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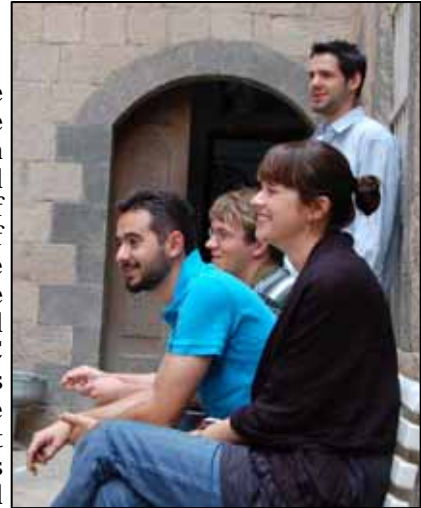
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Chapter 1: Welcome to the YCMES

For nearly two decades, the Yemen Language Center (YLC) and, more recently, the Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies (YCMES) have provided a leading education for students of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies. Founded by Sabri Saleem in 1989 as the first institution devoted to teaching Arabic as a foreign language, the YLC boasts a history of both individual success stories and continued development of educational opportunities. In 1993, the YLC expanded by adding the Yemen Center for Arab Studies, promoting a more accurate representation of the Arab world through education and first-hand experience in the Middle East. Over the last fifteen years, the YLC continuously invested in its facilities and curriculum to ensure that its students live and study in first-rate, modern facilities while getting the best educational experience possible. Though programs and student numbers fluctuated due to local and world events, overall trends showed an ever-increasing number of students wishing to study abroad in historic Sana'a, Yemen. Utilizing its strengths to meet the growing demand for study abroad programs in the Middle East, the YLC helped to establish the YCMES in 2006. This new college operates as an umbrella organization for the YLC, the new Program in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies (PCMES), and other academic programs. The YCMES takes pride in its work, and it has earned an excellent reputation among students, professors, and Yemenis alike.

The YCMES is unique not only in Yemen; the college is the first of its kind in the Middle East, designed by Honorary Dean Steven C. Caton (Harvard University) to the highest academic standards. Visiting professors teach an array of courses in contemporary Middle Eastern studies, coupled with the Yemen Language Center's Arabic program, offering international students an unmatched program of its type. The YCMES also arranges and hosts a variety of programs aimed at cross-cultural dialogue and learning. Internships overseen by the YCMES offer students an inside look in to Yemeni organizations and local issues. A multitude of short-term programs, tailored by the YCMES, allow host-institutions to send a pre-arranged group of students to Yemen. The college also assists in scholarly research, congressional visits, site visits, and cultural orientation. With all of its academic endeavors, the YCMES is a frontrunner in educating future experts in Middle Eastern culture, history, politics, religion, society, and Arabic language. The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies is accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Yemen as a private, non-profit educational institution.



Academic Programs

The YCMES houses two main academic programs: the Program in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies and the Arabic language program of the Yemen Language Center. Students enrolled in the college may focus entirely on Arabic language instruction, the Program in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies, or, as is more likely, a combination of the two. On whatever course work students embark, the college provides a unique learning opportunity for degree-seeking international study-abroad students, as well as for people from all walks of life and all stages of career. Students learn Arabic and study contemporary culture and affairs in the region, and do so while living in one of the most interesting countries in the Middle East.

More information on academic programs, courses, philosophy, and instruction can be found in the YCMES Bulletin and online at www.ycmes.org.

Program in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies

The PCMES is intended for students taking a semester or year of study abroad and are seeking credit for their course work at their home institutions. Graduate students and professionals wishing to learn more about the Middle East are also welcome to its programs. The curriculum is managed by the Associate Dean for the PCMES, with the assistance of the college's Honorary Dean, Steven C. Caton. Taught in English by distinguished guest professors from leading universities worldwide, the PCMES is held to the highest academic standards found at Western institutions. The college's curriculum focuses on the study of the contemporary Middle East, with history courses offered to students who feel the need for such background.



Courses range in topic (e.g. religion, gender, development, and politics) and discipline (e.g. anthropology, economics, geography, history, literature and the arts, political science, and sociology), but individual courses are usually inter-disciplinary in any case. A limited number of basic courses are offered each term (though taught on the basis of sufficient demand of five or more students per course) to reflect what the college considers to be important regional knowledge expected of any student concentrating or majoring in contemporary Middle Eastern studies. A set of more specialized courses is also offered each term, representing a range of topics that will vary depending on faculty specialization as well as student interest.

Yemen Language Center

With almost twenty years of experience, the Yemen Language Center has developed an excellent curriculum of Arabic courses. Classroom instruction is designed to develop the student's speaking and



listening skills, as reading and writing can be covered both in non-Arabic environments and from homework drills. The YLC offers Arabic language instruction from survival lessons to post-advanced independent study. Though many supplementary materials are utilized, the primary textbook for the YLC program is Al-Kitaab fi Ta'allum al-ʿArabiyya from Georgetown Press.

Equipped with the latest in language learning technologies and privileged with a qualified and experienced teaching staff, the YLC will continue to provide quality language learning, serving as the Arabic language department of the YCMES.

Academic Calendar

Courses for students enrolled in the PCMES are offered in two fourteen-week semesters (fall and spring). There is a three-week winter session for students wishing to travel, conduct research, or take an intensive Arabic course, as well as a ten-week summer school session, when courses are more concentrated in time and content. A student may enroll for only one semester or for the whole year, depending on individual needs and interests.

For students only enrolled in the YLC, courses are offered in nine five-week terms throughout the year. There are two terms for fall, winter, and spring, and three terms offered in the summer as a special language program for university students. Each five-week term is comprised of roughly 100 hours of study and is intended to advance the student one half-level of Arabic, i.e. from Beginning Intermediate to Advanced Intermediate. Students may enroll in any number of terms throughout the year.

All classes are held during the Yemeni workweek, Saturday through Wednesday, with weekends consisting of Thursdays and Fridays. The YCMES closes for major Yemeni and Islamic holidays, but remains open for most Western and Christian holidays.

Faculty & Instructors

Visiting faculty for the Program for Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies are rotated annually. The YCMES chooses its faculty members based on their academic specialty, Yemeni research background, and academic undergraduate teaching experience. The faculty is comprised of both highly-qualified international and Yemeni professors. Renowned international professors from tenured positions at leading Western universities are invited by the YCMES for semester or year-long teaching positions. Distinguished Yemeni professors are invited for teaching positions from Yemeni institutions, and all have experience in Western academic establishments and are fluent in English. The combination of visiting international and Yemeni professors offers students a first-rate, diverse academic program that evolves every year.

To find a list of faculty for the current academic year, please visit www.ycmes.org/faculty.



Instructors for the Yemen Language Center are all Yemeni with educational backgrounds in language or a related field. The YLC is proud of the collective experience of its Arabic teaching staff, ranging from 5 to 23 years, ensuring continuity in the YLC teaching philosophy. To encourage improvement and rejuvenation of the program, the YLC regularly invites guest Arabic pedagogy lecturers, such as Peter Abboud and Aman Attieh, to lead workshops for its teachers. All teachers place the greatest emphasis on developing a student's ability to speak and comprehend Arabic by listening to native speakers.

Student Body

The college is open to all qualified individuals regardless of race, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, or other quality in which discrimination is prohibited by U.S. and EU laws. Most students are at undergraduate or graduate level in university, though the YCMES and YLC welcome all persons who share a passion for Arabic and the Middle East. Journalists, professionals, or diplomats looking to expand their knowledge of the contemporary Middle East may find the YCMES program suitable for them.

Though the majority of students come from North America and Europe, students from other regions of the world are also represented. The capacity of the YCMES is around 200 students, though at any given time throughout the year the student body numbers between 50 and 100.



YCMES Campus

Facilities

Though set to expand in the future, the current YCMES campus consists of four separate buildings, three of which are located on 26th of September Street and the fourth in Bab al-Sabah. All four buildings are owned by the college and constructed in the traditional Yemeni style, tastefully decorated with paintings and drawings of familiar sights in Yemen along with multiple elaborate wall carvings and stained glass windows called “qamaris.” The campus creates an authentic atmosphere for students and guests staying with the YCMES.

Main College Building—The newest addition to the YCMES campus, the Main College Building is located next to the Prime Minister’s office. This is the largest site owned by the college, and contains a beautiful, green garden acting as the YCMES “quad.” The administrative part of the building contains offices for the president, deans, financial officers, program officers, and other administrators. Fully-equipped, modern classrooms and shared offices for faculty members are also located on this campus. The site contains the newly renovated and expanding YCMES library, a cafeteria and kitchen, full wireless internet access, and most services students will need during their stay in Yemen.

26th of September Dormitory— Located just down the street from the Main College Building, the 26th of September Dormitory is the largest student housing facility. The building also contains an office for student housing concerns. Along with over 30 modern, yet traditional Yemeni dormitory rooms, the facility features a 24-hour computer lab, two shared kitchen facilities, a large mafraj and roof terrace, communal areas for studying, and plans are set to include a small exercise gym. The dormitory also offers shared laundry facilities, satellite TV, and wireless internet.

Guest House—The Guest House is about a two-minute walk down the street from the 26th of September Dormitory. This luxurious Yemeni townhouse boasts a lovely garden, and all the amenities one needs to have a comfortable stay in Yemen. With over 15 rooms, the Guest House is reserved for visiting professors, senior students, and other special visitors to the YCMES. Communal areas consist of a first-floor diwan, small computer lab, fully-equipped kitchen, laundry, and services such as satellite TV and wireless internet.

Bab al-Sabah House—The Bab al-Sabah House is located about ten minutes from the main campus area. This 500-year-old Yemeni townhouse was completely remodeled and modernized in 1994, offering students comfortable living right in the Old City. The dormitory contains ten rooms, a modern kitchen, laundry facilities, a rooftop terrace, a mafraj, satellite TV and wireless internet.

The Harazi Bean—Another new addition to the YCMES campus is the Harazi Bean, a Yemeni, yet Western-styled coffee shop. This is the perfect location for students to work on Arabic homework or term papers while sipping on local brewed and roasted Yemeni coffee. Students also find the atmosphere ideal for socializing with friends or utilizing the wireless internet. Though owned by the college, the Harazi Bean is open to the public, allowing interaction among other foreigners and Yemenis.

Library

The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies library houses a substantial collection of Arabic-language reference works, with a particular focus on history and geography of the Middle East, and a growing collection of English-language texts on the history and politics of the contemporary Middle East. The collection is valuable to Arabic language students as it contains a variety of textbooks, short stories, children's books, periodicals and magazines that are perfect for those seeking to improve their Arabic. The collection's open stacks are searchable via an online public access catalogue, and the YCMES is currently developing an interlibrary loan system in collaboration with the French Institute and the American Institute of Yemeni Studies' libraries, both of which specialize in Yemeni and Arabian Peninsula social sciences, history, and archaeology. The facilities include a quiet reading room and wireless internet access.



YCMES Neighborhood

The YCMES facilities are located on 26th of September Street near Maydan Tahrir (Liberation Square). Maydan Tahrir is considered the transportation hub and commercial center of Sana'a, and is just a short walk from the Old City. The streets that meet in Tahrir are lined with hundreds of small shops selling a wide variety of goods, clothing stores, cafes and restaurants, street vendors, pharmacies, bookshops and

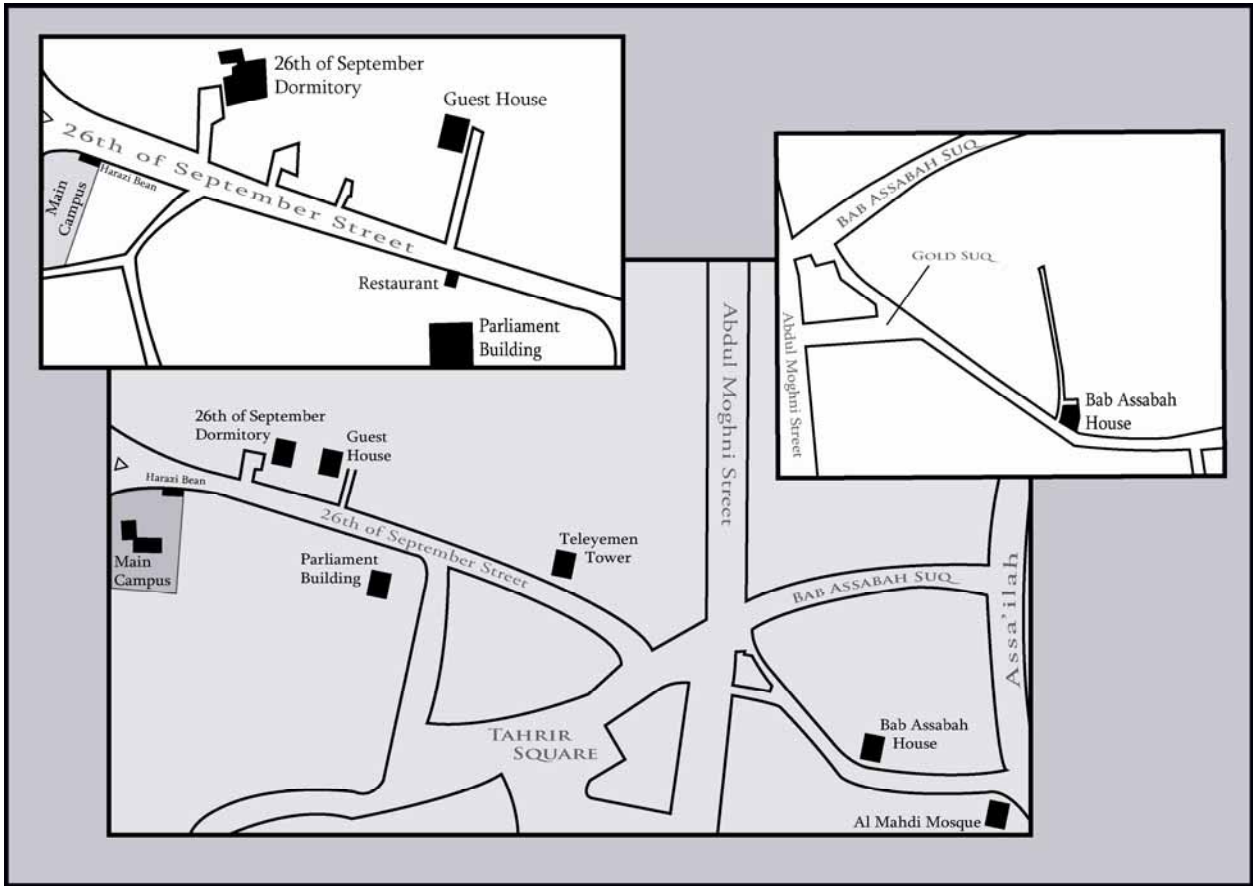


banks. The main post office is located in Tahrir Square, as are the National Museum and Military Museum. With quick access to dubabs, buses and taxis in Tahrir, students are able to travel throughout the city very easily.

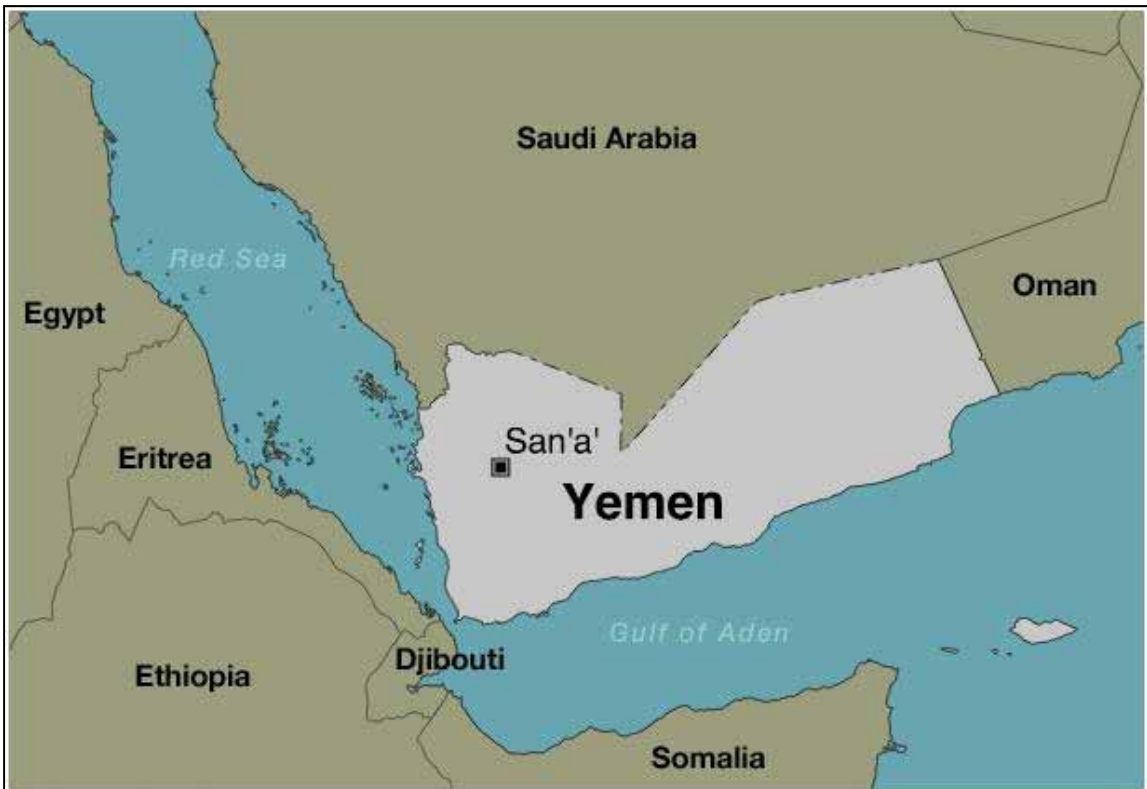
The college is situated between the Yemeni Parliament building and the Prime Minister's office, making for a safe and quiet neighborhood within the city's center. The area is famed for its gardens and located between the Old City and the old Jewish Quarter of al-Qa'a. Next to the Guest House lies the Imam Yahya's old palace, now in ruins. The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies has avoided creating an isolated complex;

instead, it has maintained separate buildings integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. Locals around the college have been used to international students for many years, allowing for natural interaction between students and neighbors.

YCMES Campus Map



Map of Yemen



Chapter 2: Life in Sana'a, Yemen

Country Overview

Yemen is an ancient land with a proud history that dates back over 3,000 years. Yemen is mentioned in the Bible (as the land of the Queen of Sheba) and the Qur'an, and is the setting for one of the stories of *A Thousand and One Nights*. Among the ancient civilizations that ruled in Yemen are the Sabaeans and the Himyarites. After the spread of Islam, the most important rulers in Yemen were the Zaydis and the Ottomans. The modern period of Yemeni history was characterized by political instability and disunity. The North was ruled by an Imamate until 1962, while the South was part of the British Empire until 1967. Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s Yemen remained split, but was unified as the Republic of Yemen in May 1990. Though Yemen was officially one country after 1990, the North and South engaged in a civil war until 1994, when peace was finally declared. Yemen continued to become more stable after a border agreement was signed with Saudi Arabia in 2000, and, more recently, the Yemeni government pledged to rid its borders of Islamic extremism and terrorism.

The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies is located in the capital city of Sana'a, which dates back to the 6th Century BC. It has been ruled by numerous dynasties, including the Sabaeans, Himyarites, Ethiopians, and Persians, and became a Muslim city while the Prophet Muhammad was still alive. Various Muslim rulers oversaw the city from the time of the Ottoman Turks to the Zaydi Imamate, which ended with the 1962 revolution. Sana'a's remarkable history of repeated inhabitations places it as a contender for the "oldest, continuously inhabited city of the world" at 2500 straight years.

Sana'a became the capital of North Yemen in 1962 with a population of less than 250,000. The newly founded capital quickly expanded without proper urban planning, accounting for some of the confusion and frustration experienced when navigating the city today. Currently the city's population is rapidly expanding to over two million inhabitants, leading to water depletion and occasional energy shortages.

Yemen's topography is the most varied of any country on the Arabian Peninsula, and northern Yemen is known as the "Roof of Arabia" for its spectacular mountains. The capital of Sana'a sits at the center of the Sana'a basin at an altitude of 2250 meters/7,400 feet. The weather in Sana'a is quite pleasant throughout the year, with the rainy seasons extending from April to June and August to September. To the west toward the Red Sea coast, the mountains give way to the Tihama, a long strip of coastal plane, which is hot and humid, especially during the summer months. The Hadhramout region extends to the south and east, bordering the southern portion of al-Rub al-Khali (the Empty Quarter). Yemen also controls numerous islands in the Red and Arabian Seas, including Socotra Island which, because of its isolation, boasts unique endemic species and some of Arabia's greatest plant and animal diversity.



The total land area of Yemen is 527,970 sq. km, or roughly twice the size of the state of Wyoming. Yemen is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the north, Oman to the east, the Arabian Sea to the south, and the Red Sea to the west.

The population of Yemen in 2007 is estimated at 22 million people, the majority under the age of 25. Growth rates are among the highest in the world at about 3.5%, with Yemeni women having, on average, 6.5 children each. The racial makeup of the population is predominantly Arab, with some immigration from Africa (mainly the Horn of Africa), South Asia, and Europe (mainly Russian). Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Arab world and receives aid from many Western and Gulf countries. Yemen remains underdeveloped and remote, especially in the countryside. For example, internet users account for less than 1% of the population.

Yemen's architecture is quite varied from region to region and from city to city. Sana'a, Shibam, and Zabid are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. Most Sana'ani houses feature a mafraj (sitting room) on the top floor. Yemenis socialize in the mafraj by talking, listening to music, smoking, and/or chewing qat. Foreigners are often invited to spend time socializing in mafrajs; this is a wonderful way to spend time with locals, make friends, and practice one's Arabic.

Though Yemen is a developing, modernizing country, it is still a tribal-based, conservative Islamic society. However, it is probably the only such country to welcome foreigners as openly as it does. Foreigners, therefore, are expected to act accordingly and respect Yemeni values and social mores.

Your Place in Yemen

The YCMES reminds all students that they are guests in Yemen. Students live and study on a YCMES-sponsored visa, and are expected to uphold the standards indicated in the Student Agreement. Respect and awareness of your surroundings is a necessity at all times, as students not only represent themselves in public, but also the YCMES institution, staff, and other students. An international student is an unofficial ambassador for his/her country; students should be aware that negative actions can affect Yemeni impressions of the student's country or region. Students can also utilize their role as a citizen diplomat to improve Yemeni attitudes towards their home countries.

Most students will notice and comment on the attention they receive from Yemenis as foreigners. Though some students feel uncomfortable with the verbal remarks and stares, this usually stems from the curious nature of Yemenis. The vast majority of Yemenis will view you as a welcomed guest and be excited to greet and meet you.



Getting involved in Yemeni society

The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies strongly encourages its students to get involved in Yemeni society. Integration and immersion improve students' Arabic language skills, knowledge of Arab and Yemeni culture, and overall study abroad experience. The YCMES helps facilitate the assimilation process by offering students opportunities of internships with local organizations, volunteer work, cultural activities, and student exchange programs between international and Yemeni students. As is with any foreign experience, it is up to the student to make the effort to interact with his/her new home, which is best done through maintaining a circle of Yemeni friends.

Culture

Introduction to Yemeni Culture

Yemeni culture is a combination of socially conservative Islamic ideals with local Arab character and deep tribal traditions. Though many social attributes found in Yemen are universal in the Arab world (emphases on family, religion, honor, and gender roles), Yemenis hold fast to these values in a way that visitors rarely see replicated in other parts of the Arab world, creating a unique cultural outlook. Yemenis are very proud of their cultural traditions and eager to share them with foreign guests. As guests in this country, students witness extreme generosity from their Yemeni hosts and are often taken aback by their hospitality. Still, other students experience the alienation of being a lonely foreigner amidst a seemingly curious and intimidating society. Since many social events take place amongst intimate circles of friends, it is recommended to slowly penetrate the society by creating a few close friends and networking through these.



Though Sana'a has many modern amenities and imported goods, travel to the villages can seem a bit like stepping back in time. Many rural areas in Yemen are agricultural and traditional farming techniques are still widely used. Surprisingly, villages in the north are considered to be more relaxed on Islamic social standards than the capital. Due to a Saudi-Wahabi influence beginning in the 1970's, the northern cities, especially Sana'a, have adopted a more conservative approach to Islamic practices. The southern cities have remained more liberal, though with reunification in the 1990s the North has pressured some groups in the South to adopt similar Islamic standards.

The nuclear family (parents and children), called "usra" in Arabic, is the most basic social unit in Yemen. Yemeni families tend to be quite large and several generations of extended family usually live together in one large home with separate floors for each usra.

Social Events

The most important event a foreigner is likely to encounter in Yemen is Ramadan, the holy month of fasting. During this time all Muslims (except children, the sick, the elderly, and other groups as stipulated by the Qur'an) abstain from food, drinking, smoking, and sexual activity during daylight hours. As the Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, the time of Ramadan falls eleven days earlier each successive year. The evening brings celebrations and the breaking of the fast, known as *iftar*; the feasting and merry-making often last until dawn. Although non-Muslims are not required to observe the fast, eating, drinking, and smoking around those who do is inconsiderate. Thus, during Ramadan, such activities should be confined to the privacy of one's own home. At the beginning and conclusion of Ramadan, small gifts may be given to children. It is also appropriate for invited guests to bring gifts of sweets to families for iftar. When giving gifts, offer them with either the right hand or with both hands. Presents are not usually opened in front of the giver.

Weddings are joyous occasions in Yemen and one should feel honored if invited. Parties for men and women are almost always held separately, and generally speaking, members of one sex are not invited to the other sex's ceremonies. Both parties usually consist of an afternoon spent socializing with the bride or groom in their home. Afterwards, their friends gather to sing religious songs, songs in praise of the bride or groom and his/her family, and to dance. Just as Yemenis will arrive for the wedding clothed in their finest attire, foreign guests should do likewise with dress from Yemen or their country of origin.

Married couples visiting a home together may be separated soon after arrival, the male guest sitting with his male host(s) and the female guest with her female hostess(es). In these situations, married couples may be expected to understand subtle hints or suggestions by the host proposing to separate them into two groups. Unmarried couples visiting a home should exercise discretion; considering the rarity of friendships between unmarried men and women in Yemen, it is usually unadvisable to make the relationship known or to make visits "as a couple." One should always take off one's shoes when entering a Yemeni home and mafraj. Also, keep in mind that not all invitations must or should be accepted. Offering an invitation is a feature of Arab culture, but one should consider whether the host will be extremely inconvenienced before accepting.

Religion

Nearly all Yemenis are Muslims. Minority communities of Jews, Christians (mostly expatriates), and some Hindus (mostly immigrants) also exist. Estimates suggest that 50-55% of Yemeni Muslims are Shafi'i Sunni, 40-45% are of the Zaydi sect of Shi'a, and 2-5% are of the Ja'fari, Western Isma'ili sect. It is assumed that students going to Yemen will have some prior knowledge of Islam, and several books for the beginning student have been listed in Chapter 7: For Further Reference.

As a foreign visitor, people will naturally be curious about you and may often inquire about your religious persuasion. In Yemen this is not considered an intrusive or impolite question, so a reaction that indicates offense on your part may insult the person inquiring. In these situations, the best response is to be as direct as possible, although replies such as "I don't believe in God" may be met with incredulity or genuine shock. The rule here is to tread sensitively, and if someone tries to argue or debate with you over religious differences, refuse politely. Most Yemenis – the vast majority, in fact – will treat you no differently for being a non-Muslim. The Qur'an enjoins believers to treat Jews and Christians with friendliness and respect, as these "People of the Book" are followers of the holy tradition, and therefore are religious cousins to Muslims.

As a foreigner, remember that the obligation to assimilate culturally is, for better or for worse, placed squarely on you. Therefore, emphasizing religious differences between foreigners and Yemenis, or between Christians, Muslims, or Jews will only render your task more difficult. Proselytizing on the part of any religious group is forbidden, so students with strong feelings about their particular religion are advised for their own benefit not to share them aloud.

Most mosques in Sana'a are closed to non-Muslims, although it appears that this restriction is not universally enforced. An individual who wishes to enter a mosque must ask first. If s/he wishes to take photographs s/he should again inquire to see if this is permitted. Both men and women should always remove their shoes before entering a mosque, and women should cover their hair. Of course, persons



wearing inappropriate clothing will not be admitted to a mosque.

There is a single church in Sana'a supported by the expatriate community where several major Christian denominations offer worship services at separate times. Small Christian study/discussion groups composed of expatriate residents also exist, and welcome new members. There are presently no functioning synagogues in Sana'a, although diminishing communities of Jews can still be found living to the north of the capital, near the city of Sa'ada. At last report, the Jewish community in Sa'ada numbered 500 people, down from 2,000 only a few years ago.

Social Relations

Most Yemeni people observe traditional Yemeni gender roles; men are more active in public and commercial spheres, and women in the home and family environment. The strict social divisions between men and women surprise many foreigners. Men and women can be thought of as living in two parallel worlds. When people gather for social events and celebrations, men and women do so separately. At wedding celebrations, for example, two separate parties are held, one for men and one for women. Wealthy families with members educated in Western institutions are more likely to relax social restrictions.

The public workforce in Yemen is still dominated by men, though women can be found working as secretaries, assistants, bank tellers, school teachers, and in an expanding realm of positions outside the home. There is a large and growing number of young Yemeni women enrolled in universities throughout the country studying a variety of subjects, including business and medicine.

Relations between men and women, particularly unmarried men and women, are subject to scrutiny throughout Yemen. You will notice immediately that virtually all women in Sana'a are covered by the long and formless *baltu* or *sharshaf*, which leaves no part of the body visible to the eye. Foreign women are not expected to dress in this manner, but they should be prepared to act in a reserved and conservative manner while in public, consistent with Yemeni values.

For foreigners coming from North America or Europe, it is entirely normal to have friends and acquaintances of the opposite sex. In many parts of Yemen, however, such friendships are abnormal and frowned upon. You should not expect, therefore, to have many (if any) good Yemeni friends of the opposite sex. This is somewhat less true for foreign women, who are not expected to observe all the rules which govern the behavior of Yemeni women. For them it will be somewhat easier to make friends of the opposite sex, although these relationships will necessarily be somewhat formal in nature. Within the confines of the Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies, there is a good deal of interaction between men and women involving teachers and students. While these relationships are essentially friendly, they should nonetheless maintain a degree of professionalism and should certainly conform to the cultural/social standards of Yemen. Relations between westerners are a private matter and should be conducted as such.



Questions posed to Yemeni men concerning the female members of their household are generally considered embarrassing and rude. On most visits to a Yemeni home, in fact, where the male head of the household is the host, the female members of the family will not be introduced to guests, or even be visible to them. It is important to note, however, that exceptions to this custom do exist, most often in wealthy, highly educated, or consciously non-traditional families. When foreign men come into contact with Yemeni women, they should generally let her take the initiative to shake hands, start conversation that extends beyond common pleasantries, and so forth. As long as male students understand the social distance that exists between men and women and avoid mannerisms which suggest familiarity or intimacy, they should experience no problems.

Among Yemeni women, foreign women can freely discuss almost any subject, including husbands or male family members. Indeed, this is often a frequent topic of conversation among groups of women. Foreign women are typically free to shake hands or start conversations with men in professional settings, though again they should maintain a sense of discretion and decorum. Women who project an air of confidence and comfort in these situations will encounter little difficulty or awkwardness.

Interactions between foreign men and women in public should conform to Yemeni standards of conduct. Intimate or affectionate behavior, such as hugging or kissing, is **absolutely** forbidden in public, and will earn the offending couple an extremely negative response from bystanders. In addition, calling late in the evening at the home of a friend of the opposite sex, or spending the night there, will likely offend residents of the neighborhood. Indeed, it is not unknown in Yemen for foreigners who have behaved insensitively to find their homes vandalized, or their laundry stolen from the line, in an expression of their neighbor's displeasure. Some reactions from Yemenis might be more subtle, but nonetheless will be felt by the offender, and the larger non-Yemeni community. These incidents are rare, but foreigners should be conscious and exacting in their public behavior, and expect the same of their peers. The missteps of a few foreigners can reflect on the larger group, obscuring the genuine effort most non-Yemenis make to assimilate into Yemeni life, and obstructing the ability of researchers and field workers to conduct their work in Yemen.

Making Friends

Foreigners, because of shyness or uncertainty about the expectations and obligations that friendships with Yemenis may entail, often have some initial difficulty in meeting and making friends. Fortunately, these problems are easily overcome when individuals are friendly and open. Yemenis, especially young people, are enthusiastic to meet their foreign counterparts and share their lives and interests. Indeed, it is completely normal for a friendly Yemeni to approach you on the street and strike up a conversation with you (although it bears mentioning again that this type of contact between members of the opposite sex is generally regarded as inappropriate). You are encouraged to pursue and cultivate these contacts, and to seek out opportunities to meet and converse with Yemenis (in Arabic, of course). Some suggestions for meeting people are: visits to the *hammam* (public bath), Sana'a University, public parks and gardens,

teahouses and small Yemeni hotels, restaurants, and the *souq*. You will have numerous opportunities for attending qat chews, weddings, and other social occasions. Take advantage of these opportunities to meet and speak with Yemenis in their own environment; your efforts will be generously repaid in warm friendships and improved Arabic skills. However, one should always be aware of the context of the friendship, as there are some people (as in any country) who will try to take advantage of you.

Dress

Yemenis are very proud of their cultural traditions. Although Western dress can be spotted on some professional men, the majority of the Yemeni population dresses in traditional style: *thoub* (full, white dress), *mawaz* (a skirt worn by men), *kufia* (head scarf), and *jambiya* (curved knife worn on an ornamental belt). Slight variations in this outfit indicate the wearer's geographical origin. Older women in Sana'a, or those from more traditional families, can be seen wearing traditional sitaras (large colorfully died cloths) and village women outside of the capital can be found wearing a rich variety of traditional dress.

Dress requirements for men and women are **extremely** important in Yemen, so it is indispensable that foreigners take as much care as possible when selecting clothes to bring to Yemen, especially women. Awareness of general sensitivities on the subject of dress is essential for relating to people without inadvertently causing offense, or inviting unwanted attention. If you choose to wear Yemeni-style clothing, be aware that the way you move, sit, and carry yourself will certainly be different from any Yemeni person and may cause offense to Yemeni men or women. Wearing loud colors or fancy items should be avoided, as this will without a doubt make you "stick out" in public. Also, you should be especially aware of the manner in which you are sitting, for example in a mafraj. The best advice is to look to a Yemeni as a model for appropriate decorum. Remember that your outward appearance is seen as a reflection of your private self, and that inappropriate clothing will discourage many Yemenis from attempting to communicate with you or will be taken as an open invitation for comments.

Men are expected to wear either pants or jeans, without holes, and shorts should be avoided. T-Shirts are acceptable, although the sleeveless variety is inappropriate. Long hair (particularly on men who do not wear a beard or mustache) will elicit occasional puzzled looks or questions, and may invite some teasing or mildly provocative comments. Exposed piercings or tattoos will also draw unwanted attention in public.

For women, pants or jeans should be covered by a skirt or tied scarf, especially when traveling in rural areas of the country. Generally speaking any article of clothing which might *remotely* be considered revealing is questionable in Yemen. Light, translucent materials or tight clothing that reveals a woman's form are also problematic. Women are recommended therefore to bring long full skirts (no slits) and blouses as a practical complement to the T-shirts and jeans they might be accustomed to wearing at home. Foreign women are not expected to cover their hair, except when entering mosques or other religious

places. Shorts, or short skirts, and sleeveless and/or form-fitting tops are altogether unacceptable and will most likely cause a woman trouble in public places. Heavy make-up is highly discouraged as most women, in Sana'a especially, go without any make-up. Some foreign women do choose to wear the Yemeni *baltu*, but if you choose to wear it, you should be aware that there is a certain way to carry yourself in public when wearing such clothing. Underneath a *baltu*, a woman is still expected to dress conservatively if removing the outer cloak during class (shorts, sleeveless shirts, low necklines, etc. are considered inappropriate dress for class). When in the house, students may choose to



wear whatever they wish, but in public (including classrooms), fashion should be conservative. The Arabic teachers at the YCMES are Yemeni, and while they do have experience with Westerners, they nonetheless deserve the same respect as Yemenis you would run into on the street.

In general, clothing for men and women should be conservative and modest. If you are unsure as to the appropriateness of a particular article of clothing, the best advice is to leave it at home. Erring on the side of the caution will serve you unfailingly. Proper dress will help you earn the respect of Yemenis who will understand that you have attempted to take notice of their social customs and have adapted accordingly; improper clothing will have the opposite effect.

Food Etiquette

Yemeni food and eating customs vary from region to region. Generally speaking, however, the noontime meal is the largest and most important of the day. Breakfasts and dinners tend to be smaller and less elaborate than the typical lunch. In most major cities, you will find Yemeni, Arab, and a few foreign-style restaurants at different levels of price and quality.

Restaurants tend to be most crowded during lunch, or from about 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Most establishments close for the afternoon, reopening at 5:00 and serving dinner until approximately 10:00 p.m. All but the most expensive restaurants insist on cash payment, though even in hotels you will want to pay cash since the exchange rate on credit cards is unfavorable.

Before sitting down at a table, it is customary in Yemen to first wash your hands. Sinks are provided for this purpose in every restaurant. One

always eats with the right hand, as the left hand (reserved for washing oneself) is considered unclean. This custom takes on added importance in Yemen, since in most restaurants food is eaten without utensils. The same table manners you would practice at home are generally applicable in Yemen as well: blowing one's nose, loud speech, or belching during a meal are all considered impolite.

As in other social situations, the space in restaurants for men and women is dictated by Yemeni social customs. Many restaurants will have a "family room" used by Yemeni families for dining out. Foreign women may sit in the purely male section as long as they feel comfortable, but they should not hesitate to ask for the family section if they would prefer more privacy.



Women's Issues

A woman's place in Yemen may appear limited and restrictive to foreigners, but it does offer security: women's bodies are absolutely sacrosanct and inviolable. However, one should realize that especially in the crowded suqs contact will occur between men and women in passing. This should not be considered



harassment unless it is obviously targeted and of a sexual nature. Foreign women are able to move freely through any part of the city without difficulty, and are welcome in nearly all public establishments, even those mainly frequented by men, such as large restaurants. However, it is clear that opportunists take advantage of crowded situations and you may wish to take care and be alert when in particularly busy areas of Sana'a, such as Bab al-Yemen or Suq al-Milh. When taking a local taxi, a woman should always ride in the back seat and be sure the doors work from the inside, and on buses a woman may expect other passengers to offer their seats to her, often next to another woman. The same is usually the case when traveling on inter-city taxis and buses. Likewise, a woman traveling by herself outside of Sana'a should experience little difficulty, though of course the same precautions she would take at home should also be applied in Yemen. Hitchhiking should be avoided and unsolicited rides declined. In hotels, a woman should insist on a single room, preferably near other foreign travelers. Especially in small villages,

conservative dress is essential. It is advisable to not smoke cigarettes in public spaces, and to be discreet if deciding to do so. More than hard rules or advice, however, a woman traveling in Yemen is advised to rely on simple common sense, consideration, and awareness of local conditions.

The most common difficulty foreign women encounter in Yemen is street harassment, usually in the form of stares, whistles, catcalls, or pinching/grabbing (although this is somewhat less common). Apologists may claim that it is only the rare Yemeni who harasses foreign women, but reports from our students suggest that harassment is nearly as common in Yemen as in most Mediterranean societies, at least in the urban areas. Perhaps it is wisest to assume you will encounter harassment and develop personal strategies accordingly. Women who have lived in Yemen for long periods, or in other Middle Eastern countries, differ widely on their advice for dealing with harassment. Some advise ignoring such behavior altogether, others suggest publicly berating or embarrassing the harasser, still others advocate punching him! You will have to decide which course of action feels most appropriate and comfortable for you. Be assured that in public, however, a pinch or grab *can* permissively be met with a loud and angry response from you; such behavior towards a Yemeni woman is grossly unthinkable, and the same standards of respect apply to your person as well. You can be guaranteed that in such situations, your reaction will immediately draw a crowd to remonstrate the harasser. More serious forms of harassment, including sexual assault, physical violence, or rape, are so rare as to be virtually unheard of in Yemen. Stares are quite common in Yemen, by both men and women, and should be understood as mere curiosity. Eye contact should be avoided, however, as this is often interpreted as an invitation to move beyond curiosity. Sunglasses allow you to look around discreetly. You should be careful in Yemen, but you do not need to be scared or overly sensitive.

Tampons are not available in Yemen therefore women are advised to bring their own supply with them; sanitary napkins are widely available. Additionally, a supply of medication for simple yeast infections and other common gynecological problems should be brought from home. Upon request, your embassy in Sana'a can provide you with a list of reputable local physicians practicing women's health and gynecology.

Qat

Qat is an evergreen plant originally from East Africa. A shrub or small tree growing to 5–8 m tall, with leaves 5–10 cm long and 1–4 cm broad, qat is classified as an illicit substance in most of the world. It is not considered physically addictive, although many chewers claim dependency. The chewer puts qat leaves in his/her mouth and chews them slowly for hours, alternately sucking the liquid out of the qat and sipping a beverage (usually one that is quite sweet, like soda.) The qat is not swallowed.

Qat has a negative effect on the kidneys and liver. Coupled with related harmful activities, such as smoking while chewing, qat can significantly shorten the lifespan of the heavy chewer. Qat is also considered to have a negative effect on the Yemeni economy. It is not an exportable product, yet a considerable amount of the country's natural resources, labor force and, perhaps most significantly, water is spent to cultivate the plant. Qat, however, is far more profitable for the rural farmer than produce, a fact that has led to the steady increase in qat production and decreased production of other agricultural products. Others believe that qat is a reason for family breakdown because it strains family financial resources and damages family bonds due to the frequent absence of male family members who chew away from home.

There are certain benefits for a foreign student who chooses to chew qat while in Yemen. Since qat chews are the most prevalent social activity in Yemen, it helps a student infiltrate many circles of Yemeni life. Qat is chewed at weddings, negotiations, government events and even daily working environments. It is so important to Yemen's social, political and economical venues that those who do not chew often find integration into these realms difficult. Some people think that qat makes them physically and mentally active. Yemeni college students often claim qat is an important part of their study practices. In the afternoon, a visitor to Yemen will notice that the majority of men have begun to chew, and it would be difficult to find a taxi driver, for example, who does not begin chewing shortly after lunch. Whatever one's position on qat in Yemeni society, its presence is undeniably pervasive and impossible to ignore.



Cultural Adjustment/Shock

Living in another culture, especially while studying, can be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. The stresses and strains of cultural adjustment should not, however, be underestimated. It is difficult to assess the degree to which cultural adjustment/shock will affect you in advance, but preparing yourself prior to departure and understanding your reactions as you experience them will aid in successful acclimation. One way to prepare yourself is to understand the stages of cultural adjustment and be able to identify your emotional state according to these adjustment phases.

- The Honeymoon Stage:

Shortly after arriving in a new place people may feel giddy and elated. This “honeymoon” stage is characterized by feelings of excitement, exhilaration and anticipation. The new and different things students see around them will be thrilling and fascinating. People in the “honeymoon” stage exhibit an eagerness to please and take an active interest in what they can learn from their new environs. Unfortunately, this eagerness to please and accept their new surroundings may mean that the person does not gain a complete understanding of cultural differences between their own and the new culture, and may be unwilling to ask for assistance. Cultural misunderstandings may accumulate, making the traveler more likely to experience the second, less pleasant stage of cultural adjustment.

- The Hostility Stage

The hostility stage is characterized by frustration, anger, anxiety, judgementalism, fear, and often depression. The strains of living in an unfamiliar environment and speaking a non-native language can lead to feelings of isolation. This is a distressing stage that fortunately does not last very long for most people. As new situations are encountered and dealt with, the visitor gains a more complete understanding of his/her environment and the hostility stage gives way to the integration stage.

- The Integration/Acceptance Stage

Humor is a sign that a visitor has moved from the hostility stage toward the integration stage. Cultural mistakes that would have caused frustration during the previous stage are more easily laughed off. The visitor begins to feel more functional in his/her new environment. Integration is accomplished by making new friends, finding recreational outlets, accomplishing minor tasks, and being willing to ask questions when something is uncertain.

- The Home Stage

This stage occurs when the visitor strikes a balance between retaining his/her own culture and being functional and happy in the new culture. This person has successfully adjusted to the norms and standards of their environment, a valuable, life-enriching skill. Reaching this stage takes time and work on the part of the visitor; there may be many times when it seems unattainable, but perseverance and flexibility ensure success.

There is also the process of reverse culture shock upon leaving Yemen and returning home. Students often feel that this is more difficult than the original adjustment to the foreign culture. One common feature of reverse culture shock is having a hard time fitting into the life you originally had and relating your experience in Yemen to home, including with friends and family. Students change a lot on a study abroad experience, but may not be aware that the place and people they are returning to have also changed while they were away. It is best to talk to a friend who has had a similar experience, and to also recognize how study abroad has made you more independent, knowledgeable on different cultures and languages, and to appreciate the differences in people.



Chapter 3: Practical Matters

Local Weights and Measures

Yemen uses the Metric system. Distance is measured in kilometers (1 mile= 1.6 km). Foodstuffs are sold in kilograms (2.2 pounds = 1 kilogram), and liquids are sold in liters (1 liter = .26 gallons or 4.2 cups).

Electricity

Electricity in Yemen is the same as in Europe- 220 Volts at 50 cycles. Throughout Yemen the three-pronged British plug is used. If you bring any personal electrical equipment, make sure that you use an international voltage converter. Voltage converters are readily available at reasonable prices in Sana'a.

Time

The time zone in Yemen is three hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +3). There is no Day Light Savings time.

Official Work Schedules

The Yemeni work week is from Saturday through Wednesday, with Thursday and Friday as weekends. Friday is the holy day for Muslims and most businesses are closed, some opening after noon prayer. Typically, work hours for businesses are from 8:00am until 12:00pm and from 4:00pm until 8:00pm, with a break during the afternoon. Many government agencies, businesses, and other commerce follow a schedule similar to this, though working hours are not completely uniform throughout the country.

Language

Arabic is the official and predominant language in Yemen. There are many regional Arabic dialects throughout Yemen such as Sana'ani and Ta'izi. Yemeni dialects are quite close to Modern Standard Arabic, so the local population will understand students who speak MSA. Though the majority of Yemenis speak only Arabic, an increasing number of Yemenis are learning English in post-secondary schools and institutes. One may also find the occasional Yemeni who speaks French, Spanish, German, Russian or other European languages.

Finance/Banking

Currency

The basic unit of currency is the Yemeni Riyal. At the time of writing, the exchange rate was roughly 198YR to the US dollar and 269YR to the Euro (exchange rates are, of course, subject to change).

Banks/ATM/Money

There are many international banks in the capital city with ATM services. ATMs in Yemen have become quite reliable, and prove to be the easiest and most convenient way to obtain cash. However, it is best not to rely solely on this service. It is recommended to carry an adequate amount of cash while traveling to Yemen. Traveler's Checks should be avoided, since only a few establishments accept them and at unpleasant exchange rates. Credit cards are not widely accepted.

Climate & Weather

There are three main climate zones in Yemen: the east is mostly hot, harsh desert, the west coast is hot and humid, and the mountains are temperate and wetter due to monsoon seasons. In Sana'a the wet season lasts throughout the summer and there can be heavy downpours in the late afternoon or evening. It is best to avoid travel at those times because roads may become flooded and muddy.



Sana'a is located at over 2000 meters above sea level, and therefore does not get very hot in the summer compared to Yemen's lowlands. The air is very dry and the average summer temperatures are as follows:

June	July	August	September
27°C/ 81°F	28°C/ 82°F	26°C/ 79°F	26°C/ 79°F

Although Yemen is located on the Arabian Peninsula, winter can get chilly. There is a stark contrast between day and night temperatures. During winter nights, temperatures can drop down to 0°C/ 32°F.

Average daytime temperatures are:

December	January	February	March
21°C/ 70°F	22°C/ 72°F	24°C/ 75°F	25°C/ 77°F

Diet & Water

The Yemeni diet is quite simple. Staples are rice, bread, mixed vegetables, chicken, beef and lamb, with fish in the coastal regions. Breakfast is a light meal consisting of scrambled eggs with tomatoes, a bean dish called ful or the similar fasulia, served with flat bread. Supper in the evening is similar, with the addition of liver or spiced ground beef dishes.

Lunch is the largest meal. It generally consists of chicken, lamb, or beef, with cooked vegetables and rice mixed with raisins and almonds. Flat bread soaked in buttermilk and covered with tomatoes, onions, and spices is served at most meals, as well as a spicy green stew called salta served in a super-heated stone bowl. Salta is considered the national dish of Yemen. It is made with meat broth, onions, tomatoes, ground meat, eggs, and hilba— a mixture of fenugreek (an herb) and grated leeks (which look like large scallions, or green onions). There are numerous types of Salta available, and some restaurants, as you will discover, are more popular than others for their particular recipe. Traditional desserts include custard dishes and various kinds of sweetened and unsweetened pastries. The most famous dessert is called bint al-sahan (daughter of the bowl); a cake-like flaky pastry with several layers covered with honey and black seeds.



Coffee originated in Yemen and was exported from Mocha, a port town on the Red Sea. It made its way to Europe on trading ships during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Yemen, both the husks and the beans are used to make beverages. Yemenis make a drink called qishr by steeping coffee husks in hot water, then adding ginger, cinnamon, and cardamom for flavor. Qishr is milder than bean coffee and is preferred by Yemenis. Best of all, the juice stands, which colorfully punctuate every street in Sana'a, serve delicious, fresh fruit juices.

There is no piped water system in the city of Sana'a. Water is delivered in trucks to each house, and then pumped up to a storage container on the top of roofs. Due to this reason, the YCMES recommends students to conserve water usage and to not drink or consume the tap water. Tap water can be used for showering, brushing one's teeth, and for cooking if boiled first. Bottled water is available at nearly every corner store, and at the YCMES facilities. It is very inexpensive and used widely by foreigners and Yemenis alike.

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Staying Healthy

Students come to Yemen for studying, traveling, and experiencing a new culture and environment. There is nothing that hinders a student's experience more than becoming sick and spending countless days in bed or the hospital. Precautions should be taken to ensure that you will remain healthy during your time in Yemen. One of the easiest ways is through hygiene. Diseases from improper washing, food, and water are the leading causes of illness in travelers. Always wash your hands with soap and water before eating, and as often as possible when venturing out into less sanitary areas. Water should only be drunk from bottles; make sure that the seal has not been broken. When ordering juices from fresh fruit stands, ask for bottled water to be used, and avoid ice cubes in all drinks. Be wary of food from street vendors, especially

uncooked foods like vegetables and fruits, and make sure that meat products are always fully cooked. Make sure that dairy products have been pasteurized and properly stored, and always check the expiration date on products. Bug spray is also a necessity in certain areas of the country to avoid possible insect-borne diseases. Traffic accidents are also a high cause of injury while traveling; make sure to take as many precautions as you can when traveling by road in Yemen. Try to avoid touching or petting animals on the street or in the wild, as bites and scratches can lead to serious infections. Always use latex condoms, available in local pharmacies, if engaging in sexual activity in Yemen to reduce the risk of STDs. By keeping these guidelines in mind, you can help prevent any serious illness or injury during your stay in Yemen.

Health Services, Hospitals & Insurance

The YCMES does not have any on-campus physicians, health facilities, or pharmacies. However, emergency health services are available 24 hours a day. YCMES staff is always on call in case of any student illness or emergency. The college assists students with transportation to and from the hospital and any further assistance needed such as picking up medications from a local pharmacy.

The Saudi-German hospital opened in June 2006 near the Sana'a International Airport with modern, clean facilities. It is recommended that all students use this hospital in case of illness or emergency, as it offers the best quality healthcare in Yemen in addition to offering a 25% discount on services to YCMES students. Students are responsible for all costs of medical examinations, medications, hospital stays, and doctor's visits incurred. If students must be evacuated for health or other emergency reasons, the cost of airfare and any special medical attention will be borne by the student.

The YCMES does not provide any type of insurance; therefore, comprehensive traveler's and/or health insurance are required of all students. The college recommends discussing your travel to Yemen with your current insurance provider, but also researching companies that specialize in travel insurance.

Exercise

The YCMES realizes that fitness and exercise are important for its students. The college has plans to include a student exercise gym in the 26th of September Dormitory, exclusive for its students. The gym, though not as large as others available in Sana'a, will offer students a private area for working-out. There are numerous health clubs in Sana'a (with and without pools) that students may use at their own expense. One may pay per-session or a monthly fee; prices vary widely depending on the quality of the facilities (at the time of writing, the Officers Club is 15,000 per month, but more modest ones can range from 700-2,000 a month). In general these clubs are for men only, though a few have open hours for women only. It is not common or advisable to jog in the streets, especially for women who might attract unpleasant comments. Also, the quality of the sidewalks and roads are not encouraging and traffic is dangerous.

Transportation

Transportation around Sana'a is easy and inexpensive, though traffic at select times during the day or after rainstorms may crowd streets and hinder your movement. The YCMES facilities are located just off Tahrir Square, the transportation hub in the capital city. Taxis, the most expensive form of public



transportation, are readily available throughout the city. There is an increasing number of metered cab services available; Raha taxi-service, the largest company, is easily identifiable by their new, yellow cars. Pick-up service can be arranged by calling 01 448 888 in Sana'a. Most cabs are still meter-less and prices are negotiated prior to the ride between the passenger and driver. Costs range from 100-1000YR depending on the destination. Though these cars differ in appearance and model, the majority are a combination of white and yellow. Make sure before entering any cab to verify that the license plate is registered as a taxi. If you are traveling on your own to a specific destination, a cheaper option to the taxi is stopping a motorcycle and hopping on back. This option is only advisable to male students.

There is also an extensive bus system throughout Sana'a consisting of regular buses and smaller, van-like vehicles called

“dubabs.” These buses follow a set path between two destinations (written on each bus), allowing passengers to jump on or jump off at their individual stops along the route. Utilizing the bus system is the most cost effective way to travel about the city, with most trips costing 20YR at the time of writing. New students learn the names of the main streets and bus routes quickly and find travel in Sana’a to be relatively uncomplicated.

Passports & ID Cards

It is not necessary or advisable to carry your passport as identification in Yemen. The YCMES recommends that your passport be kept in a secure place as a photocopy will suffice for nearly all purposes. You will be provided with an official student ID card by the YCMES at the commencement of your studies. The YCMES student ID card will serve as your official identification on and off campus, allowing entrance to facilities, travel in Yemen, and discounts at certain establishments.

Safety and Security

YCMES facilities are accessible only through a locked gate with a guard on duty 24 hours a day. The college maintains a close relationship with the foreign embassies in Sana’a, Yemeni security agencies, and the Yemeni government. On a regular basis, the college consults with these bodies to ensure the best security measures for its students. Throughout its long history serving over 8,000 students, the YCMES has not experienced a single threatening or dangerous incident directed at an individual student or its institution as a whole.

Students and visitors often comment on how Yemen is misrepresented in the media in terms of safety and security. Though a student may get the feeling that Sana’a is safer than his/her



home city, we advise all students to check their country’s travel advisory to Yemen. When reading travel advisories or warnings, it is best to remember that many times these are politically driven and are written in a manner that seeks to lessen a country’s accountability for its citizens. It is best to compare travel warnings to different countries, and explore specific incidents that are cited in the warning for a sense of real security concerns. The YCMES can provide more documentation on safety and security, and it is advisable to discuss this issue with past visitors or residents of Yemen.

Chapter 4: YCMES Student Services

Housing

For reasons of student convenience and well-being, the YCMES requires all students studying under its visa to reside in the YCMES housing facilities. This has been decided from the college's past experience with independent student-living, and to prevent problems or hassles with things such as landlords and rent, utilities, neighbor-relations, and disruptions to the student's and college's reputation. Stemming from this policy, student housing is included in the study abroad package at a cost comparable to local market prices (based on the quality and amenities provided). Except for pre-approved reasons, exceptions are rarely made and students are placed into the YCMES student housing based on their preferences and requests.

Location & Buildings

The YCMES owns three buildings used for housing. The 26th of September Dormitory, the largest, and the Guest House are located near the Main College Building, just a couple of minutes down the road on 26th of September. The Bab al-Sabah dormitory offers students a more private residence in the Old City.

The six-story 26th of September Dormitory is composed of two buildings connected by a small, enclosed bridge (referred to as the YCMES' own "Shahara Bridge"). It contains over 30 dormitory rooms, accommodating up to 90 students in singles to quintuples. Shared bathrooms are on each floor as well as communal kitchens on the first and top floors. Quiet study rooms, common areas, and a computer lab with 24 hour high-speed internet access and word processing (in both Arabic & English) are found on the ground floor. A wireless network has been installed for students with laptops, with in-room connectivity. A small exercise gym is currently being planned to offer students a convenient location for working-out. The top floor on the larger building contains a traditional mafraj sitting area with satellite TV, and a large terraced roof that offers a spectacular view of the city and its surroundings. Laundry machines can be found on the roof of the smaller building.



The Bab Al-Sabah dormitory is about a 10-minute walk from the Main College Building, located in the old Goldseller's District on the edge of the Old City. A traditional Yemeni house from the outside, the inside has been completely modernized. The house contains ten rooms accommodating up to 25 students in singles and shared rooms. Most rooms have private bathrooms, and shared bathrooms are provided for those without. The top floor is a mafraj with satellite T.V. and a beautiful view of the Old City. From the mafraj, residents have access to a private, outdoor roof-terrace with an eating/sitting area. The bottom floor is a fully modern, shared kitchen and a dining area. A washing machine and a laundry line are provided.

The Guest House is located just down the street from the 26th of September Dormitory and is used for housing professors, senior students, and other visitors. Three studio apartments have been added in this facility along with a mixture of single and shared rooms, some with private bathrooms and the others with shared bathrooms. On the ground floor there is a shared kitchen and living room with satellite television and computers with internet hookup. Many guests choose to use the wireless connection available in-room or while sitting in the beautiful, private garden. As with all of our facilities the bathrooms and the kitchen are Western style and a washing machine is provided for residents to wash their clothes.



Accommodation

The college offers comfortable single and shared rooms with shared bathrooms on each floor. Single rooms must be requested during the application process and are at a higher cost. Shared rooms range from doubles to quintuples, depending on the size of the room. All rooms are furnished with a bed, desk, and closet for each student. Students are also provided with sheets, a pillow, and a towel. Telephones and wireless internet are accessible in all rooms. All student housing requests, including building and roommate selection, will be accommodated as best as possible, though can not be guaranteed.

A cleaning service is provided for communal areas, but residents are responsible for cleaning their own rooms. Students have access to shared, fully-equipped modern kitchens, but must clean up after themselves when cooking. For the general safety of the residents, 24-hour guards and emergency services are provided.

YCMES housing facilities include public areas for socializing and studying, such as the open roof area of dormitories, communal areas, gardens and mafrajs (Yemeni living room).



Student Housing Policies

For reasons of security, non-YCMES persons are not allowed on YCMES property beyond the common entrance areas, unless with approval from the YCMES security and/or administration. Absolutely no one unaffiliated with the YCMES, Yemeni or foreign, is allowed in student residential areas. Alcohol and illegal drugs are forbidden in the student housing complex by Yemeni law, and so is coming back to the dormitories intoxicated. Smoking is not allowed in the rooms. All YCMES housing facilities are mixed-gender. Although an effort is made to make each floor gender-specific, students should be prepared to share bathrooms and common spaces with members of the opposite sex. Students do not have a curfew while living in YCMES facilities.

Laundry

All YCMES student housing facilities have Western washing machines and clothes lines for student use. These machines are free of use; students supply their own laundry detergent. The YCMES also has an agreement with a local laundry-mat across from the 26th of September Dormitory, where students receive a discount on laundry cleaning services. Both are inexpensive ways to wash your clothes during your stay with the YCMES.

Water/Electricity

Yemen continues to have problems with water shortages and electrical blackouts. The problem of electrical blackouts has been improving over the last few years and such events are now, thankfully, infrequent. Water, however, becomes scarcer every year. We ask our students and staff to help ease this crisis by conserving water and electricity as much as possible.

YCMES Meals

The YCMES cafeteria is open for breakfast and lunch and serves refreshments throughout the day. Students can purchase water and sodas from the guardhouse for a small fee. The YCMES operates a small café/coffee shop called the Harazi Bean, selling beverages and snacks with wireless internet available. Restaurants near the college are frequented by YCMES students and provide a wide selection of choices for meals. Students may also cook for themselves in the resident kitchen facilities, which include refrigerators, stoves and other modern amenities.



Technology/Communication

Telephony

There are several ways to call home while in Yemen. The cheapest is with a voice-over-internet program (i.e. Skype) using the YCMES internet connection. Due to the overwhelming amount of bandwidth this takes, these programs, along with downloading/uploading large files, are not allowed during the office hours of 8am-8pm and are not always reliable. International and domestic calling centers are readily available throughout the city. For students who purchase a local number for a mobile phone, rechargeable phone cards (pay-as-you-go) can be used to dial internationally as well.

All dormitory rooms are equipped with an in-room telephone connected to an internal phone system. Students may dial inside the YCMES campus for free. All phone calls, international and domestic, are received free of charge. Students may also use the in-room telephone to make international or local calls after the phone is unlocked by making a deposit at the accounting office. Students then are charged based on their usage, paying their bills with the accounting office.

International and local facsimiles may be sent from the main office at cost, and there is no charge to receive incoming faxes.



Computers / Internet

The college has a high-speed ADSL line available 24 hours a day in the main computer lab and other locations in student housing and administrative buildings. YCMES facilities feature a wireless connection, with access points throughout its campus. You will need to see the computer technician to obtain information on how to connect to the YCMES wireless network. Students are also able to print at a small fee in the computer lab.

Postal Services

There is no outgoing mail service for students at the YCMES facilities. Students will need to send their own letters and packages from the post office located in Tahrir Square, or through services such as FedEx or DHL. The Yemeni postal service is quite reliable for sending packages, letters, and postcards.

Students can receive mail during their stay in Yemen at the following address:

Your Name
c/o The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies
PO Box 3671
Sana'a, The Republic of Yemen

Direct delivery to the YCMES facilities is only available through mail services such as FedEx and DHL.

The physical address of the YCMES is:
The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies
Building Number 11, 26th of September St.
Sana'a, The Republic of Yemen

Accounting/Payments

Accounting

The accounting office provides financial services to students. New students are required to meet with a financial officer shortly after their arrival to go over their payments and arrange their accounts. Most additional materials and services are purchased through the accounting office. There is also a safe where valuables can be placed with YCMES-guaranteed security.

Payments

Payment procedures differ for students coming on official university programs (where the university takes care of transfer of payment) and for students who pay on their own. The preferred method of payment is through an international bank transfer, though check and credit card payment is possible at the main American Office, the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations. Students coming on a university-sponsored program should first consult their financial aid and/or study abroad office at their home institution. Students who are paying for their own studies should consult the YCMES directly.

Travel Office



YCMES Orientation Trip

All new YCMES students will go on a two-day orientation trip. The price of this trip is included in the tuition. Information on the trip will be provided to students upon arrival to the YCMES.

YCMES Organized Trips

Students of the Yemen Language Center have trips included in their study package as part of language learning. The details of these trips can be found on the YLC website or obtained from the language program officer.

Students enrolled in the YCMES are offered optional trips organized by the Travel Office (Abu Yunis). Information regarding the trips will be announced and posted by the Travel Office in conjunction with the Student Life office. These trips are at an extra cost to the student, but provide an easy, comfortable opportunity to travel both domestically and regionally in the Middle East with fellow students and a YCMES escort.

Individual Travel

The YCMES can organize student travel throughout Yemen and to several destinations outside of the country. Through the Abu Yunis travel agency, the YCMES is able to arrange flights, transportation and accommodation for students at discounted rates. If traveling in Yemen, the student is required to give the Travel Office prior notice before departure and complete an independent student travel form, signing individual responsibility for the trip. For international travel, the student must give at least two weeks notice so the administration has time to assist with the required visas. Any student without a residence visa who travels out of Yemen will have to pay for a new visa to re-enter Yemen. The college has special arrangements with Yemenia Airways, so please check with the administrative staff for updated prices.



Common Destinations

Yemen is geographically and culturally diverse, making the list of domestic destinations longer than one might imagine. The YCMES often assists students with travel to the Red Sea (Kamaran Island, al-Hodeidah, al-Khawkhah), Tihama (Zabid & Beit al-Faqih), Haraz Mountains (Manakha, al-Mahwit, trekking tours), Ta'iz, Aden, Mukalla (Arabian Sea), Soqatra Island, Ma'rib, and Hadhramout (Sey'un, Tarim, and Shibam).

Yemen is also situated at the axis of Asia and Africa, with easy access to several locations for long weekends. Popular destinations from past YCMES students have been Dubai, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Oman, India, and the Sudan.

For an extensive list of possible travel destinations, please visit the Travel Office.

Cultural Activities

While studying at the YCMES, students are offered numerous cultural activities to acquaint them with Yemeni customs and traditions. These activities are designed to encourage interaction with Yemeni society, and many are free or at little cost to the student. In-city field trips, lectures, movies, visits to hammams, museums, invitations to weddings, and more are regularly scheduled. Student exchanges between Yemeni students and YCMES students are organized weekly to promote friendships and discussion. In addition to the planned activities provided by the YCMES, students will inevitably be welcomed to many events and private homes by countless Yemeni acquaintances. The YCMES urges students to directly experience the local culture and strives to facilitate cross-cultural interaction.



Chapter 5: YCMES Policies

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies does not tolerate sexual harassment or discrimination (as defined below).

Sexual Harassment:

Definition: Unwelcome and unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, comments of a sexual nature, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual manner. This includes situations where:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing,
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting that individual's employment or academic standing, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment (a "hostile sexualized environment").

Hostile sexualized environments are environments where sexually explicit graffiti, sexually degrading posters and objects, etc., are found, and/or where people make sexual jokes, say obscenities, or view Internet pornography. None of these behaviors or objects need necessarily be directed at anyone in particular in order to create a hostile sexualized environment.

Sexual harassment can be considered grounds for expulsion without refund from the YCMES program or termination of employment with the YCMES with the incident permanently noted in the employee's file.

Discrimination:

Definition: To make a value distinction between people on the basis of class or category. Examples of such categories include race, religion, sex, gender, disability, ethnicity, employment circumstances, sexual orientation and age.

- *Direct discrimination* involves treating someone less favorably because of a real or perceived attribute (e.g., sex, age, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), compared to someone without that attribute in the same circumstances.
- *Indirect discrimination* involves creating conditions that eliminate or limit a particular group within the student and faculty bodies, without reasonable justification. It also includes creating a hostile environment for a person or group of people by doing the following: using stereotypes, epithets, or making derogatory remarks about that group of people, even if these remarks are not directed at a specific individual.

Discrimination can be considered grounds for expulsion without refund from the YCMES program or termination of employment with the YCMES with the incident permanently noted in the employee's file.

Procedure for Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Cases:

Any student, faculty member, or staff member who feels that they have experienced sexual harassment or discrimination from either a faculty or staff member or student is encouraged to contact the Associate Dean and/or the Committee for Student Affairs. This committee, which is comprised of staff members, faculty, and a student representative, will make an inquest into the situation or event and respond according to the findings of that inquest.

Informal Process:

Though not required in a sexual harassment or discrimination case, the complainant is encouraged to first inform the respondent through verbal and/or written communication about the inappropriate behavior. This may be accompanied or followed by a report to a higher administrator, such as a dean.

Formal Process:

If a complaint cannot be resolved through the informal process or the complainant shall feel uncomfortable to pursue such means, a formal written complaint must be submitted, initiating the formal complaint process for sexual harassment or discrimination.

1. Written complaints should clearly document all incidents and details that the complainant has incurred. This should include dates, words, locations, and persons involved (and if any witnesses were present). This statement, signed and dated, is to be submitted to the investigating officer, the Associate Dean, unless he is the respondent. In this case, the complaint should be submitted to the President of the college.
2. The Associate Dean will investigate the complaint, interviewing the complainant and respondent as well as any other involved parties. The respondent is provided a summary of the complaint, and allowed to submit his response.
3. If no working solution can be obtained at this point, the case is then referred to the Committee for Student Affairs. This committee is made up of administrative workers, faculty members, and a student representative. The committee will review all documents and consult with the Associate Dean. Additional, independent interviews with all parties involved may be requested. After thorough investigation into the alleged sexual harassment or discrimination, the committee shall decide on a disciplinary or corrective action, if necessary, in consultation of college policy.
4. If the decision is not satisfactory or believed to be biased by either party, the complainant and/or the respondent, then a formal hearing may be held. This hearing must be requested within two weeks from the declaration of the resolution. During this hearing, all parties may be brought in for testimony, exhibition of evidence for the panel, as well as any arguments concerning the allegations of sexual harassment or discrimination.
5. The Committee on Student Affairs may then decide to affirm the original decision, reduce or increase the original sanction, or overturn the original decision.

Academic Policies:

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all sessions, including mandatory lectures and outings, of the courses in which they are registered and to be on time. Any absence, regardless of the reason, prevents the student from receiving the full benefit of the course. To be excused, an absence must be reported prior to the class to be missed and an acceptable excuse must be provided to the instructor. In the case of an emergency absence wherein prior notification is not possible, a written letter to the instructor detailing the reason for the absence should be submitted in a timely manner to the instructor. Unless arrangements are made prior to the absence, missed tests cannot be made up. Illness related absences of three or more classes require a doctor's note. **Repeated, unexcused absence or excessive absence of any kind, as determined by the YCMES administration, constitutes grounds for failure of the course and/or expulsion from the program without refund of tuition.**

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty or academic misconduct is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise. It can include:

- Plagiarism - The assumption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements, in whole or in part, of another person without due acknowledgment.
- Self-Plagiarism - The submission of the same work for academic credit more than once without permission.
- Fabrication - The falsification of data, information, or citations in any formal academic exercise.
- Deception - Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise, e.g. giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.
- Cheating - Any attempt to give or obtain assistance in a formal academic exercise without due acknowledgment.
- Sabotage - Preventing others from completing their work.

Cases of academic dishonesty and appropriate punishments are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. **Incidents of academic dishonesty can lead to failure of a course and/or expulsion from the YCMES program without refund of tuition.**

ACADEMIC STANDING:

Students are expected to maintain good academic standing during their studies with the YCMES, which means maintaining a cumulative GPA and term GPA of 2.5 or higher and passing all of one's courses.

- **Academic Warning:** When a student's term GPA is lower than 2.5 but their cumulative GPA remains higher than 2.5 that student will receive an Academic Warning. Academic warnings are not recorded on a student's transcript.
- **Academic Probation:** When a student's cumulative GPA drops below 2.5 that student is placed on academic probation. Academic Probationary status is recorded on a student's transcript. A student placed on academic probation must recover his/her academic standing (achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher) at the end of the term following their probationary status or receive *academic disqualification*.
- **Academic Disqualification:** When a student's cumulative GPA is less than 2.5 and that student has already been placed on academic probation and not recovered good standing at the conclusion of their probationary period (one term) then that student is academically disqualified. The student is removed from the program and not allowed to re-enroll in future YCMES programs without reinstatement by the YCMES administration. **Tuition will not be refunded in the case of Academic Disqualification.**



STUDENT BEHAVIOR:

Students of the YCMES are held to the same behavioral standards of any Western-accredited college or university. In addition, students are reminded that they will be studying in a conservative country and must abide by the school's behavioral requirements for their own safety and in an effort to respect Yemeni cultural standards. These behavioral requirements preserve the good reputation held by the Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies and its students.

DRESS CODE:

Yemen is a conservative country with Islamic customs. We do not require that our students dress as Yemeni Muslims but we do require that they dress in a manner acceptable to their environs. Please observe the following rules during your studies in Yemen:

Please DO NOT:

- Wear pants or shirts that reveal your midriff (Stomach area)
- Wear blouses or dresses with short sleeves revealing the arms (women). Tank tops are unacceptable (both men and women).
- Wear short skirts that fall above the ankles
- Wear tight or low cut blouses that reveal the chest area.
- Wear any transparent clothing.
- Wear shorts (both men and women).
- Wear camouflage patterns or clothing suggestive of military or police.

Those students who choose to wear the local dress (in particular female students who adopt the balto) please remember that while in such dress you will be held to a stricter standard to comply with normative Yemeni behavior.

Students who violate the YCMES dress code will be given two warnings, the first verbal, the second written. If the violations persist past the two initial warnings then a meeting with the Student Affairs Office will be required. The outcome of this meeting will determine how the school will proceed with regards to the student in question. **Continued and flagrant disregard for the dress code after meeting with the Student Affairs Office can be considered grounds for expulsion without refund of tuition.**

ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY:

The YCMES has a zero-tolerance policy regarding alcohol and/or drugs on school property. Students found to have drugs and/or alcohol in their possession will be eligible for immediate expulsion without refund of tuition. In addition, public intoxication (example: returning to the YCMES facilities from an outside location perceivably intoxicated) is unacceptable. Walking in the street perceivably intoxicated is grounds for imprisonment according to Yemeni law. If one is imprisoned for public intoxication the YCMES cannot intervene in the legal process to have you released. Violations of the YCMES drug/alcohol policies and the severity of penalty will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. **Incidents in violation of the alcohol/drug policy may be considered grounds for expulsion from the YCMES program without refund of tuition.**

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:

YCMES students reside in Yemen on a student visa. A student visa restricts the holder from seeking employment and becoming involved in anti-government, military, religious, or clandestine activities. For the purpose of ensuring the safety and legal status of our students, involvement in such activities is prohibited. In addition, students are prohibited from volunteer work without prior approval and special program arrangements from the YCMES.

Examples of prohibited activities include (but are not limited to):

- Involvement with the activities of Yemen's various political parties.
- Monitoring of, or inquiry into, military operations in Yemen.
- Proselytizing (including passing out religious literature, "witnessing," etc.).
- Participation in religious organizations with anti-government, revolutionary or terrorist affiliation.
- Participation in demonstrations, sit-ins, riots and/or protests against the government.
- Seeking any kind of paid or unpaid employment without the express permission of the YCMES administration.

Participation in prohibited activities can be considered cause for immediate removal from the program without refund of tuition.

(Note: the intention of these restrictions is not to obstruct individual rights but rather to comply with the legal restrictions of a Student Residence Visa and preserve the safety of YCMES students.)

Chapter 6: Coming to Yemen

What to pack

When packing for your trip to Yemen it is better to bring only essential items. Though you may fear you are under-packing, remember that you will want to bring back many souvenirs when you return. Most items needed for daily life can be easily and cheaply purchased in Sana'a. Toiletries, culturally appropriate clothing, power/plug converters, and many small appliances are readily available.

When packing clothing, both men and women should remember to bring layers as Sana'a's weather can vary in temperature, especially day to night. Students should remember to dress more conservatively than they do in their home countries. Women in particular should be prepared to wear loose, non-revealing clothing. If you are concerned that an item may be questionable, it is best to leave it at home. Since Yemenis take pride in their traditional clothing, many students purchase and wear these traditional outfits while staying in Yemen.

Though students may wish to bring a small supply of their favorite toiletries, the vast majority of these items can be purchased in Sana'a. Over-the-counter medicines can be found at most pharmacies, save a few brand names, but students should bring a supply of necessary prescription medicines. Most prescriptions can be found in Yemen, but local supply cannot be guaranteed. Birth control and feminine hygiene products are also available, though tampons cannot be easily found.

The YCMES recommends bringing a laptop computer to take advantage of the wireless system, though campus computers are available for students 24 hours a day. Students may want to bring a small selection of favorite music, movies, and books, as these items are not always easily found in Sana'a.

The YCMES has prepared a packing list of essential items appropriate for a four-month stay based on our experience and student feedback.

Clothing:

- 2-3 pairs of jeans/pants
- 2-3 loose-fitting skirts/dresses (for women)
- 3-4 light-weight, long-sleeve shirts
- 2-3 T-shirts
- 1 fleece, sweater, or sweatshirt
- 1 medium-weight jacket (water resistant preferable)
- Several pairs of socks
- Several pairs of underwear
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair of comfortable sandals/flip-flops
- Sleepwear
- 1 good belt
- Swimming suit (conservative for women, i.e. no bikinis)
- 1 semi-dressy outfit for social functions

Documents:

- Passport original and photocopies
- 2nd form of ID (such as driver's license)
- Plane tickets
- YCMES contact information (when en-route)
- Copies of important documents (health insurance, transcript, important contacts, marriage license, inoculation records, YCMES enrollment certificate, etc.)
- Extra passport-sized photos (also readily available in Sana'a)

Miscellaneous:

- Small supply of common toiletries (tampons for women)
- Glasses, contacts, and contact supplies
- Sunglasses
- Photos or memorabilia from home
- Camera
- Laptop computer and charger
- Mobile phone (SIM card adaptable)
- Small selection of favorite music, movies, or books



Ear plugs (if light sleeper)
 One good backpack or shoulder bag
 Flashlight
 Alarm Clock
 Necessary medications
 Medic alert bracelet (if applicable)

Weight restrictions *(as of August 2007, subject to change)*

With a connection flight from the US: Two checked bags at 50lbs. each, with linear dimensions not to exceed 62 inches

Yemenia From Europe: 30kg Total

Budgeting

Most foreigners find living in Sana'a to be quite inexpensive. The basics of living, food, transportation, clothing, toiletries, etc. are low-cost by Western standards. The amount of money spent by a student depends upon his/her needs and interests. To have an idea of the cost of living in Yemen, the following is a short description of prices for basic items. A regular meal at a normal café runs from 200-500YR (less than \$2.50) and at a nicer restaurant up to 2000YR (\$10); 0.75cl bottle of water is 35YR (approx. \$0.20); clothing items generally run between 500-2000YR (\$2.50-10); toiletries such as shampoo between 300-600YR (\$1.50-3); a pack of cigarettes 130-200YR (less than \$1). There are establishments and stores that stock more expensive or foreign products comparable to Western prices. A student who is cost-conscious and limits him/herself to few indulgences can easily budget for \$150-200 a month. These costs are as of August 2007 and do not include buying souvenirs or other gifts.

International Travel

YCMES-Arranged Tickets

The YCMES has a special agreement with Yemenia Airlines and can arrange discounted tickets for its students. During the application process, a student can opt to include the round-trip airfare in his/her study package at the YCMES. After receiving the student request for departure city and dates, the YCMES Travel Office works to match these requests with a reserved itinerary.

Though students can sometimes find a less expensive flight on their own, the YCMES recommends that its students fly on a college-arranged flight. The discounted tickets that the YCMES offers are valid for one year and date changes can be made more easily than other international, discounted tickets. Ticket changes come at little or no extra cost to the student as long as there are seats in the same class available on the selected flights. It should be noted, though, that these tickets are not completely flexible; changes in departure cities or requests for specific layover sites or times will be difficult and mostly likely add a fee. Generally, the cheapest flights through the agreement are from New York, Washington DC, Boston, Dayton, Paris, London, Frankfurt, and Rome. Other cities can be accommodated with additional costs.

Students will receive their itinerary from the YCMES office during the application process. Prior to travel, the YCMES will inform the student about how and when to obtain their ticket. All YCMES-arranged tickets are non-refundable.

Airport Transportation

If a student flies on a YCMES-arranged ticket, airport pickup and drop-off is free of charge. Students who fly on their own ticket can arrange for pickup with the YCMES and should inform the Sana'a office of their flight itinerary. At the time of writing, this cost was \$25 and includes both airport pickup and drop-off when the student departs Yemen at the end of his/her studies.

A student is met at the airport by a YCMES representative outside of baggage claim. Unless there is a large group of students on the same



flight, this representative will have a sign with the student's name on it. The student is then brought to his/her respective dormitory by YCMES transportation. In case of the unlikely event that a YCMES representative is not present at the airport, a student should carry the phone number and address of the college.

Yemeni Visas

The YCMES offers students visa services prior to and during their studies in Yemen.

Remember: Although the YCMES may arrange your visa, you as a student are ultimately responsible for knowing visa regulations and making sure your visa is current and valid.

Options for Obtaining/Receiving a Visa

Option 1: Student arranges the visa

For students who wish to arrange their own visa, contact the Yemeni Embassy/Consulate in the country of residence. Students will be informed by the embassy or consulate of the process for obtaining a visa. Please note that students must apply for a study visa; a letter from the YCMES stating a student affiliation is needed in order to obtain the student visa.

Option 2: The YCMES arranges the visa.

Students who would like the YCMES to arrange their visa will need to send a copy of the picture page of their passport (as well as any renewal pages) to the YCMES head office in Sana'a to process the visa. At the time of writing, costs of arranging the visa through the YCMES was \$45 for US/Canadian/Australian citizens and €35 for EU citizens. Please note for students who are not citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or a Western European Country, the process may take up to two weeks with additional fees.

Students who organize their visas through the YCMES retrieve the visa at Sana'a International Airport upon arrival. After exiting the runway-bus and entering the immigration hall, students should proceed to the visa window located on the left-hand side. The YCMES-student visa is placed into the student's passport at this window. Remember, the visa is already paid for, so students will not have to pay anything extra. After receiving the visa, students may then proceed through the normal customs and immigration line in the same hall before entering the baggage claim area.

Type of YCMES-Arranged Visa

All students studying at the YCMES will receive a student visa. This allows one entry into the country. Should a student plan to travel abroad and then return to his/her studies at YCMES, the office in Sana'a will arrange an exit/re-entry visa for travel. This is at an additional cost to the student. All EU-citizens usually receive a visa good for three months. All non-EU citizens generally receive a one month visa.

Visa Extensions for Long-Term Stays

All American and non-EU residents arrive on a one-month study visa. For any student studying between five to seven weeks, your initial visa and the two-week exit visa are sufficient for your stay. Students studying longer than seven weeks must take an HIV-blood test, scheduled by the administration, in order to extend their visas for the duration of their stay.

EU-nationals arrive on a three-month visa, and do not need extensions unless they are staying at the YCMES longer than this time period.

An HIV test is required for students who need to apply for a residency visa. This test cannot be administered prior to arrival in Yemen, as the Yemeni government does not accept any test results other than those from national health clinics. An HIV-positive result will prohibit a residency visa from being issued, and you will be asked to leave the country.

Note: There is one exception to the visa process if you do not have residency. If you are traveling outside of the country and returning on your original entry visa, you will need to purchase a new entry visa on your return arrival.



Restrictions on Yemeni Visas

Students are unable to get a visa to Yemen if carrying an Israeli passport or have an Israeli stamp/visa in their passport. Any student coming to Yemen with an Israeli stamp/visa must apply for a new passport before obtaining a Yemeni visa. A Pakistani visa may also be problematic but does not necessarily prohibit a Yemeni visa from being issued.

Please note that for students who are not citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or a Western European Country, the process may take up to two weeks with additional fees. Residents of Asian, African, Eastern European, Central American, and South American countries should check with the YCMES and their local Yemeni Embassy/Consulate for possible further restrictions when obtaining a Yemeni visa.



Registering with your Embassy

Students are recommended to register with their embassy or consulate prior to or upon arrival in Yemen. Every embassy has its own set of procedures for registry so students should make sure to research their embassy's procedures. Most embassies allow online registration, which allows students to receive warden messages or any other emergency information during their stay in Yemen.

Vaccines & Immunizations

For vaccine and immunization preparation when traveling to Yemen, it is best to consult your doctor or health-care provider at least one month before departure. He/she will be able to determine specific needs, taking into account your health and immunization history and current risks in Yemen. This time will also allow any necessary vaccines or medications to take effect before arrival in Yemen. If your health-care provider does not specialize in travel medicine, locate a travel clinic near you to get the most updated and concise recommendations.

There are no required vaccinations for entering the country, unless you are coming from areas with risk of yellow fever transmission. In this case, a yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for entry.

Though not required for traveling, make sure that all of your routine vaccinations are up-to-date (i.e. influenza, chickenpox, polio, measles/mumps/rubella, and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus). Other general vaccinations recommended for traveling to areas such as Yemen are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid, and Rabies. Yellow Fever and Tuberculosis are also mentioned, but just as a precaution.

Yemen does have a malaria risk, highest from September to February and in areas under 2000 meters (does not include Sana'a and is limited on Socotra). Malaria is a serious disease and can be deadly, infecting humans through the bite of a mosquito infected with the parasite. Health officials recommend malaria pills if traveling to these areas. Some anti-malaria drugs include: atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine, most available abroad as well as in some Yemeni pharmacies.

See the Center for Disease Control at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationYemen.aspx> for more information.

Chapter 6: Further Reference

Further suggested readings on Yemen, its culture and social life, and your place in it as a foreigner, are listed below with brief descriptions. It is recommended for all students to read these titles to their interest, as more prior knowledge of Yemen will broaden the overall experience and understanding of your time abroad.

For correct social interactions, you may wish to refer to Dr. Margaret Nydell's Understanding Arabs, a short but very useful introduction to cultural expectations Arabs and foreigners have of each other, and strategies for approaching these effectively. This book can be found in most major libraries or bookstores. For a brief primer on Islam, Frederick Denny's Islam is recommended. Students with little or no background in Islamic, Arab, or Middle Eastern studies will profit from Albert Hourani's definitive A History of the Arab Peoples, which provides a concise, if sometimes superficial summary of many scholars' work. Students will note that the photograph of Sana'a that appears in this text was taken close to our Bab Al-Sabah house.



More detailed information, specifically on Sana'ni Yemeni customs can be found in the encyclopedic Sana'a: An Arabian Islamic City, published by the World of Islam Festival Trust. This is a rare book, of which only 2,000 copies exist, so it will likely be found only in large university libraries. Perhaps more generally accessible is the probing examination of northern Yemeni tribal society, Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen by Paul Dresch or A Tribal Order by Shelagh Weir. Also by Paul Dresch, A History of Modern Yemen, details the 20th Century, complete with illustrations, maps, and a chronology. Those with a taste for literary theory will enjoy Brinkley Messick's The Calligraphic State, an examination of textual authority in the Ibb province, particularly worthwhile for the emphasis on the changes in Yemen in the past century. For a more contemporary publication, look at Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change, by Kamil Mahdi, Anna Wuerth, and Helen Lackner.

Steven Caton's work on poetry as a political act in Yemen, Peaks of Yemen I Summon and his most recent work The Yemen Chronicle provide an alternative vision of conflict resolution in the Arab world. The Graves of Tarim by Engseng Ho highlights Yemen (predominantly Hadhramout's) movement and diaspora across the Indian Ocean over the past 500 years.

The most well known and popular writer on Yemen, Tim Mackintosh-Smith, has lived in the Old City of Sana'a for over 20 years. His books Yemen: Travels in Dictionaryland (1997, his most famous work), Yemen: The Unknown Arabia (2001), and more recently the first two volumes of his journeys in "the footnotes" of Ibn Batutah; Travels with A Tangerine (2001) and The Hall of a Thousand Columns (2005) are all worth reading.

Travel guides are harder to come by for Yemen. Yemen (Bradt Travel Guide) by Daniel McLaughlin has a publish date of January 2008 (not released at the time of writing), but is expected to offer the most up-to-date information on traveling in Yemen. The intellectually lighter but more practical Lonely Planet guide to Yemen contains useful, if sometimes incomplete, travel and health information. The current edition is widely available in bookstores in North America and Europe, though it is out-of-date. German speakers may also wish to consult the more thorough Reise know-how Jemen Reisehandbuch. If you plan to do much trekking in Yemen, the Reise know-how guide provides significantly more information on trails than the Lonely Planet guide, and non-German speakers may find translations of particular passages useful. Finally, for a lighter and amusing account of a former traveler in Yemen, Motoring with Mohammed by Eric Hansen is a great way to prepare yourself for the quirks of Yemeni society and culture.

Reading Yemeni newspapers before traveling will also introduce students to current events and happenings in the area. There are two main English papers in Sana'a, the Yemen Times and the Yemen Observer (www.yementimes.com & www.yobserver.com, respectively). The Arabic Felix magazine, published in Yemen, also offers readers an in-depth view to travel and society of Yemen and the greater Middle East (www.arabia-felix.com).



الكلية اليمنية لدراسات الشرق الأوسط
Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies

P.O. Box 3671
Sana'a, The Republic of Yemen

Phone: +967 1270 200
Fax: +967 1270 127
URL: www.ycmes.org
Email: ycmes@ycmes.org