

Semester at Sea Course syllabus

Discipline: Women's Studies
Fall 2009
SWAG 2559: Women and Islam
Lower Division
Faculty Name: Farzaneh Milani

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to Islam through issues related to gender. It begins with an examination of women in the Qur'an and the active role women played in the early years of Islam. It studies women's rights and gender relations in Muslim majority countries. It also explores the ways in which Muslim women have been portrayed in western arts, films, and mass media. Through a variety of sources--religious texts and commentaries, theoretical, literary, journalistic and political writings, biographies, autobiographies and films--it asks a variety of questions. How does Islam treat women? What is "Islamic" with respect to ideas about women, their civic rights, and the space they occupy? How are Muslim women represented in the West and in what ways do they participate in cultural production themselves? Why, for centuries, have Muslim women been the object of such intense curiosity and attention in the West while serious scholarly works on them have been limited and limiting? Why has Islam become the ultimate "Other" in the United States of America?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In the unprecedented flourishing of writing about Islam in the United States in recent years, Muslim women occupy a major place and attract the attention of politicians, publishers, the media, and the reading public alike. It is the objective of this course to explore the status of women in the Qur'an, the reality of Muslim women's lives today, and their representation in the West.

FIELD COMPONENT: Since field work comprises twenty percent of the contact hours for this course, students will be required to complete three Faculty-Directed Practica (FDP) in three of the Muslim majority countries we visit. Students will select, in consultation with the instructor, three themes that interest them, themes that are related to Islam and gender. They will record their observations in three 2-page essays, and share their experience with the class.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. Your regular attendance and informed participation in discussions are essential to this class. Absence without valid reason will result in loss of grade.
2. Reading assignments for each session should be completed prior to class. It is imperative that you come to class prepared to ask questions and contribute to classroom discussion.
3. Three 2-page review papers due on the topics of your Faculty-Directed Practica.
4. A short group presentation on a topic of your choice. The date, topic, and duration of your presentation should be finalized with the instructor no later than **September 4**.
5. A final exam.

Class participation:	25%
Field Experience Essays:	15%
Oral Presentation:	15%
Final exam:	45%

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Amina Wadud
TITLE: *Qur'an and Woman*
PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press
ISBN #: 0-19-512836-2
DATE/EDITION: 1999
COST: \$11.95

AUTHOR: Bruce Lawrence
TITLE: *The Qur'an: A Biography*
PUBLISHER: Grove Press
ISBN #: 10-08021-4344
DATE/EDITION: 2007
COST: \$13.00

AUTHOR: Elizabeth Fernea
TITLE: *Guests of the Sheikh*
PUBLISHER: Anchor Book
ISBN #: 13: 978-0385014854
DATE/EDITION: 1995
COST: \$10.00

AUTHOR: John Esposito & Dalia Mogahed
TITLE: *Who Speaks for Islam?*
PUBLISHER: Gallup Press
ISBN #: 978-1-59562-017-0
DATE/EDITION: 2007
COST: \$22.95

AUTHOR: Fatima Mernissi
TITLE: *The Veil and the Male Elite*
PUBLISHER: Basic Books
ISBN #: 13: 978-0201632217
DATE/EDITION: 1992
COST: \$14.00

AUTHOR: Reza Aslan
TITLE: *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*
PUBLISHER: Random House
ISBN #: 13: 978-1400062133
DATE/EDITION: 2005
COST: \$17.00

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Leila Ahmed
TITLE: Women and Gender in Islam
PUBLISHER: Yale University Press
ISBN #: 978-0300055832
DATE/EDITION: 1993
COST: \$22.00