



## **COURSE SYLLABUS** **Moroccan Culture Seminar**

AFRS 3000 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)  
Summer 2009

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Morocco: Intensive Arabic Language and Moroccan Culture

Academic Director: Farah Cherif D'Ouezzan

### **Course Description**

This three-credit course aims at providing students with the historical and cultural backgrounds of the Arabic Language, the main component of the program. The themes selected cover different topics such as family life, Islam, cultural heritage, Moroccan politics and economy, identity and ethnicity, environmental and development issues. The sessions include lectures by specialized speakers, round tables that include relevant professionals and non-governmental association members, and group discussions with young Moroccan peers. In addition, there will be a number of activities, including: hands-on activities to experience Moroccan daily life through its different aspects, live musical performances during the Gnawa festival in Essaouira, short field trips to visit the sites of community work and NGOs, and two excursions, one to the north, Chefcahouen and Ouazzane and a second one to the south, Marrakech and Essaouira.

The themes of the seminar are focused on key concepts such as:

- Hijab
- Sharia'
- Moudawana
- monarchy
- political, social and economical reforms
- sustainable development
- environment
- maraboutism
- multilingualism
- the arts

### **Course Objectives**

The Moroccan Culture Seminar has an interdisciplinary and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives:

- To develop a multidisciplinary understanding of Morocco pertaining to language and culture, identity and diversity, politics and religion, women's issues and youth issues, development and reforms, environment and arts
- To link language learning to daily life in Morocco
- To place Morocco into the wider context of the contemporary world and the globalization movement
- To be able to experience Morocco and to learn from its people's lives
- To be able to learn key concepts in Arabic

### **Course Structure**

The course concepts will be analyzed using a multidisciplinary approach, with a focus on language and the relationship of the concepts to daily life. Classroom sessions (lectures, performances, hands-on activities and group discussions) last for 90 minutes to 2 hours and the field trips for 2 to 3 hours.

Each activity is based on a list of readings and will require students' participation and preparation before the session. A list of terminology is developed in concordance with language instructors in order to highlight the root structure and evolution of the Arabic, and thereby enhance a better understanding of key concepts of the Moroccan Culture Seminar (MCS). By looking at these concepts, we will try to link theory to practice, understanding to experiential learning. The module will include presentations by relevant speakers; class interaction; debates and discussions with students, public officials, and local people; in addition to site visits and excursions. Our aim is to create an interactive environment of learning and engagement which leaves enough latitude for students to look at issues from the angle that suits their needs and their learning objectives.

The course will also facilitate forums to discuss a diversity of approaches involved in the construction of Moroccan cultural identity and politics. The Seminar allows students and speakers the freedom to relate the issues at hand not only to the readings, but also to the individual experiences and stories encountered in daily life, particularly during the cross-cultural learning process. Every speaker is encouraged to link his/her lecture to the language, and therefore will provide students with a list of terminology related to the topic of the session. After every session, students should be able to learn 10 new words in Arabic. The last two weeks of the program, lectures will all be conducted in Arabic and the general theme of these lectures will be family life and patrimony.

### **Excursions**

The excursions are not only a break from the homestay families and the routine of classrooms' sessions, but more an occasion to experience all of the issues

studied in class about the daily life of Moroccans. They are meant to expose the students in an intensive language course in Morocco to the challenge of multilingualism and the richness of multiculturalism of the Moroccan society. The program assistant and the language instructors will lead the excursions and make sure the Arabic language is being used outside of classes. The excursions are also a time to reflect on the different lecture topics discussed in class.

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

### ***Moroccan Culture & Seminar Assignments***

Timely completion of all Seminar assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

### **Assignments**

Since this experience is different from an in-campus experience, students are encouraged to make use of their sense of observation and adopt a participatory attitude to be able to achieve the cross cultural aim of this program. Learning from the other and learning about oneself is the main objective of such a course; learning that the “other” –here the host country- could be different, could behave/live/think/feel differently without necessarily being wrong. We are not judges but students of a new culture; the culture will teach us and we should be open to learn and analyze with a positive attitude and an open mind. In other words, our goal is not to change the host culture into what we believe is best for it, but is to understand how the host culture functions and respect the difference. For that purpose, the variety of sessions included in the MCS should allow students to discuss freely and openly and to learn simply how Moroccans live their lives.

You will have three assignments:

1. You are required to keep a journal during your stay in Morocco to reflect on your intercultural learning experience and your personal observations. You can use drawings, photos if possible to illustrate your journal. Adopt a personal and reflective mode and don't worry about mechanics of writing. Your Academic Director might ask you to look at your journal. But your journal will not be graded as such. It will help you in your final MCS paper.
2. You are required to hand in one final paper, 5-8 pages long, A4 paper, typed or handwritten, due one week before the program is over. The paper should be related to the themes of the seminar; its content and methods need the approval of the Academic Director. Your paper should not only rely on the readings you have made, but also on your observation and participation in the daily life of Morocco.

3. During your northern excursion, you will be asked to use Arabic only and experience the daily life of inhabitants of a small non-touristy town. Field exercises will be conducted in Arabic only and will include weaving, farming, cooking and calligraphy. You will also be part of the community life and will be required to orally present the outcomes of this visit to the rest of the group and to your Academic Director. We will aim at learning from people, about people and see how we can potentially bring a little contribution to their lives. Small groups of no more than three students could work together in preparing a small presentation to the rest of the group using photos, recordings, drawings and any artistic skills, if possible.

### **Grading Criteria**

An "A" grade for an assignment entails superior (not just "very good") performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an "A" grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students' participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Final grades are assigned by the Academic Director.

### Evaluation:

Final paper: 50%

Oral project: 20%

Attendance, participation and readings: 30%

**Grading Scale:** The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

### **Student Expectations**

#### Class Participation

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. To make this a cross cultural experience, students are expected to respect the host culture, be eager to learn and accept the difference. They should also present all their assignments –oral participation in sessions, discussions and final papers- with accurate information, a good quality of analysis, use a variety of sources and present all of this in a clear format.

Please refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

### **Selected Readings**

#### *1. Recommended readings prior to program start:*

- Mernissi, Fatema. *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems*. Washington Square Press, 2001.
- Brett, Michael and Fentress, Elizabeth, Eds. *The Berbers: The Peoples of North Africa*. Blackwell Publishers, Inc.: Oxford, 2001.
- Susan Slyomovics. 2005. *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cornell, Vincent. 1998. *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*. Austin: Austin University Press.

#### *2. Readings during the program and prior to seminars:*

- Hallaq, Wael. *A History of Islamic Legal Theories*. Pp. 1-35. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- El Guindi, Fadwa. *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*. Pp. 147-191. Berg Oxford, New York, 1999.
- Cornell, Vincent. *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*. Pp. 3-31. University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Brooks, Geraldine. *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*. NY: Anchor Books , 1996. Chapter 1: The Holy Veil. Pp. 13-32.

- Mernissi, Fatema. *The Veil & the Male Elite*. Translated from *Le harem Politique*, by Mary Jo Lakeland, March 1997, 5th Ed. Chapter V: The Hijab.
- Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. *The Holy Qur'an. Text, Translation and Commentary*. Brentwood, Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989. Chapter 19. Pp. 744-763.
- Jaroslav, Pelikan. *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*. New Haven & London : Yale University Press, 1996. Pp. 68-79.
- Feldman, Noah. Does Sharia mean the rule of law? *International Herald Tribune*, March 16, 2008.  
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/03/16/news/16shariaht.php>
- Laskier, M. Michael. "A Difficult Inheritance: Moroccan Society Under King Muhammad VI" *Middle East Review of International Affairs (Meria) Journal*, Volume 7, Number 3 (September 2003).
- M.E. Combs-Schilling, "Twentieth-Century Success, In *Sacred Performance: Islam, Sexuality and Sacrifice*. Pp. 273-313. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Munson, JR Henry. "Holy and Unholy Kingship in Twentieth Century Morocco", in *Religion and Power in Morocco*. Pp. 115-148. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Entelis P., John. *Islam, Democracy and the State in North Africa*. Pp. 1-15. Indiana University Press, 1991.
- H.M. King Mohammad VI, *Speech Delivered at the Opening of the Parliament Fall Session*. October 10, 2003.
- Mernissi, Fatema. *Dreams of Trespass*. Library of Congress Cataloging Chapter 1. Pp 1-10.
- Mohamed Arkoun. *Spirituality and Architecture in Cynthia Davidson and Ismael Serageldin, eds, Architecture Beyond Architecture, Creativity and Social Transformations in Islamic Cultures*. The Agakhan Award for Architecture Academy Editions 1995
- Haddad, Lahcen. *Al-Halqa: The Politics and Poetics of Space and Public Performance, Discours sur la Femme*. Pp 1-9, 1999.
- Elizabeth, Fernia. *Djemaa el Fna: Myth and Magic, A Street in Marrakech*. Pp 43-59, 1976.

- Kapchan, Deborah. Possessing Gnawa Culture. *Le Maghreb dans les débats anthropologiques*, Pp 77-83, 2005.