

# Erasmus Mundus ALGANT

*An Unofficial Guide*



Bordeaux 1



Leiden



Padova



Paris-Sud 11

## BEFORE THE ACADEMIC YEAR

### Maps

If you want to have a look at the area in which you'll be staying, try having a look at [maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com). You can download *Google Earth* (available for Windows, OSX, and Linux), a program for your personal computer, also created by Google.

### Translation

For translating webpages and other correspondence, try using: [www.freetranslation.com](http://www.freetranslation.com) and [babelfish.altavista.com](http://babelfish.altavista.com).

### Books and Libraries

There are a number of scanned books in *djvu* format at: [http://lib.org.by/\\_djvu/M\\_Mathematics](http://lib.org.by/_djvu/M_Mathematics)

The Library at Bordeaux: <http://almira.math.u-bordeaux1.fr/>

The Library at Leiden: <http://www.science.leidenuniv.nl/libraries/>

The Library at Padova: <http://catalogo.unipd.it/F/?func=find-b-0>

The Library at Paris-Sud: <http://hip.math.u-psud.fr>

### Traveling:

Here are some websites offering low fares to Europe from...

Africa:

Australia:

China:

India:

Iran:

Russia:

S. America:

Taiwan:

The United States: [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)

### Cheap Airfare Inside Europe:

It is possible to find round-trip flights between major European cities for less than 20€. If you plan to travel during your breaks (and you *should*, in order to keep a healthy mind and not waste the experience), try some of these websites for low fares: [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com), [www.skyeurope.com](http://www.skyeurope.com), [www.alpieagles.com](http://www.alpieagles.com), [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com), [www.blue1.com](http://www.blue1.com).

# Università degli Studi di Padova

## Getting to Padova

The airport closest to Padova is in Venice. There are two airports, Marco Polo (VCE) and Treviso (TSF). It is probably best to arrive at VCE. Once you have landed and gathered your luggage, there are a number of ways to reach Padova, ranked below according to expense:

**Bus:** You can take a bus from VCE directly to Padova for less than 3€--you can buy a ticket from the water taxi agent just before leaving the airport. You should wait until the Padova bus station or train station to dismount, and find a taxi from there. The SITA company has regularly scheduled busses between Padova and Venice. Visit <insert> for schedules and fares.

**Train:** There are train stations near VCE at both Venezia Mestre and Venezia San Lucia. A Taxi from the airport to Venezia Mestre will cost 30€. A water taxi from the airport to Venezia San Lucia is considerably cheaper than taking a taxi (and more scenic). A one-way ticket to Padova from either San Lucia or Mestre will cost less than 3 euros. The train ride lasts about 40 minutes. There are taxis parked outside of the entrance to the Padova station.

**Airport Shuttle:** Airport shuttles exist and (probably) offer to drop you at any address you choose.

**By Taxi:** *Don't take a taxi.* It will cost more than 90€. Use taxis only for shorter distance traveling and if you have too much luggage. The fares are very high, and you can almost always find a cheaper way.

Here are some useful addresses:

The Math Department (Torre Archimede) :	Via Trieste, 63
The Old Math Department (computer labs) :	Via G. Belzoni, 7
ESU offices :	Via (Giovanni Battista) Tiepolo, 6

## Accommodation and Living

**Before the Academic Year:** ESU and SASSA service can offer you accommodation in a dormitory close to the math department in your first two weeks in Padova before classes begin at reduced rates (say 250€ per week). Rooms are private with a shared bathroom between two persons (the bathroom doors lock).

Visit the following website to see the details of each residence: <insert>

**Permanent Housing:** If you have asked SASSA service to find a room for you, be sure to inspect it as soon as possible—if you are not satisfied, it is very difficult to change your place after the academic year has begun. In fact, they may tell you it is impossible, but if you are dissatisfied then you should continue asking to move.

**Internet:** Do not plan to find internet working in an ESU dormitory. Internet runs at about 5KB/sec, and shuts down from 3am to 5am each night. It is possible to get internet on your laptop by purchasing a special mobile phone, if you need it. In fact, given this, it is probably a good idea to leave your laptop at home, since you will be given a computer account in the math department (the speed is OK, sometimes 2MB/sec), in which you can use LaTeX and other things. Apartments are available and cheap. The hard part will be speaking in Italian, but ultimately if you want a private place, you can find it. In fact, SASSA service can help you find and move into an apartment if you find the student residences unsuitable.

There are internet cafes all around the city with high-speed connections. You should bring your passport, as Italian law requires official registration for using all internet cafes (registration takes only a few minutes).

**Weather:** The weather in Padova is humid during the whole year. The summers are extremely hot and humid, so be sure to bring appropriate clothing. Buy a sturdy umbrella, possibly even a small one which you can carry everywhere, because the weather can change very quickly.

## The Tobacconist's Shop

The tobacconist's shops have many things you might otherwise not expect. In addition to being the place you usually would buy bus tickets from, you can also buy mailing envelopes (buste) and stamps (francobolli) for mailing letters both inside Italy and abroad. They have different valued stamps for different countries, so be sure to ask before purchasing.

## Banking

Opening a bank account in Italy will require several documents—you will not be able to open a bank account until first obtaining a 'fiscal code' (codice fiscale), which will require a residence permit and other documents. Once you have all the required documents, you should begin searching for a bank.

Be sure to bring documents showing that you are a student, because banks in Italy charge a fee for using their services, but this fee is lower if you are a student and can prove it.

## Books

Finding books for purchase in Italy is very difficult. There exist several stores in Padova which sell math books, but the selection is very small. If you plan on buying any books, buy them before arriving in Italy. It will be a headache to have them shipped from outside the country—in fact, personal experience shows that books shipped (by amazon.de or amazon.com, for example) have sometimes taken over two months to arrive or become lost in the mail. In addition, the post office will demand that you pay a tax to receive your books.

Some stores carrying mathematics books can be found near the math department. Also, look at the general introduction to see alternatives for finding books. Check the Padova math department library to see which titles are available: <http://catalogo.unipd.it/F/?func=find-b-0>

## Transportation

**Bicycles:** You should invest in a bicycle at the first opportunity. Bikes are essentially fluid in Padova—they are stolen and purchased regularly, so you should invest in a strong lock (or two). You should be able to find a new bicycle for less than 100 euros, so keep that in mind when buying so that you aren't cheated. You can buy bicycles, for example, at the following places:

**Decathlon :** Via Venezia, across from Auchan.

**Busses:** You can buy twelve tickets (biglietti) for 10€, each of which lasts for 75 minutes (i.e., you can ride several busses with just one ticket, but the total trip should last less than 75 minutes). You cannot buy tickets on the bus. You may buy these tickets either in a [tobacconist's shop] or at the APS bus booth in front of the train station. The busses are not so reliable, so you should avoid using them if you are on a strict schedule. Most busses stop running around 9pm, but there are a few night busses.

## Food, Wine, and Fresh Produce

Before long, you will find it either necessary or desirable to cook for yourself sometimes. The giant Auchan on Via Venezia might seem like a good place to look for meats, vegetables, and other goods... Be careful. Almost all of the vegetables in Auchan are of very low quality, and cost a lot more than what you can find elsewhere. I suggest you avoid shopping there.

**Piazza Della Erbe :** In the city center, at this piazza, you can find fresh fruit and vegetable vendors each Saturday morning. The piazza is open from 08:00 to 13:00.



**Butcher Shops :**

**Fish and Cheese Markets :**  
Via Degli Zabarella 33

**Wine Shops :**

## Recreation

Of course you probably plan to take advantage of your time in Europe, but you may find it difficult to know where to go, or what to do once you get there. Here are some tips that can help you have a meaningful, memorable, and cost-efficient stay in Padova and Europe.

**Venice :** It takes about 40 minutes to reach Venezia by train, and costs 2.70€ for a one-way ticket between Padova station and Venezia S. Lucia station. Unfortunately, it's easy to spend a lot of money in Venice without having done a whole lot there, especially during the tourist season. Some of your professors probably grew up in Venice, so you can ask them for advice. Here are two noteworthy events in Venice that you shouldn't miss:

**Carnevale** : This celebration has its origins going back to the year 1268. The word carnevale roughly suggests a "farewell to meat," and marks the beginning of the Christian period known as "lent," a time of fasting. For two weeks before lent, Venetians and visitors dress in costumes and masks, as shown in the pictures, in the historic Piazza di San Marco. You can find details and dates at :

<http://www.carnevale.venezia.it/>



**Biennale** : The *Biennale di Venezia* is a major contemporary art exhibition that takes place once every two years (in odd years). The Venice Film Festival is part of it, as is the Venice Architecture Biennale, which is held in even years. A dance section, the "International Festival of Contemporary Dance", was established in 1999.

The very first Biennale was held in 1895; during the first editions, decorative arts played an important role. The event became more and more international in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: from 1907 on, several countries started installing national pavilions at the exhibition. After World War I, the Biennale showed increasing interest in innovative traditions in modern art. You can find details at: <http://www.labiennale.org/en/>

Don't forget that the historic center isn't all that Venice has to offer—you should visit the other islands (for example, Lido), for beaches, scuba diving, and other aspects of Venetian life. There is also a large New Year's Celebration at midnight each December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Entertainment** : For local concerts, music festivals, and club events, check out [www.venetोजazz.com](http://www.venetोजazz.com).

## Dining and Late Night Snacks

### Italian Food (Dining)

- **Trattoria Antica** : Via Sacro Cuore 4 – This place is a meat-lover's dream come true. A three course meal and a bottle of wine split for four, will cost about 23€. Be prepared to speak Italian, because there's no menu, and the waitress will list off a few specials of the day and wait impatiently as you try to order. The atmosphere is friendly, and the portions are huge. You can reach this place on the number 13 bus, but getting back to the city is a slight challenge, since you'll finish dinner after the last bus comes. If you're on a bike, then there should be no problem, but walking back isn't too difficult either.
- **Ristorante Carmine** : Piazza Petrarca – This restaurant offers a wide selection of Italian food at not-outrageous prices.

## **Academics**

Courses in Padova run between 9:30am to 1:00pm and 2:00pm to 6:00pm. Many days of the week you will find yourself sitting in lectures for 6 to 10 hours, depending on the trimester and your choices. The math department library closes at 6:00pm, along with the whole building. You can stay in the building after 6—In fact, it is possible to stay in the math department at least past 8pm, and possibly longer.