



ACADIA  
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

HIST 2693

Winter 2022

**The History of Islam and Gender**

*We acknowledge that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq Nation*

**Instructor:** Dr. Natalie A. Ghosn, Esq.

**Seminars:** Mondays & Wednesdays 2:30-4:00PM

**Classroom:** BAC 241

**Office Hours:** Due to a shared office space and Covid, please email me to set up an appointment.

**Email:** [natalie.ghosn@acadiau.ca](mailto:natalie.ghosn@acadiau.ca)

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Islam and Gender. It will examine the origins of the debates surrounding Islam and Gender as well as its present-day relevance. Students develop tools to investigate how historical and patriarchal notions of gender have shaped current day debates on Islam and Gender. Some of the topics covered in the course include: Introduction to Islam and Gender; Women in the Arabian Peninsula pre-Islam; Muslim women in 7th century Arabia; Muslim Women and European Colonialism; The *Qur'an* and Islamic Dress; The History of Islamic Fashion; Women's Rights Advocates in 19th Century Egypt; Women and Leadership in Islamic Law; Islamophobia; Sex, Desire and Homosexuality in Pre-Modern Islam; Muslim women in the Media; Muslim women in Politics of the Past and Present; Men and Masculinities in Islam,

The Third Gender in Islam (*Hijras*); The history of *Mukhannathan*; Islamic Feminism and Equality in Islam; Islamic Dispute Resolution and Women and Islamic Law.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

Course Textbook: Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate by Leila Ahmed (2021). Available at the Acadia Bookstore.

Other Resources: Additional readings are provided in PDF format on your course website or via *url* link on your syllabus. The PDF documents can be found in the contents section under the corresponding date for the assigned reading. Please follow your syllabus for the schedule of readings.

### **STATEMENT ON CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

Students are always encouraged to share their opinions and challenge accepted ways of thinking. By the same token, students should expect to have their own beliefs and values challenged, both by their instructor and by their classmates. The free exchange of ideas can be an uncomfortable, confusing, and even an upsetting experience, but it is vital to the learning process. As such, the learning process is only possible in an environment where all feel respected and dignified. A classroom is a community, one where every individual is an equal member. For this reason, uncivil, disrespectful, discriminatory, harassing, or disruptive communication and/or conduct are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

As your professor, I will make every effort to accommodate any special needs or circumstances of my students. More information about accessibility services Acadia University can be found at <https://www2.acadiau.ca/student-life/accessiblelearning.html>.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM**

Students must not plagiarize the course readings or other sources. Learn to make proper citations for all direct references or quotations from any source used. Text notes may be placed either at the end of the essay or at the bottom of the page. Students who plagiarize material in essays or are found to be cheating on the tests or exams in this course will receive a zero mark on the assignment and a repeated offence will result in a zero in the course grade. The instructor will write a letter to the Dean of Arts and to the Registrar documenting all incidents of cheating or plagiarism.

## **COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR**

Communicating with the Professor is best by email for shorter questions and by office hour appointment for longer questions.

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

The Writing Centre provides free academic support for students. Tutors are available for conversations to support your academic work and experienced tutors at the Writing Centre help students with academic, professional, or creative written work for undergraduate and graduate programs. For more information or to book an appointment visit their website at <https://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/home.html>.

## **ASSESSMENT**

No credit is given for this course unless all the requirements for it have been completed

Critical Participation - 25%

Op-Ed Assignment - 25%

In-Class Presentations - 20%

Research Paper - 30%

## **MORE INFORMATION ON COURSE ASSESSMENT**

Critical Participation - 25% - Ongoing

Critical participation is worth 25% of your final grade. Students are expected to come to class daily, read the assignments before class and be prepared to discuss them in class. They are also expected to join in class discussion and remain engaged during class time.

Op-Ed Assignment - 25% - Due February 18, 2022

This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade. It asks you to produce an op-ed (opinion editorial) that makes an argument on a contemporary social, cultural, political, economic, etc. issue of your choosing that relates to the topic of gender and Islam. It is important to keep in mind that op-eds are not reportage or literature reviews. Instead, think of the op-ed as a concise narrative essay that presents the writer's opinion or thoughts about an issue. Op-eds can raise awareness about a particular topic and/or aim to persuade others. It can

also substantiate the writer as an expert on a subject. Op-eds follow a particular format and style. These requirements will be reviewed in class. Your op-ed should be about 3-4 pages, double-spaced, in length.

#### Research Paper Presentations - 20% - In-Class on March 14, 2022 and March 16, 2022

Research paper presentations are worth 20% of your final grade. Presentations will take place in class on March 14th and March 16th. The presentation is designed as an opportunity to present your ideas and research for your upcoming research paper. It will allow you to gain feedback from your professor and your fellow students to help you develop your ideas and arguments. If you are a student suffering from anxiety you may reach out to your professor and make special arrangements to present to me during office hours; however, it is highly encouraged that everyone present their paper during class as the objective of the presentation is to get constructive feedback from your classmates.

#### Research Paper - 30% - Due April 6, 2022

The research paper is worth 30% of your final grade. The research paper will be 1500-2000 words in length. Standard formatting requirements will be required (double-spaced, times new roman font, standard margins, page numbers, cover page). The paper must include proper citations and a works cited page. Detailed requirements as well as a list of suggested questions will be presented in class. For this project, students will develop a research question of their own choosing that must be approved by the instructor prior to the commencement of the project.

#### **COURSE POLICIES**

1) Late Assignments: All assignments must be submitted on the due date at the stated time, unless accompanied by a doctor's note or other form of documentation. Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day, including on weekends.

2) Handing in Assignments: Assignments should be handed in electronically via the assignment dropbox on the course website. If you require another arrangement, please let me know in advance.

3) E-mail and Phone: I encourage you to reach out to me via email for any help you require with course materials and assignments. I will respond to your email within 2 days. **Students are required to use their Acadia e-mail account for course-related correspondence.**

4) Course Website: Acorn will be used to post the course outline and reading materials. Class notes will not be posted on Acorn. Acorn e-mail will not be used.

5) Correct Use of Language: Correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of all written assignments.

### **GRADE SCALE**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>	<b>Percentage Points</b>	<b>Rating</b>
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent
A	4.00	85-89	
A-	3.70	80-84	
<hr/>			
B+	3.30	77-79	Good
B	3.00	73-76	
B-	2.70	70-72	
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C+	2.30	67-69	Satisfactory
C	2.00	63-66	
C-	1.70	60-62	
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D	1.00	50-59	Marginal
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F	0.00	0-49	Failure or Withdrawal After Deadline

### **TOPICS AND WEEKLY READINGS**

**January 10, 2022 - Introduction to the Course**

**January 12, 2022 - Studying Gender in Historical Context**

Read: *Introduction: Gender and the Study of Religion* by Ursula King in *Religion & Gender* edited by Ursula Kind (1995).

Read: *Women Researching, Women Researched: Gender as an Issue in Empirical Study of Religion* by Kim Knott in *Religion and Gender* edited by Ursula Kind (1995).

**January 17, 2022 - The Pre-Islamic Middle East**

Read: *Mesopotamia* (Chapter 1, Course Textbook).

Read: *The Mediterranean Middle East* (Chapter 2, Course Textbook).

### **January 19, 2022 - Introducing Islam and Islamic History**

Read: *An Overview of Islamic History in Understanding Islam*, An Introduction by C.T.R. Hewer (2006).

### **January 24, 2022 - Women and the Rise of Islam**

Read: *Women and the Rise of Islam* (Chapter 3, Course Textbook).

### **January 26, 2022 - Famous Women in Islamic History**

Read: *15 Important Muslim Women in History*, Ballandalus (2014) available at <https://ballandalus.wordpress.com/2014/03/08/15-important-muslim-women-in-history/>.

### **January 31, 2022 - What is Scripture**

Read: *What is Scripture? Pursuing Smith's Question* by Steven G. Smith, Anglican Theological Review, Vol. 90, Issue 4 (Fall 2008).

### **February 2, 2022 - Difficult Scripture in the Qur'an on Women**

Read: *Education of Women in Islam: A Critical Islamic Interpretation of the Qur'an* by Abdulai Abukari, Religious Education, Vol. 109 (2014).

### **February 7, 2022 - Women and the Qur'an Spiritual Requirements**

Read: *The Right to Spiritual Equality, Does it Exist in Islam?* by Shafferan Sonneveld, Religion and Women's Equality, Berkley Center (2016)  
<https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/the-right-to-spiritual-equality-does-it-exist-in-islam>.

### **February 9, 2022 - Patriarchy and Religion**

Read: *Patriarchy versus Islam: Gender and Religion in Economic Growth* by Elissa Braunstein, Feminist Economics, Routledge (2014).

Read: *The Non-Religious Patriarchy: Why Losing Religion HAS NOT Meant Losing Male Dominance* by Ashley F. Miller, Wiley Online Library (2013).

Read: *Religion, Gender and Patriarchy: Awakening to my Self-Conscious Resocialization* by Sharon Brown, Human Architecture Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge (2005).

## **February 14, 2022 - Muslim Women, Traditional Gender Roles and Food**

Read: *Muslim Women's Evolving Leadership Roles: A Case Study of Women Leaders in an Immigrant Muslim Community post-9/11 America* by Yuting Wang, Social Compass SAGE Journals (2017).

## **February 16, 2022 - Islam, Gender and the Media**

Read: *Religion and the News: Stories, Contexts, Journalists and Audiences* by Jolyon Mitchell.  
Read: *Dear Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats: A Hijab is not a Hat* by Liz Bucar  
<https://religionnews.com/2019/01/03/dear-nancy-pelosi-and-the-democrats-a-hijab-is-not-a-hat/>.

## **February 21, 2022 - No Class, Heritage Day**

## **February 23, 2022 - No Class, Winter Study Break**

## **February 29, 2022 - The Embodiment of Masculinity and Femininity in Islam**

Read: *The Embodiment of Masculinity and Femininity: The Making of Material Self from Gender and Self in Islam* by Etin Anwar (2006).

Read: *Hegemonic Muslim Masculinities and Their Others: Perspectives from South and Southeast Asia*, Cambridge University Press (2021).

## **March 2, 2022 - Men and Masculinities in Islam**

Read: *Who are the Muslims? Questions of Identity, Gender and Culture in Research Methodologies* by Anne Sofie Roald in *Gender, Religion and Diversity Cross Cultural Perspectives* edited by Ursula King and Tina Beattie (2005).

Read: *Muslim Men, Racialised Masculinities and Personal Life* by Joanne Britton, SAGE Journals (2018).

## **March 7, 2022 - Sexual and Gender Identity in Islam**

Read: *Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law* (Women in Middle Eastern History) by Paul Sanders in *The Bloomsbury Reader in Religion, Sexuality and Gender* edited by Donald L. Boisvert and Carly Daniel-Hughes (2017).

## **March 9, 2022 - Islamic Feminism**

Read: *Divergent Voices* (Chapter 10, Course Textbook).

Read: *The Struggle for the Future* (Chapter 11, Course Textbook).

### **March 14, 2022 - Women in the Arab Spring**

Read: *Islamist Women and the Arab Spring: Discourse, Projects, and Conceptions* by Merieme Yafout, Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East (2015).

Read: *Women and the Arab Spring* by Tawakkol Karman, UN Chronicle (2016).

### **March 16, 2022 - Modesty in Islam**

Read: *Qur'an* 7:26; 24:31; 33:32-35; 53; 59 <https://quran.com/>.

Read: *The Discourse of the Veil* (Chapter 8, Course Textbook).

Read: *Why do Muslim Women Wear a Hijab?* by Caitlin Killian, The Conversation (2019) <https://theconversation.com/why-do-muslim-women-wear-a-hijab-109717>.

Read: *Religious Beings in Fashionable Bodies: The Online Identity Construction of Hijabi Social Media Personalities* by Elif Kavakci and Camille R Kraeplin, SAGE Journals (2016).

### **March 21, 2022 - Fashion and Islam**

Read: *When Swimming as a Muslim Woman Becomes a Political Act* by Rowaida Abdelaziz, Huffpost (2019) [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/muslim-women-are-fighting-to-swim-in-america\\_n\\_5d5594d1e4b056fafd08aa70](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/muslim-women-are-fighting-to-swim-in-america_n_5d5594d1e4b056fafd08aa70).

Read: *How Muslim Women Use Fashion to Exert Political Influence: The Rebellious Potential of an Apparently Conservative Style* by Elizabeth Bucar, The Atlantic (2018) <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/muslim-women-fashionpolitical-influence/550256/>.

Read: *It's "Been" Cool to Cover: Why Ayana Ife Matters* by Kayla Wheeler, Sapelo (2017) <https://sapelosquare.com/2017/11/21/its-been-cool-to-cover-why-ayana-ife-matters>.

### **March 23, 2022 - What is Islamic Law?**

Read: *Nature, Sources and Objectives of Shari'ah in Shari'ah Law, An Introduction* by Mohammad Hashim Kamali (2008).

### **March 28, 2022 - Women's Leadership in Islamic Law**

Read: *Legal Theory, Ideological and Methodological Justifications in Women and Leadership in Islamic Law: A Critical Analysis of Classical Legal Texts* by David Solomon Jalajel (2017).



### **March 30, 2022 - Modern Muslim Women in Leadership**

Read: *The Paradox of the New Islamic Woman in Turkey* by Jenny B. White in *Gender, Religion and Change in the Middle East: Two Hundred Years of History* edited by Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Ingvild Flaskerud (2005).

Read: *First Muslim Women in Congress: Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar* by Eli Watkins, CNN Politics (2018) available at <https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/06/politics/first-muslim-women-congress/index.html>.

### **April 4, 2022 - Family Law Dispute Resolution in Muslim Communities**

Read: *Practicing an 'Islamic Imagination': Islamic Divorce in North America* by Julie Macfarlanein in *Debating Sharia: Islam, Gender Politics, and Family Law Arbitration* edited by Anna C. Korteweg and Jennifer A. Selby (2012).

Read: *Faith-Based Arbitration or Religious Divorce: What was the Issue?* by Christopher Cutting in *Debating Sharia: Islam, Gender Politics, and Family Law Arbitration* edited by Anna C. Korteweg and Jennifer A. Selby (2012).

### **April 6, 2022 - Concluding Remarks**