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Students at College of Islamic Studies Explore Islamic Architecture in Jordan

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Students and faculty visit historical sites and monuments as part of master's program



Students from the College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) recently traveled to the Kingdom of Jordan, to complement their studies within the college's Master of Science in Islamic Art, Architecture and Urbanism program.

Dr. Tarek Swelim, Associate Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture at CIS, and the program's coordinator, led the trip, one of the excursions organized and sponsored annually by the program to a relevant destination in the Islamic world. Jordan and its pre-Islamic, Islamic, and modern cultures are being studied as part of the curriculum of the Islamic Art and Architecture program.

The educational trip included visits to the pre-Islamic Roman sites of Gerash and Nabatean of Petra; the Biblical sites of Mount Nebo and the town of Madaba; Amman's Roman theater; and the Temple of Hercules. In addition, the group toured Gerash, the most complete Roman site in the world; the Mamluk Castle of Ajlun; and the magnificent site of Umm Qais, which provided views of the Golan Heights, Lake Tiberias, Lebanon, and Palestine.

Commenting on the trip, Dr. Swelim said: "The students benefitted a great deal from such an immersive experience in which they managed to meld their cultural and academic knowledge and avail the many benefits of travelling to a new destination. They embarked on historic site visits that had fascinating characteristics for their time in history. These sites provide a missing link to understanding the connection between different civilizations in this part of the world at large."

Comprising the basic division of Arabia by ancient geographers into Arabia Felix, Arabia Petra, and Arabia Deserta, cities and archaeological sites such as Jerash, Ajlun, Umm Qais, Madaba, Mount Nebo, Mshatta, Kharana, Qusayr Amra, Little Petra, Petra, and Amman provided the needed practical experience to some of the courses in the CIS program.

Master of Science in Islamic Art, Architecture and Urbanism student, Muhammed Madandola, said: "The field trip to Jordan provided a better understanding of the art, architecture, and city planning system employed by the ancient civilizations during the Nabatean, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic eras."

Students from CIS have previously visited Cairo and Istanbul as part of CIS' recently introduced Islamic Art, Architecture and Urbanism program. The program, which re-launched in 2018, is a multidisciplinary program conducted in collaboration with the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. It aims to equip future designers, curators, and historians with a critical and informed understanding of Islamic art and architecture, in order to create and publish socially relevant material that promotes self-identity in the region.

HBKU's founding pillars of Innovation, People, Excellence, and Partners encourage students to continue in an educational path of inquisitive learning. Classroom instruction often complements unique situated learning experiences, offering students a high-value education.

For more information about CIS, please visit cis.hbku.edu.qa.

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