



**George Mason University Study Abroad Program to Morocco
January 3 to 18, 2016**

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As both academic directors and graduate students, we truly believe that we would not have been able to lead a study abroad trip of this quality and magnitude without the guidance and resources provided by ARAMFO. While we both have experience teaching courses at GMU, as well as living, conducting research and traveling internationally, neither of us had taught overseas before. In fact, very few graduate students or new professors have the chance to lead a study abroad course. While the possibility to leading a study abroad course was exciting, we were also aware of a number of challenges we needed to overcome in both coordinating with our own educational program as well as arranging the course internationally. Collaborating with Mason Study Abroad and ARAMFO in conjunction helped us to create both an academically enriching course and for our students and extensive travel itinerary throughout Morocco. ARAMFO played a crucial role in arranging the activities, travel arrangements, and safety precautions taken while abroad. Their hands-on approach to academic study abroad coordination allowed for us to do what we do best, design an educational experience for our students.



We led our students throughout Morocco on a 14-day study abroad course; spending time in major cities such as Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, and Rabat, by the ocean and in mountains and the Sahara, we were able to learn about and appreciate many of the varied regions of the country. We had opportunities that would not have been available to us had we not been partnering with ARAMFO. ARAMFO contributed to our students academic experience by connecting us with faculty, students and professors at the University of Hassan II Benmsik and Medical School and ensured that we had the most beautiful accommodations a long the way. Classroom discussions took place in historic mosques, while eating traditional Moroccan dinners at our Riads, around a campfire in the Sahara desert, and at sunset overlooking the Northern Atlantic Ocean. We simply asked ARAMFO to reserve a space for group discussion and lectures, and we can all agree, they

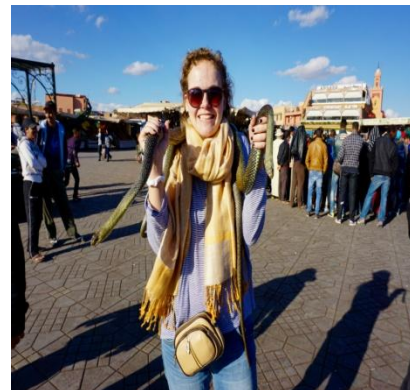
were able to provide us with so much more.



Just to give you a quick idea of the connections that ARAMFO was able to facilitate: We had the honor of introducing our students to University leaders of the University of Hassan II, such as, the President, Vice Dean, Chair of the English Departments, and Masters Coordinator of Moroccan American Studies. In addition, our students participated in both faculty-led and student-led discussions and presentations with students at the University of Hassan II.



Our students and ourselves agree that these personal connections and group discussion were some of the most memorable experiences from our trip, and without the work of ARAMFO, we would not have been able to have these hands-on learning experiences and connections. Through our conversations with individuals at the university and listening to their presentations we not only learned about the rich history and cultural diversity in Morocco, we also formed friendships and future academic collaborations.



We are very grateful to ARAMFO and to their director, Dr. Abeer Ibrahim, for the time and thoughtfulness dedicated to ensuring that we had the best possible trip. Our tour guides and driver were knowledgeable and friendly, and committed to ensuring that we were safe as we traveled all over the country.

