Course Syllabus

Youth, Media, and Social Movements
MDES 3500 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

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

Course Description
Focusing principally on contemporary Tunisian society, Youth, Media, and Social Movements examines transformations in Arab popular and political culture, with an emphasis on the mutually constitutive impact of new information and communications technologies on the emergence of local and regional civil society. Through a focus on two themes - mass media and the Arab spring; and youth, politics and social movements - the course probes the ways in which the Internet and related electronic revolutions across the region have changed and are changing expressions and understandings of Arab political culture. The course also explores the formation of new cultural bonds where political ideologies, namely Arab nationalism, are widely perceived to have failed.

Course lectures, debates and educational excursions will foreground various tensions and moments of continuity between modernity and tradition in Arab culture, illuminating the seemingly disparate connections between various themes including the popularity of rai music, bilingualism and the status of Arabic language, the reemergence of the hijab amongst young women, the failure of secularism, and the emergence of a new democratic culture challenging authoritarian regimes.

Course Objectives
Youth, Media, and Social Movements has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

• Explore contemporary social movements in Tunisia and across the Arab world, with an emphasis on youth and the emergence of civil society;
• Analyze the use of media and its role in the cultural, political, and social change of Tunisia;
• Develop self-understanding, cross-cultural awareness, and respect for different ways of life while complementing the skills of the Research Methods and Ethics course;
• 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;

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• 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 the shift in political paradigms of the Arab world subsequent to the Jasmine Revolution;
• Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of recent revolutionary movements in Tunisia;
• Recognize the ways in which various forms of media, including new media, played and continue to play a significant role in socio-political change in Tunisia;
• Assess the causes behind the resurgence of Islam today and the role played by information and communications technologies in this resurgence;
• 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:
• Mass Media and the Arab Spring
• Youth, Politics and Social Movements

Course Schedule

Module I: Mass Media and the Arab Spring
• Representation of the Jasmine Revolution, Tarak Ben Chaabane
• Tunisian Media after the Jasmine Revolution; Fatma Azzouz
• Cyber activism and the Arab Spring, Fatma Azzouz
• New Censorship, Sihem Zghidi
• Group discussion, Mounir Khélifa

Module II: Youth, Politics, and Social Movements
• The Arab Spring: Youth Revolution, Selwa Cherif
• Tunisian Youth Culture and Globalization, Mohamed Kerrou
• ICT in Tunisian Higher Education, Nejib Ayed
• Group discussion, Mounir Khélifa

Excursions

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Two educational excursions will be undertaken to familiarize students with Tunisian popular culture in both rural and urban areas and to enhance students’ empirical knowledge of Tunisia’s role in the dramatic changes of North Africa. The first excursion explores Tunisia’s southern region of oases, the Sahara desert, the island of Djerba, and the town of Sidi Bouzid, birthplace of the Arab Spring. The second excursion tours northern Tunisia, enabling students to see how rural life has been affected by recent processes of democratization.

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 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 NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS, READINGS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

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Assignments
Timely completion of all 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.

Attendance and Participation 20%
Mid-Term Project 30%
Final Term Paper 50%

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

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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