

## Modern Language Center (MLC) (AM/DIRR 399) Directed Research

**Total Hours:** 80

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Determined by topic area

**Language of Instruction:** English / Arabic

**Prerequisites:** None

### Course Description

This course provides students with an academically structured opportunity to conduct independent, field based research in Jordan. Designed for highly motivated learners, Directed Research allows students to pursue individualized research questions shaped by their academic interests, professional aspirations, and cultural engagement.

Students work under the close supervision of faculty advisors and local subject area experts. Throughout the semester, they develop research proposals, refine methodologies, review literature, conduct interviews, gather and analyze data, and produce a substantial final research paper.

The course emphasizes research ethics, cultural sensitivity, responsible interviewing, and the navigation of linguistic, political, and social dynamics in Jordan. Students receive methodological training and consistent feedback to ensure their work meets academic standards.

By the end of the term, students produce a formal 20–25 page research paper and present their findings to peers and faculty during a final research seminar.

### Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Formulate a clear, viable research question grounded in relevant academic literature.
- Develop a structured research proposal, including bibliography, timeline, and ethical considerations.
- Apply qualitative research methods appropriate for field-based inquiry.
- Conduct ethically responsible interviews, observations, and data collection in Jordan.
- Navigate cultural, linguistic, and contextual challenges in the field.
- Maintain a research journal and field log documenting observations and progress.
- Analyze findings and relate them to prior scholarship.
- Produce a 20–25 page academic research paper and present findings in a formal seminar

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to be self directed, academically disciplined, and open to faculty guidance. They must demonstrate flexibility, professionalism, and respect for local norms and communities

### Assignments include:

- Weekly meetings with the supervising professor and/or subject area experts.
- Completion of reading and writing assignments related to research methodology.
- At least 2 hours per week of literature review beyond assigned readings.
- At least 3 hours per week of active research (interviews, meetings, site visits, archival or online research).
- A 3–5 page formal research proposal including abstract, bibliography, timeline, and ethical statement.
- A research journal / field log documenting observations.
- A mid term progress report.
- A 20–25 page final research paper.
- Final seminar presentation summarizing research findings.

## Grading

### Preparation for

**Meetings:** 20%

**Research Proposal:**

10% **Journal / Field**

**Log:** 20% **Annotated**

**Bibliography:** 20%

**Draft of Final Paper:**

10% **Final Research**

**Paper:** 20%

## Readings

Readings include selections on research design, ethnographic methodology, fieldwork ethics, and qualitative analysis. Students also develop individualized bibliographies with guidance from faculty.

Representative works include curated excerpts from leading scholars in anthropology, ethnography, and qualitative research; no external links are provided in this syllabus.

## Additional Resources

Supplementary materials may include:

- Guides on interview techniques and human subjects research ethics
- Studies on Jordanian society, governance, and cultural dynamics
- Articles on fieldwork challenges and qualitative analysis strategies

These resources support students in producing academically rigorous and culturally sensitive research

## Outline of Course Content

Topics/tasks are covered weekly:

- Topic 1 – Introduction to Directed Research: assignments, timeline, ethics, IRB considerations.
- Topic 2 – Reviewing past student projects; Amman as a field site; developing field journals.
- Topic 3 – Meetings with subject experts; selecting topic and field site; drafting proposal.
- Topic 4 – Presenting and finalizing research proposal.
- Topic 5 – Asking effective questions; building field relationships; working with partners
- Topic 6 – Participant observation; researcher positionality; meeting with experts.
- Topic 7 – Understanding culture; insider–outsider dynamics; challenging assumptions.
- Topic 8 – Cultural heritage studies; meeting with Jordan Heritage representatives.
- Topic 9 – Gender, social boundaries, and ethical considerations in fieldwork.
- Topic 10 – Troubleshooting field challenges; revising research strategy; mid term check ins.
- Topic 11 – Validating findings and assessing reliability.
- Topic 12 – Capturing historical depth in contemporary research.
- Topic 13 – Connecting prior scholarship to field findings.
- Topic 14 – Analysis and preparation of final paper.
- Topic 15 – Final seminar presentations.

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