

STAP Experience Report

University of Bologna

Name: [REDACTED]

Host University: University of Bologna, Italy

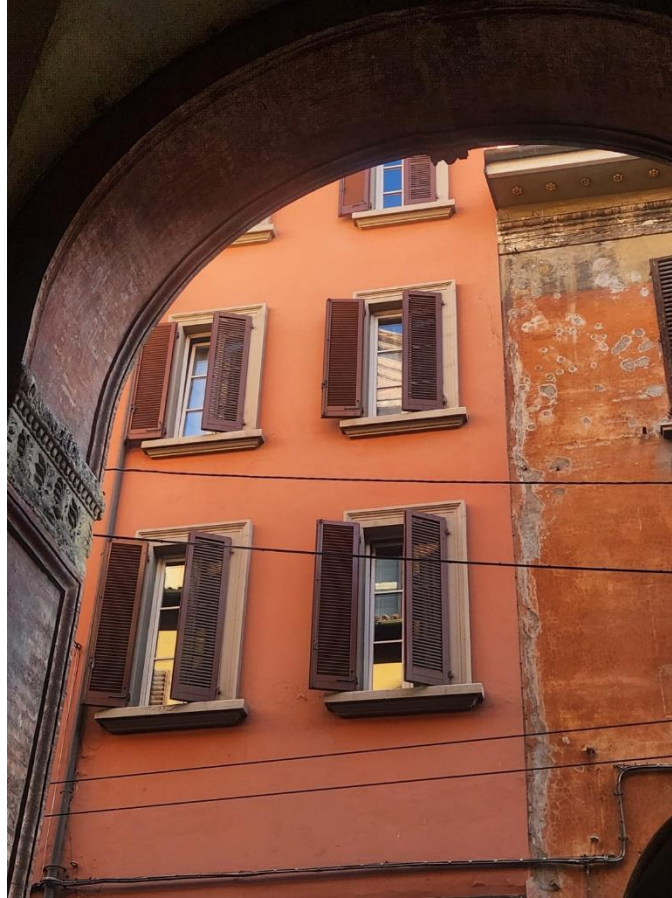
Semester: Winter semester / Fall term (01.09.2024 – 01.02.2025)

Department: Social Sciences – Political Sciences

Courses Attended:

- China in Africa
- Humanitarian Communication
- Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism
- Sociology of International Migrations
- Italian Level A2.3

Doing an Erasmus semester is a unique opportunity to learn more about yourself, immerse yourself in a culture entirely different from your own, and explore a new way of experiencing life. My time in Bologna—the people, the travels, and the Italian culture—left a deep impression on me and will always hold a special place in my life!



About the University of Bologna

One of the things I enjoyed most during my Erasmus experience was the University of Bologna—not only the facilities but also the classes, atmosphere, and professors. In the beginning, I faced some challenges with my Learning Agreement. Some of the courses I initially planned to take were either not offered or restricted to Master's students. However, there are plenty of options if you study social or political sciences and within the first few weeks, I was able to find my courses.

The ones I chose were:

- **China in Africa**
- **Humanitarian Communication**
- **Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism**

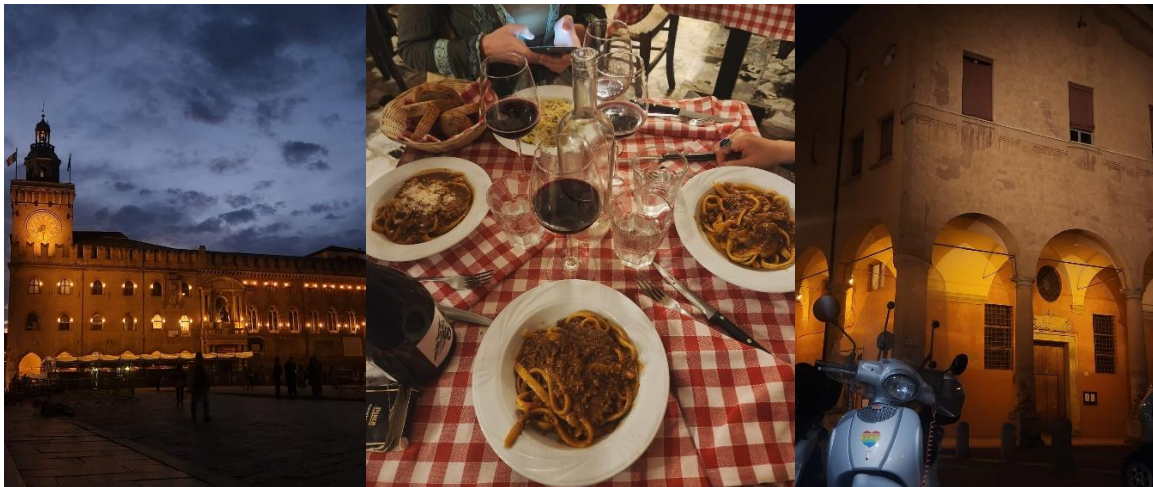
- **Sociology of International Migrations**

I enjoyed all of them—some were more demanding and interactive than others—but overall, I left with a very positive impression of the professors and the assignments I worked on.

I also decided to take an Italian language course offered by the university, which I highly recommend. It's a great way to immerse yourself in the local culture, and you can even earn credits if you need them for Studium Integrale. Just be sure to keep track of deadlines and complete the placement test to be assigned the correct level (they offer courses starting from A2).

To apply to the university, you only need proof of English proficiency. I took the exam offered by the University of Cologne, and it was sufficient.

Finally, I have to say that my faculty at the University of Bologna was stunning! The facilities were amazing, with murals on the ceilings, and the campus was located right in the city center, surrounded by countless cafés, restaurants, and students. The only thing I missed was the Mensa from UniKöln, but other than that, the atmosphere and the constant opportunity to connect with other students were incredible.



Getting There

To get to Bologna, I chose the green top-up option: I traveled there by train and returned by FlixBus. One piece of advice I strongly recommend is to start looking for accommodation as early as possible. Housing in Bologna can be quite difficult, especially if you're only staying for six months, don't speak Italian, or don't hold an EU passport.

I'd advise being cautious with offers on Facebook. My personal experience wasn't great, but some of my friends did manage to find housing that way. The best options are often through contacts or other students. I suggest arriving a few days early to search for reasonably priced accommodation or joining WhatsApp groups like those organized by ESN (Erasmus Student

Network), where housing offers are frequently shared, especially at the beginning of the semester.

About Bologna and Italy



Bologna is an incredible city if you love culture, nightlife, and meeting people. It feels like a small city, but cultural events are happening every day (sometimes it was hard to decide which one to attend!). If you enjoy cinema, photography, art, flea markets, outdoor music, going to bars, or partying, Bologna is the perfect city for you.

One of the most unique aspects of Bologna is its architecture, especially the porticos. They have a huge impact on social life because, even when it rains or gets cold, people still gather under the porticos to chat and enjoy a drink—that's something I absolutely loved. Another great

bonus: many events are free or offer discounts for students!

As I mentioned before, Bologna is undeniably a university city. Everywhere you look, you'll see students, and many of them are international, which makes it easy to meet people from all over the world. That said, if your goal is also to make Italian friends, I highly recommend putting in the effort to learn the language—it makes a big difference. Otherwise, it can be quite challenging.

And what can I say about Italy... It's an amazing country! If you love to travel, this is the perfect place to be. Transportation is affordable and efficient, so I took full advantage of it to visit cities like Florence, Naples, Venice, and Rome. Each city offers something unique, whether it's history, art, or, of course, delicious food—an essential part of Italian culture.

Finally, my Erasmus experience in Bologna was incredibly positive. If you're wondering whether I'd do it again, the answer is yes—although I'd consider staying for a year, as six months fly by. Like anything else, just when you feel fully adapted, it's time to leave. One of the biggest challenges for me was finding housing, but if you have that sorted out, I'm confident you'll fall in love with Bologna and life in Italy!



And to finish, here are some of my favorite spots in Bologna:

Cafés and Bars

- Café dei Servi
- Cortile Café
- Naama Café
- Kinotto Bar
- Camera A Sud
- Café Serre dei Giardini Margherita
- Bar Maurizio
- Via del Pratello (Street with a lot of Bars)

Restaurants and Food

- Osteria del Sole
- Pizza Casa
- Ristorante Marsalino
- Cremería La Vecchia Stalla

Outdoor Spots

- San Lucca / Trecento Scalini
- Giardini Margherita
- Piazza Santo Stefano

Entertainment and Culture

- Cinema Modernissimo
- La-bas