Christopher Newport University

Study Abroad Syllabus

MLAN 370/PHIL 370: Study Abroad in Spain and Morocco

Professor Diana Obeid, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

Dr. Hussam Timani, Philosophy and Religious Studies

Summer 2017

Course Description

Students will be given the opportunity to explore Spain and Morocco’s rich and fascinating mosaic of cultures and examine traditional and contemporary ways of dealing with coexistence, challenges, and change. Spain and Morocco are absolute goldmines with endless treasures to excavate. Each has a rich history, during which the lives of Spanish, Berbers and Arabs, Christians, Muslims and Jews, rural communities and city dwellers, have been intricately interwoven to produce a fascinating, social, cultural, linguistic, and religions mosaic. These various communities have found ways to live together for millennia, in spite of occasional challenges and changes with which they were faced. Spain and Morocco hold geopolitical importance with regards to their relations to Europe, North Africa, and beyond.

Spain has been a melting pot of people and cultures throughout its history, and Arabs had a great influence on Spain. The Arabs arrived in 711 and pushed north from North Africa and were a dominant force until their final defeat at Granada in 1492. These Muslims, later called Moors, opened Spain to Eastern civilization and even introduced Greek philosophy to the Iberian Peninsula. Córdoba & Toledo were considered the new Athens of Europe. We will focus our studies in five cities that most reflect the Arab influence. They include Valencia, Toledo, Córdoba, Granada and Sevilla. Before exploring Spain, we will follow the steps of the Arab invasion through Morocco to the shores of Algeciras, Spain. Madrid will be our ending point for this course, which will give time to explore this beautiful capital. We must include the study of the Spanish Inquisition in order to fully appreciate the Jewish and Arab cultures in Spain. This course will give the student a better understanding of the elements that shape present day religious and world conflicts.

Course Objectives

This 14-day summer trip is designed to provide students with a unique experiential understanding of the interaction between Europeans/Christians in Spain and Arabs/Muslims in Morocco. A special combination of site visits and lectures by Professors Obeid and Timani will focus on the Arab influence in Andalusia, the rise of philosophy, the role of women in both societies, the evolving role of Islam in the Arab world, and the religious and ethnic diversity of Morocco.

Students will

* Demonstrate understanding of historic, religious and post-colonial Spanish and Moroccan diversities;
* Introduce students to an in-depth and first-hand understanding of medieval Arab influence on Spain and European influence on Islam and Islamic culture in Morocco;
* Understand how gender intersects with other structures of identity formation, and social life, such as ethnicity, class, and religion;
* Produce effective written communication about field trips and conversations; and
* Understand key challenges, processes, and indicators related to the interaction North African region

Readings

Study pack provided by professors Obeid and Timani

Course Grading

Participation (20%)

Personal Journals (20%)

Two research papers (30% each)

*Participation*: Pose questions, share observations, formulate new insights, challenge and evaluate others’ views, mediate differences.

*Personal Journals*: Must be written daily while in Spain and Morocco, no more than 100 words/day. Do it before retiring each night (You will forget much by the next day). Reflect on lectures, discussions, site visits, and other group or personal activities. You need only write about one topic, but can definitely discuss multiple topics. A copy of the journals will be submitted to the professors at the end of the trip.

Here are some suggestions for critical reflection:

1. Something you learned, something that surprised you, and why. How has this experience affected you?
2. What do we learn about the European-Arab interaction in the Middle Ages, and how can we relate to this interaction in the 21st century?
3. Substantive additions to the readings or your thoughts on the readings in the context of the day’s events

*Research Paper 1*:

Choose a topic, develop a one-page, single-spaced proposal (thesis statement and implications), and write a research paper. The paper is due after returning from Morocco.

Research papers will conform to the MLA handbook and are to be 8-10 pages, typed with 12 point font, double-spaced, and have a bibliography. The student must have at least five bibliographic sources not including encyclopedic, dictionary, or required texts. Students may use Internet sites as a source but they will only count as one source.

Pre-Trip Sessions

There will be 3 pre-trip sessions. Students have to attend all pre-trip sessions. Their attendance will be part of their participation grade.

*Pre-trip session 1:*

Trip overview: introduction to the history and culture of the Arab-Muslim world with an emphasis on its legacy in Spain today; introduction to Moroccan Arabic as a dialect distinct from other Arabic dialects. Read and discuss *Understanding Arabs* (on Scholar).

*Pre-trip session 2:*

Arab-Islamic Culture: An Overview

Arab-Islamic influence in Spain

Islam and culture in Morocco

Required readings:

Ruthven Malise. *Islam*. Chapters 1-3.

Howe, Marvin. *Al-Andalus Rediscovered: Iberia’s New Muslims*.

Shroeter, Daniel. “The Shifting Boundaries and Jewish Moroccan Identity.

Ernst, Carl. “Islam and the West.”

Njoku, Raphael. *Culture and Customs in Morocco*

Rosen, Jancie K. “Trance Parties and Tomb Picnics: Moroccan Saint Veneration Among Muslims and Jews.”

Ibn ‘Ata ‘Allah, “Sufi Aphormisms.”

*Pre-trip session 3:*

Pre-trip briefing and organization; final discussions about expectations for behavior and assignments; and the cultural mores of Spanish and Moroccan cities and small towns.

July 3 – July 18

**Day 1**: Flight to Spain arriving in Madrid

**Day 2**: We will take the bus to the train station. Train travels to Seville. We will pass the old tobacco factory setting of Bizet’s Opera *Carmen* as we walk to the Medieval Barrio de Santa Cruz to admire the historic Jewish quarter of the city.

**Day 3**: Guided tour of the Cathedral in Seville, the world’s biggest temple and the third largest Christian Cathedral after St. Peter in the Vatican city and St. Paul’s in London. Visit the Giralda, the most emblematic movement of Seville. Built in 1184-96, the tower was the culmination of Almohad architecture. It is considered the first of the three Almhad minarets; the other two are in Morocco cities of Rabat and Marrakesh. After the re-conquest the Christians added a bell tower to the Minaret in 1568.

**Day 4:** We will visit the Macarena Arch, Basilica and the wall. The wall dates to Islamic rule; construction of the wall started in the 11th century and was completed in the 13th century. Tour of the Alcazar de Los Reyes Cristianos. While the Alcazar displays Islamic features, almost all of the structure was built under Christian rule. Originally the Visigolds had a fortress on the site when the Visigolds fell to the Umayyad conquest of Hispania, the emirs of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus rebuilt the structure.

**Day 5**: Bus trip to Cordoba the former Islamic capital was once a draw for intellectuals and known as one of Europe’s cultural centers. After settling in, we will visit the Medieval Jewish quarters, “la Juderia,” the Mezquita of the old synagogue.

**Day 6**: Guided day excursion to Alhambra. We will tour Spain’s most celebrated 14th century Alhambra and see the exotic mosaics and richly ornamented courtyard of the country’s last Islamic stronghold.

**Day 7**: Leave Alhambra to Costa Del Sol. Board the ferry and cross the strait of Gibraltar to the shores of Morocco. We travel South to Fez, an inland city that is often described as the spiritual heart of Morocco. Explore the Christian and Jewish quarters and wander around the Medina.

Day 8: we will travel south to Marrakech. On our way we will make a stop in Meknes.

**Day 9**: In Marrakech, we will visit Bahia Palace, Djemaa el Fana, and Koutoubia Mosque with its famous minaret towers and pass Saadin tombs where some of the country’s eminent sultans are laid to rest.

**Day 10**: Leave Marrakech to Casablanca (about two hours and a half) where we will see the Mauresque architecture that is said to be inspired by the Art Deco Movement. We will visit Hassan II Mosque. After lunch we will leave to Rabat.

**Day 11**: In Rabat we will visit Mohamad V Mausoleum and Hassan Tower. We will leave to Tangiers after lunch.

**Day 12**: In Tangiers we will visit Dar el Makhzan and the American Legation, which is the first American public property outside the U.S. It commemorates the historical, cultural and diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Morocco.

Leave to Chefchaouen where many Moriscos and Jews settled after the Spanish Reconquistor in Medieval Times. It is know for its blue buildings.

**Day 13**: Travel to the port. Cross the Strait of Gibraltar by ferry to arrive back on the Costa del Sol in Spain. We will take the Coach back to Seville.

**Day 14**: Leave Seville to Madrid by train. Spend the night in Madrid.

**Day 15**: Leave Madrid back to the States.

Schedule of Readings

Day 1: No Readings

Day 2:“Moorish Legacy,” in Howe.

Day 3:“Spain’s Multiple Muslim Voices,” in Howe.

Day 4: “Jewish Roots,” in Howe.

Day 5:“The Shifting Boundaries and Jewish Moroccan Identity,” in Schroeter.

Day 6:“Islam in the Eyes of the West,” in Ernst

Day 7:Culture and Customs in Morocco, chapter 1

Day 8:Culture and Customs in Morocco, chapter 2

Day 9:Culture and Customs in Morocco, chapter 19

Day 10:“Trance Parties and Tomb Picnics: Moroccan Saint Veneration Among Muslims and Jews,” in Rosen.

Day 11:“The Curse of the Saint,” in Schroeter.

Day 12:“Sufi Aphorisms,” in Ibn ‘Ata ‘Allah (d. 1309).

Day 13**:** Discussion of readings/trip

Day 14:No Readings/Prepare for return

Post-Trip

Submission of research paper is due 10 days after arrival in the U.S.