Description
This course will be a blend of academic and experiential learning through a faculty-led study abroad program in Morocco. The beginning of the course will take place before departing for Morocco. We will explore the peoples and history of North Africa, with particular emphasis in Morocco. We then look at the transformation wrought by Roman and then Western European contact, and colonial French incorporation.

In country, we will examine how Moroccans are dealing with the problems of modernization and sustainability, and are finding their own niche in the global system. The course will combine classroom work with experiential learning gained through student ethnographic experiences with local development actors.

The class will be a blend of academic preparation led by two UNT faculty, workshops and lectures sponsored by host-agency AMIDEAST, travel to significant cultural and environmental heritage sites, and interaction with local host families, Moroccan peers, and non-governmental organizations. Readings and discussion will focus on Moroccan culture, community engagement within international development and globalization, and the role of anthropological perspectives. We will emphasize how global processes and organizational cultures influence the interactions of macro-level policies and local realities.

General Course Objectives
1. To develop an awareness of the diversity of the peoples and cultures of the people of Morocco, and their current socio-economic situation.
2. To develop in students an open-minded objectivity in realizing not just other ways of doing things, but other possibilities of ways to make sense of the human condition.
3. To develop scholarly critical thinking skills, and effective means of organizing and presenting them.
4. To acquire an overview of theory and practice within applied international development
5. To learn how practicing developmental workers gather, analyze, and present their work
6. To understand the constraints and everyday practices of non-governmental organizations working in communities around the world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MAR.pdf


Films and Videos


Student Evaluation

- Pre-trip participation 10% of grade
- Daily journal during trip and class participation 25% of grade
- Oral presentation in-country 10% of grade
- In country activities 30% of grade
- NGO/development ethnography 25% of grade

Please realize that our goal as instructors is not just to grade, evaluate, and test, but to help you gain a valuable life perspective to carry outside the class, into whatever you do.

Pre-trip: This will include 4 MANDATORY meetings from June 3-June 6 (M-Th). We’ll cover readings, logistics, culture, contemporary development, and language training. In addition, you’ll have to independently research a contemporary issue/topic for an “in-country presentation.”

In-country Presentations: One or Two of you, working together, will have to research ahead of time, and then present to our group a presentation on topics related to contemporary issues (5-10 minute for undergrads and 15-20 minutes for grads).

Presentation: Desertification and the Environment in Morocco
Insert student

Presentation: Education in Morocco
Insert student

Presentation: Moroccan Music (Berber, Malhun, Rai, Gnawa, Chaabi, Fusion, Hip Hop)
Insert student

Presentation: Moroccan weddings
Insert student

Presentation: Birth and Childhood
Insert student

Presentation: Sufi Islam and Religion in Morocco
Daily Journal: We want you guys to write/type at 200-400 words per day (graduate students – 250-500 words) about what you did, what you saw, who you met, and what you learned that day, for every day you’re there…even travel days. The best fieldnotes are both descriptive and analytical, but realize that your analyses will change as your initial assumptions become challenged as you learn. We’ll collect these after we get back (and of course we’ll return them to you).

Post-trip: There will be 2 post-trip Canvas modules that guide you in summarizing your experiences and discuss the different trends and disparities of development that we encountered.

NGO/development ethnography: We want you to focus on some aspect of development and culture that you learned through your participant observation and informal interviews while there. For instance, talk about two development actors/NGOs. What was their mission? Their history/how did they get started? Their funding sources? Their challenges? The focus of their activities (programs/events)? What are their plans for their plans for the future and/or future projects? What is their organizational structure like (hierarchy of employees)? Finally, add a reflection on your experiences of this component of the trip and what we should do differently next time. 5-6 single-spaced pages for undergraduates, 6-8 single-spaced pages for graduates. Due date: July 5th.

Student Behavior in the field: Morocco is a developing country, that ranks 123rd on the scale of human development (out of 188 countries). It ranks fair in health and education (there is free and compulsory 9 years of education, but only about 85% of boys, and 65% of girls attend school), but low in income (average annual per capita income is $3,300 a year; infant mortality rates are average, at 25 deaths per 1000 births). Literacy is estimated at 52% among both men and women. There is a large difference in all of these statistics between urban and rural areas.

We anticipate no problems in country. DESPITE THIS, your safety on this trip absolutely depends on your ability to listen to the instructors, respect the rules laid out, and respect the rules and laws of the host country. You will need to act responsibly.

We will absolutely not tolerate any behavior that puts you, another student, or the program in jeopardy. Any behavior that interferes with other students' opportunity to learn is also unacceptable. You will be sent home immediately.

Safety in the Field: Suva is an urban environment, and so bears similar risk to any developing country capital city. Students will be advised as necessity of following the program rules, adhering to nightly curfews, and common-sense ways to stay safe. Please feel free to talk to either of us about anything you might be experiencing or feeling during the trip.

Here are some tips:
Some neighborhoods are bad, particularly after dark. We’ll tell you these. Stay away. Safety in numbers!

Single women can get harassed in public. Stay in groups!
You’ll have to buy a cellphone and keep it on you in-country. DO NOT give your phone number out to strange men!

Petty theft happens, especially from poverty stricken kids in crowded urban areas, but also from “Riads” or hotel rooms. Hide your valuables; don’t put them in an outside pocket of a backpack, or a back pants pocket!

Here is amazingly sage advice from Kate Jordan, the Assistant Director of UNT’s Study Abroad, who lived in Morocco for 3.5 years…

*The biggest concern for student groups is for women adjusting to what is considered appropriate dress (minimum short sleeves, clothing that covers the knees for women) and adjusting to traveling in groups when on the street. In addition, no shorts for men unless exercising. My Moroccan friend says, “You can’t take a man seriously if he’s wearing shorts.” This can be a challenge because yes, it’s hot!*

*For women, keeping the shoulders and knees covered and wearing looser clothing (flowy tops that cover to below the hips, definitely steering clear of leggings or cleavage) will help limit the amount of unwanted attention they gather. You may see a few locals violating these guidelines and getting away with it, but unfortunately as Western guests the assumption is that we have “Hollywood morals” and are eager to just hop into bed with whomever comes across us (or at least, the local guys don’t mind trying to see if that will work). Usually they will leave if they are good-naturedly asked to stop with a “no” index finger wag. As an aside, body language trumps words in Moroccan culture, so the finger wag is more important than the words. “No” sort of means maybe without the appropriate gesture.*

*Women should travel in groups, preferably mixed groups with at least one male, to avoid drawing attention on the street. As a woman, you will notice a marked difference in the amount of attention you get when even one male is present with you. I was always surprised how different it felt in public with even my 8 year old son! Out with my two daughters was a different thing entirely, though there is respect for mothers that also helped. Also, making eye contact on the street is considered something of an invitation, so women should not smile at strange men passing on the sidewalk. Engaging with shopkeepers in their shops or people in their homes are completely different, in which women can act more similarly to how Americans are accustomed.*

*Women who have acquired unwanted followers should duck into a shop where the shopkeeper will get rid of anyone trailing along behind them. They should NOT return to their place of residence while being followed. Keeping these few simple guidelines in mind will make a big difference in female students’ experience.*

*Morocco can be the friendliest place on the planet where hospitality is a very high value. The big difference is between private space, where the host is responsible for a guest and will bend over backward to make them welcome, and public space, where unchaperoned women are seen as free game. As soon as the same woman steps into a home or shop, the host will take care of her. You will also note a big difference between the climate on the street between the Arab majority streets of the cities and the Berber majority towns in the mountains and desert, but also more conservative dress than you’ll see in the city. I expect the norms will be quite different when you arrive for your homestays than they will be on the streets of Rabat.*
Aside from low grade hassle on the street for women, the other biggest issue is theft (children/beggars with sticky fingers wherever there is a crowded public place). As there is a much different concept of personal space, the crowded spaces seem to teem chaotically to our Western eyes.

**ODA/ADA Statement:**
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

For study abroad courses, students requesting accommodations should notify their faculty leader as early as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Note that while the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not extend beyond US borders, and international accessibility requirements vary broadly from US standards, UNT study abroad programs will endeavor to provide accommodations wherever practicable.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://disability.unt.edu/ . You may also contact ODA by phone at 940.565.4323.