Course Outline | Spring Semester 2016

SOC 622
Gender in Arab Societies

Optional Course
Course Teacher: Dr. Dana Olwan
Credit Value: 3
Pre-requisites: None
Co-requisites: None
Course Duration: 14 weeks; Semester 2
Total Student Study Time: 126 hours, including 42 contact hours of lectures and seminars.

AIMS

This course focuses on gendered social changes and transformations. In this course, we examine and explore various feminist interventions and debates surrounding gender politics in Arab societies. In addition to studying major political, social and historical changes and alterations taking place in the Arab world, this course enables students to develop an understanding of the workings of gender in every day life practices and experiences across a variety of individual, collective, communal, familial, and structural scales. This course aims to provide students with theoretical and analytical skills that help shed light on social, historical, and political changes unfolding in a number of communities and nation-states by facilitating broader and deeper understanding of social theories relating to Arab societies.

This course also aims to enable students to:

- Develop an ability to read, analyze and critique a diverse range of feminist theories that focus on issues pertaining to the experience of Arab societies and contexts.
- Understand the relationship between gender politics in the Arab world and the historical, political, and social contexts from which they emerge.
- Deepen research and writing skills by examining various issues relating to gender politics and Arab nation-states, cultures, and societies.
- Assess the importance, relevance, and/or applicability of western theorizations of gender difference to analysis of non-western nation-states across the Arab world.
- Explore Arab-based theorizations of gender formations in Arab societies.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME

1) Subject-specific skills:

a. Develop an understanding of a broad range of works that theorize and historicize gender constructions and their impact on social and political life in the Middle East.
b. Understand the relevance and application of the study of gender to theorizations of a diverse range of issues in the Arab world.
c. Attain a strong understanding of power and difference as they relate to gender politics and the experiences of women in the Middle East.
d. Utilize an intersectional lens to analyze gender, power, and society across the Arab world.

e. Construct well-articulated arguments based on the ideas, tools, and methods used by the readings and/or discussed in the class.

f. Further develop critical reading, thinking, and writing skills for the humanities and social sciences classroom.

g. Make meaningful connections between the reading materials and current political, cultural, and social realities.

2) Core academic skills:

a. Gain familiarity with the theorizations of gender in the Arab world.

b. Develop facility with interdisciplinary and feminist theories and methods.

c. Develop ability to analyze individual and/or group experience in relation to social and institutional contexts.

d. Develop ability to critically analyze primary sources and secondary texts in feminist thought as they pertain to the Arab world.

e. Develop ability to reflect on gender roles and expectations across a variety of Arab national, social, and political contexts.

f. Recognize multiple sites of knowledge production, e.g. conventional texts as well as creative work, activism, and popular culture.

g. Acquire familiarity with multiple forms of Arab, Middle Eastern and Muslim feminisms.

3) Personal and key skills:

a. Improve general research skills, including setting appropriate timescales, clarifying the aims and expected results of research, and good time management

b. Communicate clearly (both in written and oral format);

c. Train and apply different qualitative research methods to a variety of texts

d. Study independently

LEARNING/TEACHING METHODS

We will meet for a total of 42 hours. The instructor will use lecturing and participatory seminar methods in this course. The course will be split between one hour lectures by the instructor of the course and two hour seminars that include student presentations of texts and discussions of their main arguments.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Seminar Presentation (throughout the term)

Each student will lead a seminar based on weekly the readings. Presentations should attend to the key arguments/themes raised in the reading and provide discussion points and/or questions for the group. The presentations should strive to make appropriate links to contemporary political, historical, and social debates and utilize external research to illuminate difficult concepts and ideas raised in the readings. While providing some summary of the readings, presentations should include new analytic elements, showcasing students’ abilities
to synthesize ideas and suggest exciting and nontraditional avenues for feminist research and praxis. Presentations must be at least 20 minutes long and each presenter should have a list of prepared questions to launch class discussions of studied materials.

2. Short Papers (First paper due on March 25; Second Paper Due on April 25)
Each student is responsible for writing two short papers on the assigned readings. Each paper will present a critical reading of assigned texts with the aim of analyzing the work(s), summarizing its main findings, critiquing it and connecting it to broader themes discussed throughout the term. Each paper should have a clearly defined thesis and should reflect the student’s own engagement with the assigned materials.

3. Essay Proposal (April 15, 2016)
Students will provide a proposal for their final papers which is 2-3 pages long. This proposal should include the key questions that the essay will tackle and reference to the theories that the authors will address.

4. Annotated Bibliography (May 24, 2016; to be submitted with final paper)
Students are required to submit an annotated bibliography detailing the main arguments of each text used in their final research paper. This bibliography should build on readings covered during the classroom and include new and original materials not covered by the course but directly relating to the main research questions pursued by the students in their final essays.

5. Final Essay (May 24, 2016)
A final research paper which does not exceed in length (5,000) addressing and extending the questions, debates, and discussions raised by the selected course materials and readings. The paper, while referencing theoretical works utilized in this class, should also showcase students’ research abilities and analytical skills. Papers must provide a clearly articulated thesis, a works cited page, and follow appropriate documentation guidelines. All students are strongly encouraged to discuss their potential research projects with the instructor well before the deadline.

6. Final Exam (determined by school)
Students will write a final exam (3 hours) that tests their knowledge of feminist social theories and issues covered in the course materials. The exam will consist of questions that require short and long answers and analyses of textual excerpts from theoretical texts studied throughout the term.

ASSESSMENT

- Seminar Presentation (20–30 Minutes)  No Grade
- 2 Short Papers (1000–1500 words each)  20%
- Essay Synopsis and Proposal  10%
- Essay (5,000)  40%
- Annotated Bibliography  10%
- Final Exam (3 hours)  20%
SYLLABUS PLAN

Please note: This reading list may be altered by the instructor and in consultation with students.

Week One

February 28, 2016  Conceptualizations and Theoretical Background


Week Two

March 6, 2016  Gender Politics in the Arab World


Week Three

March 13, 2016  Arab Women Between Modernity, Religiosity, and Secularism


Week Four

March 20, 2016  Gendered Sartorial Politics


http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15219/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%A8.

Week Five

March 27, 2016  Constructions of Arab Mothers and the Arab Family


Week Six

April 3, 2016  Education and Empowerment


Week Seven

April 10, 2016  Gendered Citizenships and Nation States

سعاد، جوزيف. "الجنسانية والمواطنة في العالم العربي." الرائدة. 139-140: صيف 2010-2011. HTTP://IWSAWASSETS.LAU.EDU.LB/ALRAIDA/ALRAIDA-%D9%A1%D9%A3%D9%A0-%D9%A1%D9%A2%D9%A9.PDF


للبدي، فذوي. "تأثير الوضع السياسي لمدينة القدس على حقوق المواطنة للمرأة المقدسة." الرائدة. 139-140: صيف 2010-2011: 42-23. HTTP://IWSAWASSETS.LAU.EDU.LB/ALRAIDA/ALRAIDA-%D9%A1%D9%A3%D9%A0-%D9%A1%D9%A2%D9%A9.PDF

Week Eight

April 17, 2016  Feminist Activism and Feminist Resistance


Week Nine

April 24, 2016  Reading Week: No Class
Week Ten
May 1, 2016  Gender and War in Arab Societies

Al–Ali, Nadje and Nicola Pratt. “Gendering War and Transnationalism in the Middle East.”  
Women and War in the Middle East. Nadje Al–Ali and Nicola Pratt, eds. London: Zed Books,  

Shalhboub–Kevorkian, Nadera. “Violent Translations: Women, War, and Narrative in Conflict  
Zones” (41–76) “Women Frontliners in Conflict Zones: A Genealogy of Weaponization”  
(112–150). Militarization and Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East.  


Week Eleven
May 8, 2016  Gendered Violence in Arab Societies

Abu Odeh, Lama. “Crimes of Honor and the Construction of Gender in in Arab Societies.”  


Week Twelve
May 15, 2016  Nation–States, Religious and Gendered Differences


Maxine Molyneux. "The Law, the State and Socialist Policies with Regard to Women: the Case of  
Week Thirteen

May 22, 2016  Women’s Revolutions, Reformations, and Change


http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10513/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%AB%D9%89-

Week Fourteen

May 29, 2016  Arab Masculinities


Week Fifteen

June 5, 2016  Review Session

Review and Final Exam Discussions
**INDICATIVE READING LIST**


