TANGIER: Preservation and Cultural Heritage Morocco -
International Perspectives and Design Issues, Spring 2019

An Iowa State University - College of Design collaboration with the US Department of State, the American Legation in Tangier, Morocco, and preservation experts. Designed to foster international partnerships and advance cultural heritage protection globally.

Course Number: DSN S 546
Prerequisites: Juniors (Architecture or Landscape Architecture) or higher, seniors (Interior Design, Graphic Design) or higher.
Credits: 6

Primary Foci: Preservation and Cultural Heritage
Instructors: Diane Al Shihabi, Ph.D. dshihabi@iastate.edu
Mikesch Muecke, Ph.D. mikesch@iastate.edu

Locations: Tangier and Morocco
Schedule of Field Trip to Tangier: 11-17 February 2019
SUMMARY:
In collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, this course proposes ISU’s third interdisciplinary option studio in Preservation and Cultural Heritage (DSN S 546, 2018 Spring) which includes a study-abroad component to Morocco. Diane Al Shihabi (Interior Design) and Mikesch Muecke (Architecture) co-created the course, and will lead travel to Tangier, Morocco, to measure and create 3D LIDAR scans of the exterior, gardens, and interior public spaces of the American Legation, the first property abroad acquired by the United States Government for a diplomatic mission. The 18th-century building is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, is a National Historic Landmark, and is the first and only such designation in a foreign country.

Students will be trained in national and international preservation processes and will learn state-of-the-art technologies to survey, document, and analyze elements of the historic property, and to disseminate information about it. They will analyze the property’s chronological development, architectural and interior character, physical condition, and contemporary requirements through on-site analysis, interviews, videography, photography, LIDAR scans, archival analysis, and other means. The class will situate research and analysis within the context of culturally significant American properties abroad, which are under the purview of the US Department of State. Based on their research and analysis, students will develop website prototypes with video narratives, written analysis, and visual content to disseminate information on the property’s cultural, architectural, and artistic history. Following approval by the State Department, one of the websites will be made available to the general public, as a means to convey American cultural and aesthetic history, and the country’s global preservation ethic. Al Shihabi and Muecke will coordinate the course project and site visit with Tobin Tracey, Director of the Office of Cultural Heritage Abroad for the Department of State.

The course adds international perspectives in preservation practice and cultural heritage protection to the College’s curriculum, expands study abroad opportunities in Morocco, and generates interest in ISU’s developing Preservation and Cultural Heritage Program. It furthers the program’s recommended academic requirements by contributing to National Council of Preservation Education (NCPE) standards for member programs under 3.1.1 Fundamental Components - history of the designed environment, and 3.2.1 Specialized Components - design issues. The course contributes to ISU’s goal of expanding international perspectives for undergraduates and graduates. Through design education, it contributes to ISU’s mission of preparing students for challenges of responsible citizenship and effective professional roles in a culturally diverse global community.

Course objectives are to (1) introduce students to international preservation and cultural heritage history, theory, and practice through Morocco, and specifically Tangier, (2) convey a systematic design process in preservation, and (3) bridge cultures and build global partnerships through preservation to advance global cultural heritage protection. The American Legation property offers extraordinary access to culturally significant American and Moroccan properties, and exceptional insight into preservation practices in North Africa and the United States. The course will foster mutually beneficial relationships among ISU and the US Department of State’s Office of Cultural Heritage and staff and employees at the American Legation. Students will apply basic preservation techniques by, (1) learning how to research and document the American Legation building, (2) developing historical and cultural narratives about the building and its context, (3) learning Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols and Department of State procedures for interviewing and research, and (4) amalgamating research, videos, and technology in website prototypes.

By the end of the course students will (1) comprehend preservation and cultural heritage concepts at different scales (cities, buildings, interiors), (2) be cognizant of issues of appropriateness in design practice across specializations, (3) be able to use current technology in preservation research, documentation, and dissemination, (4) understand the processes and value of high-level research and educational training in preservation for design disciplines, and (5) understand how to contribute as a collaborative professional in an interdisciplinary design firm for the highest level of client. They will also (6) assimilate, and apply, a systematic process in preservation and understand how it differs from, and is similar to, contemporary practice across specializations. Students will (7) learn how to build essential relationships in preservation practice, (8) where to find experts, and (9) how to assess them. They will (10) apprehend how to be aware of their own heritage, including its histories, memories, and diversity, and (11) how to protect it.

Grading System: A-F. Students will be assessed in the course through diverse means: class attendance, completion of assignments, participation in discussions, quality of research, effort on projects, and demonstrated professionalism. A series of short readings, and the development of questions relating to them, will be required before lectures, discussions, tours, and workshops. Students will record questions, observations, and responses to daily activities, in journals and in collaborate folders on Cybox, and be graded for contributions and thoroughness. Students will apply instructional techniques for preservation and rehabilitation in multiple staggered project components, which will be assessed for completeness and understanding. Students will be assessed on the quality of research and application of course knowledge in final projects.