



Contextual Studies in Journalism: Morocco and North Africa

JOUR 3000 (4 Credits / 60 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Morocco: Field Studies in Journalism and New Media

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This interdisciplinary course combines lectures on journalism in the context of Morocco and North Africa with key issues of Moroccan society. Lecture topics from leading Moroccans in the artistic, social, and political realms (established academics, journalists, and other experts) include religious values, women's issues, economy and migration, education and literacy, human rights, and artistic culture. The course also covers the history of journalism in the region since Morocco's independence (in 1956), the role that journalism and broadcast media play in the development of individual and public liberties in Morocco, and the role of social media in this North African kingdom. These timely lectures form the framework against which students understand contemporary Morocco, undertake their own reporting assignments, and gain from the unique reporter-editor relationship afforded by this program.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be equipped to:

- Demonstrate an efficient yet comprehensive understanding of the major issues facing contemporary Morocco.
- Critically evaluate the social, economic, and political dynamics underlying the practice of journalism and reporting in Morocco.
- Produce reporting assignments from Morocco that adhere to the highest standards of professional journalism.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content and words in Moroccan Arabic useful in field reporting.

Course Schedule

***Please be aware that course contents, lecturers, and readings may be modified as needed. Should any changes of class topics or lecturers be necessary, students will be promptly notified.**

The Contextual Studies in Journalism: Morocco and North Africa course is structured in three interrelated thematic modules:

- 1) Journalism in Morocco: History and Current Media Landscape
- 2) Morocco's Current Social, Political, and Cultural Climate

3) Doing Journalism, with an Emphasis on Cross-Cultural Reporting

Module 1: Journalism in Morocco: History and Current Landscape

Topics for this module include:

- History of journalism in post-colonial Morocco
- Current state of the media in Morocco (media ownership, freedom of press, and Islamist media)
- Social media: uses and implications

The following are a sampling of the lecturers students can expect. All lectures will be delivered by respected scholars and recognized experts in the field. Each lecturer is introduced by a student who researches this person as if he/she is conducting a journalistic interview. Students are expected to ask questions and interview the lecturer after his/her presentation.

- Driss Ksikes, a Moroccan journalist, formerly editor-in-chief of *Tel Quel* magazine.
- Taieb Belghazi, professor of cultural studies and history at the Faculty of Letters at Mohamed V University in Rabat.
- Abdelhay Moudden, a professor at Mohamed V University in Rabat, specializing in human rights and political science.

Readings include:

Al Abdallah, M. (2011, November 11). In Morocco, social media are the fifth estate. *International Journalists' Network*. <http://ijnet.org/blog/morocco-social-media-are-fifth-estate>

Alami, A. (2010, April 3). Morocco's leading independent magazine is shut down. *The World Post*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aida-alam/moroccos-leading-independ_b_444845.html

Alami A. (2011, April 28). Web offers a voice to journalists in Morocco. *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/28/world/middleeast/28iht-M28C-MOROCCO-MEDIA.html>

El Amrani, I. (2012, February 27). Morocco, the Gulf, and the media. *The Arabist*. <http://www.arabist.net/blog/2012/2/27/morocco-the-gulf-and-the-media.html>

Freed Moroccan journalist remains defiant. (2012, April 28). *Aljazeera*. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/20124281889790655.html>

Morocco. (n.d.). *Press Reference*. <http://www.pressreference.com/Ma-No/Morocco.html>

Morocco. (n.d.). *Reporters Without Borders*. <http://en.rsf.org/report-morocco,160.html>

Morocco: Moroccan parliament hears media reform ideas. (2011, April 14). *Media Africa*. http://www.mediafrica.net/News_Popup.php?id=4649

Morocco's road to democracy needs free press: minister. (2012, November 15). *Radio Netherlands Worldwide*. <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/moroccos-road-democracy-needs-free-press-minister>

Morocco: weeklies censored for depicting God, the Prophet Muhammad. (2012, February 10). *Human Rights Watch*. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/02/10/morocco-weeklies-censored-depicting-god-muhammad>

Schemm, P. (2014, February 19). Moroccan journalist ready to replace banned site. *The Big Story*. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/moroccan-journalist-ready-replace-banned-site>

Module 2: Morocco's Current Social, Political, and Cultural Climate

Topics for this module include:

- Religion
- Women and gender issues
- Youth and youth culture
- The economy, the prospects for economic development and issues of
- Migration
- Education and literacy
- Artistic culture (literature, music, dance, visual art, architecture)
- Agriculture and food
- Public health
- Berber culture
- Politics, including Morocco's version of the Arab Spring
- Human rights
- Sexuality

Students engage in ongoing reporting assignments followed by professor-guided peer edits. These assignments continue on excursions. A sampling of excursion assignments follows.

- Southern Excursion (Fez, Azrou, Merzouga, Ouerzazte, Marrakech, and Essaouira). Students visit and spend the night at a secondary boarding school for young women. Each student profiles a Moroccan student, producing a story that addresses issues of education, literacy, and the challenges facing young women, especially in rural Morocco.
- Village Stay Excursion (Sbaa Rouadi Commune, Fez Boulmane Region). Students dive deeply into issues facing rural Morocco, spending five days immersed in village life. They are given a reporting assignment on a critical rural issue.
- Northern Excursion (Chefchaouen and Ceuta). Students are assigned to report on the "human mules" who cross the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.

The student's ISPJ topic often arises from these excursions and reporting assignments.

Students closely monitor the news from Morocco. Every day, throughout the program, a student posts three news stories that reflect "today's top news" from Morocco. Before coming to class, students must read all three "news of the day" postings and there will, on occasion, be discussion about these stories and the possibility of a pop quiz. Students with a facility in French will be asked to share news from French-language news sources; Arabic speakers will be asked to do the same.

The following are a sampling of the lecturers students can expect. All lectures will be delivered by respected scholars and recognized experts in the field. Each lecturer is introduced by a student who researches this person as if he/she is conducting a journalistic interview. Students are expected to ask questions and interview the lecturer after his/her presentation.

- Stephanie Wilman Bordat, Global Rights Maghreb Director, women's issues
- Mohamad Hassar, Moroccan Physician, public health
- Mourad Fahli, Moroccan researcher, music and film
- Mohamed Mellouk, Moroccan professor and researcher, education and literacy
- Abdessamad *Dialmy*, Moroccan professor and researcher, sexual identity issues
- Youssouf A. El-Alamy, award-winning Moroccan writer on artistic culture

Readings include:

A tale of two Moroccos. (2012, October 8). *Foreign Policy*.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/10/08/a_tale_of_two_moroccos

- Alami, A. (2012, November 28). African migrants in Morocco tell of abuse. *The New York Times*.
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/29/world/middleeast/african-migrants-in-morocco-tell-of-abuse.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Alami, A. (2014, May 9). Rebel prince shines a harsh light on Morocco. *The New York Times*.
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2014/05/10/world/africa/moroccos-rebel-prince.html?referrer=>
- Alami, A. (2014, June 11). Morocco's king slow to deliver on pro-democracy vows. *The New York Times*.
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2014/06/12/world/africa/moroccos-king-slow-to-deliver-on-pro-democracy-vows.html?referrer=>
- Benchems, A. (2012, July 17). Feb20's rise and fall: A Moroccan story. *Le blog de Ahmed Benchems*.
<http://ahmedbenchems.com/feb20s-rise-and-fall-a-moroccan-story/>
- Cole, J. (2012, September 20). Fury unbound: The Muslim dilemma (Majid). *Informed Comment*.
http://www.juancole.com/2012/09/fury-unbound-the-muslim-dilemma-majid.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+juancole%2Fymbn+%28Informed+Comment%29
- El Amrani, I. (2012, October 31). Morocco's citizen subjects. *The New York Times*.
<http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/31/moroccos-citizen-subjects/>
- El Yaakoubi, A. and A. Hammond. (2012, December 5). Mideast debt: Morocco under pressure to plug budget gap, avert more protests. *Thomson Reuters Foundation*.
<http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/mideast-debt-morocco-under-pressure-to-plug-budget-gap-avert-more-protests>
- Hayoun, M. (2012, October 4). Morocco cracks down on democracy rappers. *The Daily Beast*.
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/10/04/morocco-cracks-down-on-democracy-rappers.html>
- McManus, A. L. (2012, September 9). 'Arab spring,' Moroccan winter. *Jadaliyya*.
<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/7278/arab-spring-moroccan-winter>
- Pelham, N. (2012, July 5). How Morocco dodged the Arab Spring. *The New York*.
<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/jul/05/how-morocco-dodged-arab-spring/>
- Sahara Press Service. (2012, September 17). Morocco: Human rights watch - nation has not seen 'significant evolution' regarding respect for human rights. *All Africa*.
allafrica.com/stories/201209190682.html

Module 3: Doing Journalism, with an Emphasis on Cross-Cultural Reporting

This module addresses the challenges of doing journalism in a cross-cultural context including the unique challenges in Morocco, along with ways to negotiate those challenges. Highlights include lectures from professional journalists who are reporting from Morocco for top tier media (i.e. *New York Times*, Associated Press).

During this module, the American students partner with Moroccan journalism students who speak English (from ISIC, L'Institut Supérieure de l'Information et de la Communication, in Rabat). The American students are charged with finding a partner compatible with their interests. Together, the student partners begin the process of finding a story topic worthy of pursuing for a major feature story (ISPJ). During the ISPJ period, Moroccan and American students report their story together (Americans bring fresh perspective to the Moroccans, who provide invaluable cultural context.)

The students produce an online news magazine, Reporting Morocco (www.ReportingMorocco.org) during the time that leads up to the ISPJ. This magazine contains a range of information including the best of their reporting assignments along with other postings. It is a compelling resource for anyone interested in reliable news and information from Morocco.

Students must take a series of online reporting courses developed especially for this program by the Poynter Institute, a premier journalism training organization based in the United States. The Poynter courses offer our students access to some of the very finest journalism educators working in the field today. There is an assessment built into each course for every student.

The Poynter courses that apply to this module are:

Intro to Reporting. This course gives students the basics of finding and covering stories, including the use of "new media tools" such as social media. It teaches students how to identify key issues and sources and how to get background information that gives stories context. More than 8,000 journalists, students, and educators have taken this course. The instructor is Steve Buttry, a visiting scholar at the School of Mass Communications at Louisiana State University and a veteran of 40 years in the news business. In 2010, Buttry was named Editor of the Year.

The Writer's Workbench: 50 Tools You Can Use. The tools presented in this course are ones we return to again and again throughout the semester. These 50 tools help students strengthen their writing and diagnose the problems in stories they have already written. Peer edits of student assignments are a key part of our program and this course is essential in giving students what they need to accomplish these edits. Stronger writing stays with our students long after they leave the program, whether or not they pursue a career in journalism. The instructor is Roy Peter Clark, one of the most beloved writing teachers in journalism today. His books on writing are used in colleges and universities across the United States.

The following are a sampling of the lecturers students can expect. All lectures will be delivered by respected scholars and recognized experts in the field. Each lecturer is introduced by a student who researches this person as if he/she is conducting a journalistic interview. Students are expected to ask questions and interview the lecturer after his/her presentation.

- Carla Baranauckas, a 30-year editor at the *New York Times*
- Aida Alami, Moroccan journalist filing for the *New York Times* and other top-tier outlets
- Paul Schemm, Associated Press bureau chief in Morocco

Readings include:

Alami, A. (2011, October 5). Arab art as an early indicator of revolution. *The New York Times*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/06/world/africa/arab-art-as-an-early-indicator-of-revolution.html>

Alami, A. (2012, April 26). Rape victim's death sparks protest against marriage law in Morocco. *Public Radio International*. <http://www.theworld.org/2012/04/rape-victims-death-sparks-protest-against-marriage-law-in-morocco/>

Alami, A. (2012, June 6). Moroccan artists earn applause but little in royalties. *The New York Times*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/07/world/middleeast/moroccan-artists-earn-applause-but-little-in-royalties.html>

Dialmy, A. (n.d.). Moroccan youth, sex, and Islam. *Middle East Research and Information Project*.
<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer206/moroccan-youth-sex-islam-0>

Enda, J. (2011, December/January). Retreating from the world. *American Journalism Review*.

<http://ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4985>

Hamilton, R. (2007, January 15). Morocco case turns spotlight on free speech. *BBC News*.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6265425.stm>

LeVine, M. (2012, June 30). Meanwhile, in Morocco... *Aljazeera*.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/06/2012626133253231919.html>

Moore, J. (2013, January/February). Representations of Africa: the white correspondent's burden. *Utne Reader*. <http://www.utne.com/media/representations-of-africa-zm0z13jzros.aspx#axzz2cUjsfv6K>

von Hafften, M. (2012, June 22). Lesbians in Morocco: should we stay or should we go? *Global Post*.
<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/morocco/120621/morocco-LGBT-gay-lesbian>

Wheeler, S. (2012, July 18). Moroccan women build land rights movement. *Global Post*.
<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/rights/morocco-women-land-rights>

Wright, R. (2011, July 23). The hip-hop rhythm of Arab revolt. *The Wall Street Journal*.
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903554904576457872435064258.html>

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Course evaluation includes online courses, reporting assignments, “news of the day” postings, and participation in class discussion. Students are expected to ask the lecturers questions (in interview format) along with posting and reading “news of the day.”

Description of Assignments:

Reporting Assignments: Reporting assignments include writing short feature stories, profiles, and producing social media via Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Assignments are revised and edited until they are polished and ready for posting on the on-line magazine, *Reporting Morocco*, which is produced by the students on this program. (www.ReportingMorocco.org)

Online Courses: Students must complete the online courses satisfactorily by the deadlines set.

Daily news postings: Students keep tabs on the daily news affecting Morocco, sending a daily email to the group and posting the daily news on *Reporting Morocco*. Students take turns posting these news updates.

Attendance and participation: This includes the questions students ask our lecturers. These questions should reveal the student's understanding of the issues we're studying and the unique and important role of a journalist in gleaning information from interview subjects. Assessment of a student's participation in the course will be based on prompt attendance at all course activities and positive presence in all course environments, as well as active listening—paying attention in class/during field excursions, taking full advantage of a lecturers' knowledge by asking appropriate questions, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes. Participation also includes involvement in class discussions—sharing knowledge and information both in small or large groups—and respect—positive and full interaction with host institutions, learners, SIT program affiliates, local communities, and fellow students. Students must also record observations regularly in a notebook.

Assessment:

Reporting assignments	40%
Online courses	20%
Daily news postings	30%
Attendance and participation	10%

Grading Scale

SIT Study Abroad awards letter grades to all students in order to give standard values to an assessment of work. Pass/Fail and Credit/No Credit are not options.

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

Grading Criteria

A: Ready for publication or broadcast. Shows mastery of facts and elements. Story is compelling and original.

A-/B+: Accurate, contains all relevant material but may lack maximum precision and clarity in storytelling. May have spelling or grammar errors in text, lighting and sound problems in images and footage. The difference between an A- and B+ is the degree to which these occur.

B: Needs some editing, some minor rewriting, and minor production editing. All the elements are included.

B-/C+: A significant problem or two somewhere in the analysis, focus, organization, shooting, and/or production. The difference between a B- and C+ is the degree to which these problems appear.

C: Missing facts and key information. Major re-editing/reshooting or post production editing necessary. Missing crucial elements.

C-: Very weak effort.

D: Overhaul required. Poor organization, reporting, shooting, and/or production. Major storytelling issues (including sourcing, imaging) and absence of critical thinking.

F: Failure to meet assignment requirements and standards. Missed deadline.

Final grades will reflect plus (+) or (-) minus.

I = Incomplete

W = Withdrawal (student initiated)

AW = Administrative withdrawal

Note: SIT does not award A+ grades

General Expectations

Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate fully in all lectures, course discussions, and field visits/educational excursions. In addition to completing the required readings and being able to discuss them with a lively curiosity, students are expected to read local, regional, and global newspapers and other media.

Assignments are designed to facilitate study, reflection, and analyses of trenchant issues of journalism and new media in Morocco and North Africa utilizing all aspects of the program—lectures, seminars, field excursions, and research conducted during the semester. Grades are based on preparation and participation in all seminars, discussions, and activities; peer edits; and demonstrated completion of all assigned readings. Timely completion of all course assignments is expected. Late submissions will be penalized.

Deadlines: Please make them. To receive full credit for an assignment, you must turn it in by the deadline. All written assignments should be sent by e-mail. Make sure you keep back up files so nothing

gets accidentally lost or erased.

Electronic devices: No texting, surfing, tweeting, or logging onto social media or the Internet while in class, unless instructed specifically for an assignment.

Lectures: This is not only a chance to hear what experts have to say about important topics in Morocco, but also a chance to interview them. Do your homework before each lecture. Have questions ready. If it is your turn, be ready to introduce the lecturer. Your questions for the lecturers will be taken into account in your grade for the courses. A big part of doing good journalism is asking the right questions. Respect differences of opinion (classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen and consider other perspectives with respect.

Academic Honesty Policy: This program has zero tolerance for plagiarism. Academic honesty is expected of all students. All quotes and source material must be properly attributed and verified. Your reporting must be original, truthful, accurate and free of fabrication. Any work you present as your own must be your own. Violations of this policy include plagiarism, fabrication, and any other form of cheating.

Definitions and Examples:

CHEATING: The conscious use of unauthorized, prohibited, or unacknowledged materials or methods, including, but not limited to, checking mobile devices, computers, or notes during online courses or copying others' work.

FABRICATING: The conscious falsification or invention of information, quotes, sources, or any other material presented as non-fiction.

PLAGIARIZING: The conscious representation of someone else's work as your own. Please note that ANY failure to accurately and completely document ALL uses of source material constitutes academic dishonesty. You may use a quote from another source, but it must be attributed in journalistic style. Background and contextual information may NOT be taken from Wikipedia or many other online sites. When in doubt, discuss appropriate sourcing with me BEFORE submitting your assignment.

THIS IS JOURNALISM: DO NOT MAKE UP ANYTHING in work submitted on our program.

Communication: It is your responsibility to know what's going on. This includes **checking MOODLE every day before class** for announcements, updates and changes in our course schedule. **There will be changes. There will be new and/or additional assignments.**

CARRY A NOTEBOOK WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.

A CAMERA AND RECORDER ARE ADVISABLE, TOO, though be discrete and abide by the rules of the program.

Please note: the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may modified by the Academic Director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants.

Academic Policies: SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the

online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.