

Professor A. Geissinger

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

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**Course Lectures:** Tuesdays, 2:35-5:25 pm (SA 314)

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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 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 2310) and/or Middle Eastern history. Anyone without this academic background will be expected to obtain it through extensive background reading.

### **Course Evaluation: Students registered in 4851**

- Active class participation—12%
- Leading class discussion based on one day’s assigned readings—10%
- Written assignment (3-4 pages)—15% total
- Four response papers (1-2 pages each)—20%
- Paper proposal—10%
- Research paper (11-14 pages)—33%

### **Course Evaluation: Students registered in 5851**

- Active class participation—12%
- Leading class discussion based on one day’s assigned readings—10%
- Written assignment (4-5 pages)—15% total
- Four response papers (2-3 pages each)—20%
- Paper proposal—10%
- Research paper (13-16 pages)—33%

## **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**

This is a seminar course. It is expected that all students will attend class regularly, having done the readings and prepared to discuss them. Class attendance will be taken and participation will be graded (1% at the end of each class for active participation). If you are absent, participation marks cannot be made up in any way.

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?

### **Leading class discussions**

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for the class that they will lead the discussion. Leading the discussion must involve the following: (1) a 15-minute presentation about all of the readings assigned for the class, which briefly summarizes the main issues that they raise, highlights at least two critical questions that they raise for you in light of the course materials, and critically evaluates the central arguments made/methodologies used in the secondary sources assigned for that day, (2) followed by class discussion, which the presenter leads, and (3) fielding questions.

### **The Written Assignment**

The written assignment 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* (also available online; the link is on cuLearn). For this assignment, you will answer one of the questions about it, making use of other assigned course readings. Specific instructions will be provided in class.

### **The Response Papers**

The response papers must contain (1) a clear summary of the several of the main points made in all of the various readings assigned for the class, and (2) at least two critical questions that these readings raise, in light of the course materials. One of the response papers is to be done for the class that you lead the discussion; the other three are open to your choice. They are to be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point type. All response papers are due at the beginning of the class which they are associated with.

## **The Paper Proposal and the Research Paper**

Topics must be directly related to 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 proposal must contain: a working title, a thesis statement, an outline of the paper, as well as an annotated bibliography containing least seven sources. Each student must present their paper proposal in class on the day that proposals are due.

The annotated bibliography must provide complete citations of the sources used in the essay. Each source is to be followed by a paragraph, explaining why it was selected and how it will 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 due date for submitting the paper proposal is given in the course schedule (see below for policies on late submissions). Failure to submit it by the deadline 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 give a class presentation on their completed research papers in the last class of the semester. This presentation includes fielding questions and leading a discussion.

## **Lateness Policy**

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

Late response papers can only receive a maximum of half the grade, and will not be accepted for marking later than two days past the due date. If the written assignment 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 proposal must be submitted within five (5) days of the due date, or the research paper will not be accepted for marking.

## **Plagiarism**

Students are expected to be fully familiar with and to abide by university policies relating to plagiarism: <http://carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Week 1** (Jan. 6)—Situating confessional, academic and “popular” discourses on gender and Islam

Readings: Lincoln, “Theses on Method.”

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

(start reading Badawi, *Gender equity*)

**Week 2** (Jan. 13)—Contemporary constructions of 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.

(by now, you should be at least half way through reading Badawi)

### *I. Gendering texts, gendering history*

**Week 3** (Jan. 20)—Gender, sexualities, and the past

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

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.

(by now, you should be finished reading Badawi)

**Week 4** (Jan. 27)—The Qur’an, interpretive traditions, and gender

Readings: Qur’an Chapter 4 (“The Women”).

Look up the following verses from this chapter in the *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*:

1, 2, 3, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 32, 34, 117, 128.

Chaudhry, “The problems of conscience and hermeneutics,” 157-170.

**Week 5** (Feb. 3)—The Hadith literature, transmission, interpretation, and gender

Readings: Bukhari, “The Chapter on Marriage”

Geissinger, “A’isha bint Abi Bakr and her contributions to the formation of the Islamic tradition,” 37-49.

Akram, “al-Muhaddithat,” 1-17.

**Week 6** (Feb. 10)—Gendering Muslim mysticisms \* **First written assignment due** (in class)  
Readings: Dakake, “Walking upon the path of God like men?”  
Silters, “Early and pious Sufi women.”

**Week 7**—Winter Break (no class)

**Week 8** (Feb. 24)—**Paper proposals (and class presentation of them) today**

## *II. Studying contemporary discourses and lived realities*

**Week 9** (March 3)—Contemporary constructions of genders and sexualities  
Readings: Bahreini, “From perversion to pathology,” 1-49.

**Week 10** (March 10)—The “Islamic feminism” debate  
Readings: 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 11** (March 17)—Studying Muslim feminist reinterpretations  
Readings: Silters and Elewa, “‘I am one of the people’,” 141-171.  
Calderini, “Contextualizing arguments about female ritual leadership,” 5-32.

**Week 12** (March 24)—Constructions of 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.

**Week 13** (March 31)—Contemporary Muslim women and religious authority  
Readings: 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 14** (April 7)—course conclusion; research paper presentations  
\* **research papers 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. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

### 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 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. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** 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 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