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*Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Social Affairs is reportedly considering making pre-marriage courses compulsory for couples about to tie the knot. The hope is this will cut the Kingdom's growing divorce rate, especially among young people. This report from Frances Harrison:*

The idea is to force **prospective couples** to attend courses on **the art of married life**. Run by charities, classes will look at **the legal aspects of** marriage, the rights of the husband and wife and their duties to their children, as well as how to deal with both sides' families. It's not **explicitly stated** whether sex education is included but some believe it's badly needed in a society where any discussion of sex is **a taboo**.

The hope is marriage classes will reduce Saudi Arabia's rising number of divorces - almost half of which take place in the early years of marriage. Clear figures are **hard to come by** but one academic has suggested the divorce rate is as high as sixty percent; others say half that figure.

In practice, divorce often **hits** women hardest because it's almost impossible for a divorced Saudi woman to remarry. One Saudi university study that **looked into** marriages found about forty percent were unhappy - with aspects of violence, **cruelty, neglect** and continuous disagreement. Some suggest part of the problem is Saudi men are unable to deal with a female population that's more educated and assertive. Others argue it's simply too easy to obtain a divorce if you're a man.

Frances Harrison, BBC

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>prospective couples</b>	here, men and women who are preparing to get married
<b>the art of married life</b>	the talents and skills needed to live successfully together as a married couple
<b>the legal aspects of</b>	what the law says about
<b>explicitly stated</b>	openly expressed/said
<b>a taboo</b>	a subject that people in a society don't talk about (for example, because it is considered to be too private)
<b>hard to come by</b>	not readily available
<b>hits</b>	affects (in a strong and negative way)
<b>looked into</b>	studied, examined
<b>cruelty</b>	being extremely unkind, causing people to suffer
<b>neglect</b>	when you do not give enough care or attention to something or someone

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