This course is an anthropological examination of North Africa, with a specific emphasis on Morocco. We will begin with some geography and history, but move to what is distinctively “cultural” about the region. How do people think, eat, feel, fight, and love one another? What seems familiar and what feels strange? From agriculture to military history, food to dress, literature to contemporary issues like Islamism, feminism, migration, and development: we will immerse ourselves in the North African context with the aim of coming to appreciate this ancient nexus between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Along the way we will ask ourselves how we know what we know and explore the value and limits of “knowing” people different from ourselves.

Goals and Objectives

This course examines history, culture and society of Morocco from an anthropological perspective.

By the conclusion of the course students should be able to:

1. Relate the geography of Morocco in general terms, locate the main topographic features, and accurately describe the major cities and their character.
2. Convey the basics of anthropological inquiry and explain the main conventions of anthropological research and writing.
3. Compare and contrast different anthropological approaches to studying Morocco.
4. Explain what “culture” is and why it is difficult to study.

Evaluation and grades

You have twelve possible assignments to complete, but I will count only ten of them. Each is worth ten points except for the final paper, which is worth 20 points. Assignments will either be completed in class or will be due at the beginning of class, and will not be accepted after that.

Course Readings

Crawford, David


Ennaji, Moha and Fatima Sadiqi
2008 Migration and Gender in Morocco. Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press

Jacobs, Daniel and Mark Ellingham, Hamish Brown, Shaun McVeigh

McMurray, David A.

Newcomb, Rachel
Rabinow, Paul

Schedule

September 7: Introduction to the course
What is Morocco? Why should I care? How do I examine something “anthropologically?”
What does it mean to “know” a person, a culture, or a society? Today’s lecture will be a short
introduction to the assumptions, methods, and core theory of anthropology.

No reading assignment. Nothing due.

September 14: Getting to Know You
Morocco is famous as a tourist destination, and this is the first way students will come to
understand the place. We will ask how a country is packaged for tourist consumption, and how
that packaging relates to the permanent residents (or does not). Students will come to know the
different regions of Morocco and have some idea how one might get from one place to the next,
and what you might do when you arrive. We will ask how we know what there is to “see” in a
given place, and begin to ask ourselves what we might be missing.

Reading: Rough Guide: Morocco
Assignment 1 due: You have $1,000 and a month in Morocco. Write a diary describing your
time in and travels between Casablanca, Tangier, Tetouan, Chefchaouen, Nador, Fes, Errachidia,
Ouarazate, Marrakech, Taroudant, Tiznit, Tafraout, Sidi Ifni, Laayoune, Agadir, Essaouira, and
Rabat. Include a detailed budget in an Excel sheet of what you spend day by day for food, travel
and lodging. (10 pages; 10 points)

September 21: Burrowing In
This week you will imagine living in a specific region of the country. The class will be divided
into regional groups and each group will be charged with undertaking an imaginary six month
project in that region. A group presentation will show where the team members decided to live,
where they traveled to, and what they accomplished during their six months. Regions: Tangier,
Fes, Casablanca, Marrakech, Ouarazate, Taroudant, Sidi Ifni.

Reading: independent research
Assignment 2 due: Each team will have fifteen minutes to make a presentation. The other
students will grade the presentations by apportioning credits. (Each person has 10 credits to
distribute among the teams based on the quality, creativity and thoughtfulness of the
presentations. Nobody may give credit to his or her own team.) Half of each team’s grade will
reflect the distribution of student credits; the other half will remain at the instructor’s discretion.
Each team member receives the same grade. 10 pts.

September 28: History
Morocco’s history is dauntingly complex. From australopithecines to Spanish capitalists,
Phoenicians and Vandals to ex-pat American junkies: the northwest corner of Africa has been
overrun by every sort of human creature imaginable. We cannot sort this out in a week, but
students will seek to make sense of at least some of Morocco’s pre- and post-independence
history.

Reading:
Mojuetan (History and underdevelopment in Morocco)
Rough Guide section on history (pg. 701-731)
Independent research
See also this documentary on the Moroccan Sahara:
http://www.2m.ma/Programmes/Magazines/Societe/Grand-Angle/Sahara-True-Wars-and-Fake-Peace

Assignment 3 due: Choose two events, themes, dynasties, dynamics, or periods and discuss their importance in light of Mojuetan’s argument. (4 – 16 pages; 10 points)

October 5: Morocco in the World Economy
This week we discuss the contemporary political economic situation of Morocco, with an emphasis on migration. Labor migration is arguably the preeminent social phenomena in North Africa today and it impacts virtually every aspect of society.

Reading:
Ennaji and Sadiqi (Migration and Gender in Morocco)
McMurray (In and Out of Morocco, Introduction)
Crawford (Moroccan Households in the World Economy, Chapter 6)

Assignment 4 due: Submit notes on the readings. 10 points.

October 19: Introduction to Anthropological Understanding
What is “ethnography?” What is ethnographic understanding? This week we will discuss some of the basics of anthropological research and what distinguishes it from other ways of knowing. We will also discuss anthropological writing, its conventions and assumptions, peculiarities and perversities.

Reading:
Crawford (Moroccan Households in the World Economy, Preface)
Geertz (Introduction from Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society)
Rabinow (Notes on Fieldwork in Morocco, Introduction to the Thirtieth Anniversary Edition, Forward, and Introduction)

Assignment 5 due: How do Crawford, Geertz and Rabinow differently introduce their work? How do they differently present the point of anthropology? (In class writing assignment. 10 points.)

October 26: Religion, Education, Power

Reading:
Eickelman (Knowledge and Power in Morocco)
Spadola (Mohammed and Ibrahim)

Assignment 6: How is the “power of religion” different in Eickelman and Spadola? (In class writing assignment, 10 points.)

November 2: Family, Religion, and Knowledge

Reading:
Newcomb (Women of Fes)
Bargach (Notes of an Undutiful Daughter)

Assignment 7: How does Newcomb’s subject position influence the way she conducts her ethnography? How is Bargach similar or different? (In class writing assignment, 10 points.)
November 9: Critically Engaging the Classics
This week we read Rabinow’s book, which is both a classic of Moroccan ethnography and an extraordinarily influential meditation on anthropological methods. We will discuss the conventions of critiquing ethnography.

Reading:
Rabinow
Crawford (How Life is Hard)

Assignment 8: Summarize Crawford’s critique of Rabinow. (In class writing assignment; 10 points)

November 16:
Reading:
McMurray (In and Out of Morocco)

Assignment 9: How is McMurray’s treatment of migration similar to or different from that of Ennaji and Sadiqi? (In class writing assignment, 10 points.)

November 23:
Read: Crawford (Moroccan Households in the World Economy)

Assignment 10: Submit notes on the readings. 10 points.

November 30:
Read: Dwyer (Moroccan Dialogues, Chapters 4 and 10)

Assignment 12: Compare Moroccan Dialogues to Notes on Fieldwork in Morocco. (In class writing assignment; 10 points.)

December 7: Summary and celebration.

Assignment 12: Final paper: What does it mean to be “Moroccan” today? How do you know? What do you know about the diversity of social and cultural life in North Africa? Which ways of knowing (or writing) were most convincing, and why? Demonstrate that you have achieved the goals of the course. (10 – 15 pages; 20 points; due Friday, December 17th at 5 p.m. in my office.)

A 93- and up
A- 90-92
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72
D 60-69

If you have a disability or that will impact your performance in class or need special accommodations, please see:
Just so you know...

“Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, data, work, or language of others and submitting them as one’s own to satisfy the requirements of a course. Plagiarism constitutes theft and deceit. Students are often confused by just what constitutes plagiarism. When the ideas or writings of others are presented in assignments, these ideas or writing should be attributed to that source. Special care should be taken, when cutting and pasting materials or when paraphrasing, to cite sources correctly and to use quotation marks around exact words from source materials. Actions that result in plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Consequently, students must understand the concept of plagiarism. When reading, processing, or using materials from any source, appropriate documentation is always essential. Resources such as the library (ext. 2178) and the Writing Center (http://www.fairfield.edu/eng_writingcenter.html) are available on campus to assist you in your academic endeavors. You are encouraged to take advantage of these resources.”