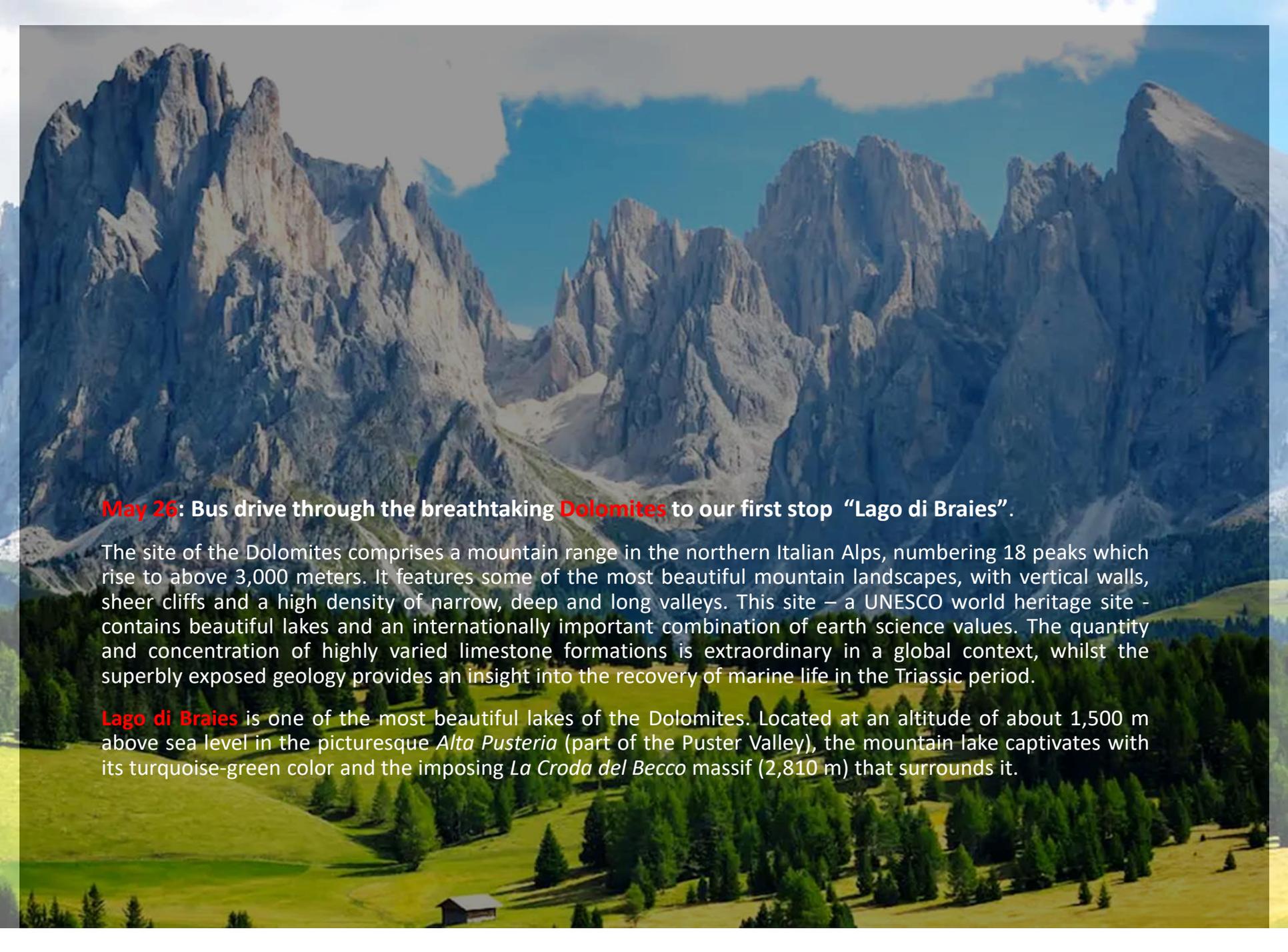




Dinner in Malcesine on lake Garda, not far from Peschiera del Garda. They offered us free prosecco and appetizers while we were waiting for a table, and free limoncello! We surely loved this place!! Thank you to Mauro, our bus driver, for recommending this restaurant.



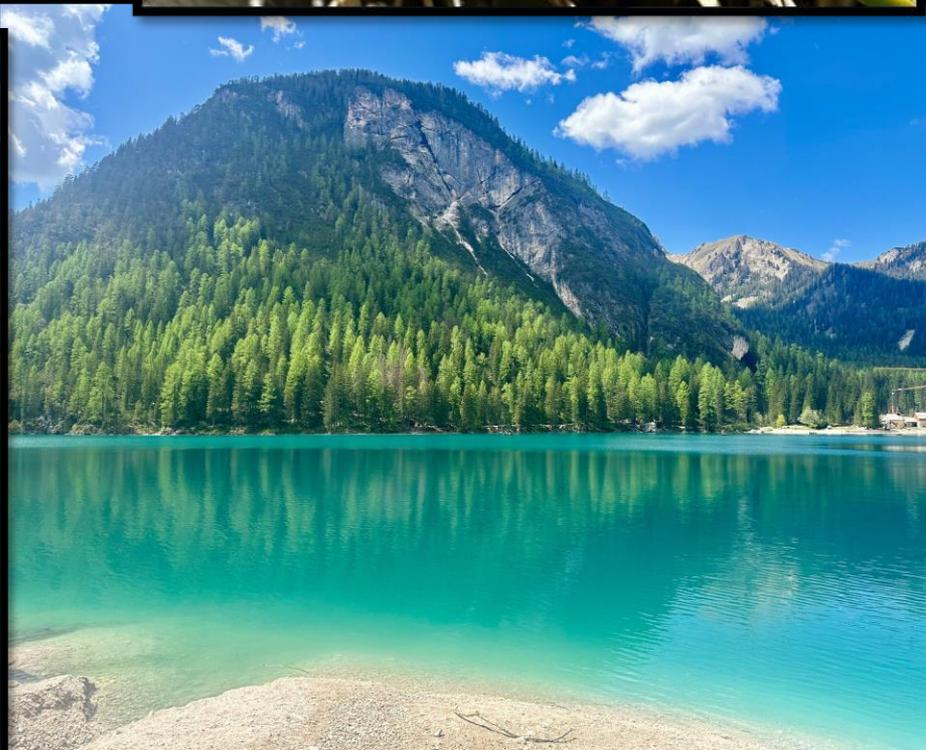




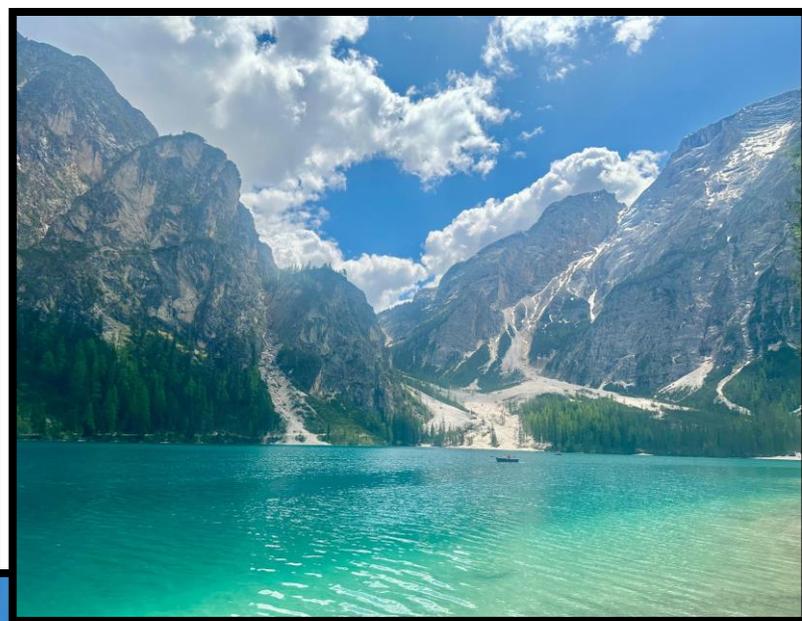
May 26: Bus drive through the breathtaking **Dolomites** to our first stop “Lago di Braies”.

The site of the Dolomites comprises a mountain range in the northern Italian Alps, numbering 18 peaks which rise to above 3,000 meters. It features some of the most beautiful mountain landscapes, with vertical walls, sheer cliffs and a high density of narrow, deep and long valleys. This site – a UNESCO world heritage site - contains beautiful lakes and an internationally important combination of earth science values. The quantity and concentration of highly varied limestone formations is extraordinary in a global context, whilst the superbly exposed geology provides an insight into the recovery of marine life in the Triassic period.

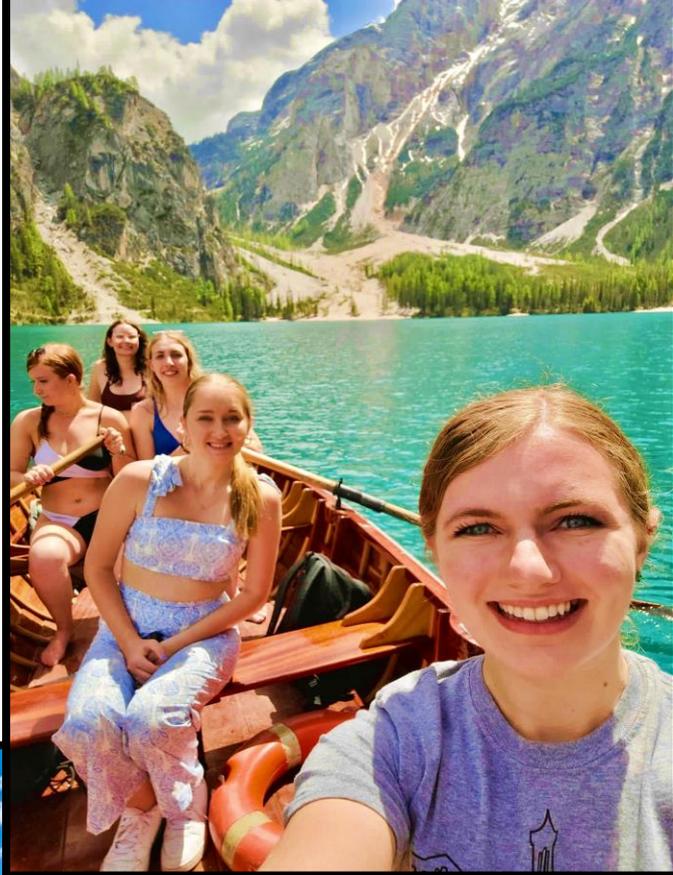
Lago di Braies is one of the most beautiful lakes of the Dolomites. Located at an altitude of about 1,500 m above sea level in the picturesque *Alta Pusteria* (part of the Puster Valley), the mountain lake captivates with its turquoise-green color and the imposing *La Croda del Becco* massif (2,810 m) that surrounds it.









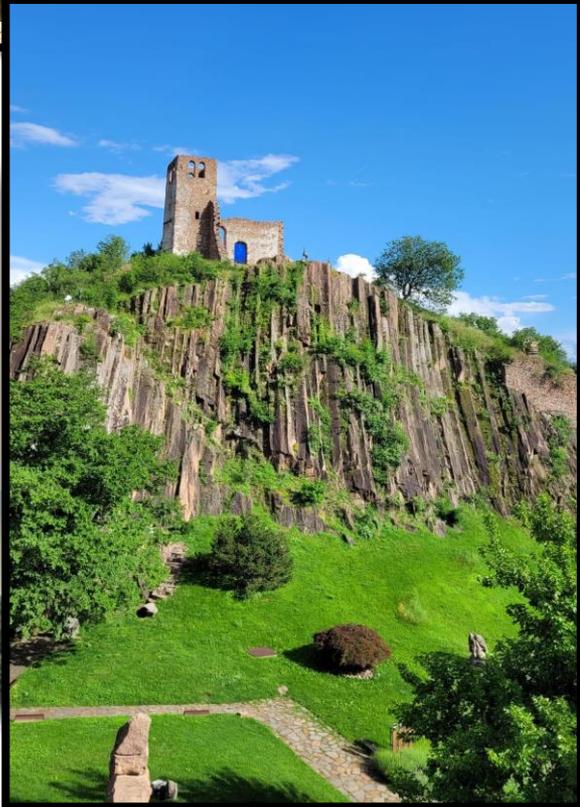


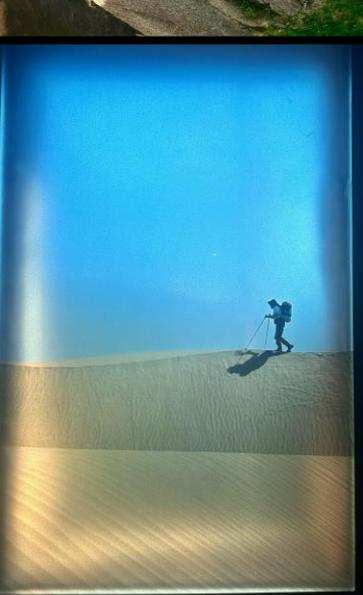






After an incredible day spent at Lake Braies, we went to visit the **MMM Firmian** in Bolzano. Legendary mountaineer Reinhold Messner has transformed several locations in the Dolomites into branches of the Messner Mountain Museum (MMM). Each branch is focused on a different aspect of the history and traditions of mountaineering, both in Italy and around the world. Set in medieval Sigmundskron Castle (in Italian *Castello Firmiano*), **MMM Firmian** artfully melds the ancient castle setting with high-tech exhibits dedicated to the history of human interaction with the mountains and modern art installations. Walking trails fan out from the castle and offer viewing points for quiet contemplation with the spectacular mountain landscape surrounding the site.



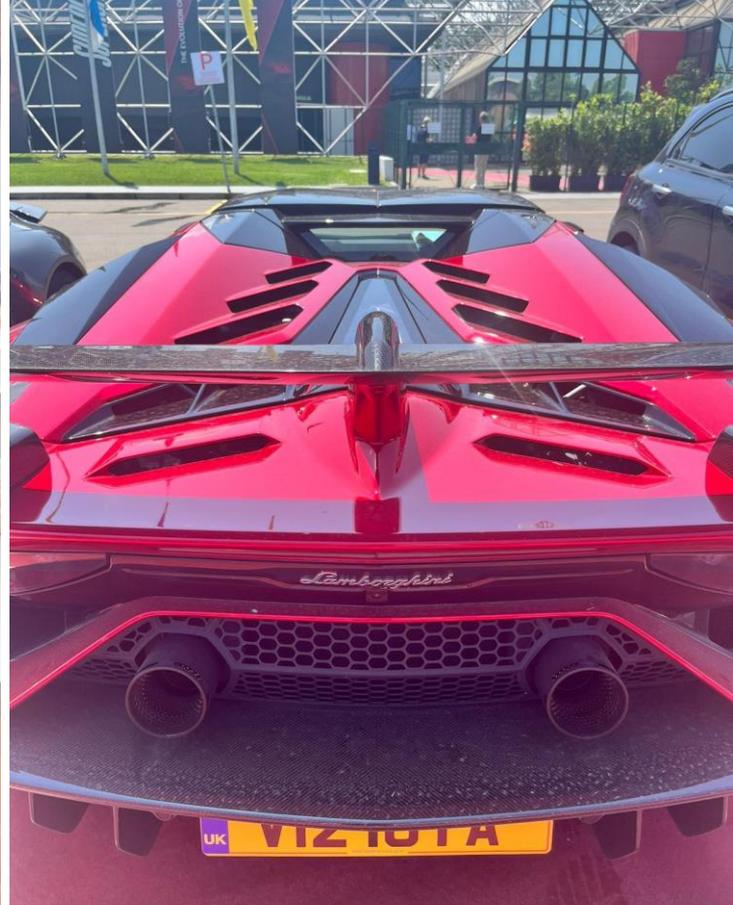




May 27: Bus trip to our first destination Maranello to visit the **Ferrari museum**. **Maranello** is a town in the region of Emilia-Romagna in Northern Italy. It is worldwide known as the home of Ferrari and Scuderia Ferrari Formula One racing team. Ferraris are produced exclusively in Maranello, Italy, which has been the home of this world-renowned automaker since Enzo Ferrari moved the factory there in 1943. The museum is not just for cars; there are also trophies, photographs and other historical objects relating to the Italian motor racing industry. The exhibition also introduces technological innovations, some of which had made the transition from racing cars to road cars.







After lunch at the Ferrari museum in Maranello, we went back to Tuscany, to our third hotel, this time in Montepulciano. Some students told me that this was the cutest hotel they have ever been. **Hotel Il Marzocco**, is the oldest in town. It was built in 1500 as a farm of the nearby convent. In 1860 it became a hotel and since the early 1900s it has been run by the same family. The hotel looks like a large house where the atmosphere of the old times is still kept. Its bedrooms open on wide lounges that, like the reading room and the sitting room, are furnished with genuine XIX century pieces. Some bedrooms have balconies or terraces with a view on the valleys, other ones have their windows over the Renaissance houses of the old town.

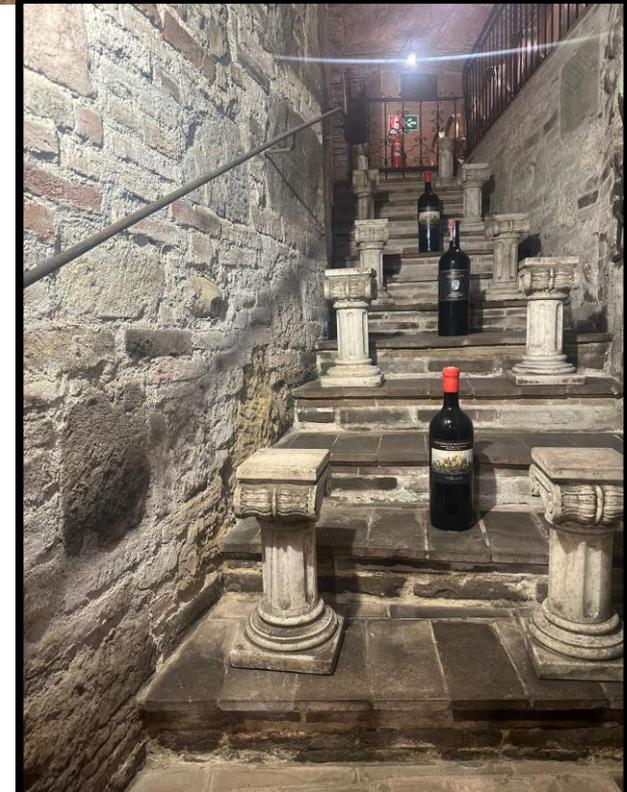


On the way to Montepulciano, we stopped to take some photos of the poppy fields and vineyards in the Tuscan countryside.





We toured (on foot!) the picturesque town of Montepulciano, had some free wine/cheese/salami/crostini tasting (WOW!) and visited an old wine cellar. We then had dinner just in front of our hotel, a great night walk to also get gelato, as usual, and they offered so many great flavors including raspberry prosecco! Students ended up buying wine, cheese, salami, souvenirs, and other gifts. **Montepulciano**: standing high atop a hill in southern Tuscany, Montepulciano is a medieval town of rare beauty highly recommended visiting in Tuscany. The city, full of elegant Renaissance palaces, ancient churches, charming squares and hidden corners, boasts vast panoramas all over the wonderful Val d'Orcia and Val di Chiana valleys that surround it. Montepulciano has received great attention following the filming of the vampire saga *Twilight* sequel *New Moon*. Piazza Grande is the heart of Montepulciano and the setting for its main events. A walk-through Montepulciano is the best way to view the town and its beautiful landmarks as well as enjoy stunning views of the surrounding countryside covered by **vineyards** producing the famous Nobile wine!











May 28: bus drive to the airport of Rome to fly back to Cleveland.

From the students:

- *It saddens me to call our trip a “once in a lifetime” experience because it was so incredible... I will be answering questions and telling stories from this trip for the rest of my life. I want to say “Grazie mille” [= one thousand thank you] for planning such an unbelievable adventure for us.*
- *Our trip was so magical in so many different ways. It truly felt like a movie.... This has been an incredible experience and opportunity that I will forever cherish. It has given me and shaped my background into having a better awareness of other cultures and identities. Thank you again Professor Basile!*
- *It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to travel to Italy with my Lake Erie College classmates on the cultural school trip. Each day provided an abundance of cultural discoveries, culinary delights, and new friendships, from the exciting moments at the airport in Rome to the breathtaking landscapes of Lago di Braies. This trip gave me a better understanding... It surpassed my expectations, and I cannot wait to go back! The memories in Italy will always hold a special place in my heart.*
- *This Enriching Journey through Italy: Exploring Culture, Cuisine, and Nature was a transformative adventure that broadened my horizons, deepened my understanding of different cultures, and left an indelible mark on my heart.*
- *I’m so grateful that Dr. Basile was so welcoming and helpful in getting me on this trip. The one-credit course was very helpful - it gave me a basic knowledge of the language and allowed me to meet the other students going on the trip, most of whom I would never have met otherwise. Above all else, it got me excited for the places we were going to visit, and an understanding and appreciation for the history behind all the cities on our itinerary. [...] My family is already annoyed by how many times I’ve started a sentence with “Well, when I went to Italy....” but I am only doing that because of how much it has genuinely changed my perspective... Dr. Basile, I cannot thank you enough for allowing me to come on this trip... I am eternally grateful to have been involved. Thank you so very much; I hope to see you again soon!*
- *My trip to Italy was an amazing experience! I learned and saw so much in just one week, and I already want to return as soon as possible. I enjoyed experiencing so many wonderful places and entering historical and famous places. I will always remember what an amazing experience I had during my first time out of the country. Thank you so much Dr. Basile for organizing this trip, and for encouraging me to continue my Italian studies! This was an unforgettable opportunity that brought new memories and friends that I will cherish forever.*