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Morris study abroad students experience modern Egypt and learn about an ancient society

Summary: Led by Sheri Breen, assistant professor of political science, the students explored the economy, culture, and religion, and experienced hospitality.

(August 30, 2010)—Several University of Minnesota, Morris political science students traveled to Egypt this summer with Sheri Breen, assistant professor of political science, to visit Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, and Alexandria and learn about the culture. Students in the course Pyramids and Politics on the Nile experienced modern Egyptian society as well as learned about ancient history. They toured temples, mosques, and pyramids as well as small villages. The students focused on economy, culture, and religion.

DeAnna Ricci ’11, Apple Valley, shares, “Their whole economy rests in tourism. The culture is very rich and very deeply rooted in traditionalism, and through that we were able to learn a lot about Islam and how Egypt became a leader in the Arab nation.”

Experiences with the Egyptian people proved to be memorable. Mallory King ’11, Albert Lea, says, “We experienced lots of hospitality. People were always inviting us to drink tea or mango juice with them in their homes. On one occasion, while swimming in the Mediterranean Sea, I met two young girls, ages 8 and 4. We played on the beach together, and then they introduced me to their family. The family was incredibly nice and offered to share their picnic lunch with me….”

Overall, the students had similar reactions to the Egypt study abroad opportunity—yearning for a return trip to Egypt and enthusiasm for study abroad.

Says King, “I really hope to travel back to Egypt! I absolutely loved this trip!”

Ricci notes that the University of Minnesota, Morris’s encouragement for students to studying abroad has made a difference in her life. Now that she has traveled to Egypt, she says, “I think everyone needs to study abroad at least once—and with so many options for places and length of time, why not?”

Breen, faculty leader for the study abroad trip to Egypt, teaches courses on Western and international political philosophy and has also led programs to Morocco, Turkey, and Greece. Her research focuses on environmental political thought and theories of property and place.
Third Row (L to R) Sheri Breen, assistant professor of political science, Andrew Showalter, DeAnna Ricci, NubianTeacher, Ryan Klawitter, Amanda Dunbar, Meaghan Young-Stephens

Back Row (L to R) Michael Peters, Tony McGerr, Matt Nelson

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