

**WGST 231
Sexual Politics in the Arab World
Summer 2018
Distance Learning**

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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 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 North Africa (MENA) 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

Required articles and book chapters will be available through Canvas and course reserves. There will also be movies, short clips, and music videos to watch. These will all be available on Canvas.

Assignments and Course Requirements

Please note: all assignments will be due at 11:59pm (EST) on the day they are due regardless of your time zone. If this poses a challenge, communicate this to me early in the semester and we will work something out.

Virtual Class Participation and Activities 31%

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 in each module by utilizing the reading materials assigned. To foster participation, you are required to answer the discussion question/s, provide the class with 2 discussion questions of your own and respond to posts by your peers in a timely manner. This includes both the informal think-aloud activities and the formal discussion board.

Media Journals 7% (7 articles total)

Every week for the first seven weeks of class by Thursday 11:59 pm (EST), you are required to post a media article of your choosing related to the topic of the class to Canvas. I strongly encourage you to post articles that broadly related to the theme of that module. This can be from traditional or non-traditional media sources. It can include a news article, opinion piece, advertisement, movie trailer, or song. The media journals will form the basis of the short paper towards the end of the course, so keep track of your submissions.

Midterm 15%

Timed midterm (1.5 hours) will be based on lectures and readings. We will allocate one day for the midterm and you are required to be available 1.5 hours during that day to take the midterm. It will include essays, short answer questions, and identification. A general study guide will be provided prior to the midterm.

Short Paper 15%

During the last week of class, you will submit a short paper (650-800 words) based on your submitted media journals. Instructions will be posted after the midterm.

Research Essay or Project 32% (proposal 4%, rough draft 4%, presentation 4%, research paper 20%)

You have flexibility in choosing your topic as long as there are enough sources to conduct the research and you are passionate about the topic. The paper should be 8-10 pages in Times New Roman, 12 font.

Important Dates:

Final Research Project Proposal Due: **June 26th**
Midterm Exam: **June 29th (alternate date: July 1st)**
Final Research Project Rough Draft Due: **July 10th**
Short Paper Due: **July 19th**

Final Research Project Presentation Due: **July 24th**
Final Research Project Due: **July 27th**

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 platform 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 as discussions also include responding to each other.

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,

Module 1: 6/05-6/11 Theory and Background

- Leslie Pierce. *Writing Histories of Sexuality in the Middle East*.
- Lila Abu-lughod. *Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism*.
- Joseph Massad. *Re-Orienting Desire: the Gay International and the Arab World*.

Module 2: 6/12-6/18 Feminism and 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*

Module 3: 6/19-6/25 Religion, Gender, and the Law

- Ziba Mir-Hosseini. *The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform*.
- Moulouk Berry. *Gender Debates in Lebanon: Muslim Shi'i Jurisprudence in Relation to Women's Marital Sexual Rights*.

Module 4: 6/26-7/02 Violence, Resistance, and Political Instability

- Lamia Rustum Shehadeh. *Impact of Armed Conflict on Gender Roles in Lebanon*.
- Nadje Al-Ali. *Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation*.
- Recommended: Jason Ritchie. *How Do You Say "Come Out of the Closet" in Arabic?: Queer Activism and the Politics of Visibility in Israel-Palestine*.

Module 5: 7/03-7/09 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*.
- Huda Jadallah. *Reflections of Genderqueer Palestinian American Lesbian Mother*.

Module 6 7/10-7/16 Hidden Economies, the Sex Industry, and Non-normative Desire

- 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*.

Module 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?*

Module 8: 7/24-7/28 Gender and Popular Culture

- Randa Jarrar. *Why I Can’t Stand White Belly Dancers*. (watch videos mentioned in article)
- Conor Friedersdorf. *In Praise of Polyglot Culture*.
- Randa Jarrar. *Why I Still Can’t Stand White Belly Dancers*.
- Watch feature film (choose either *The Salesman* or *Bar Bahar*)
- Watch Music Videos

THIS SYLLABUS IS A DRAFT AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CONSULT WITH INSTRUCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.