

**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**  
Spring 2013 – Undergraduate Studies

**UGS 302 GENDER IN THE CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM WORLD**

Unique	Day	Time	Location
<a href="#">64030</a>	TTH	11:00 - 12:30	<a href="#">SAC 5.102</a>

Instructor:                   **Sofian Merabet** (sofian.merabet@austin.utexas.edu)  
Office hours: Thursday 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
or by appointment in SAC 5.164

Course Description:

This interdisciplinary signature course examines the use of textual material in debates about gender, sexuality, and morality and explores the interplay of cultural, social, political and economic factors in shaping women's and men's lives in the Muslim world. The perspective in this course will be primarily anthropological, although special attention will be paid to the historical processes associated with colonialism and nation-building. We will work to grasp the sexual politics of everyday life in specific locales, as these are shaped by the power of representations mobilized in a global world. We will also consider local feminist movements, including Islamist, human-rights-, and LGBTQ-based, that have developed to address issues of gender and sexuality.

By looking at ethnographic material that discusses ordinary women's grassroots movements, the course will assess how a consideration of current debates about religion in the Muslim world helps us understand the conceptual relationship between bodily form and the ways it appropriates and challenges circulating discourses of human/women's rights.

Information Literacy: Throughout the semester we will visit and discuss the use of archives in addition to online resources through the Human Rights Documentation Initiative (HRDI). Included are assignments to prepare students for and offer feedback on their research strategies. We will utilize the Librarian-created resources for Signature Courses including the assignments "Creating a Research Plan" and "Compare a Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Article" as well as the tutorials and guides "Find Articles" and "Local Information."

Gems of the University: The course will incorporate the internationally-connected UT Libraries Human Rights Documentation Initiative. The students will meet with T-Kay Sangwand, Human Rights Archivist.

University Lecture Series: With prior consultation of the instructor, students are required to attend at least one lecture organized by the UT Center for Middle Eastern Studies and will write a one-page report on it (for more information, look at the CMES website). Lectures that are not organized by the CMES, but which address the topic of gender in the Muslim world, do qualify.

**Required Texts:**

Books (listed alphabetically by the author and ordered at the *University Co-Op*, [www.universitycoop.com](http://www.universitycoop.com), 2246 Guadalupe St, Austin, (512) 476-7211):

Abdel Aal, Ghada (2010) *I Want to Get Married! One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights*, University of Texas Press, ISBN: 978-0-292-72397-9

Alsanea, Rajaa (2008) *Girls of Riyadh*, Penguin (Non-Classics), ISBN-13: 978-0143113478

Hammer, Julianne (2012) *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer*, UT Press, ISBN: 978-0-292-73555-2

Maznavi, Nura and Mattu, Ayesha (eds.) [2012] *Love, InshAllah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women*, Soft Skull Press; Original edition, ISBN-10: 1593764286, ISBN-13: 978-1593764289

Additional readings on Blackboard (listed alphabetically by the author/institution's name):

- Boellstorff, Tom (2005) "Between Religion and Desire: Being Muslim and Gay in Indonesia," *American Anthropologist* 107(4): 575-85

- Deeb, Lara and Harb, Mona (2011) "Sanctioned Pleasures: Youth Negotiations of Leisure Sites and Morality in al-Dahiya" in Khalaf, Samir and Saad Khalaf, Roseanne, eds. (2011) *Arab Youth/Social Mobilisation in Times of Risk*, Saqi Press, pp. 303-18

- Gaudio, Rudolf Pell (2009) "1. Introducing 'Yan Daudu' and "2. People of the Bariiki" in *Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an Islamic African City*, pp. 1-60

- Meem (2009) "Introduction" and following stories in *Bareed Mista3jil: True Stories*, pp. 1-73

- Schick, Irvin Cemil (2010) "The Harem as Gendered Space and the Spatial Reproduction of Gender" in Booth, Marilyn, ed. (2010) *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, Duke University Press, pp. 69-84

- Wadud, Amina (2006) "Introduction: Inside the Gender Jihad, Reform in Islam" and "1. What's a Name?" in Wadud, Amina (2006) *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, One World, pp. 1-54

- Whitaker, Brian (2006) "1. A Question of Honour", "2. In Search of a Rainbow," "3. Images and Realities," and "4. Rights and Wrongs" in Whitaker, Brian (2006) *Unspeakable Love: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East*, University of California Press, pp. 17-142

- Yamani, Mai (2011) "Saudi Youth: Initiative and Inertia" in Khalaf, Samir and Saad Khalaf, Roseanne, eds. (2011) *Arab Youth/Social Mobilisation in Times of Risk*, Saqi Press, pp. 112-26

### **Course Requirements for Registered Students:**

This course relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. In order for the class to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed and ready for in-depth discussion before each meeting. Regular attendance is required, and so is active participation. Students are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the discussion during all meetings as well as during the various visits to academic units across campus. Again, you must come to class having carefully read all materials and be prepared to discuss, question, and argue about issues raised in the readings. It will be beneficial for you to take excerpts/notes on any material that you find enlightening, controversial, or objectionable. You should also take notes in class on themes, key terms, and debates we discuss. These note-taking strategies will be crucial when you write your various assignments. In short:

- Attend all classes (including the various visit across campus).
- Do all assigned readings (while taking excerpts/notes!) by the date indicated on the syllabus and participate actively in the discussion.
- Two written **Take-Home-Exams** to be handed in on **Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>** and **Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>** that cover a theoretical question based on the assigned readings. [no more than 3-pages (double-spaced/12 point)]. Assignments will be posted on blackboard on the previous Friday.

#### **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS!**

- One one-page Report based on the attendance of a lecture organized by the UT Center for Middle Eastern Studies (for more information, look at the CMES website). Lectures that are not organized by the CMES (e.g. by a particular academic department, the South Asia Institute, the Law School, etc.), but which address the topic of gender in the Muslim world, do qualify.
- One Four-page paper based on a short individual research project to be provided to the instructor on **Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>**. A preliminary one-page research outline will be handed in on **Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**. The Project will be based on a topic that focuses on some aspect of gender in the Muslim world. It can include the discussion of a written text (e.g. a novel, an ethnography, or a blog), a movie, a photography collection, an art installation, etc. All projects need to first be discussed with and approved by the instructor.
- 10-minute presentations on the respective final paper project during weeks 15 and 16. They are intended to give general feedback (by the instructor and fellow students) to be incorporated in the final version of the written paper.

All writing assignments are designed to develop critical reading, analytical, and writing skills. Evaluation criteria include: critical and integrative analysis of texts, clarity of

thought, ability to synthesize readings and class discussions into your own argument, and ability to formulate a theoretical grounding for it. Students will receive extensive feedback by the instructor and their peers, and will have the opportunity to revise their submissions.

## **PLAGIARISM:**

**Anyone plagiarizing will first be given an “F” (Fail) and a report will be forwarded to the appropriate university authorities.**

### **Notice regarding academic dishonesty (e.g. Plagiarism)**

- Honor Code or statement of ethics.
  - **University of Texas Honor Code:** Each member of the university is expected to uphold The University of Texas Honor Code through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to “plagiarize” means

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own.
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source.
- to commit literary theft.
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

### ***All of the following are considered plagiarism:***

- turning in someone else's work as your own.
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation.
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules).

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your readers with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

- Web site for more information:
- <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism>

## **Grading Procedure:**

### Grading Breakdown:

1. Attendance and Participation: 10%
2. Two Three-page Take-Home Exams: 40% (20% each)
3. One one-page Lecture Report: 10%
4. 10-minute Presentation on the Final Paper Project: 10%
5. Four-page Final Paper: 30%

## **Grading Distribution (Letter Grade: Points):**

A: 100-95   A-: 94-90   B+: 89-87   B: 86-83   B-: 82-80   C+: 79-77   C: 76-73  
C-: 72-70   D+: 69-67   D: 66-63   D-: 62-60   F: 59 and below.

## **Documented Disability Statement:**

- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. Students need to inform the instructor and the teaching assistant(s) about their disability right at the beginning of the semester.

***Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives.***

## **Reading Schedule:** (this schedule is tentative and subject to possible revision)

### Week 1: Gender in the Contemporary Muslim World

- Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>      Introduction and Orientation

- Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>      Abdel Aal, Ghada (2010) *I Want to Get Married! One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights*, University of Texas Press, pp. 1-49

## Week 2: The Female Blogosphere in Egypt

- Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> Abdel Aal, Ghada (2010) *I Want to Get Married! One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights*, University of Texas Press, pp. 50-100
- Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup> Abdel Aal, Ghada (2010) *I Want to Get Married! One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights*, University of Texas Press, pp. 101-59

## Week 3: Female Tales of Dating, Longing, and Sex

- Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> “Allahu Alim: In Search of the Beloved” in Maznavi, Nura and Mattu, Ayesha (eds.) [2012] *Love, InshAllah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women*, Soft Skull Press; Original edition, pp. 3-73
- Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup> “International *Habibty*: Love Overseas” in Maznavi, Nura and Mattu, Ayesha (eds.) [2012] *Love, InshAllah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women*, Soft Skull Press; Original edition, pp. 131-87

## Week 4: Faith, Community, and Public Opinion among US-based Female Muslims (1)

- Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> Visit of the Writing Center  
**1<sup>st</sup> Take-Home Exam to be handed in!**
- Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> - “1. A Woman-Led Friday Prayer: March 18, 2005” and “2. Women Leading Prayers: Tracing the Debate” in Hammer, Julianne (2012) *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer*, UT Press, pp. 1-55

## Week 5: Faith, Community, and Public Opinion among US-based Female Muslims (2)

- Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> - “Introduction: Inside the Gender *Jihad*, Reform in Islam” and “1. What’s a Name?” in Wadud, Amina (2006) *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women’s Reform in Islam*, One World, pp. 1-54
- Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup> - “3. Gender Justice and Qur’anic Exegesis” and “History, Women’s Rights, and Islamic Law” in Hammer, Julianne (2012) *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer*, UT Press, pp. 56-99

Week 6: Social Mobilization among Youth in the Contemporary Arab world

- Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> Visit of the Gender and Sexuality Center
- Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup> - Deeb, Lara and Harb, Mona “Sanctioned Pleasures: Youth Negotiations of Leisure Sites and Morality in al-Dahiya” in Khalaf, Samir and Saad Khalaf, Roseanne, eds. (2011) *Arab Youth/Social Mobilisation in Times of Risk*, Saqi Press, pp. 303-18 and Yamani, Mai “Saudi Youth: Initiative and Inertia” in Khalaf, Samir and Saad Khalaf, Roseanne, eds. (2011) *Arab Youth/Social Mobilisation in Times of Risk*, Saqi Press, pp. 112-26

Week 7: “The Muslim Woman” as Celebrity Author

- Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> - Alsanea, Rajaa (2008) *Girls of Riyadh*, Penguin (Non-Classics)
- Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> - Alsanea, Rajaa (2008) *Girls of Riyadh*, Penguin (Non-Classics)

Week 8: The Harem Between Fantasy and Reality

- Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> - Visit of the Perry Castañeda Library  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Take-Home Exam to be handed in!**
- Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> - Schick, Irvin Cemil “The Harem as Gendered Space and the Spatial Reproduction of Gender” in Booth, Marilyn, ed. (2010) *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, Duke University Press, pp. 69-84

Week 9:

- Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> **Spring Break!**  
No Class
- Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> No Class

Week 10: Homosexuality in the Arab World (1)

- Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> “1. A Question of Honour” and “In Search of a Rainbow” in Whitaker, Brian (2006) *Unspeakable Love: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East*, University of California Press, pp. 17-64
- Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> “3. Images and Realities” and “Rights and Wrongs” in Whitaker, Brian (2006) *Unspeakable Love: Gay and*

*Lesbian Life in the Middle East*, University of California Press, pp. 65-142

Week 11: Homosexuality in the Arab World (2)

- Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> - “Introduction,” “Sou7aqiyyeh,” and “Shabb Walla Binit?” in Meem (2009) *Bareed Mista3jil: True Stories*, pp. 1-39
- Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup> - Meem (2009) *Bareed Mista3jil: True Stories*, pp. 40-73

Week 12: Queer Muslim Life in South-East Asia

- Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> - Harry Ransom Center Visit  
**One-page Outline of the Final Research Project due!**
- Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> - Boellstorff, Tom (2005) “Between Religion and Desire: Being Muslim and *Gay* in Indonesia,” *American Anthropologist* 107(4): 575-85

Week 13: Queer Muslim Life in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> - “1. Introducing ‘Yan Daudu’ in Gaudio, Rudolf Pell (2009) *Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an Islamic African City*, pp. 1-28
- Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> - “2. People of the Bariki” in Gaudio, Rudolf Pell (2009) *Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an Islamic African City*, pp. 29-60

Week 14: Public Opinion Surrounding Women and Islam

- Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> - “5. Authority, Tradition, and Community” and “Space, Leadership, and Voice” in Hammer, Juliane (2012) *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer*, UT Press, pp. 100-46
- Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> - “7. Media, Representation(s), Politics,” “8. Memoirs, Narratives, and Marketing,” and “9. Covers and Other Matters: Concluding Thoughts” in Hammer, Juliane (2012) *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer*, UT Press, pp. 147-207

Week 15:

- Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> - Visit to the Blanton Museum



- Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>
- Student Final Project Presentations

Week 16:

- Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>
- Student Final Project Presentations
- Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Student Final Project Presentations

**Final paper version of the final project due on Monday, May 6th!**