

RELI 4851-C and RELI 5851-G  
**Islam and Gender**  
Wednesdays, 11:35 am-2:25pm

Professor A. Geissinger  
2A41 Paterson Hall  
Office Hours: Thursdays 9-11 am, or by appointment

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### **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 legal discourses (past and present), reconstructions of history, as well as in hagiographical texts 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 for RELI 4851-C**

Written assignment (2-part)—20% total  
Participation and seminar presentations—30%  
Research paper—25%  
Class presentation of research paper—10%  
Take-home final exam—15%

### **Course Evaluation for RELI 5851-G**

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

### **Course Readings**

Kecia Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2006).

- These books can be purchased at Octopus Books (116 Third Ave., Ottawa)  
<http://octopusbooks.org/>
- Several academic journal articles and online materials have also been assigned as readings; the links will be posted on WebCT.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1

Sept. 14—Introduction to the course

Readings: Lincoln, “Theses on Method.”

(recommended): Blomfield, “Hijab, Hip-hop, and Haram,” 90-102.

Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” 783-90.

#### *I. Legal discourses*

### Week 2 \* First written assignment due (in class)

Sept. 21—Contemporary conservative “popular” discourses; the Qur'an and gender

Readings: Badawi, *Gender Equity in Islam*.

Qur'an Chapter 4 (“The Women”)

### Week 3 \* paper outline due (in class)

Sept. 28—Introducing formative period legal discourses

Readings: Malik's *Muwatta'*, Chapter on marriage

Ali, Introduction and chapter 1

### Week 4

Oct. 5—Marriage, divorce, and the production of gender

Readings: Ali, chapters 2 and 3

Malik's *Muwatta'*, chapter on divorce

### Week 5

Oct. 12—Gendering legal discourses past and present

Readings: Ali, chapters 4, 5 and conclusion

CCMW Muslim Marriage Contract Kit

## ***II. Gendering history***

### **Week 6**

Oct. 19—History and gender categories

Readings: Ze'evi, Introduction and chapter 1

Najmabadi, “Are gender and sexuality useful categories of historical analysis?”

11- 21.

### **Week 7**

Oct. 26—Discourses of sexual regulation

Readings: Ze'evi, chapters 2 and 3

### **Week 8**

Nov. 2—Sexual scripts

Readings: Ze'evi, chapters 4 and 5

Bukhari, chapter on the interpretation of dreams

### **Week 9**

Nov. 9—Sexual discourses and modernity; Eurocentric and Europhobic gazes

Readings: Ze'evi, chapter 6 and conclusion

Tavakoli, “Women of the West Imagined,” 19-22.

## ***III. Gender, bodies and constructions of sanctity***

### **Week 10** \* annotated bibliography due (in class)

Nov. 16—Introducing Muslim hagiography

Readings: Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria*, chapter 2

Kugle, Introduction and chapter 1

### **Week 11** \* Second written assignment due (in class)

Nov. 23—Sufi discourses on the body

Readings: Kugle, chapters 2 and 3

Excerpts from hagiographical texts on saintly women

### **Week 12** \* Research paper due (in class)

Nov. 30—Bodies and sacred power

Readings: Kugle, chapter 5 and conclusion

## Course Policies

### 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 methodologies 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*.

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 of 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.

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.

## 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. 5, 2011**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 5, 2012**.

### 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/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Merton 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.11, 2011 for the Fall term and March 7, 2012 for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://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 Merton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library