

# WOMEN AND GENDER IN THE ARAB WORLD

Loyola University Maryland  
HS 397.01, Fall 2017  
T TH, 10:50 am-12:05 pm  
Humanities Center, Room 002

Instructor: Dr. Sara Scalenghe  
Office Hours: TTH, 9:30-10:30 am,  
and by appointment

Office: Humanities Center 301  
Email: [sscalenghe@loyola.edu](mailto:sscalenghe@loyola.edu)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the Western media, Arab women are routinely portrayed as oppressed, and Islam is frequently cited as the most significant source of such oppression. But precisely how and to what degree are women oppressed in the region? This upper-level course is designed to provide a nuanced historical understanding of the history of women and gender in the Arab world. The first part of the course consists in a broad chronological survey from pre-Islamic times to the present day that pays special attention to different interpretations of the foundational texts of Islam (the Qur'an and Hadith), to Western representations of the "Oriental woman," and to the rise of women's movements in the region. The second part of the course comprises an in-depth exploration of some of today's most contested issues, including Islamic law, honor crimes, female genital cutting, same-sex sexuality, the veil, masculinities, and women's participation in politics and in the recent Arab uprisings. Prerequisite: One 100-level History course. This class counts toward the Global Studies major and the Gender Studies minor.

## LEARNING AIMS

Students who have completed this course shall be able to:

- Demonstrate a solid foundation in the history of women and gender in the Arab world.
- Place current events and debates pertaining to women and gender in the Arab world in a broader historical perspective.
- Comprehend different historical methodologies.
- Conduct advanced-level research including library and web-based sources.
- Create, sustain, and present an argument based on that research in well-written essays.
- Discern appropriate and inappropriate sources and effectively weigh the use of evidence.

The course supports the Loyola Undergraduate Learning Aims of intellectual excellence, critical understanding, eloquentia perfecta, aesthetics, leadership, faith and mission, promotion of justice, diversity, and wellness (for a detailed description of these aims, please refer to <http://www.loyola.edu/undergraduate/academics/learning-aims.aspx>).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) *Attendance and Participation* (10%). You are expected to complete all readings prior to coming to class, and you must be prepared to both answer and pose questions about them. I will call on you! The grade will be calculated as follows. If you participate regularly and thoughtfully: 90-100% (A-/A/A+); if you participate occasionally but thoughtfully: 80-89% (B-/B/B+); if you rarely participate: 70-79% (C-/C/C+); if you never participate: 50-69% (F-/D-/D/D+). In order to participate, you must of course be present. Class attendance is therefore mandatory and will be recorded. If you are absent due to sickness you must bring me a note from your doctor or the Student Health Center. Do not be late for class, as it is disrespectful and disruptive to me and to your classmates and will lower your grade. If you miss one class without documentation, your participation grade will automatically drop to 90% (A-); 2 missed classes: 85% (B); 3 missed classes: 75% (C); 4 missed classes: 65% (D); 5 or more missed classes: 50% (F). If assigned, the film worksheets will count towards participation.

2) *Tests* (10%). There will be two tests, on September 14 and November 14. They consist in maps and/or multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the blanks questions, and short answers. They are intended to test your factual knowledge of the material covered, to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings, and to help you to prepare for the midterm and final exams.

3) *Midterm exam* (15%), on October 12. Maps, identifications, and essays. A study guide will be provided approximately one week before the exam.

4) *Research paper proposal* (10%), due on November 2.

5) *Research paper* (20%), about 12 pages in length, due on December 11. Detailed instructions will be provided separately.

6) *Peer reviews* (5%). You will be asked to critique in writing one of your classmates' papers.

7) *Primary source analysis* (10%). On October 5.

8) *Final exam* (20%), 1-4 pm on December 13, in our regular classroom. Maps, identifications, and essays. A detailed study guide will be provided.

\*\*\* You must complete ALL assignments to pass the course.

### *Laptop policy*

You may bring laptops to class, but for the exclusive purpose of taking notes. I reserve the right to ban laptop use if I see that you are checking your email, Facebook, etc.

### *About returning papers and exams*

While I will make every effort to return your work in a timely fashion, usually within two weeks, please understand that it may not always be possible for me to do so.

### *Moodle*

Assignments, PowerPoint presentations, outlines, readings, primary sources, and study guides will be posted on Moodle.

### *Email*

The best way to reach me outside of class and office hours is by email at [sscalenghe@loyola.edu](mailto:sscalenghe@loyola.edu). I will do my best to respond within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours during the weekend. Given the very high volume of emails I receive daily, please write to me only if there is an urgent matter that cannot wait until the next class or office hours. For example, if you are absent, please refrain from emailing me to ask what was covered in class (check the syllabus, Moodle, or ask your classmates instead). Please include the course number, HS 397, in the subject heading of your message.

Unsure about email etiquette with your professors?

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay-.WasOlcD10X4.link>

### *Academic Integrity*

Students are expected to be familiar with Loyola University's policies on academic integrity, which is explained in the Student Honor Code (<http://www.loyola.edu/academic/honorcode/>). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students caught plagiarizing, or violating the Honor Code in any way, should expect to fail the course and to be reported to the Honor Council. If you submit any work with your name affixed to it, I assume that work is your own and that all sources are indicated and documented in the text (with quotations and/or citations). If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to me.

### *Student Athletes*

If you are a student athlete, please provide me with your travel and game schedule indicating when you will need to miss class to participate in athletic events. While travel for athletics is an excused absence, you will need to make up any missed work. Do send me a reminder email before each missed class.

### *Students with Disabilities*

I will make every effort to support and accommodate students with disabilities. If you already registered with Disability Support Services (DSS) and requested an accommodations letter (and DSS has sent the letter to me via email), please schedule a brief meeting with me to discuss the accommodations you might need in this class. If you need academic accommodations due to a disability and have not registered with DSS, please contact the Disability Support Services Office (DSS) at 410-617-2750/2062 or at

DSS@loyola.edu. I also encourage you to familiarize yourself with Loyola's excellent DSS resources at <http://www.loyola.edu/departments/dss.aspx>.

### GRADING SCALE

94-100 = A  
90-93 = A-  
87-89 = B+  
84-86 = B  
80-83 = B-  
0-63 = F

77-79 = C+  
74-76 = C  
70-73 = C-  
67-69 = D+  
64-66 = D

### REQUIRED READINGS

The following book must be purchased and is available at the Loyola bookstore. All other readings, as well as any PowerPoint presentations and videos, will be posted on Moodle.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0674088269.

While not required, you may want to consult, for historical background, William Cleveland and Martin Bunton's *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 6th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2016). ISBN: 978-0813349800.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to change at any time)

September 5 (T)     **Introductions and Self-Reflection**  
Why are you taking in this class?

September 7 (TH)     **Introduction to the Middle East and North Africa**  
Required reading:  
1) Required reading: Dona Stewart, *The Middle East Today: Political, Geographical and Cultural Perspectives*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 23-65.

September 12 (T)     **A Quick History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to Today**  
Required reading: None.

September 14 (TH)     **Women in the Pre-Islamic Middle East**  
Required reading:  
Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), Chapter 1, "Mesopotamia," pp. 11-24, and Chapter 2, "The Mediterranean Middle East," pp. 25-37.

⇒Test 1

- September 19 (T) **Women and the Rise of Islam**  
Required reading:  
Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, Chapter 3, "Women and the Rise of Islam," pp. 41-63.
- September 21 (TH) **Women in the Qur'an**  
Required reading:  
1) Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), selections.  
2) Aysha Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), selections.
- September 26 (T) **Women in the Hadith**  
Required reading:  
1) Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, translated by Mary Jo Lakeland (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1991), Chapter 4, "A Tradition of Misogyny (2)," pp. 62-81.  
2) *Women in Islam and the Middle East: A Reader*, ed. Ruth Roded (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), Chapter 3, "Sayings of the Prophet: Selective Quotation," pp. 48-57.
- September 28 (TH) **Women in the Abbasid, Medieval, and Ottoman Periods**  
Required reading:  
1) Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, Chapters 4, 5, and 6, pp. 64-123.  
2) Fatma Müge Göçek, "Ottoman Empire: 15<sup>th</sup> to Mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century," in *The Encyclopedia of Women in Islamic Cultures*, vol. 1 (2006): 72-81.
- October 3 (T) **Orientalism and Gender**  
Required reading:  
1) Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), Introduction, 1-28.  
2) Linda Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), Chapter 3, "The Imaginary Orient," 33-59.  
3) Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), selections.
- October 5 (TH) **In-class primary source assignment**

- October 10 (T)      **Catching up and review for midterm exam**
- October 12 (TH)    **Midterm exam**
- October 17 (T)      **Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**  
 Required reading: Judith Tucker, "Women in the Middle East and North Africa: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Women in the Middle East: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 73-131.
- October 19 (TH)    **Do Muslim Women Need Saving?**  
 Required reading: Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, pp. 1-80.
- October 24 (T)      **The Question of the Veil**  
 Required reading:  
 Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, Chapter 8, "The Discourse of the Veil," pp. 144-168.
- October 26 (TH)    **Film (TBD)**
- October 31 (T)      **Islamic Law: Marriage and Divorce**  
 Required reading:  
 Judith Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 38-132.
- November 2 (TH)    **Islamic Law: Property and Legal Capacity**  
 Required reading:  
 Judith Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law*, Chapter 4, pp. 133-174.
- ⇒Paper proposal due.
- November 7 (T)      **Honor Crimes**  
 Required reading:  
 1) Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, pp. 113-142.  
 2) Kecia Alia, "Honor Killings, Illicit Sex, and Islamic Law."  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/muslim/honor.html>  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/muslim/honor-texts.html>  
<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/muslim/honorkill-hadith.html>
- November 9 (TH)    **Female Genital Cutting (FGC)**  
 Required reading:

1) Noor Kassamali, "Genital Cutting," *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, vol. 3 (2006), 129-134.

2) Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), Chapter 6, "'Reduce but do not destroy': Female 'Circumcision' in Islamic Sources," 97-111.

November 14 (T) **Catch-up day**  
⇒Test 2

November 16 (TH) **Same-Sex Sexuality**  
Required reading:  
1) Joseph Massad, "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World," *Public Culture* 14, no. 2 (2002): 361-385.  
2) Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, Chapter 5, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Same-Sex Intimacy in Muslim Thought," 75-96.

November 21 (T) **Masculinities**  
Required reading:  
Farha Ghannam, *Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), selections.

November 23 (TH): **Thanksgiving. No class.**

November 28 (T): **Women and Gender in the Arab Uprisings 1**  
Required reading:  
1) William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 5th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), chapter 26, "The 2011 Arab Uprisings," 522-540.

November 30 (TH): **Women and Gender in the Arab Uprisings 2**  
Required reading:  
1) *Middle East Report 268-Gender Front Lines* (Vol. 43, Fall 2013).

December 5 (T): **Arab and Muslim Women and Human Rights**  
Required reading: Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, Chapter 3, "Authorizing Moral Crusades," pp. 81-112; Chapter 5, "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights," pp. 143-172; Chapter 6, "An Anthropologist in the Territory of Rights," pp. 173-200; and Conclusion, pp. 201-227.

December 7 (TH): **Summing Up, Self-Reflection, and Review for the Final Exam**

**Final exam: Thursday, December 13, 1-4 pm, in our classroom.**