REL 4361

Women in Islam

Section: U01

In Person

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

TuTh 2:00PM - 3:15PM	**Charles E. Perry (PC) 438**

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

Understanding the lives, ideas, and roles of women is crucial to

any assessment of Muslim societies of both past and present. This course aims to provide students with an understanding of the position of women in Islamic history and culture through an examination of traditional and contemporary understandings of religious texts, literature, and politics. We will address the roles and understandings of women first within the context in which Islam arose, and then explore how these understandings and roles were modified by the coming of Islam. How are women discussed in the Qur'an and the hadith? How did women read the Qur'an and aspire to Islamic ideals in their lives? How did all of these things change over time? Our discussions hope to address the origins and history of women in Islam from its origins until the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Textbook and Course Materials

Women and Gender in Islam

Required/Recommended: Recommended

Authors: Ahmed, Leila

Publisher: Yale University Press

Publication Date: 1992

Copyright Date: 1992

ISBN 10: 0300257317

ISBN 13: 978-0300257311

Chapters/Pages: all

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for $22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- How are women discussed in the Qur'an and the hadith? How did women read the Qur'an and aspire to Islamic ideals in their lives? How did all of these things change over time? Our discussions hope to address the origins and history of women in Islam from its origins until the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Expectations of the Course

Students are expected to attend class and and engage with all of the readings.

Assignments & Assessments

Attendance and Participation (25% of grade):

Since this class relies upon students' active participation – it is a cooperation between instructor and students – it is necessary that you attend as many class sessions as possible. Every unexcused

absence will result in a drop of up to 1% of the course grade.

Weekly assignments (40% of grade):

At the beginning of the semester, the class will be divided into **two** groups (A and B). Each week, a set of readings will be posted every Friday. One group will create a **short presentation** based on a specific assigned reading. This will be presented in class the following Thursday. Members of the other group will create **individual response papers** based on the rest of the readings, as specified by the instructor, of a length of one to two paragraphs. This must be posted to the Canvas discussion board by class time on the following Thursday. The groups will switch roles every week.

Both presentations and response papers should address the following questions:

- What are the questions that the scholar asks?
- What are the sources and evidence that the scholar draws from?
- What is the structure of the scholar's argument?
- What is the intended audience of the article or book chapter?
- What are the flaws of the scholar's argument, or is it completely convincing?

The **short presentation** should last about ten minutes. You may use Powerpoint or Google Slides or any other presentation platform. Both the delivery and the preparation of this presentation should be evenly split among group members.

The **individual response** papers do not need to be more than two paragraphs in length. Feel free to respond in any way that addresses the above questions.

Final Research Paper (35% of grade):

Partway through the semester, I would like each student to individually communicate with me regarding their topic for a final research paper. The paper may be on any topic discussed in the course. The paper is expected to be between 7 and 10 pages (12 pt font, double spaced), using at least 5 separate academic sources.

Grading

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Schedule of Topics

COURSE SCHEDULE:

I Intro, Syllabus Review

Review of concepts (Islam, Gender, etc)

Continued

II Pre-Islamic Middle East and Mediterranean

Intro to Islam

Group A presentation (Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, Chs. 1-2)

III Intro to Islam II

Women in Early Islam: Khadija, Fatima, 'A'isha

Group B presentation (readings from Fatima Mernissi, *Veil and the Male Elite*, Denise Spellberg *Political Action and Public Example* in Nikki Keddie, Beth Baron, *Women in Middle Eastern History;* other readings TBD);

IV Feminist edges of the Qur'an

The Qur'an II

Group A presentation (readings from Aisha Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an,* Asma Barlas, *Believing Women*, Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*)

V Women in the Hadith

Hadith II

Group presentation (readings from Ruth Roded, *Women in Islam and the Middle East*, Ch. 3, Fatima Mernissi, *Veil*; other readings TBD)

VI Women in Middle Eastern history

History II

Group A presentation (readings from Nikki Keddie, *Women in the Middle East,* Souad Joseph, *Encyclopedia of Women in*

Islamic Culture, Vol. 1, Leila Ahmed chs. 4, 5, 6, Nadia El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*)

VII Women in History III

History IV

Group B presentation (readings continued)

VIII Sufism and Mysticism

Female Mystics

Group A presentation (Sadiyya Shaikh, *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy*, readings from Rabi'a, 'A'isha al-Ba'uniyya, other female Sufis)

IX Orientalism

Orientalism II

Group B presentation (Orientalist art);

X Women in the Nineteenth Century – Western influences

Islam and the West I

Group A presentation (Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism;* 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*)

XI The Veil

The Veil II

Group B presentation (Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, Ch. 8)

XII Marriage and Divorce, Property, Legal Capacity

Islamic Law

Group A presentation (Judith Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law,* Ch. 4)

XIII 20th century and Feminism

XIV "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?"

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*

Course Communication

Communication will take place through Canvas and occasionally email.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity

- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the OCR team through report.fiu.edu.