

KIRKWOOD STUDY ABROAD



GREECE

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND REFUGEE CRISIS

May 12 – 25, 2019
3 Credits

The Course: SOC-115 Social Problems

You will begin with predeparture course meetings in the United States before you travel to Greece. The Social Problems course will help you recognize local and international social problems contributing to and arising from the Syrian refugee crisis in Greece and, more broadly, the EU, including origins of the crisis, factors exacerbating the crisis for the refugees themselves, as well as how the displacement is affecting Greece as the host country.

The Crisis: Since 2015, more than 1 million refugees, fleeing war, persecution, natural disasters, and poverty, have traveled to Greece in search of safety and a dignified life in Europe. Lacking safe and legal alternatives, they put their lives in the hands of smugglers and risk everything during perilous sea and land crossings. In 2016, a series of international political policies limited immigration out of Greece and, consequently, more than 60,000 people are currently trapped, scattered across detention centers, abandoned buildings, and makeshift camps. Substandard living conditions and lack of adequate food, medical care, and information have heightened anxiety, depression, and uncertainty, but you can help.

The Service: This program is planned in partnership with Cross Cultural Solutions (CCS), a nonprofit volunteer organization with locations around the world. Student volunteers will work at the Ritsona refugee camp's distribution center, a critical dispensary of milk, hygiene products, and clothing. The Ritsona camp is one of the largest refugee camps in Greece, with more families coming every day. Over the last year, many international organizations have pulled aid even though the need has never been greater. CCS volunteers, supported by the local team, operate the distribution center and help families meet basic needs. This is your opportunity to fulfill fundamental human needs for refugees with compassion, dignity, and humanity.

The Country:

Located at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and Asia, Greece boasts the longest coastline of the Mediterranean Basin and 227 inhabited islands. The birthplace of democracy, Western philosophy, the Olympic Games, Western literature, historiography, political science, and major scientific and mathematical principles, the country retains world-renowned landmarks and historical sites to explore.

Your home base in Greece is the town of Chalkida, a welcoming town filled with small shops, museums, and historical sites. The town enjoys a promenade, delicious authentic Greek restaurants, and a nearby beach within driving distance. In your free time you can take in Greek culture on pedestrian boardwalks or take in a Greek sunset along the waterfront. You will find opportunities to immerse yourself in Greek life as you straddle two cultures—in the town of Chalkida and the nearby refugee camp where you will volunteer.

Program Highlights:

- ◆ **Service-learning** experience with Syrian refugees, working alongside non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- ◆ Gain a **deeper understanding** of the lives and experiences of the world and Iowa's refugee population
- ◆ **Discover** Athens and Evia Island during a weekend cultural excursion
- ◆ **Explore** the beauty and culture of Greece during your free time

Estimated Program Fee: \$3,950
\$1,000 Global Advantage Scholarships Available

Includes:

Round-trip Airfare
Housing
Most meals
Health Insurance
Some Cultural Excursions

Does not include:

3 Summer Credits Tuition
Personal Expenses
Passport Fee

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Tentative Itinerary: May 12 – 25, 2019

- Day 1:** **Athens arrival and Chalkida orientation.** Take a flight to Athens International Airport (ATH) where friendly staff will greet the group in the airport and provide group transport one hour north to the city of Chalkida. Situated in a safe neighborhood, the home base offers private accommodations for the group with beautiful views and expansive common areas. Depending on arrival time, enjoy your first meal in Greece prepared by staff cooks. Meet country director, Constantina Strikou, as she provides an orientation and training about the community and the week ahead.
- Days 2–6, and 9–13:** **Ritsona refugee support and afternoon cultural activities.** Over the course of the next week(s), from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., the group will commute to the Ritsona refugee camp located 20 minutes outside of Chalkida. Managed by the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Ritsona camp houses nearly 900 refugees seeking asylum throughout the European Union (EU). In supporting operations at the food and clothing distribution center, female-friendly space, and laundry facilities at the camp, the group will experience the tangible accomplishment of much-needed small construction and infrastructure projects. Each afternoon the group will engage in guided cultural activities and excursions in the local area. Learn common expressions and conversational skills in Greek and Arabic with professional language lessons. Roll up your sleeves as you learn to cook Spanakopita and make Greek salad. Visit the historic sites, shops, and beaches of Chalkida. Engage with guest lecturers and in discussions on the refugee crisis.
- Days 7–8:** **Athens and Evia Island tours.** On the weekend enjoy a full-day guided tour of Athens, including sites such as the Acropolis, Temple of Zeus, Panathenaic Stadium, Greek Parliament, and the famous Plaka for shopping and restaurants. Tour the island of Evia, stopping at local beaches, markets, ruins, and thermal baths.
- Day 14:** **Return home.** Two weeks have flown by since you arrived, and it's time to embark on a flight back home from Athens!

Program Contact:

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