

**The College of Humanities: Religion
RELI 3331A: Islam and Gender**

Professor A. Geissinger
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 pm,
or by appointment

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Classes: Fridays 2:35-5:25 pm (Southam Hall 313)

Course description

This course provides an introduction to past and contemporary Muslim discourses about gender and sexuality. It is organized around two intertwined themes: the historical record of discourses about gender roles 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, as well as religious authority.

NOTE: The purpose of this course is not to attempt to persuade you to adopt or reject any 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.

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- explain how gender works as an analytical category in the academic study of religion
- read and discuss primary and secondary source texts analytically
- present an overview of the Muslim discourses studied, with attention to the relevant historical, socio-economic and political factors that have shaped them
- discuss issues relating to the academic study of gender and Islam in a more informed and nuanced way, as human and historically situated discourses

Course evaluation

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

- Class participation—20%
- Class presentation—25%
- Reading responses—25%
- Final exam (take-home)—30%

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).

- Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2016). ***Be sure to get the expanded and revised edition**, published in 2016.

These books are all available through Haven Books (43 Seneca Street, Ottawa www.havenbooks.ca).

The links to all of the other course readings are available through cuLearn. Please bring them with you (either in printed form, or on your laptop) to class on the days for which they are assigned.

Class participation

The mark for class participation is determined not just by regular attendance, but by active and informed participation in class discussions that indicates that you have carefully and thoughtfully done the assigned readings.

Reading responses

Five short reading responses (2 pages, typed) on any five of the readings listed in the syllabus from Weeks 2 to 12 that is marked with an *. Each response must briefly answer the following questions: (1) What is the main argument being made in the reading? (2) What types of evidence are being used to support this argument? (3) Why is this argument significant for the academic study of Islam and gender? (4) What is your response to the argument? Are there any additional sources/voices/experiences/perspectives that you think should have been included, and why? Reading responses are due at the beginning of the class for which the reading is assigned.

Class presentations

For the class presentation, you need to: sign up for one of the designated topics, research it, give a 15-20 minute presentation on it in class that addresses the assigned questions, and lead a class discussion about the presentation. More detail as to what is expected will be provided in class and posted on cuLearn.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity

“The integrity of a student’s academic work is critical to enabling student success. Students who violate the principles of academic integrity undermine the quality of their education and the value of a Carleton University degree.” (<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>)

All assignments are to be written in your own words, and you must acknowledge any idea or quotation that you take from another author by properly citing it, as well as by using quotation marks where appropriate. It is every student’s responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, which includes how to properly cite sources.

Laptops and other electronic devices

In order to help maintain a respectful environment that is conducive to learning, laptops and other electronic devices are only to be used in class for matters directly related to the course.

No audio or video recording of lectures with any electronic device is allowed.

Extensions and late assignments

The reading responses are due in hard copy on the dates specified in the syllabus, at the beginning of class. Late submissions will not be accepted, except in personal or family emergencies (documentation must be provided).

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: Sept. 8

Introduction to the course

***sign up today for class presentations**

Approaching sources analytically

Stereotypes, saviour discourses, and “culture talk”

What is a “Muslim woman”, what is a “Muslim man”... and who’s missing?

Readings: Gaudio, “Dire straights in Nigeria” [link on cuLearn]

Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim women really need saving?” [link on cuLearn]

Week 2: Sept. 15

Conservative Muslim apologetics and gender

Introducing Muslim feminist discourses

Readings: Badawi, “Gender equity in Islam” [link on cuLearn]

Karim, “To be black, female, and Muslim” [link on cuLearn]*

Ahmed-Ghosh, “Dilemmas of Islamic and secular feminists” [link on cuLearn]*

Week 3: Sept. 22

Gendering early Muslim history: whose past?

Readings: Ahmed, Chapter 3*

Rowson, “The effeminates of early Medina,” 671-693 [link on cuLearn]*

Ali, “Introduction”

Week 4: Sept. 29

Gender and memory

Feminist approaches to androcentric texts

Readings: Ahmed, Chapter 4*

Ali, Chapter 7*

Week 5: Oct. 6

Feminist rereadings of founding discourses

Legal constructions of gender: marriage, money and sex

Readings: Ahmed, Chapter 5*

Ali, Chapter 1*

Week 6: Oct. 13

Constructing gender: divorce laws

Gender and interpretive authority

Readings: Ali, Chapter 2

Ahmed, Chapter 6*

Bauer, “Debates on women’s status as judges and witnesses” [link on cuLearn]*

Week 7: Oct. 20

Slavery, concubinage, and constructions of gender

Readings: Ali, Chapter 3*

Ali, “Redeeming slavery”

Stern, “Response to Kecia Ali”

Week 8: Fall Break (week of Oct. 23-27)

Week 9: Nov. 3

Constructions of licit and illicit sex

Readings: Ali, Chapter 4*

Mir-Hosseini and Hamzic, *The revival of zina laws*, pp. 119-146 OR 183-209

[link on cuLearn]*

Week 10: Nov. 10

Perceptions of same-sex sexuality

Readings: Ali, Chapter 5*

Links for same-sex sexuality [on cuLearn]

Wong, “Islam, sexuality, and the marginal positioning of *pengkids*”

[link on cuLearn]*

Week 11: Nov. 17

Female genital cutting

Readings: Ali, Chapter 6*

Links for FGC [on cuLearn]

Week 12: Nov. 24

Child marriage

The past, the present, and ethical questions

Readings: Ali, Chapter 8*

Links for underage marriage [links on cuLearn]

Week 13: Dec. 1

Future directions?

Course conclusion and review

Readings: Ali, 193-207

Hossein, “Sultana’s dream” [link on cuLearn]



University Regulations for 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.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found on <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/#AIatCU>.

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

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 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).

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System Chart](#)

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement on Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and

preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

Deferred Exams

Students who do not write/attend a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply to write a deferred examination.

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office **no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination;** and
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and in cases of illness by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

The granting of a deferral also requires that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course according to the evaluation scheme established in the Course Outline, excluding the final examination for which deferral privileges are requested. Reasons for denial of a deferral may include, among other conditions, a failure to (i) achieve a minimum score in the course before the final examination; (ii) attend a minimum number of classes; (iii) successfully complete a specific task (e.g. term paper, critical report, group project, computer or other assignment); (iv) complete laboratory work; (v) successfully complete one or more midterms; or (vi) meet other reasonable conditions of successful performance.

More information can be found [in the calendar](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to: [Registrar's Office](#)

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA.

NEW FALL 2017: WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term. Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Dates can be found here: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

Registrar's Office 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)