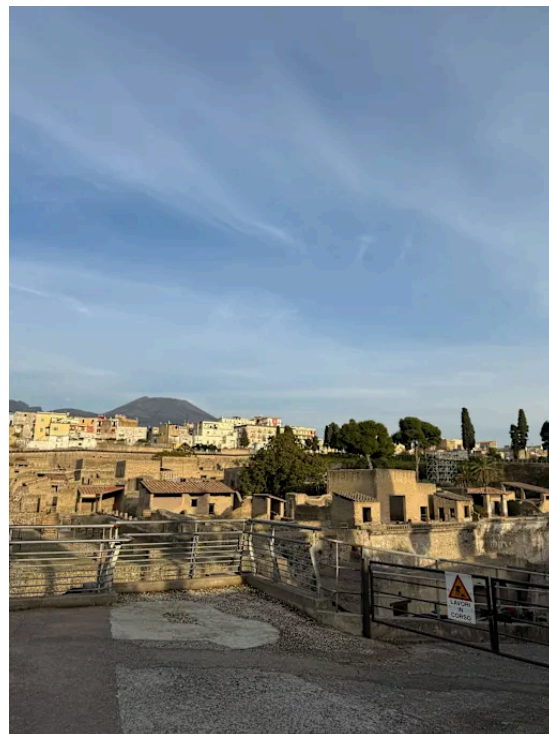


SYA ITALY

## The Wonders of Studying Abroad (<https://www.sya.org/life-at-sya/campusreporters/~board/campus-reporters/post/the-wonders-of-studying-abroad>)

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This past week, SYA Italy took a trip to Naples. On our way there, we stopped in a little town called Ercolano. We explored the ruins, marveling at the original frescoes decorating the walls. Like Pompeii, its inhabitants were tragically lost to the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius nearly two thousand years ago. We were walking through history, we realized. The stones beneath our feet were the very ones trampled by Ercolani trying to escape their inevitable death. We were wandering so casually through the last remnants of these people's lives. **We looked out at the horizon and bam. Mount Vesuvius. Like what? It's a random Monday and I'm just looking at Mount Vesuvius? The Mount Vesuvius?** The same one that has been referenced in just about every piece of media ever? The same one that killed so many people thousands of years ago?



Everything feels so surreal. Studying here in Italy makes everything seem possible. In Naples, we were tasked with interviewing three locals. We asked two questions: which place best represents Naples and what makes them most proud of being from Naples.

Initially, I was nervous about approaching strangers in public to ask them questions. What if they were in a rush and didn't want to talk to me? What if they were annoyed? What if they just didn't want to talk to me? However, as I did my first interview, and then my second, and then my third - I realized one thing: my fears were unjustified. **Everyone I talked to was more than happy to speak with me, to share their love for their city and their culture. I asked one of the women sitting next to me on the tram, a waiter that served me, and a lady that was next to me in the line to pay at a restaurant.** They were a little confused at first, but soon opened up to tell me all about the city we were in.

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I've lived through and seen so many magical things throughout the several months that I have spent in Italy that I never would have had I stayed in the US for my junior year. **While I certainly do miss my home, my friends, and my family - the experiences that I've had here are the ones that I will tell my kids one day.**

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