KIIS Egypt Program, Summer 2026

ANTH 366 Topics: Anthropology, Religion and Culture of Egypt* (3 credit hours)

Professor: M. Ruth dike (mrdike01@louisville.edu)
Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

*ANTH 366 can be used to fulfill Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS) minor credits at the University of Louisville.

1. Course Description: An intensive introduction to Egypt, focusing on its history, its cultures, and its religions. The academic methodologies of Anthropology and History will be used to learn about contemporary life in Egypt, as well as its amazing historical past. An introduction to the local cultures and teachings of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Special attention will be given to the historical development of religious traditions that are still alive today in the places that we will visit. The rich remains of religious architecture and art will be studied, from ancient Coptic churches to Al-Azhar Mosque. Additionally, students will be exposed to the diversity of cultural and religious expressions in Cairo, from a Coptic mass, to a Sufi dikhr. Students learn some Arabic words and phrases, which helps them engage with locals as they conduct small ethnographic assignments in Egypt to identify, probe, and analyze socio-cultural patterns and processes. Students will also examine how food, family life, religion, politics, gender roles, migration, and globalization affect everyday life for Egyptians.

2. Required Texts: *The KIIS Egypt Reader* (A collection of articles and documents tailored for this course.)

3. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:
KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:
KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:
1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective

essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

4. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

1. To learn the basic contours of Egyptian culture and history.
2. To learn about the religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in their historic and cultural context.
3. To gain an understanding of how these religions have been and continue to be expressed in culture, arts, and architecture.
4. To better understand contemporary Cairo, particularly how completing notions of identity seek to address fundamental questions about human nature, the role and status of women, and other human experiences.
5. To gain cross-cultural competences, to reflect on how one best engages with a host culture, to think critically about cross-cultural connections, and to develop tolerance of values across cultures.

5. Course Components:

Reading Quizzes:
You will be assigned portions of the *KIIS Egypt Reader* daily. Reading quizzes will cover whatever is due on the given day. These readings will inform your experience, and you will be asked to discuss them in your journals.

Reflection Journals:
An essential part of your learning experience is your own reflection. While small- and full-group discussions will be useful ways for you to reflect, an important venue will be your Reflection Journal. Often during this course, you will be prompted to reflect on a certain experience, thus providing you the opportunity for *sustained* reflection. At the end of the course, you will be asked to write an *elaborate and thorough essay* (of at least 1200 words), providing a *synthesis* of things you have learned during the course as a whole.

Ethnographic assignments / Experiential and interactive learning:
Often during this course you will be asked to experience something specific. For example, you may be instructed how to visit a local church or mosque politely and unobtrusively. In addition to learning proper etiquette, you will be given guidelines for how to make the most of participant observation. At other times, you will be asked to have some short conversations with a few locals concerning a certain subject that will give you new insights into Egypt's rich culture. You may be asked to attend religious or cultural events (concert, dance show, etc.) and reflect on them.

Research Project and Oral Presentation:
During the KIIS orientation in April, you will be assigned a religious and/or historical site that we will be visiting during the study-tour. You will do research into the origin, history, and significance of the site and prepare a 7-minute oral presentation. You should use at least two scholarly sources. Notes for your presentation should be made on "5x7" index cards. You should print out a bibliography of the sources you used for your research. Examples of sites that will be assigned are: the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, the Hanging Church, and the Ben Ezra

Synagogue in Cairo. When we visit "your" site on the study-tour, you will present to the rest of the group. You will turn in your index cards and your bibliography.

Final Exam:
There will be a comprehensive examination at the end of the study-tour. It will consist of multiple choice, matching, and essay questions over the assigned readings and content covered during the study-tour (lectures, briefings, tours, and discussions). A portion of the Examination will cover some of the Arabic you have learned.

Language:
This is not a language class. But in order to better engage with your host cultures, you will be asked to learn a few basic phases in Egyptian Arabic. You will be learning a few words per day. Each word you learn will help to improve your interaction with your host culture. You will be quizzed on the phrase/s or words for the day.

Lectures, briefings, tours, and discussions:
Much of this course depends on successful appropriation of information given during the study- tour. Sometimes this will be a briefing with a Muslim scholar or spokesperson; sometimes this will be with an academic tour-guide. All of this information will be represented on your final examination.

6. Grading:
Quizzes 10%
Reflection Journals 30%
Research and Presentation 10%
Final Exam 30%
Participation 20%
Total: 100%

7. Policies:

Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.
Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can "hallucinate" (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.

- Grammar and Style Checking: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

Academic Honesty Policy:
Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own), or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, term papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student's own work. Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the faculty member who teaches the course in which the cheating took place.

Student Conduct Policy:
All students must adhere to this program's behavioral guidelines and also to Western Kentucky University's code of conduct as stipulated in the Student Handbook. Please check the following link:
http://www.wku.edu/handbook/2009/index.php?option=

Attendance Policy:
KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/ early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:
Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/ at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/; additional Title IX resources can be found here https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.