



SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM PROPOSAL

PRESENTED BY THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF TRAVEL STUDIES
PART OF ELEMENTS OF LIFE INSTITUTE

A 501(C)(3) PUBLIC CHARITY

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SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY NEAR EAST STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM INFORMATION

I. MISSION & GOALS

A major pillar of education is built upon the underpinning that nurturing and preserving the values and knowledge of the past through teaching the lives and inventions of inspired and courageous leaders is a priceless educational gift to the community that will stir future generations to accomplish much good. Further, as the world becomes more cosmopolitan, the greater the need to understand the transcultural foundations of society, which can best be learned through actual mingling in the lands and among the peoples of their origins. The mission of the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program is to provide academic and continuing education certification through traditional classroom, on-site instruction, on-line curricula and text materials for individuals, families, students, and professionals. This function is realized through educational travel, and study abroad programs. The Southern Virginia University (SVU) Near East Study Abroad offers university students throughout the world opportunities to build an understanding of principles that lift them in intellect, character, and spirituality, and launch them into successful lives and careers through intensive international "on-site" study programs. More specifically, through academic and cultural experiences, the SVU Study Abroad programs are to provide:

A. ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING

Curricula designed to enhance an understanding of the student's own religious and cultural heritage while gaining a knowledge of the peoples, places, and organizations indigenous to the region.

B. SCHOLARSHIP

The development of scholarship in all areas of Near Eastern studies, reinforced by unique opportunities of residence and travel in the various lands of the region.

C. CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Cultural experiences through personal contact and interaction with the peoples of the Near East, their way of life, their hopes, their ambitions, and aspirations.

D. SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Service opportunities for students to discover the value of true charity, for charity is a virtue that develops fairness in self and society.

E. TRANSCULTURAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS

Transcultural community and educational programs and materials that will enhance the lives of people in all regions of the world.

II. FEATURES

Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad programs are 45-days of intensive educational travel programs offering university-level academic units through classroom and on-site field experiences. A typical academic term (3/7 of a normal 15-week semester) with its pre-departure orientation course offers students the equivalent of 9 university certified educational units taught by university-level instructors, faculty, and knowledgeable guest lecturers who are from local and international communities.

A correlated curriculum of survey courses provides students with an introduction to religious studies and Near Eastern history, geography, archaeology, culture, and current events.

Classroom study is built around field trips that cover the length and breadth of the Holy Lands (Israel and the Palestinian Authority) including travel throughout the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United Arab Republic of Egypt. The extended nature of this program provides an ideal environment to study the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the early apostles, and prophets in their original settings, along with the history, traditions and practices of Judaism, Islam, Mowahidoon (Druse), Samaritan, Eastern Christians, Baha'i, and other religious groups of the region.

Additionally, students gain an understanding of the peoples of the Near East by living among them, comparing cultural and political ideologies, and studying first-hand the background of the current Arab-Israeli conflict.

Each Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program includes:

A. ON-SITE STUDY AND EXPERIENCES

University-level study and field trip experiences in the Holy Lands of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

B. ORIENTATION

Mandatory 2- certified hours orientation course of study: NES 100, "Near Eastern Studies Orientation Course in the Holy Lands."

C. FORUMS

Regular forums, and courses taught by international and local guest lecturers and instructors.

D. SERVICE

Service opportunities among the peoples of the Near East.

E. TRAVEL

As you will notice, the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad experience begins before you reach the Holy Land. We wish to emphasize that each of the above items is an integral part of each Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program, and you will be expected to participate in **all** these activities. Please make sure you are willing to commit to the entire package as outlined **before** applying.

III. DATES & COST

2024 Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad is July 1-August15, 2024

This is the first Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program offering and is limited to a maximum of 40 students. Due to the anticipated interest and popularity of the programs, it is recommended that students apply early for acceptance.

A. COST OF PROGRAM

The estimated cost of this program is \$8,930 per student based on a minimum of 25 students). As departure cities may vary, the airfare is not included. * The cost of the program, including an average round trip airfare from the USA East Coast airport, is equivalent to the full time tuition for Spring Semester on the SVU Buena Vista Campus without Housing or food when adding the airfare

1. PROGRAM COSTS INCLUDE

University Tuition; field trip expenses (includes Israel/Palestinian Authority, and Jordan field study trip expenses – transportation, entrance fees and group tipping, guides, faculty, specialty programs as planned, head set receivers for field study trips, etc.); room & ½ board (full breakfast, dinner and occasionally other meals as well) throughout the program; required books & fees

(students are expected to have their own personal laptop computer); and, application fee (non-refundable \$25). The \$200 deposit paid at the time of application will be applied towards the total program cost. In the event of cancellations, see the “Cancellation Policy” section under “International Policies & Standards.”

2. PROGRAM COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE

Round-trip airfare/travel from homes to Tel Aviv and return*, items of a personal nature, such as personal laptop computer, excess baggage charges, bottled drinking water, food, or beverages not part of the group menu, gratuities for special services, passports, personal medical and travel insurance, immunization fees, toiletries, postage, souvenirs, and travel not part of the required core curriculum. For this program, we recommend an average of \$300-\$500 for personal expenses while in the countries visited.

* Airfare may be arranged personally; however, all students must arrive at the Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv by July 2, 2024, for the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad whose courses begin on July 3, 2024.

IV. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. LIMITED TO STUDENTS

Admission to the Study Abroad program is limited to students who are admissible to SVU university/college studies. Students on the Study Abroad program are not expected to have attended a university prior to participation in the program; however, the courses are taught at a university academic level. This means that a student must be able to handle a lower-division, full-time university academic load. The core studies program is designed for university freshmen and sophomore students; however, high standards of religious, social, physical, and psychological preparations are essential for successful completion of the program. The field study trips, and physical demands of the program are strenuous due to the nature of the increased frequency of these activities in a shorter period than a normal university home campus term or semester. This is accommodated by a less rigorous in-class academic load but requires that students be physically, psychologically, and academically capable of handling the type of rigorous field trip/academic schedule offered on the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad.

B. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR/ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENT

A professional counselor/ecclesiastical endorsement providing a recommendation of student willingness to abide by high standards of integrity, chastity, service, and commitment is required for admission. The ideal student has previously demonstrated the qualities of honesty, commitment, service and loyalty through church service and affiliation, seminary/catechism/institute of religion participation, personal expectations, and purposes for participation on the program, honesty, and law-abiding behavior, and living the health practices (see Honor Code, Health Requirements). Students may obtain endorsements from their professional/academic counselor or ecclesiastical leaders.

C. GPA

An applicant's **cumulative** high school or university course GPA must be at least 2.5. Also, an applicant's **current** GPA for the semester prior to applying must be at least 2.5. Students who come from homeschool and non-traditional education programs must have the equivalent graduation requirements of public high schools and graduate with an overall equivalency GPA of 2.5.

D. CONDUCT & APPEARANCE

Applicants must sign a non-proselytizing agreement; agree to abide by Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad's Honor Code and dress and grooming standards as well as any other special rules governing conduct and appearance while enrolled in an Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program; meet Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad's application, informational and payment deadlines; and can actively participate in rigorous field trip programs.

E. INTERVIEW

In general, the Admissions Committee must be able to review successful completion of full-time study prior to the interview for final acceptance.

F. MARRIED/GRADUATE STUDENTS

Students who are in graduate studies or are married must receive special approval for participation. Married couples should expect that both husband and wife are eligible for admission and will be expected to fully participate in all aspects of the program like any other admitted student. Special studies may be arranged for graduate students while they participate in the program. All such special arrangements must be approved and arranged prior to participation on the program by the Managing Director and the SVU admissions office.

The above admission requirements are subject to change for future programs. Please review individual program information as it becomes available and prior to applying. Special circumstances may be referred to the Admissions Committee for review and consideration of eligibility.

V. ADMISSION PROCESS

The Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad has a two-part admission process.

PART 1: APPLICATION WINDOW

Applications must be submitted by midnight on May 31, 2024. If more students apply than the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program can accommodate, students will be placed on a waiting list for Part II of the admission process. If the waiting list is filled, the remaining applications will be returned except the non-refundable \$25 application fee.

PART 2: INTERVIEW

Each applicant given placement in Part I of the admissions process will be interviewed for final acceptance. Applicants will be admitted to the Summer Study Abroad in the Holy Land based on their preparation for and ability to benefit from study in the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad as well as their ability to contribute to the success of the experience for others in the unique SVU Summer Study Abroad setting. Applicants on the waiting list will be interviewed as needed, or as space becomes available.

VI. SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY NEAR EAST STUDY ABROAD COURSES

The curriculum is designed to achieve a balance of spiritual, academic, and cultural development consistent with the unique goals of Southern Virginia University. Class and field trip attendance is required. Specific curriculum, certifications and course outlines are available for each program. Faculty, who develop and teach the educational packages on programs sponsored by SVU possess graduate degrees (university level Masters and Doctorates), and these faculty along with internationally recognized leaders, professionals, and scholars in various fields are retained as guest lecturers in the countries visited by participants. SVU also works with public and private secondary education schools, universities, institutions of higher learning, and professional associations to obtain faculty and design curricula, and through affiliation or articulation agreements, transferable academic and continuing education credits are

provided by their institutions. Each program has specific criteria for application and admission requirements. The Institute intends to receive additional recognition and accreditation through national and international accreditation associations as it grows over time. The transcultural offerings are also made available to all ages who find the materials beneficial to their understanding of peoples, lands, and cultures. Upon completion of course requirements, a “Certification of Completion” or Transcript of Credit for each course is provided by Southern Virginia University verifying that the student has successfully and satisfactorily completed all course requirements. For assistance pertaining to transfers of course work, please visit the Academic Advisor for the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad. As most **text materials are digital** and available on the Internet, **students are expected to bring their own durable laptop computer on the program.**

Each student will be registered for the following courses (12 certified educational unit hours of course work).

A. RELIGIOUS STUDIES CORE (2 CREDIT HOURS)

Your studies begin with the examination of the Bible from the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible or Torah in Hebrew) and proceeds through the relevant texts, ending with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the first century A.D. Christian church. As part of the course, comparative inquiries of indigenous religions (Judaism, Samaritanism, Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, and traditional Christianity, Islam, the Mowahidoon (Druse Faith), the Baha’i Faith, and others) which have their origins and foundations in the region will be investigated. This course includes extensive Field Study experiences as well as classroom and lecture series.

B. NEAR EASTERN STUDIES CORE (7 CERTIFIED HOURS)

The Near East core curriculum provides students with a blend of historical and contemporary studies of the geography, people, languages (Hebrew and Arabic), politics and current events of the region with emphasis on the post-biblical history, culture and current affairs of the indigenous peoples and their neighbors. With this concurrent contemporary study, the ancient core focuses its instruction on biblical and extra-biblical history dating from the beginnings of man to the modern world. These disciplines (ancient and contemporary studies) merge through field experiences and out-of-class activities. All students are required to register for the two sections of the ancient and the contemporary core courses (ANES 200 and CNES 200), as well as the Orientation Course and the Field Study Course (NES 100 and NES 101 respectively). The purpose of the multi-dimensional curriculum is to introduce the students to history, sociology, current affairs, politics, geography, archaeology, and literature of the ancient and modern Near East. Class sessions, field study, and personal research will focus on each of these subject areas.

The basic core class descriptions are as follows:

1. NEAR EASTERN STUDIES ORIENTATION COURSE (NES 100 – 2 CERTIFIED HOURS)

The orientation course is designed to prepare participants in the program for the serious studies they will be engaged in while studying and traveling in the Near East. The course is taught online as an independent study or home study course that is composed of eight lessons with an open-book quiz associated with each, and a proctored final exam. The topics include a general introduction to Near Eastern Studies and the rules and policies of the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad; backgrounds in the use of sources pertinent to the regional studies; physical geography and its impact on the historical development of the region; introduction to the history and archaeology of the Levant; two chapters on the major religions of the region; and two chapters on the contemporary studies and foundation of the current conflicts in the region. The course material provides the necessary vocabulary and foundational information each student will need to gain the most out of their travel and study in the Holy Land. Students must pass this course before departure to Israel.

2. ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN STUDIES (ANES 200 – 2 CREDIT HOURS)

Instruction includes ancient Near East regional studies, with particular emphasis in the region of the Levant (Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt) and its biblical, historical, geographical, archaeological backgrounds. The classes combine historical studies with field trip preparations that provide the students with archaeological, cultural, and practical information essential for the optimum experience in the field.

3. CONTEMPORARY NEAR EAST STUDY CORE (CNES 200 – 1 CREDIT HOUR)

The modern or contemporary core curriculum is designed to introduce the students to the peoples, cultures, and problems of the modern Near East with special emphasis in the region of the Levant and the foundations of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. This is accomplished through a series of separate guest lecturers, forums, instructors, field study trips and out-of-class activities that, to the degree that is possible, correlate with topics in the ancient core and scriptural studies. The instructors and guest lecturers come from the local community or from prominent international positions germane to the studies.

4. FIELD STUDIES CORE (NES 101 – 2 CREDIT HOURS)

This class has a clear ancient history and historical geography emphasis. One class period each week will be devoted to field study trip preparations and archaeological studies coupled with the historical setting of the scriptures being studied in religious instruction that same week. This weekly class day serves as the key correlation facilitator for historical, contemporary, and field studies. Field study trips should be considered by students as equal to any classroom experience in instruction and treatment. The value of a study abroad experience is the concept of the extended classroom. Students are graded on their attendance, participation, completion of assignments and exams pertaining to field study, and attention given to faculty on the field study trips. The International Travel Studies Institute Handbook clearly defines the expectations required of students on field study trips. (See International Travel Studies Institute Handbook under topic "Field Study Trips" and "Travel Regulations".) The current 6-week ITSI Study Abroad include travel throughout all the regions of Israel/Palestinian Authority and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. (Future programs may include additional countries). The majority of field study trips are conducted by SVU approved faculty/instructors/guides. Additional travel costs (which students are expected to personally pay) may be associated with optional field study trips that are outside the planned core curriculum.

5. FORUM ASSEMBLIES (SUPPLEMENTAL TO CURRICULUM – REQUIRED)

SVU Study Abroad regularly hosts distinguished guests who speak to students about a topic of current interest. Attendance at these outstanding lectures is mandatory and is an important part of the SVU Summer Study Abroad experience. Information from these assemblies may be part of exams in the certificated courses.

6. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (NON-CREDIT)

In addition to the required field study trips, a host of optional hikes, walks, and activities that enhance the students' knowledge and personal growth will be suggested or made available. For safety reasons, no student is permitted to travel alone, but must be in groups of two or three. Some activities the students have opportunity to participate in include work experiences on a kibbutz, archaeological digs, folk dancing, choir performances, fishing boat experiences on the Sea of Galilee, sporting activities, camel treks, hikes following various historical pathways, visits to mosques and synagogues, concerts and museum visits, community service, swimming, and snorkeling (Red Sea, Dead Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Sea of Galilee, Jordan River), etc. While in Jerusalem students will also be expected to plan time for their own travel in small groups, returning to field study sites or to religious and historical sites not included in the full groups' activities, etc.

VII. POLICY ON CERTIFIED COURSES AND UNITS OF CREDIT

The following guidelines have been adopted as a good for defining higher education credit hours offered through the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad program as of August 2023. They are drawn from the standards set up by the US Department of Education and also Stanford University which meets the federal requirements (see <https://studentservices.stanford.edu/more-resources/student-policies/enrollment/unit-credit>). Such definitions should allow for acceptance of the instructions/coursework offered on the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad programs, which adhere to these guidelines, by other university and higher education institutions. Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad continues to monitor their offerings to be compliant with federal rules concerning the amount of work required for a unit of credit. This policy requires that an amount of work for each unit of credit be institutionally established, represented in intended learning outcomes, and verified by evidence of student achievement. An official "Certificate of Completion" will be issued by the Southern Virginia University Near East Study Abroad after the students return and grading of course work is completed by faculty, recorded, and archived by the International Travel Studies Institute.

A. FEDERAL DEFINITION OF A UNIT OF CREDIT

Federal regulations regarding the definition and assignment of credit hours under Section 600.2 and 600.24(f) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (See also "Answers to Questions" under "Credit Definition of US Department of Education Laws of Guidance for Higher Education" at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html#credit>) now state, in part, that a unit of credit is:

"An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. "One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately ... ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or
2. "At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

Normal on-campus university courses receiving 1 unit of credit are taught in classrooms for 50 minutes per week for 14-weeks and then have a final exam during the 15th week. Including the 2-hours of out-of-class study per lecture, the total 60-minute-hours per credit is: $12.5 \text{ hours} + 25 \text{ hours} = 37.5 \text{ total hours per credit}$.

B. SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY STUDY ABROAD'S POLICY ON VERIFYING CREDIT HOURS

SVU Study Abroad policy, which is in compliance with the federal definition, states that every unit for which certification is given is understood to represent approximately three hours of actual work per week for the average student. Thus, in lecture, field study trip (FST), seminar, or discussion work, for 1 unit of certification, one hour per week is typically allotted to the lecture, seminar, or discussion and two hours for preparation or subsequent reading and study. Thus, a 3-unit course offered during a 63-days study abroad requires a minimum of six hours of total work per week. Following the guidelines of other universities, it is assumed that any class ends 10 minutes early in order to allow movement to the next class.

One certificated unit usually corresponds to a 50-minute period of lecture or seminar per week for 14 weeks and a week for course assessments. Each weekly hour of lecture or seminar is generally expected to require two additional hours of work (reading, writing, problem sets, or other assignments) per week. One additional unit is normally assigned for courses with required discussion sections, when section meetings are at least one hour per week for a total of 10 hours per program. Thus, on a program basis, one unit usually corresponds to 10 lecture or seminar contact hours per program. A 3-unit course would generally have 30 contact hours over the course of the program. Such a course might have a format of three hours of lecture per week for six weeks, plus an hour of review during the End Period. The course would have 12 hours of total work per week, three of which would be in class and three for Field Study Trips. Students would be expected to do six hours of additional out-of-class work.

FST (Field Study Trip) are based on a ratio used by Stanford University where 3 hours in the field is equivalent to 1 hour in class. This ratio is assuming that it is not just straight long rides but is interspersed with instruction periodically over 3 hours that could be considered as if received in a 50-minute class lecture with the appropriate out of class preparation or homework. Thus, a one-day FST of 9-hours (8:00AM-5:00 PM) would equate to three hours of class lecture. As a single field trip usually covers materials in the three main course offerings (Religious Studies, Ancient and Contemporary Near East Studies), the total hours would be distributed among the courses with an additional credit hour allotted to the FST course.

Total hours of in-classroom and field study trip (FST) equivalent hours per program:

FST 27 Days X 10.8 hours (where three 50-minute hours = 1 classroom hour) = 291.6 classroom hours (or 6.48 credit hours based on 15 classroom hours per credit hour.
 Classroom & Lecture Hours (50-minute hours) = 135 classroom hours (or 9 certified hours) TOTAL
 CLASSROOM HOURS FOR 2024 PROGRAM = 76.8 (+ 153.6 OUT OF CLASS STUDIES EXPECTED)
 CLASSROOM HOURS (OR 15 CREDIT HOURS BASED ON 15 CLASSROOM HOURS PER CERTIFIED HOUR
 WHICH = 5.12 CREDIT HOURS EARNED

Each week will be adjusted for field studies and out-of-center and out-of-country studies, which reflect an average amount of C.A. 30 hours of course work per week. The courses for higher education credit hours offered for this 6-week program is allocated based on actual study time as follows:

NES 100 – Near Eastern Studies Orientation	2 Certified Hours
NES 101 – Field Study Trips in the Near East	2 Certified Hours
RS 200 – Biblical History/Comparative Religions of Near East	2 Certified Hours
ANES 200 – Historical Geography/Archaeology of the Levant	2 Certified Hours
CNES 200 – Contemporary Near Eastern Studies and Current Affairs	1 Certified Hours

TOTAL Earned Certified Hours

9 Credit Hours

The additional 6 credit hours are considered required lab hours for the courses.

This correlated curriculum is designed for students who are energetic and eager to study in a serious academic program that is intended to provide opportunity for spiritual, educational, social, and physical growth. Successful students will take the personal challenge to plan well and use their time productively while part of the SVU Study Abroad program.

VIII. FINANCIAL AID

All students are welcome to apply for SVU Study Abroad Financial Aid*. Please note that students who decide to participate in extended travel immediately following a Southern Virginia University Study Abroad program are not eligible to receive this SVU Grant Awards. Students who travel home to a destination directly from a program and are still eligible. While this financial grant aid is not a loan that must be repaid, recipients of financial aid are encouraged, if they are able in future years, to replenish the financial aid fund so that future students will also have financial aid available when they need it. Currently, a donation for this SVU financial grant aid is not available. See the following WWW site for other financial assistance: <https://teanabroad.org/how-it-works/financing-your-study-abroad-program/financial-aid/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Higher%20Education,program%20tuition%20and%20fees>

IX. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS / DONATIONS

SVU Study Abroad, as a program of the University, operates as a tax exempt 501(c)(3) charitable and educational non-profit corporation. Those who wish to make it financially possible for students to participate in these educational and life-changing programs may contribute to the university for this very purpose. Please contact the SVU Study Abroad Managing Director.

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY STUDY ABROAD POLICIES & STANDARDS

A. CANCELLATION POLICY

1. Cancellation after placement in a SVU Study Abroad program means forfeiture of the \$200 deposit. Students who do not qualify for the program, do not receive placement, or cannot be accommodated from a waiting list, will receive a deposit refund minus the \$25 non-refundable application fee.
2. Failure to meet appropriate deadlines could result in the student's cancellation.
3. Cancelling within two weeks prior to departure requires a \$100 cancellation fee. Charges for accommodations may also be assessed, along with any other costs already encumbered.

B. TRANSFER POLICY

A student cannot transfer an application from one program to another. Consideration for a future program means cancellation of the current application, forfeiture of deposit, and submission of a new application and deposit for the future program.

C. SVU STUDY ABROAD DRESS & GROOMING STANDARDS

Although clothing standards vary from region to region in the Middle East, some contemporary clothing styles, particularly for young women in the US and Europe, are inconsistent with standards of modesty for many residents of the region, and especially in Jerusalem, who generally belong to orthodox—and hence conservative—Christian, Muslim, or Jewish faiths. Even commonly accepted clothing styles worn by students at conservative university campuses would be considered by many in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Middle East to be immodest.

SVU Study Abroad students need to adopt a modest look that will both set them apart and show respect. **You will be expected to dress consistent with at least minimal standards of modesty during your travels with the SVU Study Abroad program, as outlined below.**

IN GENERAL

- The Southern Virginia University Study Abroad's dress standard is conservative and what might be termed "dressy casual." It is very important that clothing be loose-fitting and modest in terms of body coverage and style.
- In addition to the specifics detailed below, no tight, torn, grubby, stained, or patched clothing is to be worn.
- Beach wear for swimming is only for the beaches and must be modest swimwear. They are not to be worn in cabins, cafeterias, or classrooms. Students should have a covering when walking to and from the beaches.
- These standards apply to clothing worn in and out of classrooms.

CLOTHING

- Clothing with slogans, political statements, US flags or other US insignia are not allowed. Most brand names and school logos are okay.
- All blouses, shirts, and tops must be loose-fitting and modest. They must have sleeves that cover the upper arm with the length closer to the elbow than the shoulder. All tops must cover in front to at least the collar bone. Cotton or cotton-blend fabrics are strongly recommended.
- Pants, for both men and women, must fit at the waist and come down to the foot. Capris, low-rise, "skinny" or excessively baggy pants are not permitted. Leggings and tights are considered to be stockings, and if worn, must be covered below-the-knee by a skirt. Jeans are acceptable as long as they are not ripped, worn out, or shabby looking. Cargo-type pants and cotton or cotton-blends are preferred and strongly recommended. Shorts can be worn only on a limited basis for gym use or as a cover-up for bathing suits in Galilee, at the Dead Sea, etc.
- Skirts and dresses should be loose-fitting and reach below-the-knee in length. Dress tops must be loose fitting with appropriate sleeve length.

FOOTWEAR AND SWIMWEAR

- No bare feet at any time in the classrooms or religious assembly areas, except in student rooms. Sandals and “flip flops” can be worn but must be kept on the foot at all times. Good walking shoes with closed toes are required on all field trips.
- For women, no two-piece swimming suits are allowed; for men, no speedo-type suits. Swimwear must be modest in fabric, fit, and style. Swimming suits may be worn in swimming areas only.

HAIRSTYLE AND HEADWEAR

- No extreme haircuts or colorings.
- Head covers (e.g., caps and hats) are not permitted in classrooms or the dining areas. Hooded sweatshirts or jackets (“hoodies”) are permitted.

We understand that dressing this way won’t make you stylish by US standards and that you may need to acquire a few new things that fit within these SVU Study Abroad standards.

D. SPECIAL HEALTH STANDARDS

Due to the unique nature and demands of the program, each applicant is screened thoroughly, particularly about emotional and medical health issues. The student will be placed in a foreign living situation that is physically, emotionally, and academically rigorous without the usual support services available in the United States or which they may normally be accustomed to in familiar home environments. The concerns are both for the student and his/her fellow students.

Students who require special medical or emotional attention may cause a disruption to the program and even endanger the well-being of others. Rather than benefit from the experience, the student may, in fact, be harmed. Southern Virginia University Study Abroad must ensure that this student can independently manage physical and emotional challenges in a demanding environment. Therefore, a special Health Evaluation Form is to be completed by all students when applying for the program. Also, maintaining a healthy body, mind, and spirit is an essential part of the experience. Students are expected to maintain the following health practices while part of the program:

- Use of tobacco products, any form of alcohol, or illegal drugs are prohibited.
- Avoidance of dangerous activities that put the student’s body or others at risk of serious injury.
- Care for one’s body, eating nutritious food (the program provides excellent foods for breakfast and dinner), exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.
- Practicing balance and moderation in all aspects of one’s physical health.
- Avoidance of extremes in diet that could lead to eating disorders.
- Not intentionally harming one’s body.

E. BEHAVIOR & DATING

Activities and behavior must be consistent with high standards of taste and decency. Be aware that any public displays of affection (arms around person of the opposite sex, etc.) is considered inappropriate among certain peoples in the Near East. Dating or pairing off between members of the program is strongly discouraged and dating or pairing off with anyone outside of the program is not allowed.

Friendships develop and intensify on this study program because of the amount of time spent living, studying, and traveling together; but time, the setting, and the environment make dating unwise.

Due to the nature of the living facilities, it is inappropriate for male and female single students to be in each other’s cabins. Students may meet in any of the public areas that are very available wherever the program is located. If students of opposite gender need to enter a cabin, permission of attending faculty is required.

F. PROSELYTIZING

The SVU Study Abroad has made a firm commitment that no one associated with the SVU Study Abroad programs will engage in religious proselytizing activities while in the countries visited as part of the program. **Students may not proselytize, directly or indirectly.** Proselytizing is defined as any activity that could be construed as aimed at including, encouraging, or leading people in these countries visited to investigate any religion for possible conversion and is strictly contrary to the desires of the government and people of the lands. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Brigham Young University have signed formal agreements and ask that their members abide by these policies. Non-LDS people who visit or reside in the countries generally understand the high tensions caused by proselytizing and generally abide by this policy as well. SVU has adopted the LDS policy in the countries where these prohibitions have been made.

Students, faculty, and staff must agree to not distribute, either directly, by mail or by internet, any materials pertaining to one's church or its doctrines within Israel or Palestine. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have similar restrictions as well. It is not permitted to discuss one's church or its doctrines or answer any questions regarding one's church or its doctrines with individuals who reside in the Holy Lands or who may be visiting there. If asked questions about one's religion, students must state that they are in the Holy Land as a student and are not permitted to discuss their church or its doctrines. The students enrolled on the SVU Study Abroad program, who may not be LDS, must understand that much of the instruction and field experiences are from the perspective of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and that their religious study courses and lectures include instruction and research into the beliefs and doctrines, histories and origins of many religions. Therefore, the rules of discussion of one's religious beliefs and doctrines does not apply to the students and faculty participating on the program but does apply to all others that they encounter while enrolled in and traveling on the SVU Study Abroad in the Near East programs.

G. INFRACTIONS

A single violation of Southern Virginia University Study Abroad policies will result in consequences related to missed privileges and could also result in dismissal from the program. Students must understand that if they are dismissed from the program, they will be responsible for additional costs incurred to return them to their homes and that there will be no refunds for services not rendered. Furthermore, in the event a student is dismissed from the program, academic certification may be withheld, and his/her standing at their university or institutions of higher learning may likewise be affected.