Multiculturalism and Human Rights in the Context of the Arab Spring
AFRS 3000 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)
SIT Study Abroad Program:
Morocco: Multiculturalism and Human Rights

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.

Description
This seminar aims to introduce students to the major current debates in Morocco on the question of multiculturalism and human rights. The course focuses on the new political, cultural, and transnational context in the wake of the Arab Spring. The social revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East have led the Moroccan state to accelerate the pace of reforms. In July 2011, in a constitutional referendum, the people approved a new constitution which acknowledges Morocco’s cultural diversity and institutionalizes the state’s commitment to the respect and promotion of human rights and individual liberties.

The seminar engages Moroccan academics, artists, civil society activists, policy makers, and students in debates on the development of a multicultural society where Amazighi language and identity, Andalusian customs and traditions, sub-Saharan cultural roots and ethnicities, and Arab linguistic and religious mapping are equally celebrated in the public sphere. The seminar is divided into six main themes: Politics and Institutions of Human Rights in Morocco, Gender and Religion in Post-Arab Spring Morocco, Multiculturalism and Social Movements, Youth and Family, Major Development Issues, and Cultural Representations and the Arts. Areas covered tackle the dynamics of Moroccan culture and society through an examination of manifestations of nationality, power, ideology, gender, class, ethnicity, and development. Overall, the approach of this seminar is multi-disciplinary, giving priority to understanding the multifaceted complexity of the questions raised. This allows the students the freedom to relate the issues at hand through not only the readings, but more importantly the individual experiences and stories encountered in daily life and the challenging learning process across cultural boundaries.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
• Identify from both a theoretical and practical standpoint the concepts of multiculturalism and human rights in the contemporary context, with particular attention given to Moroccan reality;
• Analyze current issues related to the development of individual and public liberties in Morocco regarding the spheres of human rights, religion, society, culture, and politics;
• Assess the work of institutions and NGOs in the areas of human rights and culture;
• Evaluate the integration of women and minority groups in the public sphere;
• Demonstrate country-specific knowledge about the impact of the Arab Spring on the development of human rights in Morocco;
• Produce critical papers on issues of multiculturalism and human rights in Morocco and as they relate to Morocco’s position in the cross-regional context of the Arab Spring.

Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English, but students will be simultaneously learning Standard Arabic and expected to engage community members in this language (to the best of their abilities) when the opportunity arises.

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.

Module I - Human Rights and Social Movements in the Context of the Arab Spring
The sessions offer an overview of the different social movements in Morocco, and engage with the dynamic launched by the Arab Spring and the ways Islamism has interacted with it. It will address the challenges posed by fieldwork on social movements in the Moroccan context. The sessions are based on a selection of readings that are pertinent to the module and an exercise in field work.

Sessions may include:
- Human rights and multiculturalism: Current issues in Morocco
- Moroccan social movements and the impact of the Arab Spring
- The politics of post-Islamism in the context of a hybrid regime and social movements
- Social movements, post-Islamism and new research opportunities in post-Arab Spring
- Women’s rights in Morocco

Required readings

Recommended readings:
- Austin, Leila. (Summer –Fall 2011). The Politics of Youth Bulge: From Islamic Activism to Democratic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa. SAIS Review, 31 (2), 81-96.

Module II - Women's Rights in Morocco: National Law Reform and International Standards
This module focuses on women’s human and legal rights in Morocco. We will analyze and contrast international standards, national laws, and lived realities. The sessions are based on a diverse selection of readings that include theoretical articles, practitioner perspectives, and primary source texts of international and national laws. This week also includes a research and fieldwork exercise that combines research on the United Nations human rights system and community level consultation interviews.

Sessions may include
- The Moroccan Family Code: Law versus implementation
- Human rights and violence against women
- Researching the International Human Rights System;
- Field assignment: International human rights law in Moroccan context

Required readings

Recommended readings:
- Moroccan Laws in Arabic and French can be found on the Ministry of Justice websites: http://www.justice.gov.ma/

Module III – Religion, Politics, and Everyday Life in a Multicultural Society
This module attempts to give an inside perspective of Islam through its sacred and mundane view itself: how texts are read and interpreted, who interprets them, how Muslims throughout history live their religion and how they adapt it to answer questions related to their daily life, social, cultural, and religious day-to-day duties and responsibilities. The seminar aims through selected texts from the Qur’an/Koran, the Hadith, and the Tafsir (pl. Tafassir), at shedding light on aspects of Muslim life from past to present on issues related to dress, belief, practices, and interreligious dialogue. The Moroccan way of living Islam will also be highlighted during the sessions.

Sessions may include:
- Hijab between the religious texts and its practice today,
- Sharia in Islam: between revelation and practice
- Religious freedom and human rights in Morocco
- Islam and sexuality
- How to conduct research using religious texts?
- Group discussion with Moroccan students on religion and human rights

Required readings
Module IV – Social Change and Individuation Processes in Morocco

We intend through this module to contribute to a better understanding of the process of individuation in Moroccan society. Social and economic change is disintegrating traditional structures and relationships. Primary groups are increasingly losing their authority over the individual. Globalization is also contributing to the process of freeing the individuals from a mechanical obedience towards their traditional groups of belonging. As an effect of this context of social, economic and cultural change, individuation processes are being accelerated in families and communities and new modes of sexist and intergenerational conflicts are emerging.

Sessions may include:
- Processes of individuation in Moroccan society
- Language and human rights in Morocco
- Youth and social and political transition
- The next generation: discussion with Moroccan university students
- Doing research on social change processes.

Required Readings

Recommended readings:

Module V - Major Development Issues in Morocco

As a developing country, Morocco is under a process of economic, social, and political change. While the agrarian aspect of the economy is still consistent, industrial sector is developing in large cities as well as tourism and service activities. Education is contributing to improved human capital and qualified workforce. Yet women are still marginalized as regards education and employment, little effort is done to empower women and fully integrate them economically. Over the last two decades living standards have generally improved in Morocco, but life in villages and rural areas is still hard with limited access to education, social welfare, and rising poverty. A relative effort is made by the Moroccan state to support small producers, self-employed population through microfinance and incentives for cooperatives.

Sessions may include:
- Major development issues in Morocco
- Microfinance and women’s empowerment
- Researching development in Morocco
- Field session: Informal economy and development

Required readings
Module VI: Gender, Development, and Social Change:
This module addresses the impact that the women's movement has had on the cultural and social transformation that Moroccan society is undergoing. Women are decisive agents in the process of change while they are also considered as guardians of long established traditions and as ‘representatives’ of the identity of a whole nation. The woman’s status and role within an Arab Muslim society triggers key questions such as gender relations and social constructs, the role of NGOs in public agenda setting, and tradition and modernity.

Sessions may include:
- Women in trouble: Between tradition and modernity.
- Tribal land and inheritance laws: the case of the Sulaliyates
- Women’s NGOs and the public sphere
- Visit to Association ChamIfFor Women and Family, Kenitra. With a debate around "Civil Society and Women’s Rights in Morocco”

Required readings

Recommended readings

Module VII- Multiculturalism and Contemporary Moroccan Visual Arts
This module focuses on Moroccan post-colonial art and the various aesthetic strategies of resistance developed by Moroccan artists to break away from the colonial ethnographic and exotic representations. The module also offers a critical introduction into the works of some of the most challenging 21st century Moroccan artists.

Sessions may include:
- Colonial vs post-colonial art in Morocco: From resilience to resistance
- Multiculturalism, art, and craftsmanship
- The school of the sign
- Islamist movement and the arts
- Field session: Visit to Bank Al Maghrib Museum.

Assignment
Students should form six groups and select one of the following questions to work on and do a group presentation:

1. Using some specific examples, show how “The School of the Sign” art movement has tried to rehabilitate the Moroccan cultural heritage.

2. If you were part of that movement, which element(s) from the Moroccan pop culture would you have revisited and how?
   Your presentation could be either in the form of an argument or of an artistic work.

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Description of Assignments:**
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.

The program requires two papers for the HRMS assessment (one midterm and one final). Each paper should be five pages long and should be based primarily on library sources (e-resources included). Its theme is expected to be inspired by the lectures and the readings assigned (either the required or the recommended). Justify the selection of your topic if it seems unrelated to the wordings of the sessions’ titles or the readings. For instance, if you choose desertification and its impact on the Amazighi culture of the south of Morocco, this is justified by its relation to Amazighism as a social movement. The public space can be tackled as a topic related to politics or gender. The overall grade will be based on the midterm (35) and the final papers (55%), as well as on class participation (10%).

**Class Participation**
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening, and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions, assignments, and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. An absent student is responsible for contacting the instructor, the tutor, and/or fellow students to be prepared for the assignments s/he missed and the ones scheduled for the next class.

**Assessment**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**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 academic seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of student participation will be monitored and taken into account.
Student Expectations

- **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.** 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.

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 program dossier given to you at orientation.