

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
HIST4490: WOMEN AND ISLAM

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Course Description:

This team-taught course puts the lives of contemporary Muslim women into historical perspective, examining the issues that inform constructions of gender in the Islamic world. Through monographs and essays, novels and stories, and film, we will examine the status and images of women in scripture, tradition, law, theology, philosophy and literature.

Course Objectives:

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Read and analyze primary and secondary sources related to the course, making comparisons the experience of women over time.
- Understand how social, economic, and religious constructs shape the experience in women and men in the Muslim world.
- Comprehend and synthesize the most recent research in the field.
- With a small group, lead a class discussion on a series of readings related to a specific theme.
- Discuss the significance and usefulness of Islam as an overarching category in modern Muslim societies
- Prepare a book and film review, using *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Determine how films and web sites, created in the past three decades, shape and enrich our understanding of this topic.

Classroom Policies:

- An atmosphere of mutual trust is essential to the success of this course. We strongly encourage lively debates and urge students to respect each other's opinions. Expressions of intolerance are discouraged. Disagreeing with others intelligently and politely is a skill, one that we will all strive for during the semester.

- "Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentations/ falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an 'informal' resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement" (KSU Senate 15 March 1999).

Assignments:

Attendance, Participation, and Quizzes

Punctual, regular class attendance is required. After three absences, your final grade drops a letter for each subsequent absence. Students are responsible for all assigned work. An absence does not absolve them from this responsibility. If possible, absences should be discussed with the instructor in advance. 15% of your grade

Film Screenings:

You must view, on your own time, three films this semester: *The Circle*; *Secret Ballot*; *Leila* (which we will provide). As a group, we will view *Persepolis*. You must prepare a 3-4 page film review of one of the above titles. The film review is worth 15% of your grade

Web Site Project:

At the beginning of the semester, the class will be divided into small groups and asked to review several web sites (to be provided) selecting one of the following topics:

The Spiritual Role of Women
Political Participation: Gender Equity in Islam
An Islamic Perspective on Sexuality
Violence Against Women
Women and the Family

For this 30-minute presentation and discussion, the group should synthesize the main issues for the class and examine how well they are argued and supported in the various articles you analyzed. Each group also needs to evaluate the reliability of the information presented, making sure that you examine issues of bias. The presentation is worth 15% of your grade.

Web sites for review (know that all the links on each site may not be active):

<http://www.uga.edu/islam/Islamwomen.html>

Resources for and About Muslim Women

<http://www.jannah.org/sisters/>

International Association of Sufism

http://ias.org/articles/Women_in_Islam.html

Islam for Today

<http://www.cair-net.orgwww.islamfortoday.com/women.htm>

Women and Islam

<http://www.aburabi.com/Interesting/womenIslam.htm>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/Women/inislam.html>

Book Review:

Each student is responsible for preparing a 5-7 page review on a book related women and Islam, for approval by the instructors. The essay should analyze the author's methodology, findings, relationship to other scholarly works in the field, and the book's connections to themes and issues raised in the course. Students must use the *Chicago Manual of Style* and must include a bibliography. The book review is worth 25% of your grade.

Presentation:

Each student is responsible for preparing a formal 10-minute presentation on the book they reviewed and its connections to the themes and issues raised in the class. The presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

Evaluation:

Attendance, participation, quizzes	15%
Presentation	15%
Web site project	20%
Film review	15%
Book review (and presentation)	35%

Grade Scale:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69

F	59 and below
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Required Texts (Available in the Campus Bookstore):

Brooks, Geraldine. *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*. New York: Anchor, 1995. ISBN: 0385475772

Satrapı, Marjane. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. New York: Pantheon, 2004. ISBN: 037571457X

Additional Readings: Available on WEB CT VISTA. The professors strongly encourage students to download and print all readings at the beginning of the semester.

Reading Schedule

Week 1: Historical Roots

T 8.19	Introduction to the course. (1) Anna Quindlen, "Separate but Not Equal at All," <i>Newsweek</i> (May 2, 2005): 74; (2) S. E. Ibrahim, "The Veiled Medical Student," <i>The New Arab Social Order</i> , 16-19; (3) G. Willow Wilson, "The Comfort of Strangers," <i>New York Times Magazine</i> , May 29, 2005.	Handouts
Th 8.21	(1) John L. Esposito, Chapter 1, <i>Islam the Straight Path</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); (2) Leila Ahmed, "Introduction," <i>Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 1-7.	

Week 2: Historical Roots

T 8.26	Geraldine Brooks, <i>Nine Parts of Desire</i> , 1-90	
Th 8.28	Geraldine Brooks, <i>Nine Parts of Desire</i> , 91-244	

Week 3: Historical Roots

T 9.2	(1) Leila Ahmed, Chapter 3, "Women and the Rise of Islam," from <i>Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 41- 63; (2) Leila Ahmed, Chapter 6, "Medieval Islam," in <i>Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 102-123.	Guest Lecture: Dr. Faiza Derbel, Chair of English at the University of Manouba, Tunisia
Th 9.4	Leila Ahmed, Chapter 9, "The First Feminists," in <i>Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press 1993), 169-188.	

Week 4: Theories of Patriarchy and Orientalism

T 9.9	(1) Gerda Lerner, <i>The Creation of Patriarchy</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986): 15-35 (2) Leslie Peirce, "Wives and Concubines" from <i>Imperial Harem</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 28-56.	Complete film: <i>The Circle</i>
Th 9.11	Abu-Lughod, Lila, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others," <i>American Anthropologist</i> 104:3 (September 2002): 783-791.	

Week 5: Theories of Patriarchy and Orientalism

T 9.16	(1) Edward Said, "Introduction," <i>Orientalism</i> , New York: Pantheon, 1978, 1-28; (2) Kandiyoti, Deniz, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," in <i>Gender and Society</i> 2:3 (1988): 274-290	
Th 9.18	Mai Ghoussoub. "Feminism—or the Eternal Masculine—in the Arab World." <i>New Left Review</i> 161 (January-February, 1987): 3-13	Group 4

Week 6: Islamic Law and Tradition

T 9.23	Ruth Roded, "Sayings of the Prophet: Selective Quotations," in <i>Women in Islam and the Middle East: A Reader</i> (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999): 48-57.	
Th 9.25	Workshop: Book and film reviews	

Week 7: Islamic Law and Tradition

T 9.30	Sondra Hale, "The Islamic State and Gendered Citizenship in Sudan," in Suad Joseph, <i>Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East</i> (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).	
Th 10.2	Sima Pakzad, "The Legal Status of Women in the Family in Iran," in eds., Mahnaz Afkhami and Erika Friedl, <i>In the Eye of the Storm</i> , (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994): 169-179.	Group 2

Week 8: Women and the State

T 10.7	Ayse Kadioglu, "Women's Subordination in Turkey: Is Islam Really the Villain?" <i>The Middle East Journal</i> 48:4 (Autumn 1994): 645-660.	Complete film: <i>Secret Ballot</i>
Th 10.9	(1) Juan Cole, "Women and the Making of Shi'ism" in <i>Sacred Space and Holy War</i> (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002); (2) Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women, Islam, and the State: A Comparative Approach," in <i>Comparing Muslim Societies</i> , ed. Juan Cole (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 237-260.	

Week 9: The History and Politics of the Veil

T 10.14	(1) Leila Ahmed, Chapter 8, "The Discourse of the Veil," in <i>Women and Gender in Islam</i> , 144-168 a; (2) Quasim Amin, "Women and the Veil," from <i>The Liberation of Women and the New Woman: Two Documents in the History of Egyptian Feminism</i> (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1992), 35-61.	
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Th 10.16	(1) Fatima Mernissi, "The Hijab," from <i>Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society</i> (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 85-101 (2) Leila Hessini, "Wearing the Hajib in Contemporary Morocco: Choice and Identity," from <i>Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East</i> , 40-56.	Group 3
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Week 10: Education and Identity

T 10.21	N. Abadan-Unat, "The Impact of Legal and Educational Reforms on Turkish Women," <i>Women in Middle Eastern History</i> , 177-194.	Group 1
Th 10.23	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood</i> . New York: Pantheon, 2004.	

Week 11: Understanding Identity

T 10.28	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood</i> . New York: Pantheon, 2004.	
Th 10.30	Film: <i>Persepolis</i>	

Week 12: Religious and Secular Perspectives on Marriage

T 11.4	Assia Djebar, "There is No Exile," in <i>Global Voices: Contemporary Literature from the Non-Western World</i> , ed. Arthur Biddle (Englewood Cliffs: NJ, 1995): 420-430.	Complete film: <i>Leila</i>
Th 11.6	To be announced	Group 5

Week 13: Religious and Secular Perspectives on Marriage

T 11.11	Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Negotiating the Politics of Gender in Iran: An Ethnography of a Documentary," in <i>The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity</i> , ed. Richard Tapper (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002), 167-199.	
Th 11.13	An-Na'im, Abdullahi, "The Dichotomy between Religious and Secular Discourse in Islamic Societies," in Afkami, Mahnaz, <i>Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World</i> (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 51-60.	

Week 14: Writing Back: Feminist Responses

T 11.18	Student selections from <i>Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing</i> , Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990)	
Th 11.20	Thanksgiving	No Class

Week 15: War, Society, and Gender

T 11.25	Miriam Cooke, "Arab Women Arab Wars," from <i>Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East</i> , 144-166.	
Th 11.27	Emily Nasrallah, "Our Daily Bread," in <i>Global Voices: Contemporary Literature from the Non-Western World</i> , ed. Arthur Biddle (Englewood Cliffs: NJ, 1995): 494-498.	

Week 16: Conclusion

Th 12.2	Course Evaluations	
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