

Women and Gender in Islam

370A

Tiffany Hodge

Office: 217 Emison

Email: tiffanyhodge@depauw.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-5, Wednesdays 9-12

Course Time: 12:40-2:10

Location: EM 211

Description:

Women and gender are crucial to understanding the political, social, economic and intellectual life of Muslim communities from seventh-century Arabia to the present-day United States. This course will cover significant moments in the religious and intellectual history of Muslim societies and explore several modern cases. Through each, we will be asking several questions, including: How does gender structure authority within social, religious, and family domains? How does the tension between egalitarian and hierarchical ideals play out? What, if anything, is specifically “Islamic” about the situations under discussion? And how have scholars, both Western and non-Western, Muslim and non-Muslim, approached the study of these topics?

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, each student will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key debates and questions as it relates to women and gender in Islam
- Critically analyze media and scholarly discussion of Muslim women and gender in Islam
- Demonstrate understanding of the complex ways in which the writers of religious texts approach key issues surrounding women’s rights, roles, and responsibilities, and the diversity of perspectives that interpreters have brought to these questions throughout Muslim history

Class Expectations:

As a 300-level seminar, this course will approach its subject material through discussion and written analysis.

A note on Participation:

‘C’ Range: The student meets the basic requirements of participation. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student’s contributions relate to the texts and the lectures and offer a few insightful ideas, but do not facilitate a discussion. Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of these criteria will result in a grade *below* a ‘C.’

‘B’ Range: This student participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to class well prepared and contributes quite regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the materials discussed in lecture and shows interest in other students’ contributions.

‘A’ Range: This student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts’ relation to issues raised in class. This student’s ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to contributions of other students.

Grading:

Quizzes	15%
Discussion Board	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Research Paper	20%
~Presentation	10%
Participation	15%

All components of the course must be completed in order to receive a course grade; failure to fulfill any of the class expectations or graded components will result in a course grade of “F.”

Discussion Board: You will be asked to post on the discussion board either on Tuesday or Thursday. There are nine weeks in which you can post; I will take the top SEVEN grades. Posts should be between 200 and 250 words.

Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbooks.asp?ID=101&parentid=100>

On Plagiarism: <http://www.depauw.edu/admin/arc/W-center/plag.asp>

ADA Statement:

“DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and University administered activities and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located in Harrison Hall, 302 A, 765-658-6267. It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation faculty and staff members. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.”

Required Texts:

- Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam*
- Mohja Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*
- Jamillah Karim, *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah*
- Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*
- Nikki Keddie, *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*

Other course materials will be posted on Moodle or on Reserve at the library.

Course Schedule

* All readings should be completed *before* the listed class

8/25 *Introduction*

8/30 *Gender as Category of Analysis*

- Joan W. Scott, "Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?" *Diogenes* 57, 7 (2010): 7-14.
- Nikki Keddie, "Introduction: Deciphering Middle Eastern Women's History," in *WMEH*, pp. 1-23

9/1 *Women Reading the Qur'an*

- Asma Barlas, "The Quran and Muslim Women" in *Believing Women In Islam*, 1-28
- M. Siddiqi, "Women Scholars of Hadith" from *Hadith Literature*, 117-123.

9/6 *Female Quranic Figures*

- Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an*, 3-49

9/8 *Female Quranic Figures- II*

- Stowasser, 50-118

9/13 *Women in Early Islam*

- Denise Spellberg, "Political Action and Public Example: A'isha and the Battle of the Camel," in N. Keddie, *WMEH*, 47-57
- R. Roded, "Mystic Women" from *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*, 91-109
- Serenity Young, "Biographies of Sufi Women," 110-114.

9/15 *Western Representations of Muslim Women*

- Mohja Kahf, "Introduction," in *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque*

** Note: We will have a guest today in our class: Mohja Kahf, whose fiction work we will be reading towards the end of the semester.

9/20 *Women in the Medieval Period*

- Jonathan Berkey, "Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period," from *WMEH*, pp. 143-160
- Carl Petry, "Women as Custodians of Property in Medieval Egypt," from *WMEH*, pp. 122-142
- Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-century Cairene women," from *WMEH*, 99-121.

9/22 *Law and the Jurists*

- Judith Tucker, "The Law, the Courts, and the Muftis," "With Her Consent: Marriage," & "Release Her with Kindness: Divorce," in *In the House of the Law: Gender and Islamic Law in Ottoman Syria and Palestine*, pp. 1-10, 37-112

9/27 *Sexuality, Love, and Lust*

- James Bellamy, "Sex and Society in Popular Literature," *Society and the Sexes in Medieval Islam*, 23-41
- J.C. Burgel "Love, Lust, and Longing: Eroticism in Early Islam as Reflected in Literary Sources," *SSMI*, 81-117
- Coulson, "Regulation of Sexual Behavior under Traditional Islamic Law," *SSMI*, 63-68

9/29 *Gender Boundaries*

- Watch *Jihad for Love*, part I, on youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-ESJEZemiQ> (Feel free to watch more...)
- Sanders, "Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law"

10/4 *Sexual Ethics and Law- Marriage, Sex*

- Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam*, 1-35

10/6 *Sexual Ethics and Law – Slaves, Illicit Sex*

- Ali, 36-96

NOTE: By this date, you should have your research project idea approved by the professor.

Note: Parvez Sharma will be on campus to discuss his film, "Jihad for Love," part of which we will view when we discuss homosexuality.

10/11 *Sexual Ethics and Law– Circumcision, Female Bodies*

- Ali, 97-157

10/13 **MIDTERM EXAM**

You will receive your Midterm exam grade when you return from Fall Break, thus giving you plenty of time to decide whether or not you want to drop the course. The last day to drop with a “W” on your transcript is October 28.

FALL BREAK : October 15-23

10/25 *Muslim Family Life*

- Esposito, "Classical Muslim Family Law"
- Khomeini, "Precepts of Wedding or Marriage and Matrimony" from *A Clarification of Questions*

10/27 *Muslim Family Law II*

- Musallam, "Contraception and the Rights of Women" from *Sex and Society in Islam*
- Watch “The Price of Change” VHS HQ1793 .P75 1982

11/1 *Ethnographic Accounts- Family Life*

- Fernea, *Guests of the Sheikh*

11/3 *American Muslims and Race*

- Jamillah Karim, *American Muslim Women*, 1-124

11/8 *American Muslims and Race, II*

- Karim, 125-242

11/10 **NO CLASS** (Professor will be in Atlanta)

11/15 *Veiling, Modesty, and Islamic Dress*

- Sherif, "What is *Hijab*"
- Williams "Veiling in Egypt as a Political and Social Phenomenon"

11/17 *Women as Religious Leaders*

- Wadud, "Public Ritual Leadership and Gender Inclusiveness," and sections on woman-led prayer in *Inside the Gender Jihad*, pp. 158-186 & 246-253
- Hina Azam, "A Critique of the Argument for Woman-led Friday Prayers," http://www.altmuslim.com/a/a/a/a_critique_of_the_argument_for_woman_led_friday_prayers/

11/22 *Islamic Feminism*

- Margot Badran, "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond," in *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 6-28

THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/29 Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*

12/1 Presentations

12/6 Presentations

12/8 Presentations and Course Evaluations

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE at end of
FINAL EXAM period for our class**