Course Syllabus

Arab Spring & Emerging Identities in North Africa
MDES 3000 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Tunisia: Emerging Identities in North Africa

Course Description
Focusing principally on contemporary Tunisian society, Arab Spring & Emerging Identities in North Africa examines transformations in local identities in the context of democratization, globalization, and recent political change. Through a focus on two themes - Tunisian political culture and civil society; and Islam, identity and democracy - the course probes the impact on identities prompted by social change across the region. In particular, Arab Spring & Emerging Identities in North Africa explores the formation of new political identities – both secular and Islamist - in a period of nascent democratization.

Course Objectives
Arab Spring & Emerging Identities in North Africa has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Enable students to gain factual information and a theoretical framework the Arab Spring about democratization in Tunisia and North Africa;
- Explore contemporary issues related to globalization in Tunisia and examine the effects of globalization on Tunisian culture and the emergence of civil society;
- Introduce students to a variety of institutions, individuals and viewpoints on globalization, thus contributing to cross-cultural understanding and responsibility;
- Stimulate students to analyze and author their own experiences and learning;
- Introduce students to the unique resources available in Tunisia through (a) contact with host nationals having academic and professional expertise in various fields, and (b) excursions to locations of historical, cultural, and economic importance;
- Expand background knowledge for further intensive study of the culture during the ISP and beyond.

Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify various forms of conflict and cohesion between modernity and tradition in Tunisian and Arab culture today and relate these forms to claims of national identity;
- Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the colonial legacy in Tunisia and the relationship between this legacy and specific language uses and social practices;

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• Recognize the origins of, and forms of resistance against, the dissemination of certain Western principles and ideas;
• Assess the causes behind the resurgence of Islam today and its role in political life;
• Analyze the effects of mass tourism on the economy, the culture and the life-forms of traditional communities;
• Formulate an informed, culturally appropriate, and intellectually rigorous independent research project (ISP) grounded in course readings, lectures, discussions, and excursions.

Course Requirements

Students are responsible for the timely reading and preparation of materials assigned for each session. In addition to readings and assignments, attendance and active participation during lectures, site visits, and educational excursions is required by all students. The success of the course depends upon the creation of a community of active thinkers, listeners and readers. You will rely on each other for lively discussion, respectful dissension, and conscientious, critical analysis of the lectures.

Course Description

The course is articulated around two modules:

• Tunisian Culture and Civil Society
• Islam, Identity, and Democracy

Module I: Tunisian Culture and Civil Society

• What is Arab Popular Culture? Mohamed Haddad
• Tunisian Theatre, Mohamed Idriss
• Arab Movie Industry, Ferid Boughedir
• Arab Political Culture, Hamadi Redissi
• Group discussion, Mounir Khelifa

Module II: Islam, Identity, and Democracy

• The Veil, Dalenda Larguèche
• Islamism and Democracy, Hamadi Redissi
• The State and Sharia Law, Asma Nouira
• Al Zitouna: Koran Radio or Radical Islam Mouthpiece, Asma Nouira
• Group discussion, Mounir Khelifa

Excursions

Two educational excursions will be undertaken to familiarize students with Tunisian popular culture in rural areas and to enhance students’ empirical knowledge. The first excursion explores Tunisia’s southern region of oases, the Sahara desert, and the island of Djerba, and focuses on the impact of mass tourism on the Bedouin economy and customs. The second excursion tours northern Tunisia, enabling students to see how rural life has been affected by globalization.

Readings

You are responsible for all the required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place lectures, course discussions, and

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education excursions in context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class.

**Note:** Given the recent vintage of Tunisia’s and North Africa’s political transformations, many readings are currently in press or are best accessed via the Internet and other forms of electronic media. These topical readings will be announced in class.


PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NECESSARY. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS, READINGS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE.

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Assignments**
Timely completion of all course assignments is expected. Late submissions will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Term Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**Grading Scale**
The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

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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 course lectures, discussions, educational excursions 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.

Student Expectations

Class Participation
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all course lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

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.

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