Ciao Bella Italia Students!

My name is Natalie and I’m your FIG Assistant for 2012. As a sophomore, I just experienced the life of a college freshman, so I have recent, first-hand knowledge of the worries you may be having. But I want you to know that college is a million times better than high school (not exaggerating!) and I know you will quickly think of the UO as your new home. Throughout your adjustment to college, I will be your friend and advisor on campus. You can come to me at any time and don’t be afraid to ask me questions, no matter how small! I am from Portland, Oregon and I am a recently declared English major. After taking multiple Shakespeare courses, I have fallen in love with English literature. However, I’m also fascinated by evolutionary human genetics and cultural anthropology. Quite a combination, I know! But more importantly, my Italian language classes made me fall head over heels for the Italian language and culture! I am very excited to share my knowledge and passion with you during fall term! I know we are going to have a great time getting to know each other and everything Italian.

To give you a better idea of who I am, I’ll add a few fun facts about myself. I was on the UO Women’s Rugby team last year and I loved releasing stress through the exercise that came with the sport. I have a fraternal twin who is precisely seven minutes younger than me (I never let her forget it) and we don’t look alike. I also have an older brother who plays rugby for Oregon State University and happens to be a giant (he’s 6’10). In my free time, I love reading the classics including Jane Austen novels and Shakespeare plays. My love of old fashion works spills over to my favorite movies - *Roman Holiday* with Audrey Hepburn (a great movie made in Italy) and *Rear Window* with Grace Kelly. I also have a passion for exploring the beautiful outdoors of Oregon, something I plan on doing more of with our FIG during the fall!

Now that you know a little bit about me, I will elaborate on the courses you will be taking in this FIG and the professors you'll be working with. The Bella Italia FIG includes ITAL 101 Introduction to Italian, ITAL 150 Cultural Legacies of Italy, and ITAL 199, our College Connections class. ITAL 101 is an introductory Italian language course that is perfect for beginners. Professoressa DeRenzo-Huter (Lauretta) will be your professor. She is a true Italian with endless knowledge and experience to share with us! Lauretta and I will be teaching the College Connections course which is a small class for only Bella Italia FIG students. We will have many discussions and fun activities to connect the concepts of the ITAL 101 and ITAL 150 courses. Lastly, you will take ITAL 150, a course that elaborates on the most influential contributions of the Italian region to western civilization. Italy's history is rich with infamous artists and scientists and cultural revolutions. Professoressa Psaki will be teaching the class. She is an expert in her field who earned her PhD in Medieval Studies and will share as much Italian history as she can with us in ten weeks. I will also be taking ITAL 150, so we can study for the class together! With the support of our small class size, you will have the help you need to be successful. You will be completely immersed in the Italian culture and I have a feeling you will begin to love everything Italian just like I have!
Throughout the term, we will have study sessions and go on fun outings around campus. I found during my freshman year that studying in groups helped a lot before tests, so I will organize coffee shop or library gatherings whenever we feel we need them. There are also so many places to explore around campus! I don’t want to give away all the awesome trips we can go on, but you can be sure they’re going to be great! Whenever we need a break from studying, we can decide as a group where we’d like to go! But before all of those activities, make sure you are at the first Week of Welcome Meeting for our FIG on Friday, September 21 in Columbia 150 at 10 am. Then on Sunday, September 23 we will go to University Convocation. Meet me and Lauretta in front of Hayward Field (next to the picture of the guy in the short running shorts by the front gate) fifteen minutes beforehand, so we can walk to Convocation as a group.

I am very excited to meet you! At some point during the summer, please email me with any questions you have and tell me a little bit about yourself. I am here to help you and it’d be nice to get to know each other before you get here. I am also on Facebook (my last name shouldn’t be too hard to find) and feel free to text or call me. **For the summer assignment, please post a short video of something you find interesting that is related to Italy on the Bella Italia blog.** It can be anything from an Italian cooking show to Italian cars. Whatever makes you excited to learn more about this ancient culture! And if you have any questions about the assignment, my contact information is below.

Start getting pumped! You’re in college now!

Natalie Quenneville

natalieq@uoregon.edu

Cell: (503) 319-9801