

SYLLABUS

Fibers In Florence Summer 2026

Barbara S. Pickett

Italian, on-site learning, interacting with weavers, supporting staff and locals

6 credit hours (4 cr hrs in-studio; 2 cr hrs Italian culture)

Total contact 188 hours: 114 in-studio instruction; 74 Italian culture & group activities

ARTF 456/556 Workshop

Florence, Italy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 3-week intensive studio is a unique experience to learn fabric analysis, Jacquard design and weaving from Eva Basile, the Foundation Lisio's expert instructor. Field trips to local museums and textile bottegas are led by the resident manager. Students work across the hall from the silk production looms. They interact daily with the weavers and support staff. They with the resident manager are housed in shared apartments on Lisio's grounds in a true Italian neighborhood.

Location and Facilities at the Foundation Lisio

The Foundation Lisio is located on a gated estate in the south hills of Florence about 25 minutes by bus from city center. Besides the well-equipped classrooms, there is a computer lab, an extensive textile reference library, an archive collection, the production silk weaving studio, and three apartments for students and the resident manager, a park and a church dedicated to the patron saint of weavers. Students share two modest apartments located on the gated grounds. The resident manager resides in the third. The kitchens allow students to prepare economical meals and store food. Wi-Fi will be available in the apartments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Instructional goals

to experience the full manual Jacquard weaving process from initial design sketch to woven cloth
to experience working on a design team of 2 or 3 students with a common goal
to learn skills of the textile curator/historian, analyzing and identifying fabric weave structures
to observe and learn from Lisio's professional weavers on-site at the looms
to learn about textile curatorship duties administering Lisio's Archive
to experience Italian design/culture by visiting museums, galleries, design related businesses
to experience Italian culture through everyday activities like grocery shopping, riding public transportation in conversational Italian
to see textile professionals at work beyond academic studies

Student immediate outcomes

- Understand the steps in the fabric design process used in studio and textile industry
- Gain experience and confidence in working on a design team with common goals and deadlines
- Comprehend the tasks and activities of textile professionals
- Gain confidence and self-reliance operating in another culture and language
- Know that the Jacquard's binary system set the foundation for digital thinking and design

Student long-range outcomes

Many students who have completed the Fibers in Florence program have considered it a highlight in their undergraduate work. I have kept in contact with students and include a partial list of their accomplishments to illustrate long-range outcomes:

- 3 have earned national scholarships that brought national recognition to the UO Fibers
- 2 have worked in the Design Department in Women's Wear at the Pendleton Woolen Mills
- 1 is the manager of a leading gallery in Portland
- 1 has written two weaving books
- 1 teaches digital Jacquard design and weaving at PSU
- 1 teaches and heads Fibers at the University of Kentucky
- 1 is a national textile supplier
- 1 served an internship at a New York city museum based on her experience with fine silk fabrics
- 1 became a textile conservationist
- many run their own art studios, interior design companies and work on product design teams.

Students who are attracted to programs such as Fibers in Florence are already highly motivated, self-assured, and eager to achieve. Quite a few undergraduate students went on to earn BFA and MFA degrees. The results of their work in the Fibers in Florence program strengthened their portfolios and bridged their way into professions in the textile field.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Undergraduate coursework includes full days in the studio learning fabric analysis and Jacquard design and weaving from Eva Basile and outside studio hours with the resident manager in group activities visiting to local museums, textile bottegas, and artisan studios as well as navigating normal life necessities like grocery shopping, post office, dining out, public transportation, and currency exchange.

Studio instruction: Eva Basile first teaches how to take a swatch of fabric and figure out how it was woven. Then she introduces the Jacquard loom with its binary system, the innovation that led to the computer. The students work in teams of two or three with a common goal to design a fabric with a certain weave structure and go from initial sketch to finished cloth in three weeks. Eva assisted by the resident manager guides and troubleshoots throughout the complex process.

Each student weaves an exhibition piece and a color-way showing the same design in different colors. Each team weaves a sample for the Lisio and the UO archives plus small samples for other students. Each team records and turns in the point paper design and all the data needed to reproduce the design. Each team mounts samples to be exhibited at UO or another venue including any visual support items.

Graduate level coursework: in addition to the above, the graduate student proposes an independent study, obtains approval from the resident manager, completes the project, and submits a final report by the last day of the course.

One or two hours of homework outside of the studio prepares for the next day's tasks. The waking hours outside the studio are filled with rich Italian cultural experiences. The resident manager leads the group on visits to a selection of museums, churches, and other venues in Florence and the environs. He/she also guides students in informal activities providing support and assistance. In past years I have slanted these activities to serve particular interests of students. For instance, I arranged group visits to the Restoration Laboratory at the Fortezza da Basso, to a major furniture design studio for Interiors and Product Design students, to a craft fair where self-employed artisans demonstrate their skills and sell their works, and to artisans' bottegas. Students are encouraged to explore Florence on their own too, the Uffizi Museum, Michelangelo's David, the Pitti Palace, the Duomo, all beckon.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Is done by the resident manager in consultation with Eva Basile

Students turn in a notebook or journal documenting their fabric analysis work
Students turn in a short Powerpoint documenting their step-by-step design process with captioning
Students turn in a digital file of selected images of their personal Italian cultural experience
Students keep a daily journal of writings, sketches and reflections on the museums, exhibitions, performances attended, and other experiences they encountered.

Students submit the above materials to the resident manager at noon the day before the last studio class. The resident manager reviews, grades and returns the work prior to the students' departures.

Evaluation (excellent attendance is crucial, even 1 missed day is significant) any missed time needs to be made up

In-studio (4 credit hours)

85% attendance, involvement & performance in team projects

15% studio care

Italian cultural activities (2 credit hours)

85% on evidence of involvement observed and recorded in written and photo-journals

15% on citizenship, being a team player, leaving the apartment in good condition

COURSE OUTLINE/COURSE READINGS/BIBLIOGRAPHY

The core of this course is an intensive, hands-on design studio. Students receive hand-outs and compile them into a reference notebook. Students receive a list of websites to explore before and during their stay. To date there is no published textbook in English that covers the contents of this course.

Academic Misconduct

Students are instructed that they are representatives of the United States, of the University of Oregon and of the Fibers in Florence program. Their behavior should bring merit and praise to themselves as well as the institutions.

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Generative AI Course Policy

Students are expected to do their own work and to submit evidence of their personal involvement in the course materials. AI-generated materials are NOT acceptable.

Accessible Education

This course has an active studio. Students learn to operate manual Jacquard looms and auxiliary equipment. Weaving is done from a standing position with the right foot operating the Jacquard pedal. Passing the weft requires the use of both hands and arms. A student who lacks the physical ability to perform the above tasks could possibly audit the course and be an observer in-studio. For group activities special arrangements for the disabled student could be made prior to visits to insure access, comfort and welcome. A disabled student could be housed in the downstairs apartment with its walk-in shower.

The University of Oregon and I are dedicated to fostering inclusive learning environments for all students and welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) assists students with disabilities in reducing campus-wide and classroom-related barriers. [If you have or think you have a disability](#) and experience academic barriers, please contact the AEC to discuss appropriate accommodations or support. Visit 360 Oregon Hall or aec.uoregon.edu for more information. You can contact AEC at 541-346-1155 or via email at uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Reporting Obligations

I am a designated reporter. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see [Employee Reporting Obligations](#) on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing sex- or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit safe.uoregon.edu for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123 to request information and resources. Students are not required to participate in an investigation to receive support, including requesting academic supportive measures. Additional resources are available at investigations.uoregon.edu/how-get-support.

I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Pregnancy Modifications. Pregnant and parenting students are eligible for academic and work modifications related to pregnancy, childbirth, loss of pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, lactation, and related medical conditions. To request pregnancy-related modifications, students should complete the [Request for Pregnancy Modifications form](#) on the OICRC website. OICRC coordinates academic and other modifications for pregnant and parenting students to ensure students can continue to access their education and university programs and activities.