Health, Environment, and Community Development
MDES 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Jordan: Health and Community Development

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 course addresses the intertwined relationship between health, environment and social development through an examination of the rights to public health, accessibility to health services, environmental protection, and alternative medical resources. The course also explores the link between poverty and health risks and the role played by civil society associations to facilitate access to disenfranchised segments of the population. The course relies on the UN Report on Human Development to contextualize the debate on health, environmental protection and social development in Jordan. This course also addresses the emergence of Jordan as a major center for alternative medical treatment in the region. The course combines classroom lectures by academics and health professionals and field visits to government health centers and development NGOs working in the areas of health development and preventive care. The lecturers are drawn from national universities, in particular the Medical School and School of Nursing at Jordan University, Jordan University Hospital, as well as guest speakers from various Jordanian associations working in the areas of environmental protection and community development. These public health professionals and civil society participants are invited to share their experiences and the challenges they deal with in the field.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able:

- To demonstrate country-specific knowledge about the impact of environmental protection on health development;
- To show greater understanding of the impact of health education and preventive care on health development in Jordan;
- To demonstrate knowledge of the impact of alternative medical care on local community development;
- To show understanding of the role environmental associations and alternative medical care play in health development in Jordan;
- To produce critical papers on issues of health and community development, environmental protection and alternative medical care in Jordan.

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Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English. Students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of health, environmental issues and community change and development through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Health and Community Development
This module will address the intertwined relationship between health and social development. It will address the link between socio-economic, cultural challenges and their impact on health.

Session 1: Social Determinants of Health
This session addresses the effects of Poverty, unemployment, bad housing and working conditions, poor social policies, unjust economic arrangements, and inequitable power relations on the health of the population in Jordan.

Required Readings:


Session 2: Gender Disparities in Health Provision
This session will address gender and social determinants of health, differential social roles, gender and power, patriarchal kinship structure, gender identity, gender relations and their effect on health across the life course of women.

Required Readings:


Session 3: Jordan Human Development Report
This session will discuss the UNDP Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative, health-related MDGs, the link between human development and health status, MDGs versus SDH, the role of SMEs as an agent of sustainable development in Jordan, Jordan’s Human Development Progress, and Recommendations of the Jordan Human Development Report 2011.

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Required Readings:


Session 4: Employment & Migrant Workers’ Health
This session will discuss the working environment, working conditions, employment contract and social security and their effect on the health of migrant workers in Jordan. The session will also address the role of ILO, Ministry of Labor policies, status of health of migrant workers and their access to health care.

Required Readings:


Session 5: Community Initiative (Field Visit)
This session will include a visit to Nazik Al-Hariri Center for Special Education in Amman. The Center provides students with special needs with special care, education, rehabilitation and recreational care. The visit will shed light on the role of community initiatives in promoting access to quality health care for disadvantaged groups.

Required Reading:

Module 2: Healthcare & Development in Badia
This module is organized around field based learning during the Badia stay (rural stay) or the southern educational excursion. Lectures, presentations or group discussions will take place during these field visits and students are required to do the assigned readings, take part in conversations in the field, and participate in debriefing and reflection sessions.

Session 1: The Challenges of Land and Water Resources Degradation in Badia -Southern Excursion
This session consists of a field visit to Badia Ecosystem and Livelihood Project-BELP. The objective of Belp is to support sustainable livelihoods and enhance ecosystem services through participatory approaches. The students will be briefed on the adaptive rangeland management and alternative livelihoods support project in Southern Badia which is working on constructing long-lasting multipurpose water harvesting structures, the establishment of improved rangeland reserves, and maintaining and enhancing livelihoods in target communities.

Required Reading:

Session 2: Access to Healthcare in Badia: Field Visit to Primary Health Care Center

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This visit to a Primary Health Care Center during Al Badia stay will include a lecture about access to healthcare in Al Badia by the center’s doctor.

Required Reading:

Session 3: Herbal Medicine in Badia –Southern Excursion
This session will include a lecture at Dana by an expert in herbal medicine use and distribution in the local context of Badia.

Required Reading:

Module 3: Social and Environmental Determinants of Global Health
This module will take place during the program's international excursion. Through lectures and field visits, students will be able to draw a comparative overview to health systems, environment, and development in MENA region. Sessions may include the following:

Session 1: Health Systems and Policies
This session will address in-country health systems and policies and their implications on the population’s access to healthcare.

Required Readings:
Relevant readings are assigned before the excursion.

Session 2: Health and the Environment
This session will address the impact of environmental issues such as urban planning, green cities, and pollution on the health of the population.

Required Reading:
Relevant readings are assigned before the excursion

Module 4: Environmental Protection and Preventive Care
This module will address the effects of environmental hazards, environmental change and environmental protection on the health of individuals and population.

Session 1: Environmental Health Hazards
This session addresses physical, chemical and microbial hazards and their effect on health, environment-related burden of disease due to modifiable factors in earth, water, soil, and food.

Required Readings:

Session 2: Environmental Change and Human Health
This session discusses environmental degradation and impairment of biophysical and ecological systems and resultant risk to population health.

Required Readings:


Session 3: Water Availability & Quality as Challenges to Health and Human Development
This session combines a lecture and a field visit to Zai Water Treatment Station, the most important water source in Amman for a first-hand demonstration of Jordanian water quality surveillance and monitoring system and national standard. In addition, the students will be briefed about water resources in Jordan, policies for development and management of water resources, linkages to health, and related social issues.

Required Reading:

Session 4: Healthy Places & Healthy People - Southern Excursion to Aqaba
This session will combine a lecture and field visit to the Municipality of Aqaba with the aim of introducing students to urbanization and the urban settings as social determinants of health. The session will also discuss the concept of ‘healthy urban governance’ which uses a spectrum of interventions to improve housing and living condition, access to safe water and good sanitation, efficient waste management systems, safe neighborhoods and working environment, and public transportation, among others. The Work carried out by the municipality of Aqaba towards healthy urban governance will be presented as a case in point.

Required Readings:
WHO Healthy Cities (nd). Healthy Cities website. Copenhagen, World Health Organization (http://www.euro.who.int/healthycities, Module 5: Alternative Medical Care and Local Development
This module will discuss the various components of complimentary/ alternative medicine in Jordan including diet, herbs, homeopathy, the Dead Sea, and their utilization by various groups of population in addition to their effect on local development.

Session 1: Alternative Medicine in Jordan - Herbal Medicine

Required Readings:


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Session 2: Field Visit to an Alternative Medicine Practitioner
This session will consist of a visit to an alternative medicine practitioner who uses herbal and diet recipes to cure and alleviate the symptoms of various diseases. The visit will discuss the nature and origin of the herbs used, knowledge transmission of herbal medicine, and the demographics of the practitioner’s clients/patients.

Required Reading:

Session 3: Alternative Medicine in Jordan- Traditional Healers (*Tib Al Nabawi*)
This session discusses the role and practices of *tib al nabawi* (literally medicine as practiced or conceptualized by the Prophet Muhammad). *Tib al nabawi* refers to a set of health practices, advice, and recommendations made by the Prophet Muhammad and compiled by his companions to help prevent and cure physical, mental, and psychological disorders through the use of spiritual, herbal or diet recipes.

Required Reading:

Session 4: Field Visit to the Royal Botanical Garden
This session will consist of a visit to the Royal Botanical Garden in *Tell Ar-Rumman*, Al Balqa Governorate, North of Amman. Students will learn about RBG’s efforts to advocate and practice biodiversity conservation, education, community development, and sustainable living. Students will also have the opportunity to tour the 5 native Jordanian habitats re-created within the site and the various theme gardens.

Session 5: Alternative Medicine & Tourism – the Dead Sea & Hot Water Spas
The session combines a lecture and field visit to the Dead Sea and discusses health benefits of the Dead Sea, the Dead Sea products industry, the Dead Sea spas, hot water springs and their benefits, and the effect of alternative medicine tourism on development.

Required Reading:


Session 6:
Final Session: Concluding Synthesis and Analysis of Course Themes

Date Final Comparative Case Study Paper Due: _______

Date Feedback Due: _______

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**
Timely completion of all 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.

**Description of Assignments:**
- The Literature Review consists of two essay questions. Students will be expected to respond to one question and will have three days to complete the assignment.
- During the semester, students will be required to write one critical analysis based on lectures and readings assigned. Papers should be 2-3 pages long.
- Students will also be required to lead one weekly synthesis session. Leading a synthesis session requires that the student prepares a summary of one of the week’s lectures and readings, make comments and prepare questions for class discussion.
- Following each field site visit, students will be expected to prepare a 2-page analytical paper focusing on observations made during the visit, issues raised and/or presentations given by health professionals during the visit.
- Comparative Analysis of Rural Urban Disparities of Health: in 5-8 pages, students will be expected to present an analysis of the rural urban disparities of health in Jordan and MENA region. The analysis should include the status quo, a root cause analysis of identified disparities including social, cultural, and political factors, in addition to the role of health and social policies and governance. Recommendations to rectify rural urban disparities should also be included.
- Attendance during the thematic seminars is mandatory and your grade will reflect your involvement in class and during other activities and excursions.

Assessment:

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<td>Critical analysis</td>
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<td>Weekly synthesis sessions</td>
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<td>Field site reports</td>
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<td>Comparative Analysis</td>
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<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
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Grading Scale

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Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak….
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- 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 across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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.

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