

California State University  
Chico

**Anthropology of the Islamic World**  
***Anthropology 377***  
Study Abroad in Morocco Summer 2020  
9 June through 19 June

Instructor: Jesse Dizard  
Office: Plumas 105  
E-mail: [jdizard@csuchico.edu](mailto:jdizard@csuchico.edu)  
Telephone: 530-898-5583  
Office Hours: By appointment

This class meets in Morocco, North Africa at various locations.

This course is a study tour of Morocco which makes maximum use of local and regional examples of culture in all its forms (architecture, art, cuisine, customs, dress, language, and values) in an effort to explore not only the history of the region, but also the ways in which Islam has been integrated into what it means to be Moroccan, North African, and also human. Students participating in this Study Abroad Program will learn about the rich culture and complex history of Morocco in particular and North Africa more generally through site visits, lectures, and cultural exposure. They will gain direct experience of Moroccan culture from homestays with a Moroccan family, participating in cultural practices such as the public baths (*Hammam*), pottery making, exploring ancient markets (*souks*), enjoying authentic traditional dishes (*couscous*, *bastilla*, *tajine*), and interacting with locals on a daily basis. Lectures and discussions, coupled with close reading of primary and secondary sources, will help students grasp the diversity of North African religious traditions, cultural and social practices, and political systems. The course will also highlight intercultural and cross-cultural exchanges within and between North Africa and the Middle East, as well as the broader global context. Islam is perhaps the world's fastest growing religion and as many as 1.3 billion people around the globe identify themselves as Muslim. This course seeks to provide an understanding of how Islam impacts the daily lives of Muslims. Can non-Muslims understand Muslims and Islam? This course explores the history and cultural context of Muslims and Islamic culture globally, with a practical emphasis on North Africa and Morocco. Human behavior and social interaction are the twin foci of inquiry. All religions seek to order their cultural contexts. But what does it mean to be Muslim in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century? Is there such a thing as 'Islamic behavior'? How, if at all do Muslims differ from non-Muslims? Is Islam really 'incompatible' with Western secular modernity? Are we witnessing a 'clash of civilizations' as some have suggested? The perspective taken in this course is anthropological, not theological. Anthropologists are primarily concerned to explain and predict behavior, not to pass value judgments. As such, this course ignores questions of 'good' or 'bad' and 'right' or 'wrong' and seeks instead to understand Muslims as individuals within specific cultural contexts, and during particular historical periods.

## Student Learning Objectives

---

1. Understand and produce clear expository writing based upon systematic revisions of original work.
2. Understand and practice the principal methods of textual analysis and interpretation.
3. Examine and describe several examples of complex human social organization in the context of Islamic societies and Muslim religious practices.
4. Respond articulately and coherently to abstract questions in writing.

Upon completion of this course, students should have a better appreciation for the role of culture in Morocco in particular, and in contemporary Islamic societies more generally, experience conducting close textual analysis, an understanding of religious – political relationships, a clearer idea of the role of power in society, and an understanding of the role/s of individuals within bounded social units and/or sub cultural groups.

In addition, students will:

1. Understand from an anthropological perspective the phenomenon of culture as it differentiates human life from other forms. Understand of the roles of human biology and cultural processes in human behavior and human evolution.
2. Develop an ability to critically address ethical and moral issues of diversity, power, equality, and survival from an anthropological perspective.
3. Know substantive data and theoretical perspectives in the sub-disciplines of anthropology. Know the history of anthropological theory and be conversant with the major issues in each area.
4. Be familiar with the forms of anthropological literature and basic data sources. Know how to access, interpret, evaluate, and apply such information, using a range of sources and information technologies.
5. Grasp the methodologies appropriate of the sub-disciplines of anthropology. Be able to apply appropriate methods when conducting anthropological research.
6. Be able to present and communicate the results of anthropological research.

### Required Reading:<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>

Akyol, Islam Without Extremes (2011)

Dizard, Into Fez (2008)

Fish, Are Muslims Distinctive? (2011)

Turner, Islam, The Basics (2011)

Additional readings available on the course website include selections from:

Benboune, Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here (2013)

El Feki, Sex and the Citadel (2011)

### Suggested Reading:

Cesari, Why the West Fears Islam (2013)

Cook, Understanding Jihad (2015)

El Tahawy, Headscarves and Hymens (2016)

Halliday, 100 Myths about the Middle East (2005)

Lapidus, A History of Islamic Societies (2002)  
Maalouf, The Crusades Through Arab Eyes (1989)  
Shah, The Caliph's House (2006)

### **Course Usage of Blackboard**

Copies of the course syllabus and major assignments may be found on Blackboard (Bb). You are responsible for regularly checking the online resources, which can be found on the course Bb site via the Chico State Portal at <http://portal.csuchico.edu>

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION (subject to modification)**

### **PART ONE:**

#### **1. What is Islam? (6/9/20 – 6/11/20):**

**Reading:** Turner, Islam: The Basics.

**Film:** “I Am Muslim” available on course Blackboard site

June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 group leaves for Rabat, Morocco

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 group arrives in Rabat, Morocco; travel by bus to Meknes; students meet ISA staff and host families; introductory remarks about Morocco and North Africa. Students go with host families to begin homestay experience.

June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 group health and safety orientation; walking tour of Meknes' medina (old city). Lecture and discussion about Islam, Muslim culture, and Morocco. **Essay One first draft due.**

#### **2. The practice of culture (6/12/20 – 6/13/20):**

**Reading:** Fish, Are Muslims Distinctive?

June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 lecture and discussion of assigned reading, critical review of first drafts. Visit hammam. Free time for reading, and work on revisions of first drafts.

June 13<sup>th</sup>, Free day.

June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Day trip to Chefchaouen; visit farmer's market, 17<sup>th</sup> century Qasbah, and the Ethnographic Museum of Chefchaouen.

### **PART TWO:**

#### **1. The importance of interpretation (6/15/20 – 6/19/20):**

**Reading:** Akyol, Islam Without Extremes.

June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Class meeting and lecture with Drs. Dizard and Yousefi (2-3 hours); conversation with local students at café. **Essay One final draft due.** Essay Two assignment discussion of possible topics.

June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Guided tour of Volubilis. First draft of Essay Two due.

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Free day to write and explore and visit with host families.

June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Day trip to Taza, site visits to Jebel Tazzeke *parc nationale*, el-Sarajin tower, the Great Mosque. Essay Two first draft due.

June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Service Activity

#### **2. Are we prisoners of culture? (6/20/20 – 6/23/20):**

**Reading:** Dizard, Into Fez.

June 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 Free days in Meknes.

June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Move to Fez; walking tour of the Medina (old city). Essay two revisions.

June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Fez cultural visits; course ends, summary review. **Essay Two final draft due.**

### ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

This is a Capstone course and there are serious expectations regarding attendance, in-class discussion, and assigned readings, in addition to a substantial writing requirement (with mandatory revisions of all essays).

### **PARTICIPATION**

**In class (30%):** Attendance will be taken. All students are expected to attend lecture and to participate in discussions based on assigned readings. At least two (2) oral presentations are required on topics to be determined in consultation with the instructor.

### **WRITING**

**1. Two essays (60%):** Students will be assigned two (2) essays, the topics corresponding to each of the three parts of the course. Each essay demands integrating interdisciplinary perspectives, examples to be discussed in class. Each essay must be approximately 1,750 – 2,000 words. Essays each will require at least two, preferably three revisions.

**2. Discussion Commentary (10%):** Each part of the course will have a corresponding Discussion Question. Students are expected to offer replies to the question and pose additional questions of their own in dialogue with one another on a regular basis. Contributions to the discussion must address some facet of the argument, theme, method or theory of the material under examination. Correct grammar and citation format is required for all Blackboard comments. All comments and essays may be submitted electronically through the course website.

### **Grading**

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the following criteria:

Attendance and class participation 30%

Original Research Project 60%

Discussion commentary 10%

Regular attendance is required and will be factored into the final grade. Students must keep current with readings. The +/- system will be used to resolve borderline cases. *If a student feels an error in grading has been made, the student has one week from the time the exam/assignment is returned to them to request a review of the grade. The request must be in writing – attached to the original assignment—and must include a specific statement as to what is in error, how it should be corrected, along with any available supporting evidence.*

### **Intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and classroom discipline:**

Freedom of thought and expression is highly valued in this class. Many ideas presented are controversial. Discussion and debate is encouraged. If you disagree with ideas expressed in class, you are encouraged to challenge those ideas, but NOT to attack the person presenting

them. Cell phones, music players and other electronic devices must be turned off, and reading material not related to class must be put away. Whispered conversations and/or side discussions will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct includes cheating on exams, homework assignments, class projects, and deliberate plagiarism of someone else's work.

**Additional note on Academic Integrity:**

Evidence of plagiarism has significant consequences up to and including failure of this course. For more information on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it please see:

<http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/assets/docs/integrity/Avoiding%20Plagiarism.pdf>

For additional information about academic integrity please see:

<http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml>

**Disability Support:** Students with a documented disability can contact Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Building E (Phone#: 898-5959; web: [www.csuchico.edu/dss/](http://www.csuchico.edu/dss/) <<http://www.csuchico.edu/dss/>> ) to arrange academic accommodations. Please let me if you have any questions or concerns. All administrative details concerning adds, drops, incompletes, etc will be the student's responsibility. This syllabus is subject to change. All changes and/or modifications to the course syllabus will be communicated to students via Vista notification.

1. Understand from an anthropological perspective the phenomenon of culture as it differentiates human life from other forms. Understand of the roles of human biology and cultural processes in human behavior and human evolution.
2. Develop an ability to critically address ethical and moral issues of diversity, power, equality, and survival from an anthropological perspective.
3. Know substantive data and theoretical perspectives in the sub-disciplines of anthropology. Know the history of anthropological theory and be conversant with the major issues in each area.
4. Be familiar with the forms of anthropological literature and basic data sources. Know how to access, interpret, evaluate, and apply such information, using a range of sources and information technologies.
5. Grasp the methodologies appropriate of the sub-disciplines of anthropology. Be able to apply appropriate methods when conducting anthropological research.
6. Be able to present and communicate the results of anthropological research.