

WGST 231
Sexual Politics in the Arab World
Summer 2017
Distance Learning

Professor Fatemeh Hosseini

Office: ICC 456

Office Hours: virtually via zoom and by appointment

Email: fh256@georgetown.edu

Course Description

The aim of this course is to explore the ways in which the social and cultural construction of sexual difference shapes the politics of gender and sexuality in the Middle East and North Africa. Using interdisciplinary feminist theories, we will explore key issues and debates including the interaction of religion and sexuality, women's movements and feminisms, gender-based violence, queerness, masculinity, the sex industry, and finally the crossroads of sexuality and technology." We will examine women's and gender's place in the various revolutions and uprisings across the Arab World as we explore the varied and shifting gender dynamics in the region. Particular attention will be paid to the historical contexts of various topics.

Course Objectives

- Identify and comprehend key theoretical concepts in the study of gender and sexuality.
- Describe and discuss prevalent themes in the study of gender and sexuality in the Middle East and explain them within their historical contexts.
- Recognize how knowledge about gender and sexuality in the Middle East is produced and apply this to future scholarship.
- Develop critical analysis skills to interpret past and current debates and changes concerning gender and sexuality in the MENA region.
- Improve research and writing skills through assignments.

Required Texts

Readings (articles and selected chapters) and videos will be posted on Canvas. Occasionally links will be emailed to the account on file with Canvas.

Note: Syllabus is subject to change. All changes will be communicated in class and via email.

Assignments and Course Requirements

Class Participation **25%**

This is a discussion based class. I expect students to participate fully in the online class activities and discussions. You will reflect on, engage with, and discuss the topic(s) under consideration by utilizing the reading materials assigned. To foster participation, you are required to post a brief summary of the main arguments of one reading/s one time during the semester and provide the class with 2 discussion questions.

Media Journal **10% (7 articles total)**

Every week for the first seven weeks of class by Friday 11:59 pm (EST), you are required to post a media article of your choosing related to the topic of the week to Canvas. This can be from traditional or non-traditional media sources. It can include a news article, opinion piece, advertisement, movie trailer, or song. You will be required to comment on your classmates' articles from ONE Week.

Midterm **15%**

In class midterm will be based on lectures and readings. It will include essays, short answer questions, and identification.

Written Response Papers **15%**

You will hand in a total of 5 response papers (3% each) based on the assigned reading in the second half of the course. In your response, engage with the reading material for that week. This could be something you find particularly important, insightful, or misguided, or something that puzzled or surprised you. You may also wish to relate the readings to a current event or popular culture. This is somewhat of an open-ended assignment. However, keep in mind, "analysis" does NOT mean merely summarizing a reading or referring to it in general terms. You need to think critically about each author's arguments and to compare specific aspects of multiple readings. This should include two specific questions for class discussion. 350-500 words.

Research Essay or Project **35% (proposal 5%, rough draft 5%, final paper and presentation 25%)**

To be discussed. 8-10 pages

Important Dates:

Research Project Proposal Due

Midterm Exam

Research Project Rough Draft Due

Final Paper Due

Course Policies

- This is not a course with right or wrong answers. The aim is to “hear” different perspectives and understand why and how these individual and collective conflicting viewpoints are made.
- Practice being *curious* about others’ experiences without needing to be *right*.
- The class is a safe space for expressing opinions, conflicting at times, backed by research and evidence. Be respectful of your peers and their ideas. You are responsible for contributing to the production of a productive learning community.
- Complete discussion activities on time. This is essential to the “flow” of the course and to the learning environment.

Religious Holidays

“Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.”

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you have a disability that will affect your performance in this class, please contact the Academic Resource Center (<http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/>) for further information. The center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Georgetown Honor Code

Plagiarism: DON’T DO IT. If you are struggling, I am available to help.

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties. All students are held to the Georgetown University Honor Code.

Schedule and Readings

Orientation: **Introductions, Syllabus, Expectations,**

Week 1: 6/05-6/11 **Theory and Background**

- Afsaneh Najmabadi . *Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Historical Analysis?*
- Lila Abu-lughod. *Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism.*
- Pinar Ilkkaracan. *Women, Sexuality, and Social Change in the Middle East.*
- Joseph Massad. *Re-Orienting Desire: the Gay International and the Arab World.*

Week 2: 6/12-6/18 **Religion, Gender, and the Law**

- Ziba Mir-Hosseini. *The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform.*
- Febe Armanios. *The ‘Virtuous Woman’: Images of Gender in Modern Coptic Society.*
- Moulouk Berry. *Gender Debates in Lebanon: Muslim Shi’i Jurisprudence in Relation to Women’s Marital Sexual Rights.*

Week 3: 6/19-6/25 **Women’s Movements**

- Ellen Fleischmann. *The Other “Awakening”: The Emergence of Women’s Movements in the Modern Middle East, 1900-1941.*
- Islah Jad. *The NGO-ization of Arab Women’s Movements.*
- Movie: *Feminism Inshallah*
- Gassan Moussawi. *(Un)critically Queer Organizing: Towards a More Complex Analysis of LGBTQ Organizing in Lebanon.*

Week 4: 6/26- 7/02 **Violence and Resistance**

- Lamia Rustum Shehadeh. *Impact of Armed Conflict on Gender Roles in Lebanon.*

- Nadjé Al-Ali. *Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation*.
- Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. *Towards a Cultural Definition of Rape: Dilemmas in Dealing with Rape Victims in Palestinian Society*.
- Jason Ritchie. *How Do You Say “Come Out of the Closet” in Arabic?: Queer Activism and the Politics of Visibility in Israel-Palestine*.

Week 5: 7/10-7/16 Sexuality, Diaspora, and the Veil

- Leila Ahmed. *The Veil Debate—Again*.
- Mona El-Ghobashy. *Quandaries of Representation*.
- Munerah Ahmed. *My Name is Munerah*.
- Asra Q. Nomani and Hala Arafa. *As Muslim Women, We Actually Ask You Not to Wear the Hijab in the Name of Interfaith Solidarity*.
- Nadine Naber. *Decolonizing Culture: Beyond Orientalist and Anti-Orientalist Feminism*.
- Randa Jarrar. *You are a 14-year-old Arab Chick Who Just Moved to Texas*.
- Huda Jadallah. *Reflections of Genderqueer Palestinian American Lesbian Mother*.
- Watch fashion tutorials and Islamic lifestyle videos online

Week 6 7/11-7/16 The Sex Industry

- Jared McCormick. *Hairy Chest, Will Travel: Tourism, Identity, and Sexuality in the Levant*.
- Jessica Jacobs. *Have Sex Will Travel: Romantic ‘Sex Tourism’ and Women Negotiating Modernity in the Sinai*.
- Hayeon Lee. *The Public and Hidden Sexualities of Filipina Women in Lebanon*.
- Selected readings on Temporary Marriage

Week 7: 7/17-7/23 Technology, Gender, and Masculinity

- Marcia Inhorn. *The New Arab Man* (Selections)
- Watch *Dishing Democracy: Arab Social Reform via Satellite TV* on Blackboard.

- Maya Mikdashi. *At the Beach with Nancy Ajram: Can Lebanon's Plastic Surgery Obsessed Culture Sheathe the Scalpels and Unleash Some Transformative Change for Women?*

Choose one reading:

- Angel Foster. *Tunisia: A Global Leader in Reproductive Health and Rights.*
- Saad Harti. *Morocco: A Personal Account of the Introduction of Saga.*

Week 8: 7/24-7/28 Sexuality and popular Culture

- Ela Greenberg. *'The Kind of the Streets': Hip Hop and the Reclaiming of Masculinity in Jerusalem's Shu'afat Refugee Camp.*"
- Randa Jarrar. *Why I Can't Stand White Belly Dancers.* (watch videos mentioned in article)
- Randa Jarrar. *Why I Still Can't Stand White Belly Dancers.*
- Watch The Salesman
- Choose Music Videos