

Snapshots from the Strait of Gibraltar

*Digital Transcriptions of
Culture, Architecture,
and Religion*

Spain & Morocco

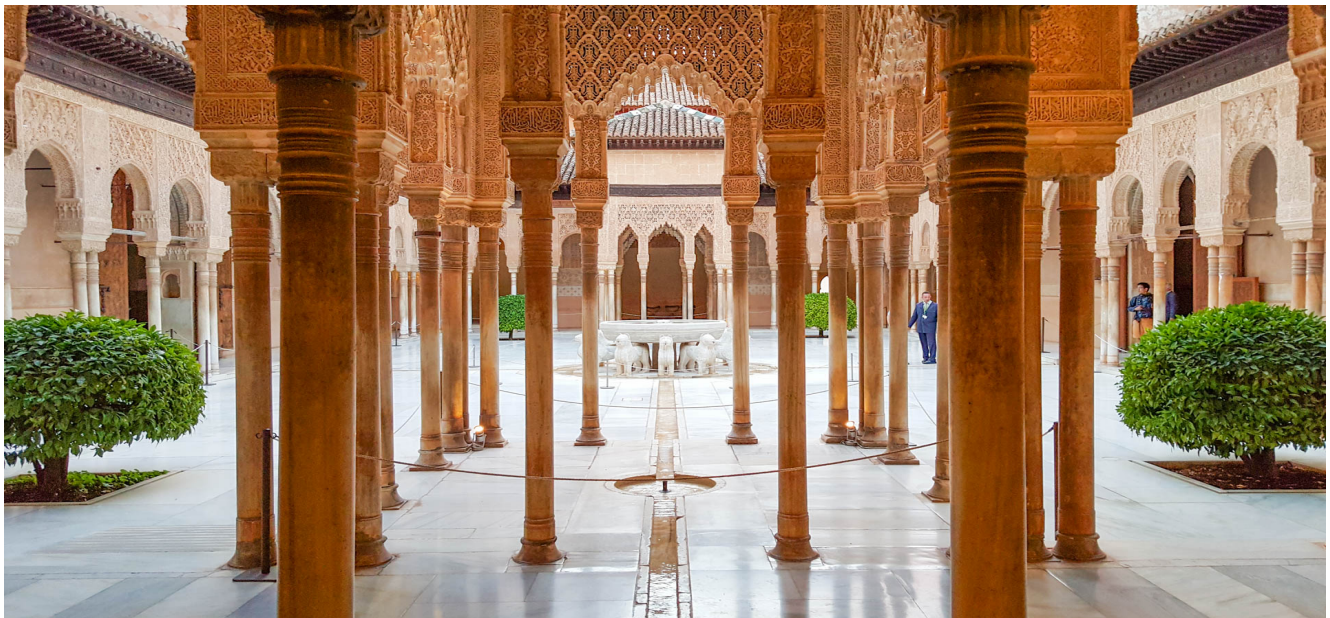


Snapshots from the Strait of Gibraltar

Digital Transcriptions of Culture, Architecture, and Religion

Program Direction and Academic Content to be provided by

Dr. Cate Blouke (English Department) and Dr. Trina Jones (Religion)



Course Overview:

From the Alhambra Palace to the ancient medina of Fez, flamenco dancing to Arabic calligraphy, this interim explores the unique aspects of the region stretching from Southern Spain to Morocco – through the lens of our cameras. After lessons in digital photography and pre-trip orientation, we'll take off for two weeks of exploration, creating travel blogs to reflect on the experience.

We'll spend our first week in southern Spain, based in the Plaza Santa Ana -- at the center of Granada. With an eye toward the Islamic history and influence in the region, we'll tour the Alhambra palace, take day trips to Albayzin and Sacramonte, visit the famous mosque of Cordoba, and take a bike tour of Seville. We'll then wind our way to Morocco after touring the Rock of Gibraltar, crossing the Strait by ferry, and landing in Tangier. Our Moroccan explorations will be based in Rabat (the capital city), and from there we'll explore Moroccan culture via its ancient architecture, a class in calligraphy, a henna demonstration, and visits to numerous important cultural sites.

The through-line for the course will be digital photography and intercultural writing, and students need not have sophisticated equipment to participate.

For questions or more information, please email Dr. Blouke: bloukecm@wofford.edu

Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Take effective photographs—considering elements of composition such as point of view, balance, and symmetry
- Navigate a number of digital platforms and engage with online environments to create rhetorically aware compositions
- Craft a particular narrative identity/ethos through travel writing/blogging
- Identify and describe cultural contexts
- Describe and analyze American notions of Spanish and Moroccan cultures
- Reflect on social aspects of climate and geography

Assignments:

- Students will create a blog and compose a minimum of 6 posts of 500 words (navigate digital platforms, craft identity, create rhetorically aware compositions)
- Students will create an Instagram and/or Flickr account to post photographs from each location (take effective photographs, navigate platforms)
- Generate a final portfolio that reflects on cultural differences, American notions of Islamic identity, and aspects of climate and geography

Estimated Cost:

\$5,025 (includes international airfare, lodging, transportation to and from the airport, on-site transportation, some group meals (lunches are on students' own), all fees/tickets for pre-arranged events and museums, and international insurance coverage)

Additional Expenses: \$380 (some meals, local transportation, passport)

Program Partners – IES Abroad

Dr. Blouke and Dr. Jones have partnered with [IES Abroad](#), a study abroad organization with more than 125 centers around the world. IES has semester programs based in both [Spain](#) and [Morocco](#), and they've helped us design this customized trip - drawing on their experience and contacts, and providing us with local guides and facilities. The IES Abroad Centers (in Granada and Rabat) are fully-staffed local offices ready to respond quickly and professionally to student and faculty needs. An on-site coordinator will be designated specifically as the point of contact for students and faculty on the program at each center. This on-site coordinator, in partnership with other staff at the IES Abroad Centers, helps to manage logistics including accommodations, field trips, cultural activities, and day-to-day administration. This coordinator will also handle on-site emergencies and manage student academic, health, and discipline issues in conjunction with the IES Abroad Dean of Students Office in Chicago. IES Abroad will provide information to the School's students concerning cultural activities and available local resources, such as libraries and athletic centers, in the program locations.

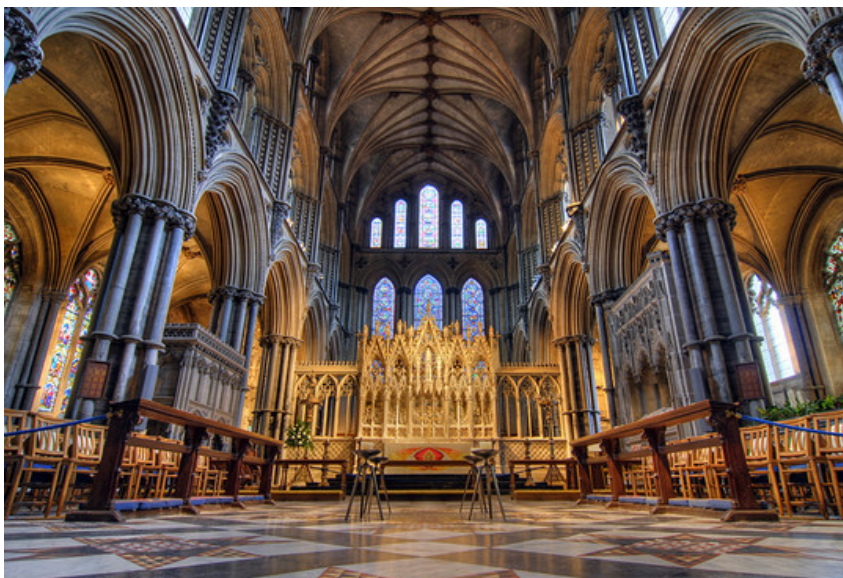
Sampling of Site Visits and Activities in Spain and Morocco:

Granada, Spain

[Alhambra Fortress](#) - A [UNESCO World Heritage](#) site, the Alhambra "is Granada's – and Europe's – love letter to Moorish culture, a place where fountains trickle, leaves rustle, and ancient spirits seem to mysteriously linger. Part palace, part fort, part World Heritage site, part lesson in medieval architecture, the Alhambra has long enchanted a never-ending line of expectant visitors. As a historic monument, it is unlikely it will ever be surpassed." (From [Lonely Planet](#))

Albayzin and Sacromonte - We'll take a guided tour of these areas of Granada. [Albayzin](#) comprises the Arab quarter and the medieval [Medina](#), and [Sacramonte](#) offers views of indescribable beauty (including the cave houses that adorn the area). On our tour, we'll pay particular attention to the urban structure of the old Muslim city, its transformation into a Christian space, and recent Orientalized idealizations.

Cordoba - on this day trip, we'll visit [the Great Mosque](#) - one of the oldest standing structures from the time Muslims ruled Al-Andalus. The Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba is one of the most important monument of all the Western Islamic world. The evolution of the "Omeya" style in Spain is resumed in the history of the Mosque of Cordoba, as well as other styles such as the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque of the Christian architecture. We'll also take a walking tour of the city.



Seville - We'll take a day trip to Seville, where we'll visit [the Cathedral](#) - the largest Gothic cathedral in the world, and another UNESCO World Heritage site. The cathedral's construction lasted over a century, from 1401 to 1506. It is said that when the plans were drawn up, church elders said, "Let us build a church so beautiful and so magnificent that those who see it finished will think we are mad". We'll also take a bike tour of the city.

[Flamenco](#) - we'll be treated to an evening [flamenco](#) performance – “a Spanish [art](#) form made up of three parts: [guitar](#) playing ("guitarra"), [song](#) ("cante"), and [dance](#) ("baile"). Flamenco originated in the southern regions of Spain, but it's thought to be influenced by many world cultures, including Latin American, Cuban, and [Jewish](#) traditions. Originally flamenco dancing was not set to music; it was only singing and clapping of hands called “toque de palmas.” Some flamenco dancing still follows [ancienttradition](#), but the use of [guitars](#) and other musical instruments has become more [popular](#) in modern flamenco.” We'll have dinner alongside the performance.



Gibraltar

The British overseas territory occupying a scant 2.6 square miles, [Gibraltar](#) is nonetheless a major landmark and important territory for global history. "First settled by the Moors in the Middle Ages and later ruled by Spain, the outpost was ceded to the British in 1713. Layers of fortifications include the remains of a 14th-century Moorish Castle and the 18th century Great Siege Tunnels, which were expanded in WWII". Known primarily for the Rock of Gibraltar, it is also home to 30,000 Gibraltarians and Europe's only population of wild monkeys (the Barbary Macaques that occupy the nature reserve at the top of the Rock).

After a tour of the Rock and surrounding area, we'll take a ferry across the Strait of Gibraltar on to Tangiers, Morocco. From there, we'll be met by our IES partners and take a bus on to Rabat.



Rabat, Morocco

Hassan Tower and Mausoleum of Mohammed V – Hassan Tower is the minaret of an incomplete mosque in Rabat, Morocco. Begun in 1195, the tower was intended to be the largest minaret in the world along with the mosque, also intended to be the world's largest. The tower, made of red sandstone, along with the remains of the mosque and the modern Mausoleum of Mohammed V, forms an important historical and tourist complex in Rabat. The Mausoleum stands as a masterpiece of modern Moroccan architecture, holding inside the grand tombs of past kings.



Calligraphy class - "Calligraphy is the most highly regarded and most fundamental element of Islamic art... [I]nherent within the Arabic script is the potential for developing a variety of ornamental forms. The employment of calligraphy as ornament had a definite aesthetic appeal but often also included an underlying talismanic component."

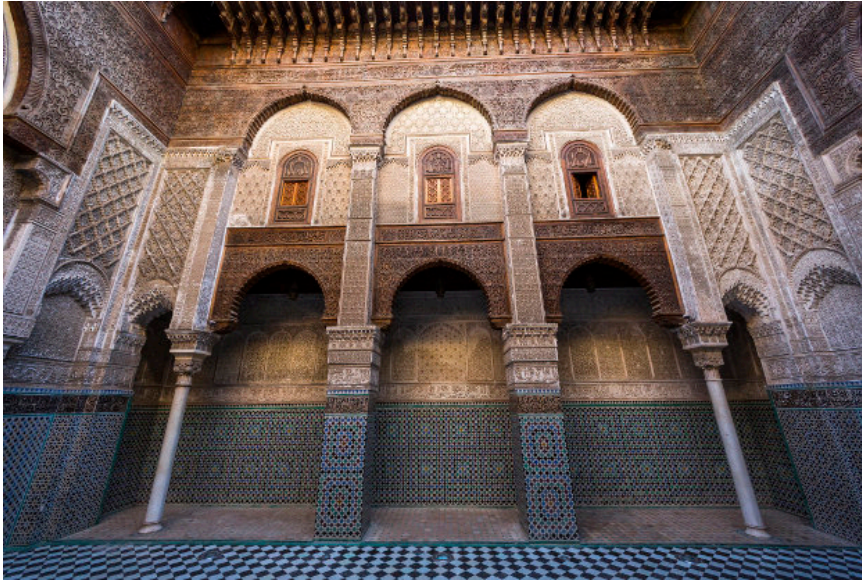
Henna demonstration - "Some view Henna only as a bodily adornment or an alternative to a permanent tattoo, but in Morocco, the role of Henna transcends that of beauty. In harmony with the Berber's belief in Baraka (good luck), Henna worn on the body offers protection against illness, the evil eye, and brings joy." In Morocco, henna is applied to a bride's hands and feet during a ceremonial henna day, prior to the wedding. The bride's hands will then be wrapped in cotton and sprinkled with rose water. The wrapping of the hands allow the henna to set to a deep crimson tint. Most of the women in the bride and grooms family will in turn have henna applied to their hands with less extensive work. Henna is used by women of all ages ceremoniously or decoratively.



Hammam - A Turkish bath (hammam in Arabic) is the Islamic variant of the Roman bath, distinguished by a focus on water, as distinct from ambient steam. In Western Europe, the "Turkish bath" as a method of cleansing and relaxation became popular during the Victorian era. The process involved in taking a Turkish bath is similar to that of a sauna, but is more closely related to ancient Greek and ancient Roman bathing practices. The Turkish bath starts with relaxation in a room (known as the *warm room*) that is heated by a continuous flow of hot, dry air, allowing the bather to perspire freely.

Fez, Meknes, and Volubilis

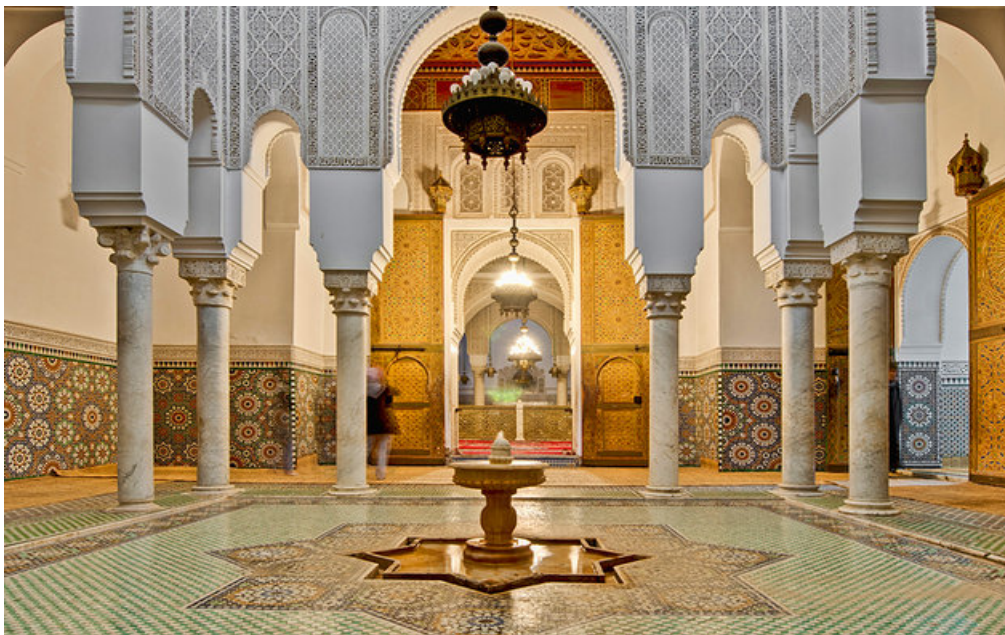
We'll take a two day, one-night trip to these locations and visit sites such as:



[University of al-Qarawiyyin](#) - "the oldest existing, continually operating and the first degree awarding educational institution in the world according to [UNESCO](#) and [Guinness World Records](#) and is sometimes referred to as the oldest university. The Al Quaraouiyine mosque-religious school / college was founded by [Fatima al-Fihri](#) in 859 with an associated school, or [madrasa](#), which subsequently became one of the leading spiritual and educational centers of the historic [Muslim world](#). It was incorporated into Morocco's modern state university system in 1963."

Fez Medina - "[Fes](#) is the fourth largest city in Morocco and also known as one of the ancient imperial cities). It is separated into three parts, [Fès](#) el Bali (the old, walled city), Fès -Jdid (new Fes, home of the Mellah), and the Ville Nouvelle (the French-created, newest section of Fes. The Medina of [Fes](#) el Bali is believed to be the largest contiguous car-free urban area in the world. To enter the medina, you will pass through the Bab Bou Jeloud Gate, with its decoration of blue and green faience."

Meknes - "Often referred to as the Versailles of Morocco, [Meknès](#) is located between the fertile plain of Rharb and the Middle Atlas. The historical importance of Meknes is reflected in its grand Moorish buildings and in Meknes' close relationship with Volubilis, a nearby city known as the most important archeological site in Morocco."



Volubilis - is a partly excavated Berber and Roman city in Morocco situated near the city of Meknes, and commonly considered as the ancient capital of the kingdom of Mauretania. [The UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) “contains essentially Roman vestiges of a fortified municipium built on a commanding site at the foot of the Jebel Zerhoun. Covering an area of 42 hectares, it is of outstanding importance demonstrating urban development and Romanisation at the frontiers of the Roman Empire and the graphic illustration of the interface between the Roman and indigenous cultures.”

