



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES
NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

**NE3520/WS3520: *Women & Gender in
Middle East History***

Winter 2012

**Room: 150 Manoogian
M/W 9:35 AM – 11:00 AM**

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Overview and Purpose:

This is an introductory survey of gender history in the Middle East with the purpose of acquainting students with the field of women's studies in that region of the Third World. The geographical area of this course broadly covers Turkey in the west, Iran in the east, and the central Arab states. Students can expect to understand the impact of religion, culture, and regional and global histories, as well as economic and political globalization on Middle East women. The range of topics to be studied include the following: status of women in Islam as experienced historically, Laws and practices governing marriage and the family; sexual ethics and questions of veiling and seclusion; the impact of modernization and colonialism on women; women's political activism and feminism; and women and contemporary Islamic fundamentalism. We will be discussing women of all classes and lifestyles. The aim is to examine the way in which religion, class, technology, globalization, transnationalism, among other factors, have contributed to the construction of gender in the Middle East.

For these purposes we will study the complex, varied, and rapidly changing roles, struggles and achievements of women in Middle Eastern history, taking care to challenge and/or avoid the stereotypes and misconceptions commonly found in Western media. We will begin the course with a discussion of these stereotypes and misconceptions and attempt to define their realities and fallacies. While we will study various facets of women's roles, these will be analyzed within intersecting frameworks of **regional and global social histories** highlighting the push and pull of tradition and modernity.

This historical survey starts with a study of women and gender in the seventh century Middle East, and the impact of Islam on society, in particular women. This will be followed by the solidification of Women's position in Islamic tradition by the medieval era (15-16th century) and then by the Ottoman period (17-early 20th centuries). The modern era- (19th-20th centuries) will occupy a significant portion of the course, at least 40%, concluding in a discussion of women and contemporary social-political movements.

In order to accomplish such an ambitious course plan it is essential to focus on the introductory nature of the course. The aim is to introduce in a survey fashion, topics and issues significant to gender consideration in the Middle East, geared to provide students with information and critical tools that will motivate them to further their interest. Further study can be facilitated through your term paper and/or other course offerings by the Near East program.

Required Textbooks:

Ahmed, Leila. *Women & Gender in Islam*. Yale University Press, 1992.

Hasso, Frances. *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East*. Stanford University Press, 2010.

Joseph, Suad Ed. *Women and Power in the Middle East*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

We will be covering a large amount of material in a short time, therefore keeping up with the reading is critical.

Recommended Supplemental Reading:

Afkhami, Mahnaz (Ed.) *Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World*. Syracuse University Press, 1995.

Afzal-Khan, Fawzia (Ed.) *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*. Interlink Publishing, 2005.

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short Introduction*. Random House, 2002.

Cleveland, William and Martin P. Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Westview Press, 2009.

Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

Meriwether, Margaret and Judith Tucker (Eds.) *Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East*. Westview Press, 1999.

Moghaddam, Valentine. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.

Moghissi, Haideh. *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Post-modern Analysis*. Zed Books, 2002.

Rahman, Fazlur. *Islam and Modernity*. University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books (Random House), 1979.

Shirazi, Faegheh. *Velvet Jihad: Muslim Women's Quiet Resistance to Islamic Fundamentalism*. University Press of Florida, 2009.

Tucker, Judith. *Women, family and gender in Islamic family law*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Important Databases and Sources (see Blackboard/Content for more):

Journal of Middle East Women's Studies: JSTOR

International Journal of Middle East Studies: JSTOR

Christian Science Monitor

Middle East International

Feminist Yearbook: JSTOR

Karamah.org (Muslim women lawyers)

Human Rights Watch

Gender and Development: JSTOR

www.lib.utexas/maps

EVALUATION:

Attendance and Participation (15%):

If you arrive later than 15 minutes to class, you will be counted as absent for that day. The first 15 minutes of each lecture will be spent answering a series of discussion questions posted on blackboard for that week and related to that week's reading. These discussion questions will also act as review for your exams. You will not be required to hand in your answers, but I expect that you will be prepared to share with the class, individually or as a group. Asking questions and participating in discussions are integral to your success in this course. In this way, I will take note of your attendance. **Only 2 excused absences are acceptable**, each subsequent absence will have a detrimental impact on your grade.

Examinations (55%):

There will be two major exams for the course: The midterm exam (see schedule for exact date) is worth 25% and the final exam (see schedule for date and time) worth 30% of your final grade.

Thought Papers (10%)

You will be required to complete and hand in *two thought papers, each worth 5%* of your final grade. Each paper should be between 2-3 pages double-spaced. See schedule below for the weeks and topics for each thought paper.

Term Paper (20%):

You are responsible for completing one term paper between 5-7 double-spaced pages using a 12-point, Times New Roman font. The topic is up to you, but you must clear it with me by the end of week four (4). See me if you have difficulty arriving at a topic. ***A rough draft of your paper is due by the end of week six (6), and your final paper is due in class by the end of week fourteen (14).***

The following are important points to keep in mind in the paper:

1. *Argument.* Your research paper should be attempting to make some kind of a point. It should not merely be a review of what is in the various books that you have looked at on the subject, but should demonstrate that you have thought about the material and have your own opinion that you wish to present. That being said, your paper should not be one long "rant." It must be well referenced and well sourced. Avoid emotional argumentation. Pretend as if you were arguing in front of a judge in court; your goal here is to prove your point in a reasoned, logical, and consistent way. You will *not* be graded on whether or not I agree with your point; you will be graded on how well you have made your case. As such, a well-argued point of view that I disagree with will receive a high-grade; *a poorly argued point of view that I happen to agree with will not.* You must keep your paper focused on the argument and not get sidetracked.
2. *Proper referencing.* Research papers of this nature require the student to go to a wide variety of sources. As such, I will expect at least 2 books and 2 academic articles from peer-reviewed journals (ask me if you do not know what this means) to be referenced in the Works Cited page of the paper. *Citations should be made as much as possible; the more references, the better.*
3. *Avoid quotations.* Do not quote things from your sources unless it is absolutely necessary for the structure of your argument. Quotations will not be counted towards the required number of words.
4. *Language.* Avoid using personal, conversational type language such as "I think." A good rule of thumb is to try and avoid using the first person "I" as much as you possibly can. Always be as clear as possible. Remember, you are trying to present an *argument* here. Using vague, informal, conversational language will not help advance your point. Avoid run-on sentences. Make your paragraphs moderate length; not too short and not too long.

5. *Structure.* Your paper should have an **introduction**, where you will lay out what it is you are going to talk about. Then you should have a main body, where you present your case, your arguments, and your sources. Finally, you should not introduce any new arguments or evidence in your conclusion. Avoid digressing into other areas.
6. *Layout.* Please justify the margins of your paper. Indent each paragraph. Double-space and use 12-point Times New Roman font.

**** Late assignments will be reduced by 2% for every day they're late (see internet usage laws below).**

Final Grade Scale:

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following percentage scale:

100-95=A	79-76=C+
94-90=A-	75-73=C
89-86=B+	72-70=C-
85-83=B	69-65=D+
82-80=B-	64-60=D
	59-0=F

Internet Usage:

Do not send me your assignments by way of electronic submission (email, websites, peer to peer, or any other protocol) unless you clear it with me first.

This is not a distance education class; therefore attendance, participation, and bringing your *printed* assignments to lecture are necessary for the successful completion of this course.

Recommendations for Success:

- ⇒ *Primarily*, success in this course depends on reading the assigned sections of the text(s) *prior* to attending the lectures. Many of the names of people and places will be unfamiliar and/or strange, so reviewing these names and familiarizing yourself with the general topic under discussion will make for a more comprehensible lecture.
- ⇒ ***Familiarize yourself with the geography of the modern Middle East*** through such sources as the Atlas of the Middle East published by Cambridge University Press, the Atlas of Islam by Harvard University, of the Historical Atlas of Islam by Brill. Comprehensive answers to exam questions will reflect an understanding of the physical aspects of the studied areas.
- ⇒ Make it a habit to **log on to Blackboard** on a regular basis. From time to time I will post announcements or supplementary documents.
- ⇒ If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

Schedule of Lectures & Corresponding Readings:

Week 1: Jan. 9, 11

- Reading: * Said; *Orientalism*, Introduction
* Afzal-Khan; *Shattering the Stereotypes*, Foreword and Introduction
Ahmed, Introduction
- Topic: *Introduction: Interpretations of gender (us and them/east and west)*
- Recommended: Moghadam, Ch. 1; Armstrong, pp. 1-50

Week 2: Jan. 18 (Jan. 16, Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

- Reading: Ahmed, Introduction; Film: PBS, Empires of Faith
* Ali & Nino (excerpt)
- Topic: *Background: History, People, Culture, Islam*
- Recommended: Armstrong; *Islam: A short introduction*

Week 3: Jan. 23, 25

- Reading: Ahmed: Chpts 1, 2, 3
* Sonbol; *A History of Marriage Contracts in Egypt*
- Topic: *Women in Pre-Islamic Middle East*

First Thought Paper Due – January 23:

What would you like to learn during this course? Do you see yourself as “us”, “them” or both (depending on the situation)? Explain. Recall Said’s challenge on page 24: “Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how can one study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective?” Propose and describe one way in which we can try to achieve this ideal.

Week 4: Jan. 30, Feb. 1

- Reading: Ahmed: Chpts 4, 5, 6
* Ali; *Marriage in Classical Islamic Jurisprudence: A Survey of Doctrines*
- Topic: *Women in the Classical and Medieval Islamic Eras*

Term Paper topics finalized

Week 5: Feb. 6, 8

- Reading: Ahmed: Chpts 7 & 8
* Mehdi; *Journal Entry from Tehran*
* Mayer; *Rhetorical Strategies and Official Policies on Women’s Rights*
- Recommended: Moghadam Chpts 4 & 5
- Topic: *New Discourses*

Week 6: Feb. 13, 15

- Reading: Ahmed – Chpts. 9, 10, 11
* Shaaban; *The Muted Voices of Women Interpreters*
- Recommended: Haideh Moghissi; *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*
- Topic: *New Discourses*

Second Thought Paper Due – February 15:

Briefly summarize Ahmed’s concluding assessment of the “new discourses” pertaining to women in the Middle East. Do you agree or disagree with her assessment? Explain your answer in the context of what you understand the status of women to be now in the Middle East.

Week 7: Feb. 20, 22

Reading: Nothing Additional Required
Topic: *Midterm Review*

Midterm – Feb. 22

Week 8: Feb. 27, 29

Reading: Joseph/Slyomovics: Introduction
Film: Mosaic News (12/30/2011) – LinkTV
Topic: *Shift to contemporary Middle East*

Week 9: Mar. 5, 7

Reading: Joseph/Slyomovics: Part 1
Topic: *Overview of aspects of women & power in the Middle East*

March 12-17, Spring Break!

Week 10: Mar. 19, 21

Reading: Joseph/Slyomovics: Part 1 (continued)
Topic: *Overview of aspects of women & power in the Middle East*
Paper Rough Draft Due – March 19

Week 11: Mar. 26, 28

Reading: Joseph/Slyomovics: Part 2, Country Case Studies - El-Gawhary, Abu Lughod & pp. 126-158
Recommended: Tucker; Women, family, and gender in Islamic Family Law
Topic: *Women's experience in Egypt & Palestine*

Week 12: Apr. 2, 4

Reading: Joseph/Slyomovics: Part 2, Country Case Studies – pp. 159 – 182
* Wynn; *Marriage Contracts and Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia*
Topic: *Women's experience in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait*

Week 13: Apr. 9, 11

Reading: Joseph/Slyomovics: Part 2, Country Case Studies – pp. 183 – 205
Film: *Bridge to Iran: We are Half of Iran's Population*
(<http://www.linktv.org/programs/we-are-half-of-irans-population>)
Topic: *Women's experience in Yemen and Iran*

Week 14: Apr. 16, 18

Reading: Hasso: *Consuming Desires*
Topic: *Egypt and Gulf States in comparison*

Essay Due

Week 15: Apr. 23

Reading: Nothing additional required
Topic: *Final review*

END OF CLASSES

**Final Exam: Take Home April 18,
DUE April 27 in my office mailbox (487 Manoogian)
Final Grades will be posted on pipeline by April 30**

Policy on Academic Misconduct:

1. Academic misconduct is any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the educational process. Misconduct may take the form of cheating (for example by using unauthorized materials, including the work of fellow students), plagiarism (using words or ideas of others as one's own), fabrication (falsification or invention of information or citations), and other activities, including the sale or purchase of part or all of a test or paper. For further information including other instances of each of these kinds of misconduct, please consult <http://www.otl.wayne.edu/pdf/AIB07Print.pdf>.

2. All forms of academic misconduct are prohibited at Wayne State University, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (see <http://www.doso.wayne.edu/codeofconduct.pdf>). The relevant information is found in Article 10.1. It is the responsibility of all members of the Wayne State academic community to be familiar with that document.

3. The Department presumes the existence of an Honor System at all times. A signature or name on exams and assignments implies that the work is of that person alone.

4. Sanctions for those found guilty include, but are not limited to, failure on the exam or paper, failure in the class, suspension from the University, and expulsion.

5. To protect themselves from accusations of misconduct, students should take careful notes with clear annotation as to the source of the materials being used, use quotation marks to differentiate direct quotes from paraphrases, cite all sources, and consult as needed with their instructors, as well as librarians, the WSU Writing Center staff, and staff in the Academic Success Center.

For more information on avoiding plagiarism and employing proper citation styles, see the WSU Library's "Citation Style Guides" webpage:

<http://www.lib.wayne.edu/resources/guides/reftools/guide.php?id=2>.

This is a contractual agreement and commitment by you, the student, therefore binding you to its terms. The professor, however, reserves the right to change the terms of this agreement if deemed necessary after viewing student output and achievement.