

MENA315/WMST315: Beyond the Uprisings: Gender Dynamics in the Arab World

Syllabus

Credits: 3 credit hours

Program Location: Amman, Jordan

Term and Year:

Name of Instructor:

Course Hours:

Aims and Objectives of the Course:

- Demonstrate a strong foundation in the history of women and gender in the Arab World
- Link current debates and events pertaining to women and gender in the Arab world within a broader context
- Deepen the understanding of how power struggles affect women and men differently

Course Description:

Arab women are often portrayed as oppressed and in need of being saved, but to what degree are women in the Arab region oppressed? This course is designed to study Arab struggles of power and women and gender dynamics. The first part of the course focuses on a chronological survey from pre Islamic to the present day, to Western representation of oriental women and to the rise of women in the region. The second part of the course comprises an in-depth exploration of the 2011 Arab Uprisings as a critical juncture for Arabs and women in particular. Pictures, films, songs, poetry and literature will help understand the lived realities of theories. This will be an interactive class with occasional guest speakers to be identified.

Learning outcomes for the course

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

- Gain awareness of Middle East politics in light of the 2011 Arab Spring
- Gain understanding of the lives of women in the region and what they face
- Become familiar with women's rights movements in the region

Knowledge

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

- Understanding gender dynamics in the Arab world especially during power struggles
- More focused knowledge of gender dynamics during the Arab Spring
- Debunking some stereotypes about Arab women and the Arab Spring

Skills

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

- Develop analytical skills for understanding the linkages between power struggles and gender dynamics
- Develop skills to link art and culture with lived realities
- Hone critical thinking competency
- To analyze text critically

Attitudes

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

- Cultural awareness through analysis of readings and supplementary literature and art
- Bridge understanding through linking texts and understand
- Appreciate Arab literature and culture

Required Reading

- Abu-Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving?, Chapter 3, "Authorizing Moral Crusades," pp. 81-112; Chapter 5, "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights," pp. 143- 172; Chapter 6, "An Anthropologist in the Territory of Rights," pp. 173-200; and Conclusion, pp. 201-227.
- Ahmed, Leila. Women and Gender in Islam. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. (chapters 4, 5, and 6)
- All Country Profiles on BBC
- Asma Barlas, Believing Women in Islam, Understanding Patriarchal Interpretations of Quoraan.
- Bayat Asef, Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East (chapter 1)
- Beinín , Joel and Frederic Vairel, eds 2011. Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa, Stanford University Press (Intro: Chapter 1)
- Carnegie Foundation (2017) Arab Fractures: Citizens, States and Social Contract pp 1-14 and 18-20
- Charles Halton and Saana Svad, Ancient Mesopotamia: An Anthology of the Earliest Female Writers (2017) pp 3-15
- Dona Stewart, The Middle East Today: Political Geographical and Cultural Perspectives, 2nd Edition (NY: Routledge 2013) pp. 23- 65
- Edith Gülçin Ambros, Ebru Boyar, Palmira Brummett, Kate Fleet, and Svetla Ianeva, Ottoman Women in Public Space: An Introduction, PP 1-17
- Edward Said, Orientalism (1979) The introduction
- Five Years after the Arab Spring: What's Next for Women in the MENA Region? Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/five-years-after-the-arab-spring- whats-next-for-women-the-mena-region>
- Hanna Arendt, On revolution (pages 11- 58)
- Judith Tucker, Women in the Middle East and North Africa: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, in Women in the Middle East: Restoring Women to History 1999, pp 73-131
- Keddie Nikki, Women in the Middle East, Chapter 1
- Leila Ahmed, Women and Gender in Islam 1992
- Linda Nochlin, The Politics Of Vision: Essays On Nineteenth-century Art And Society, 1089, chapter 3 pp 33-59
- Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition, Musawah 2016
- Middle East Report 268-Gender Front Lines (Vol. 43, Fall 2013).

- Mona Eltahawy, Why do they hate us?
- Ola Galal, Gender Justice and the Possibilities and Limits of Digital Mobilization in Post- Arab Spring Tunisia, 2021, <https://items.ssrc.org/10-years-after-the-arab-spring/gender-justice-and-the-possibilities-and-limits-of-digital-mobilization-in-post-arab-spring-tunisia/>
- Sarah Graham-Brown, Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950 (Quartet, 1988). Selections
- Stowasser Barbara, Women in the Quoran, the chapter of Zulaykha
- The Uprisings will be gendered, (jadaliyya)
- Timeline of Revolts: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/arab-and-middle-east-protests>
- UNDP, Arab Human Development Report 2005 THE ARAB WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: STRUGGLES AND EXPERIENCES https://arab-hdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/ahdr-report_2005-en-chapter_5.pdf
- Webinar Recording, The Prophet and Khadija: Partners in Marriage , Jan 26th 2021, Musawah
- William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, A History of the Modern Middle East, 5th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), chapter 26, "The 2011 Arab Uprisings," 522-540.
- Yasmin Moll, Living through Thick Concepts in Revolutionary Egypt 2021, <https://items.ssrc.org/10-years-after-the-arab-spring/living-through-thick-concepts-in-revolutionary-egypt/>

Assessment Overview

Description	Weight	Due Date
Overall Participation	20%	Ongoing
Weekly News	20%	Ongoing
Blog (700-750)	20%	
Final Research Paper	40%	First Day of Exams

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.

Beyond being in class on time, expectations of student engagement that are accounted for in this portion of the grade include both quality and quantity: full involvement in in-class exercises, class discussions, active listening and asking questions, and proactively seeking additional help during office hours if needed. Throughout the semester, there are a number and variety of program activities that are mandatory for all students. They are announced in advance and reminders are sent. Failure to attend mandatory program activities therefore reflects negatively on students' attendance and engagement grade.

Attendance Policy

Please see the terms of the attendance policy as noted in the LMS for this course.

Assessment Tasks

Overall Participation (20%) Ongoing

This is a participation grade, pure attendance is not enough, it is about engagement with course material, demonstrating that you understand the reading material and engage in discussions.

Come prepared with questions and/ or comments.

Each week, two students will lead the discussion by presenting the class reading, students should do outside research, find poetry, photographs, literature, or films/ movies and any interesting reading material related to the class subject and share it with the rest of the students via email by 5 pm the day before the class.

There are some books at the Amideast Library that could be of use, I will name suggest a few:

- Fran Lioyd, Contemporary Arab Womens Art: Dialogues to the Present (1999)
- Karin Van Nieuwkerk, A Tradition Like AnyOther, Female Singers and Dancers in Egypt , University of Texas Press (2006)
- Amal Al-Malki, et al, Arab Women in Arab News, Qatar Foundation (2012)
- Suha Sabbagh, Arab Women Between Defiance and Restraint, Olive Branch Press (1996)

Weekly News (20%)

I will ask you about the news of the week and expect you to remain updated. Watch Aljazeera, Alarabiyah, Ammon English and the Arab news outlets. In addition, check top trends on twitter in Jordan and capture which ones relate to women. We will dedicate a portion at the beginning of each class to discuss some of the pieces. We will focus on how the news is written, any biases, etc.

Blog (20%) by March 15, 2022

Write a (700-750 word) blog on an issue related to our course based on your reflection of the reading and what you are experiencing by living in Jordan. I will grade for clarity and strength of argument. I would encourage publishing those blogs at your own local outlets.

Final Research Paper (40%) Due on First day of Exams

The final paper should critic one of the readings, or pose a theoretical question. The paper should be analytical, not descriptive. Keep the following in mind:

- Layout: double space, Times New Roman, font 12. Margins 1 inch from all sides
- Length: 10 – 15 pages
- A research question: what do you plan to analyze, and be as specific as you can
- Rely on at least 4 academic articles. You can use news-papers and web articles but they will not count as academic articles.
- Assignments submitted late will drop 3 grades for the every 24 hours.

Course Schedule

MODULE: Women, Middle East, and struggles of power

Week 1: Introduction: the Arab World, social movements and hegemonies

This week, we go over the logistics. We also begin to understand the last the last few centuries. How did the Middle East become what it is today? This week is important to set the context for the topics of the semester.

Readings:

- Edward Said, Orientalism (1979) The introduction
- All Country Profiles on BBC
- Timeline of Revolts: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/arab-and-middle-east-protests>

Additional Reading:

- Dona Stewart, The Middle East Today: Political Geographical and Cultural Perspectives, 2nd Edition (NY: Routledge 2013) pp. 23- 65

Week 2: Revolutions, social movements and hegemonies

In this session we explore some critical concepts such as social movements, awakenings, struggles of power, a revolution. How should we understand power struggles in the Middle East?

Readings:

- Beinín, Joel and Frederic Vairel, eds 2011. Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa, Stanford University Press (Intro: part 1 1)
- Carnegie Foundation (2017) Arab Fractures: Citizens, States and Social Contract pp 1-14 and 18-20, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/02/01/arab-fractures-citizens-states-and-social-contracts-pub-66612>

Additional Readings:

- Marc Lynch, The Arab Uprising, Public Affairs NY 2011 (4 copies are available in the Amideast Library)
- Al Saban Center, The Arab Awakening, 2011 (one copy at the Amideast Library)
- Jean-Pierre Filiu, The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprisings 2011, Oxford University Press.
- After the Arab Spring: Economic Transitions in the Arab World (2012) Oxford University Press
- Foreign Affairs, The New Arab World, 2011
- Bayat Asef, Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East (chapter 1)

In the next sessions, we will analyze women's economic, cultural, social and political roles and how they were affected after struggles and political shifts. A significant part is to locate the voices of women as much as possible. The rights of women were set in law and this era offers some valuable insights for later sessions and understanding the progression in later centuries.

Week 3: Women in the Pre Islamic Middle East

Readings:

- Leila Ahmed, Women and Gender in Islam 1992 (chapter 2) Mesopotamia 11-24, and The Mediterranean Middle East 25-37
- Charles Halton and Saana Svad, Ancient Mesopotamia: An Anthology of the Earliest Female Writers (2017) pp 3-15

Week 4: Women in the Rise of Islam

Readings:

- Keddie Nikki, Women in the Middle East, Chapter 1
- Laila Ahmed, Women and Gender in Islam, Chapter 3

Week 5: Women in the Quoran and Hadith: The issue of Qiwama and Wilaya

In this session, we will attempt to unpack two very contentious terms: Wilayah and Qiwama. Read the resources with ** first

Readings:

- **Asma Barlas, Believing Women in Islam, Understanding Patriarchal Interpretations of Quoraan.
- **Amina Wadud, Quoran and Women: Reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective Oxford University Press 1999, pages 15-43
- **Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition, Musawah 2016
- **Webinar Recording, The Prophet and Khadija: Partners in Marriage , Jan 26th 2021, Musawah

Additional Reading:

- Fatima Mernissi, The Veil and the Male Elite (1991), available at the Amideast Library
- Stowasser Barbara, Women in the Quoran, the chapter of Zulaykha

Week 6: Reflections on Draft Blogs

Week 7: Women in the Abbasid, Medieval and Ottoman Periods

Readings:

- Ahmed, Leila. Women and Gender in Islam. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. (chapters 4, 5, and 6)
- Iris Agmon, Muslim Women in Court According to the Sijill of Late Ottoman Jaffa and Haifa, in Amira Sonbol, Women, the Family and Divorce Laws in Islamic History (1996) pp: 126-140.

Additional Reading:

- [Edith Gülçin Ambros](#), [Ebru Boyar](#), [Palmira Brummett](#), [Kate Fleet](#), and [Svetla Ianeva](#), Ottoman Women in Public Space: An Introduction, PP 1-17

Week 8: Women and Orientalism

Readings:

- Linda Nochlin, *The Politics Of Vision: Essays On Nineteenth-century Art And Society*, 1089, chapter 3 pp 33-59
- Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950* (Quartet, 1988). selections

Week 9: Guest Speaker

Week 10: The beginning of Women's movements Women in the 19th century

Readings:

- **Qasem Amin, *The Liberation of Women*, The American University Press in Cairo, 2000: pages 3-34
- Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Islam and Gender: Dilemmas in the Changing Arab World*, in *Islam, Gender, and Social Change* (Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito eds) Oxford University Press (pp 3-29)
- UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2005 THE ARAB WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: STRUGGLES AND EXPERIENCES* https://arab-hdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/ahdr-report_2005-en-chapter_5.pdf

Additional reading:

- Judith Tucker, *Women in the Middle East and North Africa: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, in *Women in the Middle East: Restoring Women to History* 1999, pp 73-131

Week 11: Guest Speaker

Week 12: Women Dynamics in the Arab Spring

What is the relation between the uprising and sexuality? What were the ongoing debates?

Readings:

- Pernille Arenfeldt and Nawar Al-Hassan Golley, *Arab Women's Movements: Development, Priorities, and Challenges* in Pernille Arenfeldt and Nawar Al-Hassan
- Golley, *Mapping Arab Women's Movements: A Century of Transformations from Within* (2012) pp7-42.
- William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 5th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), chapter 26, "The 2011 Arab Uprisings," 522-540.
- Middle East Report 268-Gender Front Lines (Vol. 43, Fall 2013).
- Mona Eltahawy, *Why do they hate us?*

Week 13: The Arab Spring

Readings:

- Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, Chapter 3, "Authorizing Moral Crusades," pp. 81-112; Chapter 5, "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights," pp. 143- 172; Chapter 6, "An Anthropologist in the Territory of Rights," pp. 173-200; and Conclusion, pp. 201-227.

- The Uprisings will be gendered, (jadaliyya)

Week 14: Guest Speaker

Week 15: 10 years after the Arab Spring

Readings:

- Five Years after the Arab Spring: What's Next for Women in the MENA Region? Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/five-years-after-the-arab-spring-whats-next-for-women-the-mena-region>
- Yasmin Moll, Living through Thick Concepts in Revolutionary Egypt 2021, <https://items.ssrc.org/10-years-after-the-arab-spring/living-through-thick-concepts-in-revolutionary-egypt/>
- Ola Galal, [Gender Justice and the Possibilities and Limits of Digital Mobilization in Post-Arab Spring Tunisia](https://items.ssrc.org/10-years-after-the-arab-spring/gender-justice-and-the-possibilities-and-limits-of-digital-mobilization-in-post-arab-spring-tunisia/), 2021, <https://items.ssrc.org/10-years-after-the-arab-spring/gender-justice-and-the-possibilities-and-limits-of-digital-mobilization-in-post-arab-spring-tunisia/>

Week 16: Guest Speaker/Review of Assignments

