

Geographical Field Course Morocco

2023 - 2024



UCSSCGEO35

Course offered in the summer term 2024, focusing on sustainability issues in the socio-cultural context of Morocco

Staff: Dr. Gery Nijenhuis (& tba)

Preparation: 27 May – 6 June 2024

Program in Morocco: 9 – 18 June 2024



On the road...

Introducing the field course

Since 2008, the field course forms an important element in the geography curriculum of UCU. During a field course you learn outside the classroom: it confronts theoretical knowledge with the empirical reality in the field. Being in the 'field' enables you to better understand the messiness of 'geographical reality', to develop subject knowledge, and to gain a range of skills that are difficult to develop in the classroom alone: you will question, listen, observe, map, interview etc. Moreover, it is a very motivating – and social - form of education, and adds greatly to personal development.

After a successful fieldtrip last year, we are able to offer again a geographical field course to Morocco.

This intensive course is meant to highly benefit students who wish to broaden their field knowledge of the African/Arabic/Amazigh and Islamic world. Morocco offers a chance to explore a vast geographical area with multiple dimensions. The country is often described as the 'Gateway to Africa'. It also represents an area with a rich culture, linked to various civilizations that Morocco encountered through different eras in its history. This is reflected in current Morocco, the way the country deals with the sustainability challenges of our time, such as the energy transition, questions of identity and state formation, migration and diversity and inequality. This course will help you to analyse and explain these challenges, by using an interdisciplinary

approach. It will provide ample opportunity to observe, experience and discuss how these challenges are taking shape in Morocco.

Structure of the course

The course will start with an intensive preparation on campus of two weeks, after the finalization of the Spring Semester. Students and instructors will meet 3 –4 times a week, to prepare for the field visit. Modes of instruction include reading and discussing literature on cultural and socio-economic background of Morocco and the topics that are featured in the field trip, a crash course Moroccan, and assignments

A 9-day program of activities in Morocco forms the core of this course, with a departure in the second week of June, after Commencement Day. Supported by guest lectures, an active exploration of the different study sites by the participants themselves constitutes the ‘fieldwork’ component. Students further explore their specific theme through observations in the field, visuals and other materials. Fieldwork will be complemented by organized group visits to specific sites, institutions and interactive sessions with local experts (academics and representatives of NGOs, public and commercial sectors).

Topics that will be addressed include (de)colonization, remnants of the French colonial period, diglossia, climate change adaptation, migration, identity (French/Arabic/Amazigh /English/Spanish), sustainable urbanization and minorities.

Preliminary itinerary

Marrakesh - Rabat - Fez – Azrou – Casablanca - Marrakesh



Time schedule

Week 1 (May 27 – May 31) - Preparatory week: 3 sessions of 4 hours each, including: introduction participants and lecturers; introduction to the learning objectives and the format of the course. Themes: (de)colonization, remnants of the French colonial period, diglossia, migration, identity (French/Arabic/Amazigh/ English/Spanish).

Week 2 (June 3 – 7) - Preparatory week: 3 sessions of 4 hours each, including: climate change & energy transition, inequalities and diversity, sustainable urbanization, institutions and governance

Week 3 and 4 (June 9 – 18) – Fieldtrip Morocco: guest lectures, in-house visits NGOs/municipal government, urban walks, exchange with Moroccan students, site visits projects

Week 5 (June 24 – 28) - Wrapping up (completion of papers/group work); deadline assignments: June 28.

Assessment

Assessment will consist of a presentation in the preparatory week, active participation, an individual fieldwork paper and an individual reflection paper.

Instructors

The course is taught by Gery Nijenhuis, and another lecturer (tba).

Gery Nijenhuis is associated professor at the department of Human Geography and Planning at Utrecht University. She's trained as a human geographer, and holds a PhD in Development Studies. She was involved in several projects in Morocco, and carried out research on transnational activities of Dutch-based Moroccan diaspora organizations. She also coordinated the 22-23 field course to Morocco.

Gery will act as course coordinator, and can be reached through: g.nijenhuis@uu.nl.

Costs

Costs for the fieldtrip will be approx. 475 € per participant, including B&B, local transportation, tours and 2-3 meals, but excluding airfare and all other meals. We aim to keep the costs as low as possible, the amount mentioned here is at the safe side. At the moment of writing, the airfare for a return ticket Amsterdam – Marrakesh mid-June 2024 ranges between 160 - 250 €.

Recommended knowledge and skills

Recommended for students in Geography:

- Intro Human Geography; and of one of the following courses: Development Studies, Urban Geography or Globalization and Regional Development; or another relevant level 2 course, in SSC, HUM or SCI.

Recommended for students in Humanities, one of the following courses:

- level 1 Arabic
- level 2 French
- Intercultural Communication
and a relevant level 2 course, in SSC, HUM or SCI.

Do you have another background, and are you interested in taking this course? Please write an email to Gery Nijenhuis (g.nijenhuis@uu.nl).

How to register?

Students who want to participate make their interest known by email to the course coordinator. The organizers will approach those who have expressed interest for confirmation of registration. Registration closes early for reservation of travel and accommodation; it is in the form of a binding signed contract as well as a down-payment of part of the field trip costs. You cannot register yourself through Osiris Student. The coordinator will take care of this.

Deadlines:

- expression of interest: **Friday December 15, 2023** (motivation of 200 words + match prerequisites, via email to Gery Nijenhuis: g.nijenhuis@uu.nl)
- deadline final registration: **Friday February 2, 2024**; we will provide an online form for this purpose (available through the website after the Christmas break)

Selection will be based on the timely registration of participants, and the way the requirements are met. If interest turns out to be larger than the maximum number of participants, selection will be done through lottery.

More information?

Visit the information meeting on **Tuesday November 28, 14:00 hrs (UCU-campus, location tba)**.

Or contact the course coordinator, Gery Nijenhuis: g.nijenhuis@uu.nl

Annex: Schedule Morocco Fieldtrip June 11th - June 21th, 2023

Day 0 - Marrakech		Sunday June 11 th
Themes	n.a.	
Itinerary	Arrival of students & staff in Marrakech 20:45 hrs: welcome dinner in Marrakech (location tba)	
Day 1 - Marrakech → Rabat		Monday June 12 th
Themes	Youth in Morocco/student life	
Itinerary and activities	09:30 hrs: Bus trip to Rabat 14 – 16 hrs: visit University Mohammed VI 17:30 hrs: arrival at hotel	
Day 2 - Rabat		Tuesday June 13 th
Theme(s)	Multilingualism Sub-Saharan migration and Inter-religious dialogue	
Itinerary and activities	09:00 hrs: City Walk: Touring Rabat 15:00 – 18:00 hrs: visit Nimar, Nederlands Instituut in Marokko, exchange with students	
Day 3 – Rabat → Meknes		Wednesday June 14 th
Theme(s)	Sub-urbanization Urban planning	
Itinerary and activities	Morning: visit Tamesna (departure: 10:00 hrs) Afternoon: visit Medina Rabat/work on paper/visit museum (tbd) 17:00 hrs: bustrip to Meknes	
Day 4 – Meknes → Fez		Thursday June 15 th
Themes	Religion Morocco's imperial history & dynasties Roman rule in Morocco	
Itinerary and activities	Morning: visit synagogue & church & soufi Aissawara including lunch +/- 15:00 hrs: bus leaves to Moulay Driss Visit Moulay Driss (town and mausoleum) Visit the Amazigh-Roman vestiges in Volubilis Bus trip to Fez	
Day 5 - Fez		Friday June 16 th
Themes	Moroccan Islam Moroccan Art: Handicraft Moroccan Architecture	
Itinerary and activities	Time: Guided tour in the Medina of Fez Afternoon: time to work on research paper	
Day 6 – Fez →Ifrane →Azrou		Saturday June 17 th
Themes	Rural Morocco/Agriculture	

	Rural development Environmental issues Amazigh Culture
Itinerary and activities	09:30: Bus leaves to Ifrane Visit to Ifran and the monastery of Toumlilin Visit to an agricultural cooperative rural Azrou
Day 7 – Azrou → Casablanca → El Jadida	
Sunday June 18 th	
Themes	Religion and politics
Itinerary and activities	09:00: Bus trip to Casablanca Afternoon: Visit Hassan II mosque in Casablanca Bus leaves for El Jadida at 16:00 hrs
Day 8 – El Jadida → Marrakech	
Monday June 19 th	
Themes	Introducing Marrakesh
Itinerary and activities	Morning: bus leaves to Marrakesh Afternoon: time available for work on research paper
Day 9 - Marrakech	
Tuesday June 20 th	
Themes	Rural development
Itinerary and activities	Day trip rural village (including lunch)
Day 10 - Marrakech	
Wednesday June 21 th	
Themes	Wrapping up
Itinerary and activities	Morning: time to work on paper Afternoon: evaluation of field trip and final guestlecture 20:30 hrs: Farewell dinner (location to be announced)



Tannery in Marrakech