

Oman

Political Culture and Economic Development in the Gulf

Explore social and economic development, political reform, regional politics, and religious traditions in the Persian Gulf. Students choose between two thematic concentrations.

Coursework

Please note: This program will have credit distribution and/or other curriculum changes beginning in the fall 2012 semester. Please visit www.sit.edu/OMC for details.

Students on this program choose to focus on political culture or economic development and diversification. While this affects the choice of thematic seminar, all other program components remain the same.

Political Culture and Development Seminar

MDES 3000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English with required readings and relevant educational excursions. Students examine the complex roots of Omani political culture and their effects on concepts of governance, state-society relations, and the path of development in Oman. Lecturers include faculty from Sultan Qaboos University; government officials such as members of the Majlis Al-Shura (parliament); and high-ranking experts from the private sector.

Seminar topics typically include:

Omani Culture and History

Contemporary Omani society; religious and sectarian traditions including Ibadhism; women and social participation; East African influences; the Bedouin; post-1970 history; multilingualism; Omani foreign policy.

Political and Social Development

Political institutions and tribes; the legislative process and participation; women's empowerment; roles of public/private sector enterprises; tourism development; environmental and water management; Vision 2020; oil as a geostrategic resource; workforce nationalization; the media and press freedom.

OR

Economic Development, Energy, and Diversification in the Gulf Seminar

ECON 3000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English with required readings and relevant educational excursions. Students examine the current economic environment, energy policies, and sociopolitical situation of the Persian Gulf, with a particular focus on the Sultanate of Oman. Lecturers are drawn from institutions such as the Omani Center for Investment

Promotion and Export Development (OCIPED), the Muscat Securities Market, Qatar University, and the American University of Sharjah's Department of Business and Economics.

Seminar topics typically include:

Omani Culture and History

Refer to Omani Culture and History topics at left.

Economic Development, Energy, and Diversification in the Gulf

SME incubators; regulatory reform and promotion of agriculture and fisheries; the creation of upstream and downstream industries; the Muscat Stock Exchange and the Central Bank of Oman's policies.

Educational Excursions (both concentrations)

All students undertake excursions to sites in Muscat, the Omani interior, and the Sharqiyya and Dhofar regions. A longer excursion to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, conditions permitting, provides a cultural, economic, and political comparison of three Gulf states, and includes a visit to the headquarters of *Al Jazeera* in Doha as well as visits to several universities in the region.

Intensive Language Study: Arabic

ARAB 1000-3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

Emphasis on speaking, reading, and writing skills in Modern Standard Arabic through classroom and field-based instruction. Students are placed in intensive beginning, intermediate, or advanced classes based on in-country evaluation, including oral proficiency testing. An introduction to Omani Colloquial Arabic is included in the course.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours

A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience. As an introduction to the Independent Study Project (ISP), topics include cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects

NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST



Credits 16

Duration Fall/Spring 15 weeks

Program Base Muscat

Language Study Arabic

Homestay Muscat, 6 weeks

Rural Visit Salalah, 1 week

Other Accommodations Hotels and one desert camp

Independent Study Project 4 weeks

Prerequisites None

Review Policy; developing skills in observation and interviewing; gathering, organizing, and communicating data.

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours

Conducted in Muscat or another approved location in Oman appropriate to the project.

Sample Political Culture ISP topics: new media in Oman; language and identity in Oman's Swahili community; Omani women's associations; Omanization and local development programs; campaign tactics in the Majlis al-Shura. **Sample Economic Development and Diversification ISP topics:** corporate culture and its adaptation to local culture; implications of the Oman-US Free Trade Agreement; impact of tourism development on local communities; effects of privatization on the telecommunications sector; implementation of workforce nationalization policies.

Students may have the option of completing an alternative ISP project, such as interning with a local organization and completing a written evaluation of the experience, circumstances permitting.