

Professor A. Geissinger

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 am,
or by appointment

Office: 2A41 Paterson Hall

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Email: Aisha_Geissinger@carleton.ca

Course Lectures: Wednesdays, 11:35 am-2:25 pm (SA 506)

Course description

In much of the public discourse on Islam and Muslims in Canada today, gendered bodies are central. This is often the case not only in media stereotypes, but also in internal Muslim communal discourses on identity and “correct” practice. In this course, the question of how and why gender matters in past and present discourses on classical texts, in reconstructions of history, as well as in the study of contemporary Muslim societies will be examined in detail.

Note: It is assumed that all students who take this course have already taken at least one university-level course on Islam (such as RELI 2340) and/or Middle Eastern history. Anyone without this academic background will be expected to obtain it through extensive background reading.

Course Evaluation

- Written assignment (2-part)—20% total
- Participation and seminar presentations—30%
- Research paper—40%
- Class presentation of research paper—10%

COURSE POLICIES

Course Readings

Links to the course readings are available through cuLearn. These are mostly library resources—therefore, for the links to work, you need to be either on campus, or signed into the library website. Please bring the readings to class with you.

Participation and Seminar Presentations

This is a seminar course. It is expected that all students will attend class regularly, having done the readings and prepared to discuss them.

When preparing for class, write down questions which the readings bring to mind, particularly focusing on the central issues for this course: How are bodies, gender and sexuality being represented in this reading? Why do they matter here? What purpose(s) does the writer appear to

have in mind by highlighting (or downplaying) them? What sources and methodological approaches are being utilized and how insightful are they?

Students will take turns leading the class discussion on the readings, and the various methodological issues that they raise.

Written Assignments

There are two written assignments in this course:

The first written assignment (4-5 pages max.) is a critical reading and analysis of a booklet which is widely circulated in conservative Sunni North American communities today: Jamal Badawi's *Gender Equity in Islam*. (The link is on cuLearn.)

In your analysis, answer the following questions:

- (1) According to Badawi, what is "Islam"? How does one know what "Islam" is (or isn't)?
- (2) What does it mean to be a Muslim, in Badawi's view? Does he ever envision "Muslim" as an ungendered identity?
- (3) How is the word "gender" being used in this booklet, and what exactly does it mean here?
- (4) Where does this booklet belong in the wider context of Muslim discourses (i.e. theological/ sectarian affiliation, historical period, assumed primary audience)?
- (5) What major historical, interpretive, textual, and/or sociological questions does this booklet raise for you at this time?

The second written assignment (4-5 pages max.), you will revisit these five questions in light of the materials studied in this course, as well as the research you have carried out for your research paper.

The Research Paper

Topics must be directly related to the topics studied in this course, and approved by the professor before you proceed. This is a research paper, which must be written in standard format, with proper citation and bibliography, following the Chicago style.

The paper outline must contain: a working title, a paragraph which outlines the topic and scope of the paper, as well as at least five sources.

The annotated bibliography must provide complete citations of all sources used in the essay. Each source is to be followed by a paragraph, explaining why it was selected and how it was used. At least ten major sources must be used. Students are expected to make extensive use of academic, peer-reviewed secondary sources in their research papers, and to use all primary source materials analytically. The use of sources will be discussed in detail in class.

The deadlines for submitting the paper outline and the annotated bibliography are given in the course schedule. Failure to submit these documents by these deadlines will mean that your research paper will not be accepted, and will therefore receive a grade of zero.

Papers which do not follow the instructions given in class will be returned ungraded for revision and resubmission. Late penalties will accrue from the due date, regardless of when the problem was discovered.

All students will also give a class presentation on their research, which includes fielding questions and leading a discussion.

Lateness Policy

All written work is due at the beginning of class on the dates specified.

If the two written assignments or the research essay are submitted late, 2% per day (including weekends) will be deducted, unless an extension has been prearranged with the professor at least a week in advance of the due date. Any requests for extensions must be accompanied by acceptable and verifiable documentation (police reports, death certificates, etc).

Please note that under all circumstances, the paper outline and the annotated bibliography must be submitted within five (5) days of the due date, or the research paper will not be accepted for marking.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Jan. 8)—Introduction to the course

Readings: Lincoln, “Theses on Method.”

Hirschkind and Mahmood, “Feminism, the Taliban, and Politics of Counter-Insurgency,” 339-354.

Week 2 (Jan. 15)—Constructing the “Muslim woman” and the “Muslim man” (and who’s missing)

Readings: Blomfield, “Hijab, hip-hop, and haram,” 90-102.

Abraham, “‘Sodomized by religion’,” 137-152.

Schielke, “Being a nonbeliever in a time of Islamic revival,” 301-320.

I. Gendering texts, gendering history

Week 3 (Jan. 22)—Gendering history: Issues and approaches

* **First written assignment due** (in class)

Readings: Najmabadi, “Are gender and sexuality useful categories of historical analysis?” 11-21.

Geissinger, “A’isha bint Abi Bakr and her contributions to the formation of the Islamic tradition,” 37-49. (cont. on the next page)

Hidayatullah, “Mariyya the Copt: gender, sex and heritage in the legacy of

Muhammad's Umm Walad," 221-243.
Amer, "Medieval Arab lesbians and lesbian-like women," 215-236.

Week 4 (Jan. 29)—The Qur'an, interpretive traditions, and gender

* **Research paper outline due** (in class)

Readings: Qur'an Chapters: 4 ("The Women"), 24, 66 ("Prohibition").
Bauer, "'Traditional' exegeses of Q 4:34," 129-142.
Chaudhry, "'I wanted one thing and God wanted another,'" 416-439.

Week 5 (Feb. 5)—The Hadith literature, transmission, interpretation, and gender

Readings: Bukhari, "The Chapter on Marriage"
Akram, "al-Muhaddithat," 1-17.
Sayeed, "Gender and legal authority," 115-150.

Week 6 (Feb. 12)—Gendering Muslim mysticisms

Readings: Dakake, "Walking upon the path of God like men?"
Sillers, "Early and pious Sufi women."

Week 7 (Feb. 19)—Winter Break (no class)

II. Studying contemporary discourses and lived realities

Week 8 (Feb. 26)—Contemporary constructions of genders and sexualities

Readings: Bahreini, "From perversion to pathology," 1-49.
Siraj, "'Because I'm the man! I'm the head'," 195-214.

Week 9 (March 5)—The "Islamic feminism" debate

Readings: Najmabadi, "(Un)veiling feminism," 29-45.
Cooke, "Multiple critique: Islamic feminist rhetorical strategies," 91-110.
Mojab, "'Muslim' women and 'western' feminists: The debate on particulars and universals."
Mir-Hosseini, "Beyond 'Islam' vs 'feminism'," 67-77.
Sholkamy, "Creating conservatism or emancipating subjects?" 47-55.

Week 10 (March 12)—Muslim feminist reinterpretations: Possibilities and limitations

* **Annotated bibliography due** (in class)

Readings: Ali, "Just say yes: law, consent, and Muslim feminist epistemology," 121-134.
Azam, "The exclusion of women's testimony in the hudud: Towards a rethinking," 135-148.

Hammer, "Performing gender justice: The 2005 woman-led prayer in New York," 91-116.

Week 11 (March 19)—Constructing pious female selves

Readings: Mahmood, "Feminist theory, embodiment, and the docile agent," 202-236.

Deeb, "Piety politics and the role of a transnational feminist analysis," 112-126.

Azam, "The hijab at cross-purposes: Conflicting models of the erotic," 131-176.

Week 12 (March 26)—Contemporary Muslim women and religious authority

Readings: Omar, "Al-Qubaysiyyat: Negotiating female religious authority in Damascus," 347-362.

Ahmed, "Al-Huda and women's religious authority in Pakistan," 363-374.

Hill, "'All women are guides': Sufi leadership and womanhood among Taalibe Baay in Senegal," 375-412.

Week 13 (April 2)—Gendered constructions of exemplars; course conclusion

* **research paper due** (in class)

Reading: Szanto, Sayyida Zaynab in the state of exception," 285-299.

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see "Petitions to Defer")
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 9, 2013**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2014**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 8, 2013** for the Fall term and **March 7, 2014** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library