

Amideast Education Abroad Programs

WMST 311: Gender, Islam, and Society Syllabus

Program Location: Rabat, Morocco

Credit Hours: 3 Credit Hours

Term and Year:

Course Description:

This course will take a multidisciplinary look at gender within the context of Muslim majority countries with a particular focus on Morocco. A major part of the course will be fieldwork oriented. Some of the class sessions will be visits to women's associations, both secular and Islamic. Discussion will focus on the processes of empowerment and disempowerment that are engendered by Islamic and secular women's activism in Morocco. The overall objective is to introduce students to contemporary scholarship on women's issues, feminist activism in both a secular and Islamic context, and the nature of women's engagement with power in the Islamic world. In addition to fieldwork visits to some Moroccan women's associations, students will read texts written by academic and activist feminists. The overall objective is to introduce students to contemporary feminist scholarship and activism within the contexts of predominantly Muslim societies.

Aims and Objectives of the Course:

- To introduce and discuss the issues pertaining to women and society within the context of Muslim-majority countries in general and Morocco in particular.
- To present and place current legislation on gender equality into the wider political, historical, and cultural context of contemporary Morocco.
- To get a sense of what Islam has to say about women's rights.
- To develop an interdisciplinary understanding of Islamic and secular feminist ideologies in Morocco, in their academic and activist variants.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Assess women's roles in early Islamic and contemporary Muslim-majority societies.
- Evaluate the status of contemporary feminist scholarship and activism and their engagement with power.
- Explain and provide examples of the complexity of women's rights, legal change, and feminism in Morocco.
- Analyze feminist activism in Morocco.
- Demonstrate an individual and critical approach to the concept of gender in Islam.

Knowledge:

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

- Women and Islam.
- The historical development of the "Women's Question" within the context of Muslim-majority countries.
- Women and state formation within the context of Muslim-majority countries.
- Women, religion, and reform.
- Secular feminism.
- Islamic feminism.
- Islamist women's activism.
- Gender and public sphere.

Skills:

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

- Analyzing Islamic and secular feminist discourses in Morocco.
- Drawing connections between academic and activist feminisms in Morocco.
- Critically analyzing various representations of “Muslim women.”

Attitudes:

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

- Appreciating the complexity and cultural subtleties of gender and society in Muslim-majority countries.
- Individual and critical positions towards biased representations of cultural differences.
- Appreciation for the development of communicative skills within different cultural contexts.

Required Readings:

All required readings for the course are in the LMS and are indicated in the Course Schedule.

- **Useful Websites –**

1. Fatima Mernissi
<http://www.mernissi.net/>
2. Nadia Yassine
<http://nadiayassine.net/fr/>
3. Asma Lamrabet
<http://www.asma-lamrabet.com/html/default.htm>
4. Ministry of Religious Affairs
<http://www.marocislam.com/fr/detail.aspx?id=413&z=244&p=3>
5. ADFM
<http://www.adfm.ma/index.php?lang=fr>
6. Anaruz
<http://www.anaruz.org/portail>
7. Sisters in Islam
<http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/>
8. Musawah
<http://www.musawah.org/>
9. Karamah
<http://www.karamah.org/>

- **Additional Readings:**

1. Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2001.
2. Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
3. Ali, Kecia. *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith and Jurisprudence*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2006.
4. Asad, Talal. *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*. Center for Contemporary Arab Studies Occasional Papers Series. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1986.
5. An-Naim, Abdullahi, “The Dichotomy Between Religious and Secular Discourse in Islamic Societies” in *Faith and Freedom, Women's Rights in the Muslim World*, Mahnaz Afkhami (ed.) (London: Syracuse University Press, 1995, 51-60).
6. Badran, Margot, “Gender Journeys in/to Arabic” in *Language and Linguistics*, No. 9 (2002): 79-97.
7. Barlas, Asma. *“Believing Women” in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.
8. Bessis, Sophie, and Belhassan Souhayer. *Femmes du Maghreb: L'enjeu* (Paris: Eddif, 1992).

9. Belghazi, Taieb, and Madani Mohammed. *L'action collective au maroc: de la mobilisation à la prise de parole* (Rabat: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 2001).
10. Bourqia, Rahma. *Femmes et fécondité* (Casablanca: Afrique Orient, 1996).
11. *Etudes féminines: Notes méthodologiques* (Rabat: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines. *Séries colloques et séminaires*, No. 73, 1997).
12. "Women, Uncertainty, and Reproduction in Morocco" in *Family, Gender and Population in the Middle East*, Carla Makhlouf Obermyer (ed) (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1995), 136-144.
13. Cooke, Miriam. *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism through Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
14. Daoud, Zakia. *Féminisme et politique au Maghreb: Soixante ans de Lutte* (Casablanca: Editions Eddif, 1993).
15. "Femmes, mouvements féministes et changement social au Maghreb" in *Islam et changement social*, Mondher Kilani (ed) (France: Payot Lausanne, 1998), 247-259.
16. El Harras, Mokhtar. "Féminité et masculinité dans la société rurale Marocaine, le cas d'anjra" in *Femmes culture et société au Maghreb*, R. Bourqia, M. Charrad and N. Gallagher (eds) (Casablanca: Afrique-orient, 1996).
17. Esposito, John L. *Islam: The Straight Path*. 3d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
18. Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. Introduction to *In Search of Islamic Feminism: One Woman's Global Journey*, xi-xvi. New York and London: Doubleday, 1998.
19. Lazreg, Marnia. "Decolonizing Feminism" in *The Eloquence of Silence* (New York-London: Routledge, 1994), 6-19.
20. Majid, Anouar. "The Politics of Feminism in Islam" in *Signs*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Winter 1998): 321-362.
21. Mernissi, Fatima. "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco" in *Feminist Issues* 2/2 (1982), 69-104.
22. *La Peur modernité : Conflit Islam démocratie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992).
23. *Le Monde n'est pas un harem: Paroles de femmes du Maroc* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991).
24. "Etat planification nationale et discours scientifique sur la femme" in *Portrait de femme*, collection Approches (Casablanca: Le Fennec, 1987), 21-45.
25. "Population without Democracy? The Conflict between the Muslim State and Women" in *Women's Rebellion and Islam Memory* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1996), 46-63.
27. Interview with Serge MENAGER in *Le Maghreb littéraire*, University of Natal, République d'Afrique du Sud. Vol II N 4 (1998): 97-119.
28. Rhiwi, Leila, "Le Mouvement des femmes au Maroc" in *Bulletin économique et social du Maroc: rapport du social* (Rabat: Okad, 2000), 141-146.
29. M. Moudden, Abdelhay, "Cultural Struggles In Morocco" in *Proceedings of the Conference Cultural Studies, Interdisciplinarity, and The University*, Mohammed Dahbi, Mohammed Ezroua and Lahcen Haddad (eds), Rabat: Publications of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences (1996), 135-145.
30. Sherine, Hafez, *The Terms of Empowerment: Islamic Women Activists in Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2001).
31. Wadud, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman* (preface, introduction, chap 1 = pp ix-28)

Assessment Overview:

Description	Weight	Due Date
Engagement	20%	Continuous
Midterm Exam	20%	
Essay	10%	
Research Paper	20%	Topic Proposal Due: Final Paper Due:
Final Exam	30%	

Assessment Tasks –**Attendance and Engagement:**

This course is discussion based. Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and come fully prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. This will directly affect your Engagement grade. Students may be asked to answer questions related to the required readings; failing to answer questions two times in the semester, results in losing 60% of the Engagement grade. Students who are uncomfortable talking in class should take advantage of office hours to discuss ways to contribute to the discussion. Students must give at least one presentation on the recommended readings during the semester. Students are further expected to be on time for all classes. Arriving late for class is disrespectful of both the instructor and fellow students.

For more on the attendance policy, please see the policy posted in the online course and on the Absence request site on the Student Portal.

Midterm Exam:

The midterm will be an in-class, open book exam. Students choose one question (out of 3 or 4) and write an essay of about 900-1000 words. Duration: 2 hours on ...

Essay:

A reaction essay in which students engage with Stéphanie Bordat's article (Recommended reading for Week 10) in addition to using notes and observations from the field visit to the Islamist women's organization. Due ... (900 to 1000 words).

Research Paper:

Students will write a research paper on a topic related to the course. Research based on interviews is strongly recommended to benefit from the student's presence in Morocco. It should be between 3,000 and 3,500 words long. Students will need to submit a proposal for the topic of this research paper on ... and a final draft on ...

Final Exam:

The final exam will be in-class and open book. It will mainly cover material studied after the midterm exam. Students choose one question (out of 2 or 3) and write an essay of 900 to 1000 words.

Some Study Guidelines for Class Discussions:

1. How does the text shed light on the understanding of issues of women/gender and Islam?
2. What are the particular issues raised in this text? How are the issues presented?
3. What are the particular lessons you have learned from this text?
4. In what ways does the text refer issues of culture, society, and religion?
5. How relevant is the issue of this text to women throughout the world or is this an issue of limited geographic importance?

Course Schedule:

Week	Topics to be Covered	Learning Outcomes	Readings/Preparation	Assignments/ Work Due
Week 1	<u>Introduction to the Course</u>	Get a general idea of gender issues in Morocco - Lecture on Gender and Politics in Morocco		Answer questions from the board on a piece of paper and seal it in an envelope. (Provided by the professor)
Week 2	Postcolonial Feminism	Discuss feminism and the challenges/differences in Algeria and learn about postcolonialism feminism.	1. Marnia Lazreg, "Decolonizing Feminism" in <i>The Eloquence of Silence</i> 2. Deniz Kandiyoti, Bargaining with Patriarchy. Recommended Reading: - Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" - Fatima Mernissi, ". <i>Beyond the Veil</i> " (Chapters 1 & 2)	
Week 3	Secular Feminism	Discuss and analyze feminist texts written from a secular perspective and identify their points, strengths, and limitations.		Class Discussion on the required readings. Prepare questions to ask the leaders of the organization and take notes during visit.

Week 4	Islamic Feminism	<p>Understand the historical and political contexts within which Islam maintained and changed women's status.</p> <p>Get a sense of the political foundations of the representation of the "Muslim Woman."</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fatima Mernissi, <i>The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam</i> (Preface, Introduction, chapters 3, 5, 9, 10). 2. Margot, Badran, <i>Between Secular and Islamic texts Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond</i>. <p>Recommended readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asma Lamrabet, "An Egalitarian Reading of the Concept of Khilafa and Qiwwamah" - Amina Wadud, <i>Quran and Woman</i> (chapter 4) - Ziba mir Hosseini, <i>Muslim Women's Quest for Equality: Between Islamic Law and Feminism + Musawah website: https://www.musawah.org/</i> 	Debrief of the visit and discussion of the assigned texts.
Week 5	Islamic Female Dress and the Veil Debate	Get a sense of the linguistic and theological significance of the veil.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anne Sophie Roald, "Islamic Female Dress," in <i>Women in Islam: The Western Experience</i> 2. Leila Ahmed, "The Veil Debate Again" & "Veil of Ignorance: Have we gotten the headscarf all wrong?" <p>Recommended readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abu Lughod, <i>An Anthropologist in the Territory of Rights</i> 	Discussion of the assigned texts
Week 6	The Colonial Harem	Discuss the Colonial and Western narrative of the Veil	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malek Alloula <i>The Colonial Harem</i> 2. Fatima Mernissi, "Size 6: the Western Women's Harem" <p>Recommended readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joan Scott, <i>SYMPTOMATIC POLITICS: The Banning of Islamic Head Scarves in French Public Schools</i> - Eric Fassin, <i>National Identities and Transnational Intimacies: Sexual Democracy and the Politics of Immigration in Europe</i> 	<p>Class discussion of the required text.</p> <p>Please note: Proposals for Research papers Due</p>
Week 7	<u>Midterm</u>	<u>Midterm Exam</u>		

Week 8	<u>Break</u>	No Class: Break		
Week 9	Women, Capitalist Development	Discuss the impact of neoliberal policies on women living in rural areas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fatima Mernissi, Women and capitalist development in Morocco, Part one 2. Zakia Salime, Women and the Right to Land in Morocco: The Sulaliyyates Movement <p>Recommended readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Samia Errazouki, Working-class women revolt: gendered political economy in Morocco - Watch: Soraya EL KAHLAOUI, Landless Moroccans http://www.landlessmoroccans.com/en/home_page/ 	
Week 10	Islamist Women's activism	How do Islamist female leaders define their activism? How is feminism re-appropriated and transformed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nadia Yassine, "On the Status of Women in Islam", "Is there an Islamic feminist movement?" & "Islamic Feminism" 2. Stephanie Bordat, et al, "WOMEN AS AGENTS OF GRASSROOTS CHANGE: ILLUSTRATING MICRO-EMPOWERMENT IN MOROCCO." 	Write a 3-page reaction essay in which you engage with Bordat's article, weaving into it your own notes and observations of the Islamist women's organization.
Week 11	Legal reform and Women's religious leadership	Learn about the Family Code change and understand the social and political significance of the Family Code change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Katja Zvan Elliott, "Reforming the Moroccan Personal Status Code: A Revolution for Whom?" <p><u>Film Screening:</u> Casablanca Calling</p> <p>Recommended readings:</p> <p>Morocco's human rights progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch PBS documentary "Class of 2006: Female Religious Guides in Morocco" 	Essay Due

Week 12	The Politics of the Family Law Reform in Morocco	Understand the political background of the reform and the emergence of female religious guides in Morocco (Murshidats) and discuss the prospects and limitations of such policies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zakia Salime, "The War on Terrorism: Appropriation and Subversion by Moroccan Women". 2. Silvia Gagliardi, Violence against women: the stark reality behind Morocco's human rights progress. <p>Recommended reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zakia Salime, A New Feminism? Gender Dynamics in Morocco's February 20th Movement. - Nicola Pratt, "The Gender Logics of Resistance to the 'War on Terror': constructing sex-gender difference through the erasure of patriarchy in the Middle East". - Souad Eddouada and Renatta Pepicelli, Morocco towards an "Islamic State Feminism". 	
Week 13	<u>Excursion</u>	No Class: Excursion		Final Paper
Week 14	Do Muslim women need saving?	Discuss the following questions: What are the assumptions behind the narrative of salvation? Are feminist concepts and ideals universal?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lila Abu Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?: Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativisms and Its Others" in American Anthropologist (2002): 783-790 2. Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival", <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 16(2): 202-236, 2001, American Anthropological Association <p>Recommended readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carol A. Stabile and Deepa Kumar, "Unveiling imperialism: Media, gender and the war on Afghanistan" - Mahmood and Hirshkind, "Feminism the Taliban and the Politics of Counterinsurgency". 	Read the required texts.

Week 15	<u>Final</u>	<u>Final Exam</u>	
Week 16	<u>Reflection Week</u>	<p>Reflect on your experience living in Morocco and taking the course.</p> <p>Discuss the learning outcomes of the course.</p>	<p>General Discussion.</p> <p>Open envelopes containing your response to the questions asked in the beginning of the course. To what extent have you changed?</p>