

Professor A. Geissinger  
Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 pm,  
or by appointment

Office: 2A41 Paterson Hall  
Office phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108

**Course Lectures**: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:35 am-12:55 pm (Southam Hall 505)

### **Course description**

This course provides an introduction to past and contemporary debates among Muslims about gender. It is organized around two intertwined themes: the historical record of discourses about gender and Muslim women's lives from the seventh century to the present, and the ways that foundational and medieval texts, as well as contemporary Muslim conservative apologetic and feminist discourses variously construct gender and religious authority.

**Note:** The purpose of this course is not confessional—it will not attempt to persuade you to adopt or reject a particular religious viewpoint. This course presupposes that students accept that the primary and secondary source texts used will be studied using critical methods that are employed in a modern research university when examining any text, religious or otherwise.

### **Course evaluation**

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

'One-minute essays'—20%

Leading discussion of a primary source text (sign up in advance)—15 %

Midterm exam—20%

Alternative discourses written assignment—20%

Final exam—25%

### **Required course readings**

The following textbooks are required:

- Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993)
- Ruth Roded, *Women in Islam and the Middle East: A Reader* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008)
- Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006)
- These books are all available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa [www.havenbooks.ca](http://www.havenbooks.ca)). The links to all of the other course readings are available through WebCT. Please bring them with you (either in printed form, or on your laptop) to class each week.

## COURSE POLICIES

### 'One-minute essays'

The 'one-minute essays' will be held in class at random. They are based on the readings and/or lecture materials. **There is no way to make up for any one-minute essays missed.** This course is designed with the assumption that students will prepare the readings before coming to class, and will attend class regularly. Please note that the readings are heavy; therefore, students should seriously consider whether they will be able to make the time commitment required for this course.

### Leading class discussion of a primary source text

Each student is required to sign up by January 14 for leading class discussion of one of the primary source texts assigned for reading. When leading discussion, you are expected to begin by briefly addressing the following issues: (1) What sort of a text this is, (2) When it was written down, and by whom, (3) What its intended audience appears to be. Then, raise questions that deal with how the text constructs gender, as well as the authority to define what gender is. A written outline of your observations and questions is to be submitted immediately following the discussion. More detail as to what is expected will be provided in class.

### Exams

Please note that there will be no make-up examination for the mid-term. If you must miss the mid-term, you must choose whether to add its value to your final exam mark, or to your written assignment mark. In order to qualify for either of these options, you must (1) provide adequate documentation which shows why you missed the midterm, and (2) fill out a form (available in my office) asking to have the normal grade distribution changed.

### The Alternative Discourses Written Assignment

- More detailed instructions for the assignment will be provided in class.
- **Ensure that you know what plagiarism is**, and how to avoid it. For details, see: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs.academic-integrity/> If you are in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask.
- **If you have never written a paper like this before**, you are strongly urged to contact the Student Academic Success Centre: <http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/writing-resources/>
- **Assignments are due** in hard copy, at the beginning of class, on the date specified in the syllabus. Late papers will be penalized by the deduction of 2% per day or partial day (including weekends), unless an extension has been arranged before the due date. Retroactive extensions will be granted only according to the rules of the university—personal and family emergencies (documentation must be provided). Extensions will not be granted because of exam or essay conflicts, jobs, busy schedules, etc.
- **Late papers can be submitted** through the drop box at the Religion and Classics Department (a large locked wooden box on the wall outside 2A39 Paterson Hall). Do not put them under my (or anyone else's) door; the cleaning staff may pick them up and throw them out.

- **Papers that do not follow the directions given** in class (in content, methodology, appearance, length) may be returned ungraded for resubmission. In such a case. Late penalties will accrue from the due date, regardless of when the problem was discovered.
- **Be sure to keep a hard copy of your paper**, and do a computer/disk back-up as well. Please submit the original for marking, not a photocopy.

### **Email communication**

Please be aware that in order to ensure compliance with the federal privacy act known as FIPPA, Carleton communications policy states that faculty may only communicate with students through their Carleton Connect accounts.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1**

Jan. 7—Introduction to the course

Jan. 9—Orientalism, stereotypes and “saviour discourses”

Readings: Roded, 1-24; Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim women really need saving?” [link on WebCT]

### **Week 2**

Jan. 14— What is a “Muslim woman”? : gender and “Muslimness” as social and historical constructions

**\* Sign up in class today for leading a discussion of a primary source text**

Film: “They call me Muslim”

Reading: Rowson, “The effeminates of early Medina,” 671-693 [link on WebCT].

Jan. 16—Gender and the pre-Islamic Near East

Reading: Ahmed, 11-37.

### **Week 3**

Jan. 21— Gender and historical narratives: the rise of Islam

Readings: Ahmed, 41-63; Roded, 25-47.

Jan. 23—Founding discourses

Readings: Roded, 48-83; Ahmed, 64-78.

### **Week 4**

Jan. 28—Imagining alternative discourses

Readings: Hossein, “Sultana’s dream”; Kahf, “Lost pages” [links on WebCT]

Jan. 30—Medieval Islam: historical memory and legal discourses

Readings: Ahmed, 102-123; Roded, 84-114.

### **Week 5**

Feb. 4—Medieval Islam: gendered ideals, gendered realities

Readings: Roded, 115-158; Sayeed, “Muslim women’s religious education in early and classical Islam,” 94-103 [link on WebCT].

Feb. 6—The long nineteenth century

Readings: Ahmed, 127-143; Roded, 181-212.

### **Week 6**

Feb. 11— Gender and Islam in the early twentieth century

Readings: Ahmed, 144-188; Roded, 213-236.

Feb. 13—The twentieth century: key themes and developments

Readings: Ahmed, 189-234; Roded, 237-261.

### **Week 7—Reading Week**

### **Week 8**

Feb. 25—**Midterm exam** (in class)

Feb. 27—Introducing Islamist apologetic discourses in North America

Readings: Badawi, *Gender equity in Islam* [link on WebCT]

### **Week 9**

March 4—Introducing North American Muslim feminist discourses

Readings: Wadud, “Justice, Gender and Islam” [link on WebCT]; Ali, xii-xxviii.

March 6—Debating marriage, money and sex

Readings: Ali, 1-23.

### **Week 10**

March 11—Debating divorce

Readings: Ali, 24-38.

March 14—Debating concubinage

Readings: Ali, 39-55.

### **Week 11**

March 18—Debating licit and illicit sex

Readings: Ali, 56-74.

March 20—Perceptions of same-sex sexuality

Film: “A jihad for love” (pt. 1)

Readings: Ali, 75-96.

### **Week 12**

March 25—Contemporary Muslim discourses on transgender issues

Film: “A jihad for love” (pt. 2)

Reading: Najmabadi, “Transing and transpassing across sex-gender walls in Iran” [link on WebCT]

March 27—Debating female genital cutting

Readings: Ali, 97-111.

### **Week 13**

April 1—Debating the Qur’an and androcentrism

Readings: Ali, 112-134.

April 3—Debating women and ritual

Readings: Silvers and Elewa, “‘I am one of the people’,” 141-171 [link on WebCT].

### **Week 14**

April 8—Debating the relevance of past exemplars to the present

Readings: Ali, 135-157.

April 10— Course conclusion and review \* **Alternative discourses assignment due**

## 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. 3, 2012**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 10, 2013**.

### 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/)

#### Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

#### 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 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library