



Politics, Civil Society, and Migration in Tunisia

MDES-3000 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Tunisia and Italy: Politics and Religious Integration in the Mediterranean

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from term to term.

Description

This interdisciplinary seminar addresses ways in which government politics and civil society action bear on human mobility in Tunisia and the region. The succession of revolutions in the MENA (Middle East, North Africa) region and the disintegration of authoritarianism in Tunisia and its replacement by nascent democracy have not only accented human mobility across North Africa and Europe but also created a new legal, economic, cultural, and political framework to deal with it. The seminar explores the diverse roles of state and civil society in the democratization process and shows the treatment of migration is shifting from the perspective of European safety and security to immigrant human rights and integration of asylum seekers. The dynamic role played by the Tunisian NGOs explains the success of democratic transition and testifies to the humane and multifaceted question of human mobility in the region today.

Learning Outcomes

The Politics, Civil Society, and Migration in Tunisia seminar comprises 45 hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Gain factual knowledge of human mobility in Tunisia and MENA region;
- Identify the main civil society organizations active in the field of migration and human trafficking;
- Learn about the Tunisian legislation on human mobility and human trafficking and the main international conventions on the issues;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the causes of migration and the challenges in the face of immigrant integration;
- Recognize the role of civil society in Tunisia's democracy-building process;
- Show awareness of the intimate connection between civil society and human mobility and human trafficking;
- Formulate an informed, culturally appropriate and intellectually rigorous independent study project grounded in course readings, lectures and discussions, site visits, and educational excursions both in Tunisia and in Italy.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English. Students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and 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: Impact of Arab Revolutions on the Euro-Mediterranean Space

This module is designed to familiarize the students with the concept of Mediterranean history and culture, exploring common political, social, religious and economic features. Salient among these features today is the Arab Spring revolutions, and their impact on human mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean space.

Sessions address:

- Brief History of the Mediterranean from antiquity to the present;
- European attitudes towards the recent revolutions in North Africa;
- Impact of the revolutions on the European countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean: Italy and Greece;
- Human mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean space after the revolutions.

Session 1: Conceptualizing the Euro-Mediterranean Space

In this session the students will explore the idea of a Mediterranean culture, dwelling both on the similarities and the differences, continuities and disruptions between the different national "cultures." More importantly the conceptualization will consider the political, economic, and social implications of the idea of Euro-Mediterranean space, its institutional formulation, and the modalities of its apprehension of the phenomenon of human mobility and migrants' integration within it.

Required Readings:

- Abulafia, D. (2013). *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*. London: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0199315994
- Fargues, P., & Fandrich, C. (2012). *Migration after the arab spring*. The European University Institute Migration Policy Center (MPC), Florence.
- Brown, K. (1993). *Mediterraneans/Mediterranéens Review*. Manchester, UK: Didsbury Press.
- Malmström, C. (2012). Responding to the Arab Spring and rising populism: The challenges of building a European migration and asylum policy. *discours prononcé au Centre d'études européennes Minda de Gunzburg, Université Harvard, 30*. Retrieved from: <http://europa.eu//rapid/pressReleaseAction.Do?reference=SPEECH/12/3126/format=HTML&aged=O&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
- Norwich, J. J. (2006). *The Middle Sea: A History of the Mediterranean*. London: Doubleday. ISBN-13: 978-1400034284
- Theroux, P. (1996). *The Pillars of Hercules: The Grand Tour of the Mediterranean*. London: Ballantine Books. ISBN-10: 0449910857

Session 2: A New Social Actor: Civil Society in Tunisia

This session focuses on the emergence of Tunisian civil society, principally women and youth associations, as key players in Tunisian polity, and their roles in the January 2011 Revolution, and ongoing democracy-building process. The session shows that without civil society, the challenges of immigration and human mobility would probably have been approached merely from security

perspective. The session will include onsite visits to associations to evaluate their action in the democratic process and the role they play in immigrant integration.

Field Visit: Institut de Developpement Humain (youth radicalization prevention through culture, sports and the arts); Al Bawsala (Observatory of the Political scene and Parliament action); I-Watch (Transparency and good governance), Ligue des Electrices Tunisiennes (League of Tunisian Women Voters, for women's rights and empowerment in political representation).

Required Readings:

Baker, V. (2015). The Role of Civil Society in the Tunisian Democratic Transition. Boulder CU scholar. Retrieved from:

http://scholar.colorado.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2212&context=honr_theses

Natter, K. (2015). Revolution and Political Transition in Tunisia: A Migration Game Changer?. *Migration Information Source*. Migration Policy Institute, Florence, 28.

Van Houte, M. (2017). Hopes and fears of migrants' contribution to political change: A Tunisian case study. Oxford University. IMI Working Papers Series 137, 1-21.

Recommended Readings:

Akkari, A., Bouthaina A., and Sobhi, T. (2010). Education, diversité et cohésion sociale en Méditerranée occidentale. *Report*. UNESCO. Retrieved from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001883/188331f.pdf>

Chomiak, L. (2011). The making of a revolution in Tunisia. *Middle East Law and Governance*, 3, 68-83.

Session 3: Civil Society and Minority Groups

This session focuses on the various minority groups organized in civil society associations that operate as watchdogs for democracy consolidation in Tunisia, including trade unions. Students examine the UGTT historical role in the post-revolutionary democratic transition "national dialogue" (which earned it the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize); women's associations both secular and Islamist, and the thriving associations for minority groups such as LGBT, Jewish, Amazigh, and Tunisians of sub-Saharan origin. Field visits to *M'nemty* (My Dream), NGO against racism and racial discrimination; *Damj* (inclusion), for LGBTQ+ rights.

Required Reading:

Charrad, M. M. and Zarrugh, A. (2013). The Arab Spring and Women's Rights in Tunisia. *e-International Relations*. Retrieved from: <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/09/04/the-arab-spring-and-womens-rights-in-tunisia/>

Stepan, A. (2012). Tunisia's Transition and the Twin Tolerations. *Journal of Democracy*, 23:2, 89-103.

Connell, T. (2016). Tunisian Women: Sustaining the Fight for Equal Rights. Policy Brief. Solidarity Center. Retrieved from: <http://www.solidaritycenter.org/tunisian-womensustaining-the-fight-for-equal-right/>

Connell, T. (2013). Working Women Empowered: Making Democracy in Tunisia. Solidarity Center, March 5. Retrieved from: <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/working-women-empowered-making-democracy-in-tunisia/>

Session 4: Group Discussion and Reflection on the Thematic Content of the Module

Module 2: Civil Society, Immigration, and Human Trafficking Awareness in Tunisia

The module examines the complex issues of immigration, both documented and undocumented, as well as human trafficking in Tunisia through two workshops organized by the dynamic civil

society organizations in the field of human mobility and human trafficking: FTDES (The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights) and Not4Trade (Human trafficking).

Sessions address:

- Understanding precise terminology related to migration and human trafficking;
- Understanding the difference between the various statuses: asylum seeker, refugee, migrant, victim of human trafficking;
- International cooperation and civil society in the prevention of human trafficking and defending migrants' rights;
- Familiarization with all signed conventions related to the issue;
- Immigration and social media.

Session 1: Workshop on Immigration

This session consists of a workshop organized by The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights. Over a period of two days the students will acquire a clear understanding of the history of migration and mobility in Tunisia, learn about the signed conventions and the organizations working in the field and learn to identify all the factors of the “push and pull” at work in human mobility in Tunisia and the region. The workshop ends with a meeting and discussion with the director-general of the National Office of the Immigration.

Recommended Readings:

- Natter, K. (2014). Fifty years of Maghreb emigration: How states shaped Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian emigration. *International Migration Institute. Oxford*, No. 95. Retrieved from: <file:///C:/Users/GRAIOU~1/AppData/Local/Temp/WP95%20Fifty%20years%20of%20Maghr%20emigration.pdf>
- Gsir, S., & Mescoli, E. (2015). *Maintaining national culture abroad: countries of origin, culture and diaspora*. European University Institute. Migration Policy Center. ISBN: 978-92-9084-286-6. Retrieved: http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/35881/INTERACT-RR-2015_10_Culture.pdf;sequence=1
- Van Hear, N. (2010). Theories of Migration and Social Change. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, December 36:10, 1531-1536.

Session 2: Workshop on Human Trafficking

This session consists of a workshop on human trafficking organized by Not4Trade founder, Racha Haffar. Over a period of two days, the students will learn about human trafficking in Tunisia, and the goals, means, and actions undertaken by the association. They will also learn about Tunisia's national legislation on human trafficking (law of 26 August 2017) and the international conventions signed by the Tunisian state (the Palermo convention), and mainly the reasons why, despite progressive legislation, human trafficking persists in the country. The workshop ends with a meeting and discussion with members of the National Commission on Human Trafficking.

Recommended Readings:

- Slavery and Human Trafficking Bibliography. University of Texas at Arlington. Retrieved from: <https://libraries.uta.edu/dillard/subfiles/SlaveryHumanTraffickingBib.htm>
- Slavery and Human Trafficking Bibliography. Georgetown University. Retrieved from: <https://isim.georgetown.edu/sites/isim/files/files/upload/2.23.2015%20Trafficking%20Bibliography.pdf>

Session 3: Group Discussion and Reflection on the Thematic Content of the Module

Module 3: Public Authority, Immigration, and Human Trafficking in Tunisia

This module premises that the Tunisian state is aware that immigration and human trafficking are fundamental challenges to the ongoing democracy-consolidation phase in Tunisia, and that they are the social, economic and cultural founding of democratic system. Whereas the first challenge hinges around youth unemployment and aims mainly at circumventing this very cause that triggered the January 2011 Revolution, the second one aims at shoring democracy from the gross infringements of human rights. The module argues that in the response to both challenges the role of public authority is crucial. Students examine how historically marginalized constituencies in Tunisian society, namely women, youth, children, transit migrants, ethnic minorities, all vulnerable to immigration and human trafficking, are protected or unprotected by the state.

Sessions address:

- Legislation on undocumented immigration and human trafficking before the 14 January 2011 Revolution;
- Legislation on undocumented immigration since the 14 January 2011 Revolution;
- The mission of the Tunisian Office of Immigration and Technical Cooperation;
- The EU treaties on undocumented immigration with the Tunisian government;
- Women and children protection laws in Tunisia.

Session 1: Immigration and Human Trafficking Legislation

This session provides a critical review of the main existing legislation related to undocumented immigration and human trafficking since Independence.

Required Reading:

Handouts: Corpus of Tunisian Legislation: The Personal Status Code; the Code of Children Rights, Law on Human Trafficking (August 2017).

Session 2: Immigration, Education, and Social Media

This session is devoted to education in Tunisia. It will review the challenges and hopes associated with education and its effect on immigration, both in the selective form known as “brain drain” and undocumented across-the-Mediterranean mobility. The session also examines the role played by social media in the preparation and organization of documented and undocumented human mobility.

Required Readings:

Handout: Annual Report of the Tunisian Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

Dekker, R., & Engbersen, G. (2014). How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *Global Networks*, 14(4), 401-418.

Faist, T. (2010). Towards transnational studies: World theories, transnationalisation and changing institutions. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1665-1687.

Recommended Reading:

Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., & Pellegrino, A. (1999). *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Clarendon Press.

Session 3: Immigration and Jihadism

Taking Tunisia as an example, the session explores the relationship between radical Islam and immigration. The session examines the notion of “holy war” in its dual manifestation as radicalized youth leaving in numbers Muslim and non-Muslim countries to fight in Libya and Syria, and young Jihadists leaving these war-zones as refugees bent on actions of violence in asylum countries. The session also looks at the actions undertaken by civil society associations to prevent, through the arts, sports, and culture, the radicalization of youth.

Required Readings:

- The Euro Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS). Jihadism and the immigration process: a closer look at the identification of possible jihadists among asylum seekers and jihadist activists in and around reception centers.
- European Migration Network. (2016). Jihadism and immigration process. Brussels. Retrieved from <http://emn.tento.kmo.gent/publication/jihadism-and-immigration-process-wodc>
- Foscari, C. (2017). Jihadism in Europe, the problem is not immigration.

Recommended Readings:

- Hashmi, S. H. (Ed.). (2012). *Just wars, holy wars, and jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim encounters and exchanges*. Oxford University Press.
- Rand Corporation. (2017). The origins of America's jihadists. Available online. Retrieved from: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE251.html>
- Warner, B. (2015). Migration as Jihad. Retrieved from: <https://www.politicalislam.com/migration-as-jihad/>

Session 4: Group Discussion and Reflection on the Thematic Content of the Module

Module 4: Mobility, Citizenship, and Security in the Mediterranean

This module focuses on the context of mobility across the Mediterranean and demonstrates how it impacts definitions of citizenship both in the host country and country of origin. The module also looks at the impact of mass migration and refugee flux and related security concerns on Mediterranean crossings. Discussions started in this module would continue during the excursion to Italy and students have the opportunity to see how issues such as security and citizenship play out in physical space and help reconstruct the social and cultural life-world of European societies.

Sessions address:

- Citizenship and the nation state: shifting categories in a changing social and cultural environment;
- Immigrants, asylum seekers, and the question of borders;
- Youth radicalism in the Mediterranean and beyond;
- Can Europe close its borders to humans fleeing zones of conflict?;
- Italian associations working with immigrants.

Session 1: Citizenship in Limbo

Through life narratives, we study in this session the case of the “harraga” or clandestine migrants who obliterate their personal documents to efface any trace that may betray their country of origin, in the hope of foiling the risks of “refoulement” or deportation. Beyond the sheer dramatic hopelessness of such a gesture, the students are invited to reflect on the ambiguity of the correlation between citizenship, personal identity, and politics.

Session 2: War Heroes or Criminals?

In this session we examine the problematic issue of the returnees from the war zones of Syria and Libya, the ambiguity of popular perception (heroes or terrorists?), the contradictory statistics, the government measures for their reinsertion, and the role of civil society organizations. Of special importance in the session is the example of the many dozen Tunisian girls who engaged in what is known as the “Jihad Nikah” or “Holy Prostitution” in Syria, and the civil and legal status of the children begot from the unions.

Session 3: Migratory Flows in the Mediterranean: Push and Pull Factors

With the support of illustrative maps, the session will help students to trace the migratory flow across the Sahara and through Tunisia, from the countries of origin, Mali and Niger, to the countries of destination, Italy and Greece. Though one of the learning outcomes is to identify and understand the push and pull factors related to migratory projects, a leading objective of the session is to recognize the violence of human trafficking involved in this migratory flow.

Session 4: Group Discussion and Reflection on the Thematic Content of the Module

Required Readings:

- Andrijasevic, R.(2010). From exception to excess: detention and deportations across the Mediterranean space. De Genova, Nicholas and Nathalie Peutz. Eds. *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*. Durham: Duke University Press, 147-165.
- Klepp, S. (2010). "Contested Asylum System: The European Union between Refugee Protection and Border Control in the Mediterranean Sea", *European Journal of Migration & Law*12(1), 1-21.
- Springer, D. R., et al (2009). *Islamic radicalism and global jihad*. Georgetown University Press.

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:

Critical Paper (50%)

During the semester, students will be required to write one critical paper that analyzes an aspect of political or religious transformation in Tunisia. Students are also encouraged to extend the analysis to the Mediterranean region. The paper should be at least five pages long.

Appraisal /Design of Social Entrepreneurship Project (30%)

Students will also do a critical assessment of a social entrepreneurship project. This project can either appraise the reach and efficiency of an existing project or the blueprint of a project thought through and proposed by the student and should be 10 – 15 pages long.

Oral Presentation of the Entrepreneurship Project (10%)

Students will provide a 10 to 15 minute presentation of the social entrepreneurship project.

Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

Attendance during the thematic seminar is mandatory and your grade will reflect your involvement in class and during other activities and excursions.

Assessment:

Critical Paper	50%
Appraisal /Design of Social Entrepreneurship Project	30%
Oral Presentation of the Entrepreneurship Project	10%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%

Grading Scale:

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

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 (those of classmates, lecturers, and local constituents). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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>.

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.