

A Married Couple Left the U.S. to Study Together in Rome, Italy During the Covid Pandemic

It's unusual for a couple to choose to study the same major at the same time, but to also move halfway across the world during a pandemic to do it was extreme.

ROME, LAZIO, ITALY, April 16, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Brayden and Jenny Johnson, husband & wife students from Wyoming, fell in love with Rome on an anniversary trip in 2019. In 2021 they returned, in the middle of the Covid pandemic, to study

[Archaeology](#) at The American

University of Rome ([AUR](#)). Here they share their experiences as Americans in Rome during Covid-19 and talk about the ups and downs of being a married couple studying the same subject at the same institution.



Brayden and Jenny Johnson in front of the Pantheon in Rome

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Being able to see everything in person rather than in a textbook is wonderful. Rome is simply the most amazing city in the world to be a student in.”

Jenny Johnson

Question: What prompted the move from Wyoming to Rome and from Anthropology to Archaeology and Classics?

Brayden: The school itself was a big plus for me: I've always been interested in Roman history and it's just so rich in this area, whereas in Wyoming there's a lot of desert, sand, and sagebrush so it's definitely a more interesting location. AUR had everything we were looking for in a school, it met all of our criteria.

Question: Had you spent time in Italy before coming to AUR to study?

Jenny: For our first anniversary, we came to Rome to explore the college and it confirmed for us that we wanted to come here.

Question: How did you feel before arriving? Were you hesitant because of the pandemic?

Brayden: There was definitely some doubt and nervousness. We didn't know which protocols we would have to follow, plus not speaking the language makes it kind of intimidating going to a foreign country.

Jenny: Overall, exciting though! I was nervous but tremendously excited.

Brayden: From Wyoming, we were looking at how Italy was handling Covid and it's a lot more efficient than what was being done where we lived, so it was definitely reassuring to see the steps being taken to keep us safe.

Question: Is there anything about AUR or Rome, in general, that has surprised you?

Brayden: There was a kind of a culture shock in the sense that I didn't realize how different the apartments would be – they're smaller than we're used to and in the winter it got colder than we were expecting, so that was something to adjust to, but nothing that is a dealbreaker at all! There haven't been any setbacks, really. Even not knowing Italian doesn't hold us back, it's very easy to get around.

Jenny: One aspect that I like is the slow pace of life. You just go with the flow, and I like that. It's so much more relaxing than back home.

Question: How does your experience of studying in Rome compare to that of studying in the US?

J. I love it! On-site classes are my favorite, because I learn the best that way. Being able to see everything in person rather than in a textbook is wonderful.

Brayden: It feels a lot more hands-on, and I learn better that way. You're just in the middle of it



Brayden and Jenny Johnson at Villa Sciarra in Rome



The American University of Rome

all. You can learn something in class and then take a walk and actually see what you learned.

Question: What on-site classes do you have coming up?

Brayden: We are taking some summer courses with [Professor Wueste](#) where we'll be taking part in the new dig near Circus Maximus, it's an amazing opportunity.

Question: To what extent do you feel your studies have been impacted by the pandemic?

Jenny: They have been impacted in some respects, but in others not so much. For example, going on-site visits without crowds of people makes it more one-on-one. But at the same time, we've had to cancel a few study visits because the restrictions have changed, and we've not been able to go. But when we do go, it's more personal, I would say.

Brayden: I feel like AUR has found a good balance dealing with everything during Covid. We were out of our previous college before Covid hit, but I know that they moved all classes online very quickly and there was a fair amount of resistance from people who didn't agree with the restrictions.

Question: You're married, you live together, you're on the same course... How does that work with your coursework? Are you competitive with each other?

Brayden: We're supportive of each other, we lift each other up. We struggle in different areas so we are able to help each other.

Jenny: I'm more into conservation and Brayden is more into field-based archaeology. My overall goal is to work in a museum, his is to work in the field.

Brayden: My dream job would be working for Discovery Channel. I'm looking for a way to blend my love of photography and my love of archaeology, that's my goal. So, our interests are different, but they complement each other.

Question: After the first three months, how would you summarize your Rome experience so far?

Brayden: I would say that my experience at AUR so far has been overwhelmingly positive. With Covid, there have been smaller class sizes, so more one-on-one time with the professor, and it's nice to be able to pick their brain and learn more about their field, and that impacts how I'm looking at the future and what I might want to get into. It's been awesome so far.

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