

Islam, State and Society in the "Middle East"
University of Houston,
T/Th

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Course Description

The principal aim of this course is to identify and consider the key variables that have shaped "Middle Eastern" societies. The emphasis of this discussion is on women and families of the region. In this critical examination we analyze a number of salient themes. We look at religion, colonization and nationalist movements, among other variables to understand their role in these societies. Additionally, we review the intellectual and social frameworks that support and define the position of women and families in the region from a regional as well as a western perspective.

Course Requirements and Grading

Video Response Memo: 35%

Book Review: Year of the Elephant, 10%; Florence of Arabia 10%

Leading Discussion on selected articles: 15%

Mid-Term 15% "Summit" 10%, Participation 5%

YOUR READINGS:

The following are available for purchase:

Ahmed, L. Women and Gender in Islam Buckley, C. Florence of Arabia

Abuzaid, L. Year of the Elephant Aslan, Reza, No God But God

Course Schedule

8/22 Introduction to the course and its requirements

8/24 Historical Overview, Part 1; Aslan, R No God But God ;preface, prologue, Chapter 1: pg 3-8, pg 17-22, Chapter 2

Religious/Conceptual/ Cultural/Legal Foundations and Frameworks

8/29 Historical Overview Part 2; Aslan. R. No God but God Chapter 3: pg. 50-60, Chapter 4: pg 75-92, pg 104-106

8/31 NO CLASS

9/5 Hopkins and Ibrahim, Arab Society, Introduction
Merriweather and Tucker, Social History, Introduction
Mernissi, The Veil and Male Elite, Introduction

9/7 Video 1: Islamic Conversations: Women and Islam

9/12 Video Response Due

Student Led Discussion on articles Set 1.

9/14 Video 2: Hollywood Harems

9/19 Video Response Due

Ahmed, L. Women and Gender in Islam Introduction, Chapter 1, 2

9/21 Ahmed, L. Women and Gender in Islam Chapter 3

Contemporary Issues

9/26 Ahmed, L. Women and Gender in Islam, Chapter 4 and 5

Stowasser, B. Women in the Quran, Chapter 8

9/28 Video 3: Covered; Student Led Discussion: Article set 2

10/3 Ahmed, L. Women and Gender in Islam, Chapter 7 and 8

10/5 Student led discussion article set 3

10/10 Merriweather and Tucker Chapter 2, 3

10/12 MID TERM

Honor/Islamic Punishment

10/17 NY Times: Arab Honor's Price; Final Paper Outlines Due

Video 4: Pacifica Conversation on Nigeria; Nightline

10/19 Student Led Discussion: Article Set 4

Discussion
12/6

Saudi Arabica

10/24 Video 5: "Death of A Princess"

General Considerations

10/26 Video Response Due; Student Led Discussion: Article Set 5

10/31 Book Review Due: Abouzeid, L. Year of the Elephant ; "The Son's Return"

11/2 Student Led Discussion: Article Set 6

11/7 . **Video 6:** Beauty Academy of Kabul

11/9 Video Response due; Student Led Discussion Article Set 7

11/14 "Summit"

11/16 "Summit" part 2

11/21 Book Review Due, Buckley, C. Florence of Arabia

11/28 Student Led Discussion: Article Set 8

11/30 Student Led Discussion: Article Set 9

Assignment Descriptions

*All written work must be original and properly cited. You may use the Internet for research but cite all your sources. Any work that is not original and submitted under your name will result in **severe penalties**.*

Video Response Memos

We will view 6 videos in this class. These documentary presentations are intended to give you a visual angle on the many themes we consider. Your job is to review each of the videos in a 2 page typed memo. Provide a **critical analysis**: did you learn something? Was the material well presented? What was the major argument, what were the producers trying to relay. Avoid re-telling the video.

Leading Discussion on Articles

Throughout the semester a series of articles will be distributed. Your assignment is to lead a discussion of these articles in class. You will work with other students though you will be evaluated independently. In discussing these articles you should address: What insight is to be gained? What arguments are advanced? How are these supported?

Book Reviews: Florence of Arabia, Year of the Elephant

For these reviews you are to provide a 4-5 page typed analytical review. You may format it as if you are doing a review for a newspaper or television show. Tell me what you liked, what you did not like, where does the work leave you emotionally and intellectually? Talk of the characters you were introduced to, what was appealing or not about them. What were the major themes and arguments advanced by the authors. In class student teams will lead discussion of these narratives. In your written work **do not re-tell the story** instead provide a commentary on it.

Summit

In a debate format you will be asked to argue certain assigned positions..

Participation.

Regular and prepared class participation is a class requirement. In order to get the most from this class it is conducted as a seminar and each of you is responsible for class discussion.

Attendance: I expect you to attend class regularly and on time unless you have a valid excuse. If you are absent more than three times and/or excessively late without a valid excuse we will have a consultation to determine the next course of action.

Late Policy: Any work submitted after its deadline without approval is penalized 5 points per class period late.