

RELG 335: Women and Islam Syllabus

Credit Hours: 3 credit hours

Contact Hours: 45

Course Duration: 1 semester

Location: Amman, Jordan

Course Description:

This course aims to examine the position of women in Islam. Using a mixture of historical and textual material, this course begins by investigating how the foundational texts of the Islamic faith (the Qur'an and the Hadith) have impacted the lives of women. The course will examine the impact ontologically, legally, and socially. We will touch upon how these texts were interpreted and applied in different historical epochs, with a focus on the modern context and how these texts are used to understand contemporary women's issues such as identity, family, education, and public roles.

Learning outcomes for the course

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- critically analyze the different interpretations of the foundational texts and their bearing on women's position
- explain the development of Muslim women's roles and identities
- recognize and compare the various views on women's roles both in culture and religion
- discuss the difference in rights accorded to men and women in Islamic law

Knowledge

This course is designed to assist students to acquire and demonstrate knowledge about:

- the Islamic foundational texts dealing with women
- the various interpretations of those texts
- the historical development of Muslim women's roles and identity
- key issues facing Muslim women today and how they are debated

Skills

This course is designed to assist students in acquiring or enhancing the following skills:

- to thoroughly research a topic
- to critically analyze texts
- to compare and contrast different view points
- to write an explicatory essay on a relevant topic
- to present topics and research work

Attitudes

This course is designed to encourage development of the following attitudes:

- to distinguish between fact and fiction about women in Islam
- to develop an understanding of how Muslims see themselves

Required Readings

(parts or chapters from the following sources assigned for reading will be provided in a course pack)

- Abdel Latif, Omayma, *In the shadow of the Brothers*, Carnegie Papers, 2008
- Ahmed, Leila, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, Yale UP, 1992
- *The Quiet Revolution*, Yale UP, 2011
- Al-Khawaldeh, Samira, "The One Raised in Ornament? Gender Issues in the Qur'an", *Hawwa*, Brill, 2015
- Aslan, Ednan, et al., *Muslima Theology*, Wiener Islamstudien 3, Peter Lang, 2014
- Barlas, Asma, [*Believing Women in Islam*](#), University of Texas, 2002
- Clinton Bennett, *Muslim Women of Power : Gender, Politics and Culture in Islam*, London, GB: Continuum, 2010.
- Ende, Werner et al., *Islam in the World Today*, Cornell UP, 2010
- Esposito, John, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2011
- Haddad, Yvonne, *Women, Religion, and Social Change*, NYSUP, 1985
- Haniyeh, Hassan Abu, *Women and Politics*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2008
- Qutb, Sayyid, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, III, 34-51
 - <https://www.kalamullah.com/shade-of-the-quran.html>
- Ramadan, Tariq, videos
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Yo6RsGouzM>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uz98enBnUd8>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do--YdH-888>
- Roald, Anne Sofie, *Women in Islam*, Routledge, 2001
- Rosen, Lawrence, *The Culture of Islam : Changing Aspects of Contemporary Muslim Life*, University of Chicago Press, 2004
- Stowasser, Barbara Freyer, *Women In the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, Oxford UP, 1998.
- Tessler, Mark, *Islam and Politics in the Middle East : Explaining the Views of Ordinary Citizens*, Indiana University Press, 2015
- Turabi, Hassan, *Women between Islam and the customs of Muslim society*
<http://www.salaam.co.uk/knowledge/turabi-essay.pdf>
- Vogt, Kari, *New Directions in Islamic Thought*, I.B.Tauris, 2011

Other Readings:

- Badawi, Jamal, *Gender Equity in Islam: Basic Principles*,
<http://www.islamicweb.com/begin/gender.pdf>
- Esposito, John, *Islam, Gender, and Social Change*, Oxford UP, 1998
- Jones-Pauly, Christina, et al., *Library of Islamic Law: Women Under Islam*, I. B. Tauris, 2011
- Kecia, Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith & Jurisprudence*, One World Publications, 2007
- Keddie, Nikki, and Beth Baron, *Women in Middle Eastern History*, Yale UP, 2008
- Krivenko, Ekaterina Yahyaoui, *Women, Islam and International Law*, Brill, 200
- Lazreg, Marnia, *Questioning the Veil*, Princeton UP, 2009
- Marranci, Gabriele, *The Anthropology of Islam (1)*, Berg, 2008
- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba, et al., *Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law*, I. B. Tauris, 2013
- Sharify-Funk, Meena, et al., *Gender in a Global/Local World: Encountering the Transnational: Women, Islam and the Politics of Interpretation*, Routledge, 2008
- Syed, Mohammad Ali, *Position of Women in Islam*, SUNY, 2004

- Torab, Azam, *Women and Gender: The Middle East and the Islamic world*, Brill, 2006
- Voorhoeve, Maaïke, *Library of Islamic Law: Family Law in Islam: Divorce, Marriage and Women in the Muslim World*, I. B. Tauris, 2012
- Wadud, Amina, *Qur'an and Woman*, Oxford UP, 1999

Assessment Overview

Description	Weight	Due Date
Engagement	10%	Continuous
Mid-Term Exam	30%	Week 3
Written Assignment	10%	Week 11
Research Paper	20%	Proposed Research Topics Due: Week 5 Final Paper Due: Week 12 Presentation of Final Papers: Week 14
Final Exam	30%	Finals Week

Assessment Tasks

Attendance and Engagement:

Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and come prepared to participate fully in class activities. Students are further expected to be on time for all classes. Arriving late for class is disrespectful of both the instructor and fellow students. Please refer to the official Amideast Attendance policy for more information.

Written Assignment:

A report of 1000 words comparing Tariq Ramadan's views on women's rights with those of Qutb.

Mid-Term Exam:

The Mid-Term exam will include the material covered up to the date of the exam. Students will write essays which are informative and analytical, narrating an issue or comparing two sets of ideas/attitudes, etc. These items will have been previously discussed in class.

Research Paper:

The research paper will consist of at least 3500 words on a topic approved by the instructor. The research paper will constitute 20% of the semester grade for this course. Students should make appointments to meet with the instructor prior to March 10 to discuss proposed paper topics. Prior to the meeting, students should submit at least two proposed topics described in approximately 100 words and an indication of the sources available. Papers must have at least 5 sources outside the assigned reading. Papers that are less than 3500 words will be penalized 10 points. Papers that are late will be penalized 2 points for each day that they are turned in after the announced deadline.

Final Exam:

The Final Exam will include the material covered up to the date of the exam. Students will write essays which are informative and analytical, narrating an issue or comparing two sets of ideas/attitudes, etc. These items will have been previously discussed in class.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic(s) to be covered	Preparation/ Readings	Assignments/ Work Due
Week 1	Introduction Pre-Islamic Arabia Cultural and historical background		
Week 2	Portraits of women in the Qur'an: Prophets' wives, etc.	B. F. Stowasser, <i>Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation</i> 13-84	
Week 3	Portraits of women in the Qur'an: The social construct	Jane I. Smith, "Women, Religion and Social Change in Early Islam" in Haddad, <i>Women, Religion, and Social Change</i> , 19- 37 B. F. Stowasser, <i>Women in the Qur'an</i> , 85-134	Assignment: a report of 1000 words on a female figure from the Muslim world (writer, politician, etc.), due in 2 weeks time (10 points)
Week 4	Women in the Qur'an: rules, laws, and descriptions	Stowasser, "Gender issues and contemporary Quran interpretation" in Haddad, <i>Islam, Gender and social Change</i> , 30-45 Stowasser, <i>Women in the Qur'an</i> , 119-134 Khawaldeh, "The One Raised in ..." 1-24	
Week 5	Women in the Prophetic Tradition	Asma Barlas, <i>Believing Women</i> , 31-93	Students submit 2 proposed research topics
Week 6	Muslim women in today's Muslim-majority societies: An overview	Mark Tessler, "Islam in the Lives of Ordinary Muslims", 66- 111 Werner Ende et al., <i>Islam in the World Today</i> , 620-680	Research topics assigned
Week 7			Midterm Exam
Week 8	Spring Break (No Classes)		
Week 9	Muslim women in public life and the dress code	Ahmed, <i>The Quiet Revolution</i> , 117-130 John Esposito, <i>What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam</i> (2), 95-132	

Week 10	Marriage, divorce, and family	<p>Anne Sofie Roald, <i>Women in Islam</i> 201-236</p> <p>Barlas, "The Family and Marriage: Retrieving the Qur'an's Egalitarianism", 167-202</p>	
Week 11	Political role of Muslim Women in principle and in history	<p>Clinton Bennett, <i>Muslim Women of Power : Gender, Politics and Culture in Islam (1)</i>, 1-48</p> <p>Anne Sofie Roald, <i>Women in Islam</i>, 185-200</p>	
Week 12	Women in the Islamic movements	<p>Omayma Abdel Latif, <i>In the Shadow of the Brothers</i>, 1-23</p> <p>Hassan Abu Haniyeh, <i>Women and Politics</i>, 77-118</p>	Research papers due
Week 13	Culture versus religion concerning women's issues	<p>Hassan Turabi, <i>Women between Islam and Customs of Muslim Society</i>, 1-33</p> <p>Lawrence Rosen, <i>The Culture of Islam : Changing Aspects of Contemporary Muslim Life</i>, 1-50</p>	
Week 14			Students' presentations of their research topics
Week 15	Final Exams		
Week 16	Reflection Week		