

Vanderbilt in Venice



Student guide to the Vanderbilt in Venice Program

Packing



GENTS

Pack **as light as possible**. I got away with stuffing 1 camping backpack and my normal school backpack to the brim (though if you do plan to buy souvenirs or anything make sure you leave room to bring stuff back with you). The weather is **very hot** most of the time, so you don't need too much warm clothing. You should be able to get away with one "nice" outfit (jeans/khakis and a button up) and one light jacket. Everything else you pack should be shorts and short sleeve shirts, and definitely make sure you bring tennis shoes.

If you are willing to have only a few outfits and wash them regularly, you don't need to pack much. One carry-on bag + a backpack was enough for me

FOR EVERYONE

Prepare for rain, pack **comfortable shoes**.

Make sure you have the **correct adaptor** – different parts of Europe have different types of outlets.

Keep in mind – you will likely **NOT** have a dryer.

Raincoat & shoes you don't mind getting wet.

Bathing suit – Lido beach is a quick vaporetto ride (water taxi) from Venice!

Light jacket – it is unexpectedly chilly the first couple of weeks in Venice, particularly at night.

LADIES

Don't worry about bringing shampoo/conditioner/body wash/lotion etc. You can buy it there for just as cheap over there and convenience shops are everywhere.

PACK LIGHT. But leave room for souvenirs. It is hard to get luggage around Europe/Venice in particular, so keep this in mind.

Pack a nice outfit for when you inevitably go to Padua or Venice Bar Association meeting – a slightly nicer dress and flats, with a cardigan. Attorneys will be in suits, but it is **NOT** necessary that you need to be. You will just feel more comfortable in flats/nice sandals paired with a nicer dress than shorts and flip-flops.

It is sometimes cool at night so pack thin layers – one light jacket and/or raincoat.

Housing in Venice

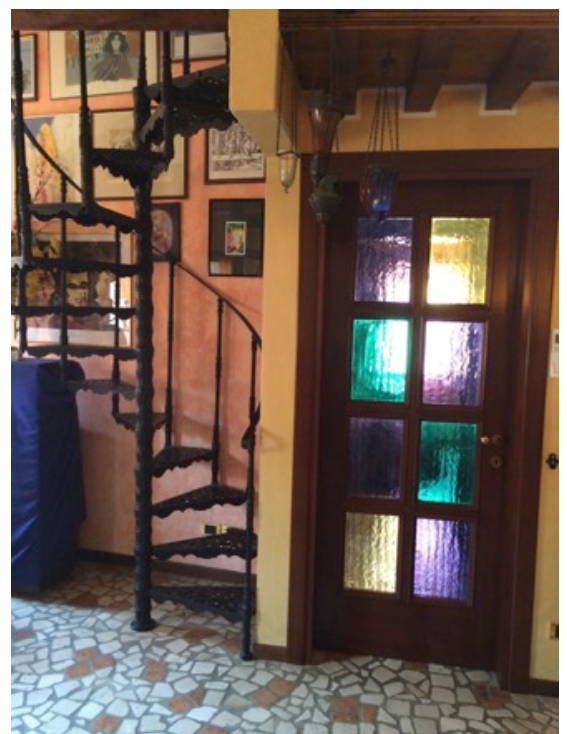
There are various neighborhoods in Venice that are great. The island itself is not that big, but be careful in choosing an apartment that isn't across the island – you will cross MANY bridges each day and take long HOT walks to school each day. Get an apartment with **air conditioning** – even though it is sometimes cool at night, there are mosquitos and they will bite you. The extra cost is WORTH IT, as it gets very hot towards the back half of the trip and leaving windows open lets in mosquitos.

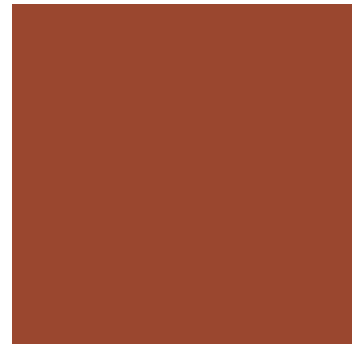
The Dorsoduro area is probably the most convenient. It is very close to school and Santa Margherita (the going out spot). Some students stayed in an apartment very close to the Palazzo Franchetti (our classroom building) called Palazzo Malipiero. It was very convenient, nice, and the landlord is easily accessible. Many students suggest living within 10-15 minutes from the school as daily foot travel can be a pain and it gets very hot quickly.

The two most helpful sites for finding great housing tend to be: [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) or [vrbo.com](https://www.vrbo.com). Get roommates to ensure the cheapest housing (if that is what you are looking for).

Be smart and shop around. Most importantly use your best resource – **previous students!!** We are here to help and can get you in touch with our old landlords, give you recommendations, etc. Many of the apartments students have stayed in throughout the years have been the same ones each year – just passed down to the next batch of students.

Put in the time to really research the island, where the classroom building is, and potential locations you'd be comfortable living in.





How to survive in Venice...

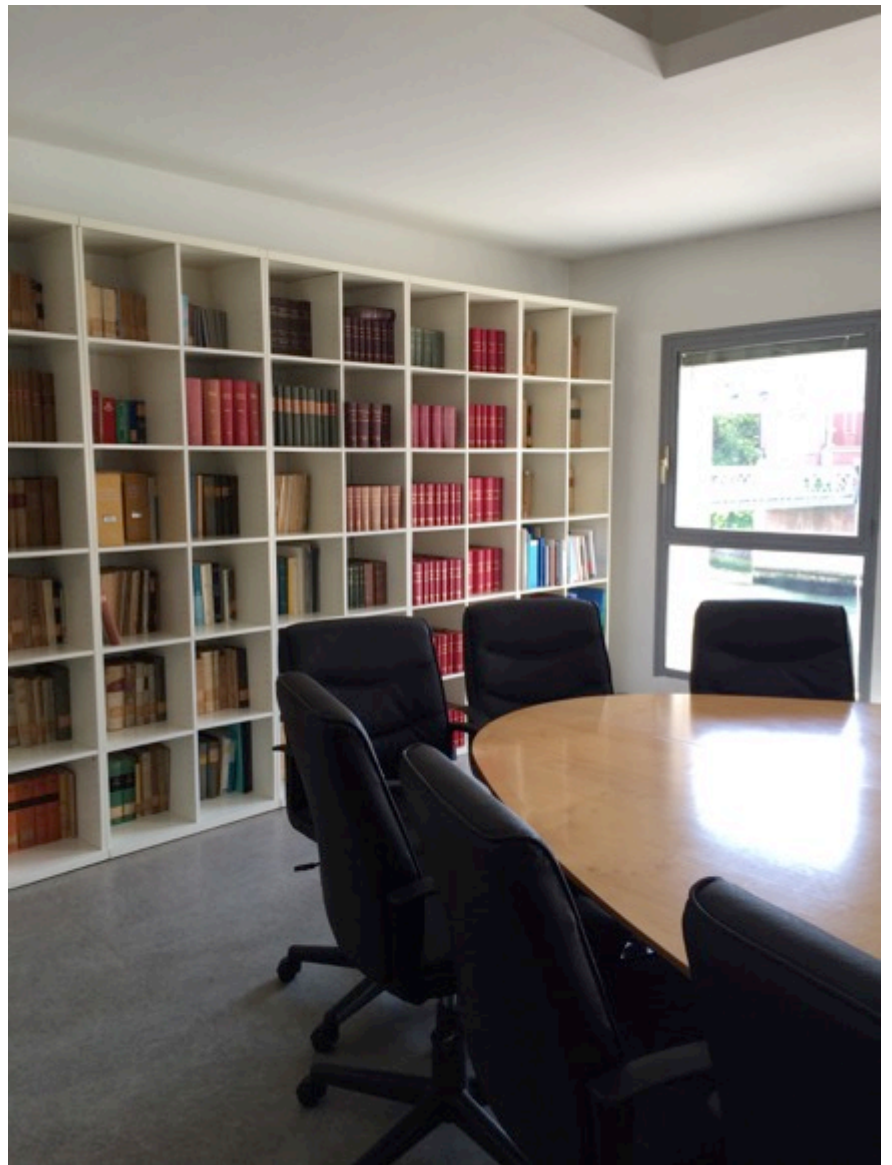
[practical ideas / warnings / etc.]

- Identify the nearest grocery store – probably a Punto or Conads. Take advantage of these so that you do not spend all of your money eating out at every meal.
- There is a small refrigerator in the classroom building at school – take advantage and bring lunch! Though there are quite a few restaurants in the area, they are not worth dining at for 6 weeks.
- If you don't plan on having cell data in Venice, get a hard map of the place. Your best bet is to get a couple of landmarks down as best you can, and navigate off those. – i.e. Piazza San Marco, Rialto Bridge, Academia Bridge.
- Venice is very touristy, and as such, has a ton of touristy restaurants. It's difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff, and in order to prevent yourself from growing tired of Italian food too quickly, I recommend consulting places like TripAdvisor, specifically when seeking out non-Italian options. There is a good Chinese restaurant near the fish market, for example, that I never would have found without TripAdvisor.
- Get to Venice a few days before the program starts if possible to get your bearings.
- Figure out exchange rates / currency / etc. ahead of time with your bank – know the daily or weekly ATM limits of your bank.
- Don't get sucked into buying a rose, selfie stick, or any other items people sell on the bridges and all over town.
- Because Venice is touristy, most everyone speaks English at least enough to get by. But immerse yourself in the culture and learn a few words.
- Get to know and love Spritz (typical Venetian drink) – but make sure you ask for it to be made with Prosecco rather than white wine so that it is not as flat tasting.
- Nightlife in Venice = Campo Santa Margherita – it is a large square with several bars and restaurants.
- Negotiate your price when buying any kind of souvenir.
- There's an Irish pub called Devils Forest on the island that has great burgers and beer for when you are inevitably craving that.

Books

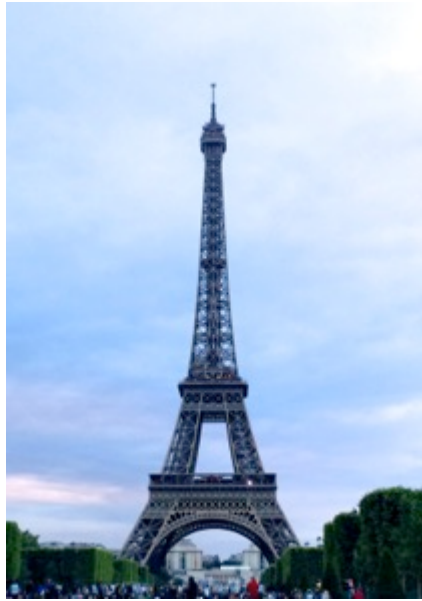
Books are very heavy. Most people either left their books in Italy or donated them to Professor Newton to be reused the following year. Contact either previous students or Professor Newton about inheriting the books that have been left in the classroom building in Venice. Share books with classmates.

Most of the class materials are available through Blackboard via pdf. Don't print (save the packing space) and just save to your computer. If materials are up before leaving America, save to your hard drive ahead of time. Internet is not very fast in Venice and downloading several articles / documents can take longer than we're used to.



Weekend Travel

... a MUST do!



Method of transportation

- Train: particularly useful for traveling throughout Italy. Cheap, particularly if you book ahead. [TrenItalia](#) is best for inter-Italy traveling.
- Flight: You can find cheap flights for travel throughout Europe using [EasyJet](#) or [RyanAir](#). Again, planning ahead is better. Other options are the standard Priceline / Orbitz / Kayak / Expedia.

Where to Go

This list could be endless, but here are common places people have gone in the past:

- Italy: Rome, Florence, Cinque Terre, Pisa, Amalfi Coast, Milan
- France: Paris, Nice
- Monaco
- Croatia
- Greece
- Netherlands: Amsterdam
- Austria: Vienna
- Hungary: Budapest
- Germany: Berlin, Munich, Hamburg
- Spain: Barcelona, Madrid, Ibiza
- Czech Republic: Prague

Planning

- Getting to Venice airport: don't use water taxi, they are outrageously expensive. Take the public vaporetto to bus stop and your pass will allow you to get on a bus to the airport..
- Staying in other cities: use www.airbnb.com, especially with small groups. In larger groups and in certain cities hostels are a good option: www.hostelworld.com
- Keep in mind exchange rates / currency. Note – Eastern Europe is not on the Euro and is therefore very cheap
- Book as far in advance as possible – the earlier the cheaper, generally.
- Talk to Sarah (or whomever the Italian program director will be) – he / she will be VERY valuable – particularly with travel throughout Italy.

Venice & 1L Internship



Is it hard to find an internship for second half?

The only difficulty in finding an internship for 1L summer comes from the fact that you are limited to those that take place during the second half of summer – particularly big firms in certain markets which only offer first half summer internships. With that said, it is a fairly common predicament that in no way disadvantages you with the job search.

Everyone that has gone to Venice has come back with a summer internship that has afforded them a great experience.

Splitting your summer between an internship and Venice is an incredible use of your time and experience – gives you a cultural learning opportunity as well as real world skills at an internship.



How do I find an internship?

Like any other job search for the rest of your classmates, there are a variety of resources VLS offers to 1Ls. Commit to Venice and then plan your summer around it. That way, in interviews you can brag about it having the first half of summer planned – making you a diverse candidate.

Talk to your career counselor about the opportunities for you. Participate in Spring OCI if any of the employers spark an interest for you. Use NALP.. Apply to judges for clerkships – they are generally very flexible with scheduling and will let you clerk whenever. Talk to professors – many Vanderbilt in Venice students come back and spend the rest of the summer researching with a professor (many of them will even pay you!). Spend time on Simplicity throughout the Spring and apply to any jobs that might interest you. And of course, talk to Professor Newton often. He is a great resource and will do whatever he can to ensure you find a job.



If you have somewhere you really want to work this summer (firm or elsewhere) and you really want to do Venice, don't be afraid to ask. Most law firms will work with you and allow you to do Venice and start a little later. Find where you want to work and negotiate (it's part of being a lawyer- they may even be impressed).

If you participate in Spring 1L OCI – don't only apply to jobs that specifically say second half only. A lot of times you can negotiate with them about splitting the summer in a screener interview once they hear your reasoning behind it.

From a student who researched for a professor: “ It gave me the opportunity to go to 3 job fairs during the summer. I had my 2L summer internship before OCI started.”



Venice

Credits



Do the credits earned actually help you?

The short answer to this is: YES, absolutely!

The long answer to this from past students:

- “My credits certainly did, just because I was able to get a pretty decent GPA boost as a result. Professor Newton will say this a million times, but it is very true so you should listen: this is VANDERBILT in Venice. Yes, you are in a foreign country and you want to do nothing but drink and eat and explore everything, but the exams are not set up for you to be able to completely blow off work for 2.5 weeks and then pull a grade out of your ass. You have to do at least a LITTLE legwork before exam day. It is not nearly as time-consuming as Vanderbilt in Nashville, but a little effort spent preparing goes a long way on exam day. The credits are also extremely beneficial if you want to get other credits outside of the law school and don't want to kill yourself doing so. I am applying for the JD/MSF program for my 3L year, and the 8 credits I got in Venice really help me free up some time in my remaining 4 semesters. I will either be able to take an average course load and get a second degree while I'm here (if I'm accepted to the program), or I will be able to take essentially the bare minimum credits each semester and still get one degree with ease.”
- “The credits earned in Venice have probably been the most helpful part about attending the program. With moot court, journal, and the job search 2L fall can be very busy and only having to take 11 hours this semester because of Venice has helped me immeasurably.”
- “The credits ABSOLUTELY help. Having just enrolled for Spring 2016 classes, I could not be more sure that the credits will end up helping every student who goes to Venice. After factoring in journal and moot court, I only have to take 12 credit hours per semester from here on out. This means I will be taking 3 or 4 classes maximum each semester. People who didn't go to Venice, are going to be taking somewhere around 15 hours each of the last 3 semesters. Even just a 3 credit hour difference per semester makes a huge impact on the stress level of the 2L and 3L years.”
- The eight-credit cushion allows you greater flexibility in planning your schedules for the rest of your law school career. In addition, you have a foundation going into 2L year that nobody else has.

From students who have been able to spend an entire semester at an internship:

- “The credits from Venice allowed me to take an internship abroad for a semester! Internships abroad only get 10 credits, so it is very hard to do unless you are willing to load up on classes during a regular semester or, alternatively, enjoy life in beautiful Venice for 6 weeks.”
- “If I hadn't gone to Venice, I wouldn't have been able to accept an externship with the United Nations. An externship only counts for 10 hours total. If I hadn't gone to Venice I would have needed to take 31 hours during 3L. Without Venice, taking the externship would mean taking 21 hours spring semester 3L year. Because of the Venice credits, I could spend the fall at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, and only need 13 credits when I get back in the spring to graduate.”

Venice & Future Employment Prospects

Does Venice enhance job prospects & how does it fit into the OCI Process?

"I think that one of the most beneficial things that Venice gives one in the OCI process is something **more unique to discuss**. Employers want to see if they can just talk with you in a casual manner. Connecting with someone about a favorite city in Italy, or how the Mona Lisa is smaller than you would have expected is a great way to spend some of the interview **bonding** with the interviewer."

"Going to Venice is a bold choice, and if one confidently frames it as such in the interview room then one can **stand out from the crowd**. Every interviewer will ask about Venice and it allows you to talk about your interest in international law or dealing with international clients in addition to talking about a specific class you loved and how the experience matured you. If international law isn't your thing, you can still frame it in a positive way by focusing on the extraordinary amount of face time with amazing professors that one simply cannot get in Nashville."


"Venice helps in seeking employment in some ways, and it hinders seeking employment in some ways. It certainly **helps in regards to your GPA if you take the program seriously**. Employers who only take a cursory glance at your resume and see your GPA, they won't necessarily see what went into that GPA. It also helps in that it gives you **something to talk about** in interviews... In interviews, I made sure to **emphasize the academic aspects** of the program when answering future questions. Pointing out why you thought the topics of the courses were interesting, or (even better) why you think they are **applicable for your employment future** is a great idea, and really went over well. I also got a lot of positive reactions when I explained that Venice allows me the schedule flexibility to pursue another degree while I am at Vanderbilt, though that is obviously something that does not apply to everybody."

"Venice is the only thing I talked about in pretty much all of my interviews. It shows you are a real person with **culture and personality**. Nobody really wants to talk about why you want to work at ABC law firm but they LOVE to talk about Italy and all the cool adventures you had over the summer. You will be memorable!"

"You have something huge to talk about during interviews that **sets you apart** from most other candidates."

Improved GPA entering OCI/the overall job search: "While this may not be true for people in the top 10% of the class, I truly believe that my grades in Venice improved my overall GPA just enough to get the interviews I wanted. Honestly, this is not because I was an above-average worker in Venice but because, unlike regular law school classes, the teachers are not required to grade on a tight curve."

Enhanced job prospects: "Even if I don't consider the benefits that came from a GPA boost, my 1L summer experience enhanced my job prospects in several ways. While many of you may not be familiar with the mechanics of OCI yet, nothing can be more damning to your interview than regurgitating the same vanilla narrative as the other eighty candidates that attorney screened across the country. Your chances of making a **lasting impression** on someone in twenty minutes (which is a must if you want a callback), your chances are significantly better if you spend the interview swapping stories about traveling through Europe rather than drawling on about the insights you had last semester in torts. Also, I was fortunate enough to get a great job for the second part of the summer through Professor Newton. While he can't guarantee you a 1L summer job upon enrollment, I am confident he will bend over backwards to help you in your job search."



From all of us Vanderbilt in
Venice alumni, we encourage you
to go!

Build lifelong relationships: “Aside from having one of the best summers of your life, you will meet a lot of new people in Venice and you will bolster your existing relationships. You may not be thinking in these terms now, but these relationships will be your most valuable asset when you enter the workforce and there is no better way to get to know your classmates than through experiences like Venice.”

Have the time of your life: “Law school is (probably) the last stretch of schooling you’ll have, so take the time now to travel, explore, learn, and immerse yourself in new cultures while you still have the ability to do so for such a long period of time.”

