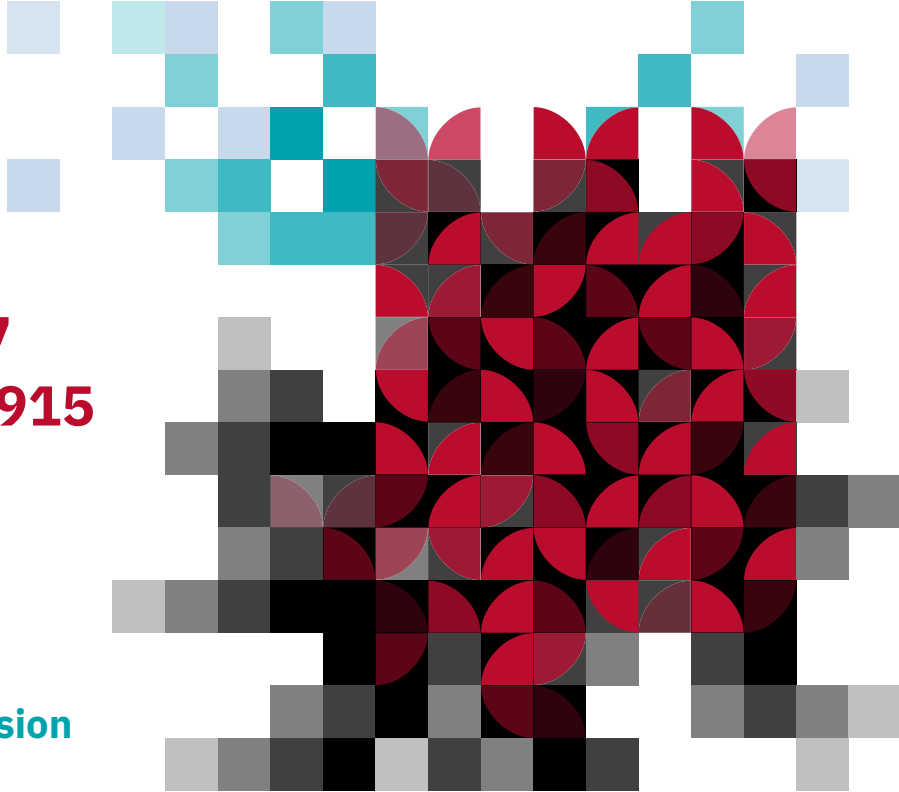




UGA Cortona Spring 2027 Thematic Inquiry ARST 4915

Mark Taggart, Instructor

01 Italy captures your attention

02 AI tools expand your options

03 You turn experience into expression

Your UGA Cortona semester in Italy is full of distinctive sights, sounds, and experiences. This course asks a simple question: what are you going to **make** out of everything you notice while you're here?

Thematic Inquiry is a studio class built around turning your semester abroad into a real body of creative work in photography, drawing, writing, design, or whatever media you already work in. You'll use your day-to-day experience in Italy as raw material, and you'll use AI tools as a thinking partner throughout, one who helps you notice patterns, ask sharper questions, and push past your first ideas.

By the end of the semester, your work goes on display in **La Mostra**, a public exhibition in Cortona. You'll also learn to format it digitally, so you can keep showing it after you're home.

Why this class is unique to UGA Cortona

This isn't a regular on-campus class with a "study abroad" tag slapped on it. Its whole structure depends on you actually being here:

- **Your material comes from your experience.** The course is built around collecting real observations, images, and reactions to your international experience.
- **The excursions are the coursework.** Roma, Siena, Firenze, Assisi... these aren't just field trips added to the syllabus. They're where you collect what eventually becomes finished work.
- **La Mostra is a real public exhibition.** You'll show finished work to the people of Cortona, not just turn in a paper or a file.

Working with AI is part of the course

This is not optional or occasional. You'll use a large language model (Claude, ChatGPT, and/or Gemini) throughout the semester to develop your ideas: asking questions, working through drafts, and seeing your own thinking from new angles. If you've been curious about AI but haven't built it into your creative process yet, this course is designed to get you there.

The free versions of Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini are enough to complete the coursework. You may **OPTIONALLY** use pro level LLMs, image generating tools (e.g. Adobe Firefly), and/or other AI tools, depending upon your project.

Questions?

Email me at mtaggart@uga.edu if you'd like to make sure this class is the right fit for you.