

## **Arabic Course in Jordan**

This summer, I took part in an intensive Arabic course in Jordan, Amman. At Queen Mary I had taken a beginners course and after a placement test in Amman I was placed in the intermediate class. The course at Queen Mary was a compulsory part of my masters in Applied Linguistics for English language teaching and it was aimed for us to observe teaching methods as well as seeing from the learner's perspective how we reacted to these methods. As future language teachers this was an incredible opportunity. My dissertation was on how the learners' motivation and attitudes towards the target language affected their performance. Whilst in Jordan, I continued observing the teaching methods and I used the time when I was not at the course to finish writing my dissertation.

The course was in the evenings from 6 to 9 at the French Institute in Amman. It was great to meet people who had a passion for languages as well as those who needed to learn Arabic for work reasons. They all had different motivators and this was seen in the progression of their learning and motivation, such as doing their homework or attending all classes. Before the class I would meet with other students and we would practice what was learnt during the previous class and did our homework. After having two different teachers, one at Queen Mary and one in Amman, a comparison between teaching styles was

made and this was also reflected in my own motivation and enthusiasm for the class. Our teacher in Jordan was a very talented teacher with incredible methods and who wrote an English and Arabic book for learners of the Jordanian dialect. This was the book used for the class. During the course we learnt topics such as giving directions to a taxi driver or ordering food in a restaurant, things which luckily I was able to apply in real life. This was very satisfying as all the new words learnt had an application in real life, so the motivation to learn was greater.

During the weekends I travelled around Jordan and I saw places like the Dead Sea, the Red Sea, the desert and Petra. I was lucky enough to be received in my friend's house in Amman where I stayed for the duration of the course. I learnt from her and her family many new things and I had a first-hand insight into the way of living of a Jordanian family. I tried many delicious new foods and despite associating Arabic food with the heavy consumption of meat, I was surprised to see how many vegetarian options I was able to have.

After having passed the initial cultural shock of living in a country with a different language, a different religion as well as different customs and foods, it was an incredible learning journey. As a future teacher, I now understand another culture and if I will teach Arabic students, I will have a common ground on which to base the learning and teaching.



