Fulfilling Arabic degree requirements (major or minor) while studying abroad

Students who study abroad often have questions concerning which courses they will be able to count towards their degree requirements. This sheet addresses these questions and sets out new guidelines that supersede any prior policies or precedents.

The Arabic degree requirements include three categories: “language”, “culture,” and “related” courses. Students should be aware of the distinction between the first two categories, and how they each differ from the third category.

a) Language courses: These are courses whose primary learning objectives relate to progressive language acquisition. The Department of International Literary & Cultural Studies designates only courses that are part of a progressive sequence of language study to be fulfilling the language course requirement. Courses that are equivalent to Tufts language course sequence (i.e. equivalent to Arabic 1, 2, 3, 4, 21, 22, 121, 122) will transfer as fulfilling Tufts courses at a level equivalent to those taken abroad. Colloquial Arabic courses, and courses on discrete other language topics (e.g. media, religion, etc.) do not count for the degree language courses requirement. These courses also do not count towards the culture course requirement (see below).

b) Culture courses: These are any courses that cover subjects that are equivalent to those taught in the Arabic program’s culture courses. In general this means courses that contain 50% or more content on literature, film and/or visual cultural topics/materials. These courses must also be critical and/or analytical, meaning that they assess students’ ability to think critically on the topics studied. Courses that are primarily on language topics (e.g. colloquial courses, or media Arabic courses) do not fulfill this requirement. Courses on topics covered in other departments (e.g. religion, politics, anthropology), while they may be “cultural” in one or another sense, do not fulfill this category—they may transfer to be counted towards the “related course” requirement (see below).

c) Related course: This includes any non-language courses on topics relating to the Arab world or broader Middle East not covered by category (b). When transferring the credits the course will need to be validated by another Tufts department (e.g. Religion, History, Politics, etc.).

Students who have questions about what transfer courses will fulfill the degree requirements must contact the Arabic program director in advance of taking these courses. Students are responsible for the choices of courses they take in study abroad programs and should select these courses carefully and in consultation with the program director if they intend to use any of these transfer courses towards fulfilling degree requirements.