

FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Faculty-Led Semester Programs

St. Olaf faculty members organize and lead semester-long programs. The Global Semester is offered annually during fall semester. Religion, Politics and Society in Jerusalem and Athens and Environmental Science in Australia and New Zealand are offered every other year during the spring semester. The Smith Center for Global Engagement website offers program details, eligibility requirements, costs, and application processes and timelines.

The Global Semester (Fall Semester)

The Global Semester is a fall semester academic program which gives students insight into sites around the world. Through the combination of coursework in a variety of disciplines and cultural learning opportunities, the semester provides a remarkable experience of academic merit and personal development. The itinerary takes the group around the world. Students spend approximately one month each in three sites where courses are offered, with shorter stays in any other sites. A fourth course, taught by the accompanying St. Olaf faculty member, lasts the duration of the semester. The program is typically highly competitive for admission.

Environmental Science in Australia and New Zealand (Spring Semester)

Note: The Environmental Science semester is offered every other year.

The flora, fauna, ecological habitats, human history, and geology of Australia and New Zealand offer opportunities for study that are unique for their diversity and time horizons. The landscapes range from white sandy beaches to dry bush inland to broadleaf, temperate, and tropical rainforests. The diversity of mammalian fauna, over 600 species of eucalyptus, and the Great Barrier Reef provide examples of how biological organisms have adapted to the isolation of the Australian continent and the islands of New Zealand.

The human history is no less fascinating. Aboriginal Australians represent the oldest continuous culture in the world today, and the Maori exemplify Polynesian expansion and settlement more than 500 years prior to Europeans. Students will learn how people's adaptation to environmental conditions shows remarkable innovation, as well as how the recent European invasion significantly altered Indigenous lifestyle and affected many environmental parameters.

In addition to increasing our understanding of human behavior across cultures, students explore how various animals and humans navigate their environment – an ability fundamental to species survival – as the group travels from place to place in Australia and New Zealand. A combination of lectures, extensive field experiences, and brief research projects enable students to learn about and appreciate this fascinating area of the world. All courses are taken concurrently and will be highly integrated to provide a strong interdisciplinary focus. Students considering this program should be aware that it has a demanding physical schedule and moves frequently to new locations. The program is highly competitive for admission.

Religion, Politics and Society in Jerusalem and Athens (Spring Semester)

Note: Religion, Politics and Society semester is offered every other year.

The Religion, Politics and Society in Jerusalem and Athens is a semester length faculty led program offered through Smith Center and a St. Olaf faculty member who will lead the program. The program will meet the requirements for four OLE Core Requirements: Ole Experience in Practice; Religion, Faith and Values; Christian Theology in Dialogue; and Global Histories and Societies or Social Science. The program will be based primarily in Jerusalem, Israel and Athens, Greece, with excursions in both countries as well as Palestine and Jordan. The program will consist of the following courses: 1) Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Sacred Encounter in the Text, which will explore the Abrahamic texts and place in Israel and Palestine and how they animate contemporary life. 2) Political Theology, which will focus on the Middle East and the Israel/Palestinian conflict, with additional case studies of other Arab countries. 3) East or West: A Cultural Sociology of Greece, placed in the geographical and ideological crossroads of Greece and how historical events and forces shape modern life. 4) Ole Experience in Practice is reflective and applied-based course connecting the experiential and curricular elements of their semester.

Faculty-Led January Term and Summer Session Courses

Off-campus courses, both in the United States and abroad, are developed and led by St. Olaf faculty each January term and, occasionally, in summer session. Courses vary from year to year and require an application. Most programs are competitive for admission, as there are more applicants than spaces.

Approved courses are listed under the Courses tab for each academic department in the St. Olaf Catalog, designated by "study abroad" or "study away" following the course title. Courses open for applications in a given year are listed on the Smith Center website with course details, eligibility requirements, costs, and application processes and timelines. Partial scholarships are automatically awarded for accepted students with demonstrated financial need.

Interested students may seek advising from Smith Center staff and the faculty member leading the course. Financial aid counselors are able to estimate approximate scholarship amounts for an individual applicant.