

**History 200:**  
**GENDER & THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA**  
**Spring 2016**

Professor Golnar Nikpour

Email: gnikpour@wisc.edu

Seminar: Tuesday 8:50-10:45am, Mosse Humanities 5245

Office Hours: Tuesday, 11am-12:30pm (or by appointment), 307 University Club

*In this course, we will study histories of the modern Middle East and North Africa and examine the ways that issues relating to gender have affected the politics and social worlds of the region. This course begins with the medieval Islamicate Empires — Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman — and then moves through the end of empire, the colonial era, the establishment of the nation state, and the emergence of modern cultural, political, and religious movements. In doing so, we will situate the histories and social worlds of the region in a global frame. At the same time that we attend closely to these histories, we will also examine the ways in which the category of “woman” has been mobilized in popular and political discourses in the 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries, paying particular attention to how Muslim and Middle Eastern women have been represented in various political discourses, as well as how they have represented themselves. Through close readings of both primary and secondary sources — including historiographical, theoretical, and literary texts as well as film — we will also tackle the questions, controversies, and stereotypes that have animated debates in both scholarly and popular literature on such topics as the veil, feminism, human rights, and war.*

**Required Texts:**

- Q. Amin – *The Liberation of Women and The New Woman*
- L. Abu-Lughod – *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*
- F. Kashani-Sabet – *Conceiving Citizens: Women and the Politics of Motherhood in Iran*
- S. Mahmood – *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*
- L. Pierce – *The Imperial Harem: Women & Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*

**Course Materials:**

All required books are available at the University Bookstore, and have been placed on reserve at the library. All other materials will be provided digitally, either in the UW Box folder or via weblink.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. To learn the basic contours of modern Middle Eastern histories, cultures, and politics with a specific focus on issues related to gender and sexuality
2. To learn to analyze and interpret both primary and secondary historical sources through the development of close reading skills
4. To learn the skills of scholarly evidence gathering and argumentation
5. To develop writing skills
6. To approach complex or even controversial topics in Middle Eastern history (and contemporary life) with increasing nuance and intellectual sophistication

## **Course Requirements:**

This course is a seminar; as such, weekly attendance and participation are critical and mandatory elements of the class. (You will be penalized for unexcused absences.)

You will be responsible for knowing the geography of the region we will be studying. For this reason, there will be a map quiz in the second week of class. Maps will be available in the UW Box folder for the course.

You will be assigned weekly two-paragraph (~500 words) response essays in which you should engage with that week's reading assignment. These weekly write-ups will be guided by questions that I will provide. Your weekly assignment will also include coming to seminar with two questions to pose to / thoughts to share with your classmates regarding the readings. I may call on students at any time to share their thoughts or questions, so please come prepared.

You will be given two take-home essay exams in which you will write approximately 4-6 pages in response to guided questions / prompts. These longer essays will ask you to synthesize and interpret materials from several weeks of class. You will be required to cite texts that we have read for class, and to incorporate knowledge gained from seminar lectures and discussion.

## **Grading:**

### **• Weekly attendance and participation – 35%**

Attendance is mandatory, and as such you will be penalized for every unexcused absence. Emergencies and illness are a part of life, but you will be expected to contact me if you cannot attend class for any reason. If you need to miss more than one class session (including for illness), you must provide documentation of your reason to do so. *Failure to account for absences will lead to a reduction in attendance grade.*

Remember, participation is not the equivalent of speaking off the cuff during class; it is the diligent reading of weekly assignments in preparation for class discussion.

An active seminar participant will have engaged with the readings / weekly assignments, and will come to class ready to add to be part of a conversation. Throughout the semester, you will be expected to push yourselves to be good citizens of our small seminar. This means that if you are naturally shy, you will be asked to work at building confidence through active participation. On the other hand, if you are naturally chatty, you will be asked to work on active listening skills. We will hopefully all get to know each other well over the course of the semester, so you should use this seminar as an opportunity to have engaging conversations with your fellow students. ***Respect for one another's opinions and experiences will be of paramount importance in this seminar!***

- **Weekly response essays – 20%**

Weekly response essays should be uploaded to the UW Box folder 24 hours before class, meaning it will be expected by 9am *every Monday morning* (except where noted).

- **Map quiz – 5%**

Taken during the third class session. Maps will be provided via UW Box folder.

- **Take home midterm exam – 20%**

- **Take home final exam – 20%**

For these two assignments, questions/prompts will be provided *one week* before the essay is due. Please see syllabus for assignment / due dates.

## **Academic Integrity & Plagiarism:**

According to the Oxford Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own.” Plagiarism is an extremely serious issue, and as such if any student is found plagiarizing work (from another student, from a book, from the internet, from an article, or from *any* uncredited source), they will be in grave jeopardy of failing the assignment if not worse.

To leave no room for doubt regarding the seriousness of this matter, please see the UW-Madison Academic Integrity policy copied below. If you would like to see this policy on the UW-Madison website, you can find it online at:  
<https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>.

Academic Integrity is critical to the mission of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a research one institution with high academic standards and rigor. All members of the University community play a role in fostering an environment in which student learning is achieved in a fair, just and honest way. Faculty and instructional staff set the tone in their classrooms by communicating clear expectations to their students and educating them on the consequences of engaging in academic misconduct while referring to campus resources. Students are expected to uphold the core values of academic integrity, which include honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. These core values, combined with finding one’s purpose and passion and applying them in and out of classroom learning, produce students who become extraordinary citizens. This unique path of opportunities, created by each student, is commonly known as the Wisconsin Experience and impacts our campus community and beyond in significant and positive ways. The value of a University of Wisconsin-Madison degree depends on the commitment of our academic community to promote high levels of personal honesty and respect for the intellectual property of others.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison takes academic misconduct allegations very seriously. If an instructor suspects a student has engaged in academic misconduct, then the instructor will contact the student and ask him/her to explain their work. If the instructor still believes academic misconduct occurred after meeting with the student, he/she will determine the consequences, known as sanctions. One or multiple sanctions may be imposed. Types of sanctions include an oral reprimand up to expulsion. If the sanction affects any grade, the student will then be notified in writing, typically by email, of the instructor's decision. The Dean of Students Office is also informed and will contact the student about his/her rights and any additional sanctions. In most cases, the DoSO will require a student to complete an online tutorial on academic integrity, known as the RAISE program. Repeated acts of academic misconduct or extreme circumstances may result in more serious actions such as probation, suspension, or expulsion.

According to the University, academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) the following behavior:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance
- Assists other students in any of these acts

### **Electronic Device Policy:**

Phones are to be off / on silent and put away during the entirety of seminar. Laptops and tablets can only be out if they are being used to look at class readings or to take notes. Failure to comply with the policy will lead to a reduction in participation grade.

### **Email and Office Hours Policy:**

I will respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving any email message. For in-person meetings, I will be available any time during my weekly office hours, though if you are not able to make those hours alternate times can be arranged via email.

### **Some Dates to Remember:**

Last day to apply for pass / fail privilege: February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Last day to drop course: March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**WEEK ONE, January 19th:**  
**Introduction and course overview**

**WEEK TWO, January 26th:**

**Orientalism and Representations of Muslim Women in the U.S. / Europe**

- Lila Abu-Lughod. "Introduction" & "Do Muslim Women (Still) Need Saving" In *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (pp. 1-54)

**WEEK THREE, February 2nd:**

**Women in the Islamicate Empires (Part One)**

- Kathryn Babayan. "The Aqa'id al-Nisa": A Glance at Safavid Women In Local Isfahani Culture." In *Women in the Medieval Islamic World*. (pp. 349-382)
- Gregory Kozlowski. "Private Lives and Public Piety: Women and the Practice of Islam in Mughal India" In *Women in the Medieval Islamic World*. (pp. 469-488)
- *IN CLASS MAP QUIZ* •••

**WEEK FOUR, February 9th:**

**Women in the Islamicate Empires (Part Two)**

- Leslie Pierce. Intro: "Myths & Realities of the Harem," Chap. One "The House of Osman" & Chap. Five: "The Imperial Harem Institution" In *The Imperial Harem: Women & Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. (pp. 3-27, 113-149)

**WEEK FIVE, February 16th:**

**The New Woman**

- Qasim Amin. "The Liberation of Women" in *The Liberation of Women and the New Woman* (Part I)

**WEEK SIX, February 23rd:**

**Gendering the (Mother) Land**

- Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet. *Conceiving Citizens: Women and the Politics of Motherhood in Iran*. (Part II – pp. 51-146)

**WEEK SEVEN, March 1st:**

**Colonialism, Nationalism, & Modern Citizenship**

- Ahmet Serdar Aktürk. "Female Cousins and Wounded Masculinity: Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Post-Ottoman Middle East" in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 52, Issue 1, 2016 (pp. 46-59)
- Marnia Lazreg. "Gender and Politics in Algeria: Unraveling the Religious Paradigm" In *Signs*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Summer, 1990 (pp. 755-780)
- Franz Fanon. "Algeria Unveiled." In *A Dying Colonialism*. (pp. 35-69)

**WEEK EIGHT, March 8th:**

**The Politics of the Veil in Historical Context**

- Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet. *Conceiving Citizens: Women and the Politics of Motherhood in Iran*. (pp. 147-166)
- Leila Ahmed. "The 1970s: Seeds of Resurgence" in *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's*

*Resurgence, From the Middle East to America.* (pp. 68-92)

••• **Midterm exam questions circulated on Monday, March 7th via UW Box Folder** •••

**WEEK NINE, March 15th:**

• FILM: *Silences of the Palaces* (Moufida Tlatli, 1994)

••• **Midterm exam essays due / no reading or weekly write-up** •••

••• **NO CLASS MARCH 22nd, SPRING BREAK! HAVE FUN!** •••

**WEEK TEN, March 29th:**

**Islamist Feminism, Muslim Feminists, & Feminist Muslims**

- L. Abu-Lughod, "The Marriage of Feminism & Islamism in Egypt" In *Remaking Women: Feminism & Modernity in the Middle East.* (pp. 243-269)
- Elora Shehabuddin. "Gender & the Figure of the 'Moderate Muslim': Feminism in the 21st Century." In *The Question of Gender.* (pp. 102-142)
- Marnia Lazreg, "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman About Women in Algeria." *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring, 1988, (pp. 81-107)

**WEEK ELEVEN, April 5th:**

**The Piety Movement and the Critique of the Feminist Subject**

- Saba Mahmood. Chapter One: "The Subject of Freedom" & Chapter Four: "Positive Ethics and Ritual Conventions" in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject.* (pp. 1-39; 118-152)

**WEEK TWELVE, April 12th:**

**Gender & the Making of Culture**

- Virginia Danielson. "Artists & Entrepreneurs: Female Singers in Cairo During the 1920s." In *Women & Middle Eastern History.* (pp. 292-309)
- Ahdaf Soueif "I Think of You" (short story) in *I Think of You*
- Forough Farrokhzad. Selected poetry
- FILM: *The House Is Black* (dir: F. Farrokhzad, 1962) – <http://vimeo.com/11482249>

**WEEK THIRTEEN, April 19th:**

**Rights Talk: How We Talk About Women's & Human Rights**

- Talal Asad. "What Do Human Rights Do? An Anthropological Enquiry." *Theory and Event.* Volume 4, Issue 4, 2000.
- Arzoo Osanloo. "Human Rights and Cultural Practice," In *The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran.* Princeton University Press, 2009. (pp. 1-42)

**WEEK FOURTEEN, April 26th:**

**Queer and Transgender Bodies & Lives**

- Afsaneh Najmabadi. "Transing and Transpassing Across Sex-Gender Walls in Iran" *Women's Studies Quarterly.* Vol. 36, no. 3-4, Fall / Winter 2008: (pp. 23-42)
- Joseph Massad. "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World"

*Public Culture*, Spring 2002 14(2): (pp. 361-386)

**WEEK FIFTEEN, May 3rd:**

**War & Occupation**

- Nadjé Sadig Al Ali. “Living With War and Sanctions” & “Living with Occupation” in *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948*. (pp. 171-259)

••• *Final exam essay questions circulated on Monday, May 2nd via UW Box Folder* •••

**May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015: FINAL EXAM ESSAYS DUE**

Please have final essay exams turned in by 12pm on Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.