

POL 208
Gender and Politics in the Middle East
Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30-2:55 PM
Prof. Emily Regan Wills
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 3-4:30pm, or by appointment

Syllabus

Description

This course will provide an overview of the politics of gender in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa, including the Arab countries, Iran, Israel, and Turkey. Topics covered will include women's engagement in revolutions, political parties, monarchical government, and resistance movements; state intervention into questions of gender, including family law, inheritance and citizenship rights, dress codes, laws regulating sexuality, and state feminism; and women's and feminist movements, including peace movements, Islamist feminisms, pro-democracy activism, and diasporic feminism. In particular, it will analyze recent and current revolutionary transformations in the Middle East and North Africa, in light of the ways that gender intersects with them.

Course Requirements

The course requirements are as follows:

Attendance and Participation. As college students, your time is your own, and you are free to make choices about when to attend and when not to attend class. However, those choices are not without consequences. Students are allowed three absences over the course of the semester, for any reason (and you are not required to present me with any rationale for those absence). A fourth absence will result in your grade being lowered by one half-grade (e.g., from B+ to B, or from C to C-). A fifth absence will result in failure. Timeliness is important, as we have only 80 minutes in which to work through this material. Arriving more than 10 minutes after the announced start time of class more than twice will count as an absence.

You are expected to arrive to class having completed the assigned reading for the day, and having reflected upon it in relationship to previous reading and the discussion article circulated. You are also expected to participate meaningfully in the class's analysis and discussion of the topic. I understand that not all students are comfortable participating vocally, particularly early in the semester; being engaged in the conversation means more than speaking daily. However, all students should expect to speak before small groups or the whole classroom several times during the semester, at minimum.

All students are required to meet with me in my office hours *twice* over the course of the semester. The first time will be during the first two weeks of school; I will hold additional office hours for this purpose. The second may be at any point. Sign-up sheets will be distributed during the first class, or you may sign up on the schedule on my door.

Your participation and attendance grade will be determined based on a) attendance, b) meeting with me twice over the semester, c) making contributions to the class, and d) being engaged with the material through interactions with me.

Geography/Geopolitics Quiz. Without some basic knowledge of the geography, history, and politics of the Middle East and North Africa, it will be difficult for you to understand the material we will read in the rest of the course. Therefore, in the first three classes, we will cover this material, and you will take a brief quiz on it.

Short Papers. You will write two short papers over the course of the semester. You will have an option, for each paper, of choosing one of several types of assignments: close readings of chosen primary sources, analytic questions about the readings, or assignments that ask you to use tools from the class to discuss other issues. Each paper will be approximately five pages long. Topics will be circulated a week in advance; if you need to choose a topic earlier for scheduling reasons, please talk to me.

Final Project. Politics in the Middle East and North Africa is changing rapidly right now, and has changed dramatically in the past year. For a final project, you will work in groups of 2 or 3 to assess how this changing situation is altering the politics of gender and the status of women in the region. Each group will be assigned a country. There will be both a written and an oral component. The oral component will be a group presentation on the country, its current political situation, and the way that gender intersects with it. The written component will be a brief, with separate components written by each group member, summarizing your findings and including an annotated bibliography of primary sources on your country. Further details about the project will be distributed later in the semester. The oral component will be scheduled during the last three class meetings; the written component will be due on December 15th at midnight.

Lateness Policy. Short papers and final projects will lose one half-grade per day they are late. The geography quiz and class presentation cannot be rescheduled without prior permission; that means that, if you miss them, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

Grading. Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation & attendance: 10%
- Geopolitics quiz: 10%
- Short Essays: 20% each (40% total)
- Presentation: written: 25% oral: 15%

About the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL): At Hobart and William Smith Colleges, we encourage students to seek the academic collaboration and resources that will enable them to do their best work. The CTL offers a variety of resources that can help students achieve academic success. Particularly relevant for this class are Writing Colleagues (for help on papers) and Study Mentors (for help with study skills and time management). To access other CTL resources, visit the CTL webpage at <http://www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/index.aspx>, or visit the CTL Blackboard site.

Disability Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability for which you may need accommodations, you should self-identify and register for services with the Coordinator of Disability Services at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and provide documentation of your disability. Disability related accommodations and services generally will not be provided until the registration and documentation process is complete. The guidelines for documenting disabilities can be found at the following website: <http://www.hws.edu/disabilities>. Please direct questions about this process or Disability Services at HWS to David Silver, Coordinator of Disability Services, at silver@hws.edu or x3351.

Office Hours. I will hold scheduled office hours on Monday and Wednesday from 3:00-4:30 PM. You may make an appointment to see me at that time, or you may simply drop by my office. If you would like to meet with me at another time, you should schedule an appointment; I do have availability at other times during the week, but need at least 24-48 hours notice to schedule an appointment.

Professors' offices are funny things. They are simultaneously places for meeting with students, places for doing work related to teaching, and places for doing our other intellectual work: writing, reading, and thinking. That means that just because a professor is in his/her office does not mean s/he is available to meet with you. My general policy is that, if my office door is open outside my regular office hours, you may feel free to knock and say hi; if it is closed during my office hours, that means I am with another student, and please knock to let me know you are there; if my office door is closed outside my office hours, even if I am obviously in the office, I am not available.

Class Email Policy. Important class announcements will be sent out over the Blackboard email system; I will assume that you check your HWS email at least once a day. I will respond to emails within twenty-four hours of their sending on weekdays, and on the next business day for weekend emails. If it has been longer than that and I haven't responded, please email me again.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty. The primary forms of academic dishonesty are cheating on exams and quizzes, and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, etc), intentional or unintentional. Plagiarized material may be derived from a variety of sources, such as books, journals, internet postings, student or faculty papers, etc. This

includes the purchase or “outsourcing” of written assignments for a course. A detailed definition of plagiarism in research and writing can be found in the fourth edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, pages 26-29.

Any academic dishonesty in this class will result in a zero for the assignment. Repeat offenders will be referred to the Committee on Academic Affairs.

Classroom Behavior. The college classroom is a space for learning new information about the world, for assembling facts and ideas from disparate areas into new ideas, and for engaging others in intellectual debate. Conduct rules for the classroom are designed to facilitate that sort of engagement, as well as respect your autonomy as both adults and as students. The following are some general principles to follow in the classroom; it is not intended to be exhaustive. In general, use your discretion.

- Laptops form a physical barrier between students and between student and professor, encourage distraction, and do not promote taking thoughtful notes. Please do not bring your laptop to class. (Tablet computers are acceptable, but please shut down your wireless during class.)
- Cellphones, both as telephones and as internet connection devices, are highly disruptive in the classroom. Please turn your ringer off when you arrive. Although anyone might want to use their phone to check the time in class, texting, websurfing, email checking, and the reading of Twitter and Facebook are entirely inappropriate. Should you choose to use your smartphone as a notetaking device, please turn on airplane mode during class.
- Eating and drinking in class are acceptable, provided they are not a disruption (e.g., no excessive noise, no elaborate preparation, etc). If you have an allergy and need others in the classroom to be aware of it, please tell me, or let the class know.
- Late arrivals disrupt the class and are rude to your fellow classmates, as well as depriving you of the opportunity to gain the full benefit of class. Penalties for lateness are discussed above.

Course Materials

Three books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore:

Ahmed, Leila (1993). *Women and Gender in Islam*. Yale University Press
Badran, Margot and Cooke, Miriam (2004). *Opening the Gates: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing, 2nd Edition*. Indiana University Press.
Sadiqi, Fatima and Ennaji, Moha (2010). *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Agents of Change*. Routledge.

In addition, students should download *Gender, Nation, and Belonging: Arab and Arab American Feminist Perspectives* from the Resources section of Blackboard.

Readings that are available from online journal databases should be accessed via those databases. (We will discuss how to find them at the first class.) Readings that are scanned from books will be posted on Blackboard as PDFs.

Course Schedule

Abbreviations:

- B&C: Badran and cooke, *Opening the Gates*
- Ahmed: Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*
- S&E: Sadiqi and Ennaji, *Women in the Middle East and North Africa*
- MITEJMES: *Gender, Nation, and Belonging* (pdf on Blackboard)
- JMEWS: *Journal of Middle Eastern Women's Studies*, available on Project Muse

Readings are not set past September 29th. An updated syllabus will be circulated in mid-September

August 30: Introduction

Please read the following short essays from TeachMidEast as a follow-up to our class discussion.

- <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/27-geography/51-what-is-the-middle-east>
- <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/26-stereotypes/50-arab-muslim-or-middle-eastern>
- <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/28-history/3-understanding-middle-eastern-history>
- <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/36-people/44-arab-identity>
- <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/36-people/46-communal-identities-and-ethnic-groups>

September 1: Studying Gender, Studying The Middle East

- Said, "Orientalism" {BB}
- Ferree and Mueller, "Feminism and the Women's Movement: A Global Perspective" {BB}

Sept 6: Introducing Gender & Politics in the Middle East

- Kandiyoti, "The Politics of Gender and the Conundrums of Citizenship" {BB}
- Moghadam, Valentine and Fatima Sadiqi. "Women's Activism and the Public Sphere: An Introduction and Overview." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 2.2 (2006) 1-7.

SECTION ONE: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Politics

Sept 8 Gender and Modernization 1

- GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

- Ahmed, Chapters 7
- B&C, Musa, 257-269; Nawfal, 215-219;
- Shissler, A. Holly. "'If You Ask Me': Sabiha Sertel's Advice Column, Gender Equity, And Social Engineering in the Early Turkish Republic." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 3.2 (2007) 1-30

Sept 13 Gender and Modernization 2

- Ahmed, Chapter 8
- B&C, Bahithat al-Badiya, 227-238; Zain al-Din, 270-278
- Elsadda, Hoda. "Imaging the 'New Man': Gender and Nation in Arab Literary Narratives in the Early Twentieth Century." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 3.2 (2007) 31-55

Sept 15: Early Feminism(s) 1

- Ahmed, Chapters 9 and 10
- B&C: Shaarawi, 41-48; Shaarawi, 337-340; Dughan, 341-342

September 20: Early Feminism(s) 2

- Weber, Charlotte. "Between Nationalism and Feminism: The Eastern Women's Congresses of 1930 and 1932." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4.1 (2007) 83-106.
- DuBois, Ellen Carol, and Haleh Emrani. "A Speech By Nour Hamada: Tehran, 1932." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4.1 (2007) 107-124.
- Jayyusi, Salma Khadra (2002). "Modernist Arab Women Writers: A Historical Interview." In Majaj, Lisa Suhair, et al, *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women's Novels*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP. (PDF)

September 22: Women, Gender, and Independence Movements

- B&C: Tuqan, 26-40; Guendouz, pg 102-103; Hélie-Lucas, pg 104-114
- Rosenberg-Friedman, Lilach. "Religious Women Fighters in Israel's War of Independence: A New Gender Perception, or a Passing Episode?" *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* 6 (2003) 119-147
- Amrane-Minne, Daniele Djamila. "Women and Politics in Algeria from the War of Independence to Our Day." *Research in African Literatures* 30.3 (1999) 62-77.

September 27: Egyptian Modernism, Post-Revolution

- Joseph, Sabrina. "Representations of Private/Public Domains: The Feminine Ideal and Modernist Agendas in Egyptian Film, Mid-1950s–1980s." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 72-109.
- Baron, Beth. "The Origins of Family Planning: Aziza Hussein, American Experts, and the Egyptian State." *JMEWS* 4:3, 31-57.
- Okeke-Agulu, Chika. "Politics by Other Means: Two Egyptian Artists, Gazbia Sirry and Ghada Amer." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 6.2 (2006) 117-149

SECTION TWO: Gender and Politics in the Middle East in the Late 20th/Early 21st Century

September 29: Gender, State, Nationalism

- **SHORT PAPER DUE**

October 4: Gender, Women and War

October 6: Women in/Outside Government

October 13: Family Law

October 18: Sex and Sexuality

October 20: The Politics of Personal Appearance

October 25: Gender, Religion, and Politics 1

October 27: Gender, Religion, and Politics 2

November 1: Feminism 1

November 3: Feminism 2

November 8: Transnational Feminist (and non-feminist) Politics

- **PAPER #2 DUE**

SECTION 3: Game Changers: Gender and Politics in MENA now

November 10: Irhal! The 2010/2011 Arab Revolutions

November 15: Reconstructing the New Middle East and North Africa

November 17: Group Work Day for final projects

November 22: Presentations

November 29: Presentations

December 1: NO CLASS

December 6: Presentations

December 8: Conclusion; final review

- **SHORT PAPER DUE**