

Off-Campus Study Student Profiles

John Kaderbek

Major: History

SIT: Culture & Development, Morocco



Program Highlights:

- Rural stay in the middle Atlas
- Visits to the four imperial cities of Maknas, Al-Rabat, Fas, and Marrakush
- Seeing sunset and sunrise in the Sahara
- Living in the Old Medina of Rabat

What courses did you take and how did you like them?

The courses were a broad set of seminars and a language course. Notable lecturers included: a formerly imprisoned journalist and political activist, a theatre director, the founder of a rural micro-development firm, the head of the center of Amazigh Studies and Language, or a nationally-renowned feminist intellectual. What we learned in the few months we were there could not be replicated in any course.

Why did you choose your program and location in particular?

I chose the program because I wanted to study in an Islamic country. In deciding between Oman, Jordan and Morocco, I found that Morocco has the same ties to "proper" Africa as Oman and historically has an incredibly diverse population.

What unique experience did you have that contributed to your education?

For the independent study portion of the program I worked closely with some of the most prominent political parties and discussed the political situation in Morocco with people directly involved in the process. My advisor was a prominent intellectual of the PJD (the Islamist Party).

What specific advice would you give to other students preparing for this program and for living in your host country, or studying off-campus in general?

Start learning the Arabic alphabet, it is hard and a head start will help you deal with the two dialects you will learn. Get ready to experience culture shock, over and over again. The second you think you have come to terms with how different their culture is, they will show you how similar your cultures are. Put your Western eating habits on hiatus (vegetarianism, etc.): your hang-ups could offend your hosts and in general will diminish your experience. Finally, read up on some Moroccan history and culture, it can really help you avoid making some embarrassing comments.

SIT, Morocco

This program examines Islam as a system of thought, Morocco's political system and monarchy, and the country's place in the Middle East and in African, Berber, and Arab cultures through an independent field study project.

Come to the IPO or check <http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad.htm> for more information!