

Gender and Politics of the Middle East

Rice University (POLI 458)

Tuesday, 1:00-4:00 PM

Instructor: Marwa Shalaby

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Office Hours: Monday 2-3 PM & by appointment

Required Books

- Ahmed, Leila. (1992). *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Charrad, Mounira A. (2001). *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Joseph, Suad and Susan Slyomovics (Eds.). (2001). *Women and Power in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gary King, Robert Keohane, & Sidney Verba. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Recommended)
- Shively, W. Phillips. (2013). *The Craft of Political Research*. 9th Edition. Boston: Pearson.

Additional readings are listed on the syllabus and will be posted on OWL-Space. You are required to print copies and bring them to class, as they will be used in our discussion.

Learning Outcomes

- Provide students with a sound understanding of the intertwined relationship between gender and politics in contemporary Middle East and North Africa.
- Equip the students with the necessary skills/tools to produce high quality research related to the study of gender in the MENA region.

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- Students will be able to identify the different socio-cultural, legal and political barriers facing women across the region and to empirically test and operationalize these factors in their own research projects.
- Introduce students to the ongoing debates and competing theoretical frameworks necessary for the understanding of gender relations and women's social status across the region and to engage in critical analysis of the assigned readings and hypotheses.

Course Description

The first part of this seminar will focus on familiarizing students with the region's historical, socio-political, and cultural context that have particularly contributed to shaping the current discourse on gender in the Arab World. The second part of this seminar will mainly explore-both theoretically and empirically- the role of Arab women in influencing the political processes across the Middle East. The seminar will conclude by highlighting real-world examples of Middle Eastern women from different parts of the region who have succeeded to challenge the status quo and push for genuine change.

Assignments and Evaluation

Our class will be a combination of lectures, class discussions and student-led presentations. Students are required to keep up with the assigned reading, to attend our weekly meetings and to participate intelligently in our class discussions. Students' evaluation will be based on four response papers, two class presentations, one book report, and a final research paper

- **Attendance (10% of course grade):** Each student will be granted two unexcused absences during the semester. Missing more than two classes will result in a 2-point grade reduction for each additional absence, unless there is a compelling reason that you would need to communicate directly with me.
- **Active, informed Participation (10% of course grade):** Students are required to participate actively and intelligently in our class meetings. Students' discussions are an integral part of the class and students should have read the assigned readings for the day and be ready to discuss them before coming to class. Additionally, each student is required to be a discussion leader, at least once, during the semester. The discussion leader for a specific day will be responsible for introducing the main themes of the readings, providing us with a list of questions that we should collectively answer during class in addition to demonstrating the points of strengths and/or weaknesses in the arguments presented in that specific day's readings. Discussion leaders' roles will be assigned on the first day of class.

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- **Response Papers (35% of course grade):** Students are required to write **four** 3-4 pages (double-spaced, Font 12) response papers based on the readings. These assignments should demonstrate your ability to think analytically and to develop a clear and logical argument, rather than being simply a summary of the readings. The instructor will provide you with further guidelines and instructions on how to formulate and design your papers. These papers are due by the beginning of the classes that you chose to write about.
- **Book Report (10% of Course Grade):** Students are required to read an outside book pertinent to the themes covered in the course, write a two-page (single-spaced, Font 12) report, and present the book to their colleagues. Students are also expected to distribute to the class their written report prior to their oral presentation. Your book report should be more than a summary of the book. Your report should specify the author's implied and/or stated purpose for writing the book, the author's major theoretical contribution(s) to the discipline, profound investigation and evaluation of the research methodology and main conclusions of the assigned book. A list of book suggestions will be provided by the instructor the first day of class.
- **Final Research paper (35% of course grade):** Students are required to write 12-15 page (double-spaced, Font 12) research paper on the topic of their choice. The final version of your proposal should demonstrate your mastery of the key concepts, approaches, and the different research tools introduced in this class. This assignment should also demonstrate your ability to think analytically and to develop a clear and logical argument. It should also be written in a clear, scholarly format, with an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and a properly referenced bibliography (APA/Chicago). The final version of the research paper is due on **May 5th**. The Instructor will provide you with further guidelines and instructions on how to formulate and design your research paper. However, it is very important to start working early on your research project. It takes weeks of critical and analytical thinking to produce not only good research questions (puzzles), but also to produce a set of good testable hypotheses.

Honor Code, Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are expected to follow Rice Honor System. Please review the relevant section on: [http://honor.rice.edu/emplibrary/Student%20Handbook%20\(rev%201-1-08\).pdf](http://honor.rice.edu/emplibrary/Student%20Handbook%20(rev%201-1-08).pdf).

Students should also be aware that plagiarism in this class would result in an F in the class and a note in your academic record. Please take a moment to go over the Rice University rules against cheating and plagiarism on this website:

<http://honor.blogs.rice.edu/files/2011/02/Acknowledgement-of-Sources.pdf>

Alternatively, you can review the section on "Academic Honesty" in Rice University Handbook. <http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>

ADA Statement

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center or just communicate your needs and/or concerns with me directly.

Class Schedule

Week 1

Tuesday, January 13: Course Introduction and Role Assignments

- Please review this collection of background essays on the Middle East to be discussed during our first two weeks of class. These essays can be accessed online from TeachMiddleEast/University of Chicago.
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/27-geography/51-what-is-the-middle-east>.
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/26-stereotypes/50-arab-muslim-or-middle-eastern>
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/28-history/3-understanding-middle-eastern-history>.
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/36-people/44-arab-identity>
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/36-people/46-communal-identities-and-ethnic-groups>.

Week 2

Tuesday, January 20: Historical Context of the Region and the Rise of Energy Politics

- Lust, Ellen. (2014). *The Middle East*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Chapter 1. (Recommended)
- Bill, James. (1996). "The Study of the Middle East Politics, 1946-1996: A Stocktaking" *Middle East Journal*, 50 (4): 501-512. (Recommended)

Week 3

Tuesday, January 27: Guest Lecture – Dr. Mounira Charrad

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- Charrad, Mounira. (2001). "State and Gender in the Maghrib" in Joseph, Suad and Susan Slyomovics (Eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 61-71.
- Charrad, Mounira A. (2001). *States and Women's Rights. The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 2, 7-9.

Week 4 (Research Question Due)

Tuesday, February 3: Realities and Misconceptions on the Study of Gender in the Middle East

- The World Bank MENA Development Report. (2013). *Gender Equality and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere: Overview*.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. (2002). "Do Muslim Women really need saving?" *American Anthropologist*, 104 (3): 783-790.
- Mikdashi, Maya. (2012). "How Not to Study Gender in the Middle East." *Jadaliyya*. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4775/how-not-to-study-gender-in-the-middle-east>
- Moghadam, Valentine M. and Lucie Senftova. (2005). "Measuring Women's Empowerment: Participation and Rights in Civil, Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Domains." *International Social Science Journal*, 57(187): 389-412.
- Haghghat, Elhum. (2013). "Social Status and Change: The Question of Access to Resources and Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 14(1): 273-299.
- Pillarisetti, J. Ram and Mark McGillivray. (2002). "Human Development and Gender Empowerment: Methodological and Measurement Issues." *Development Policy Review*, 16(2): 197-203.

Week 5

Tuesday, February 10: Gender, Culture, and Islam: A Historical Perspective

- Ahmed, Leila. (1992). *Women and Gender in Islam*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Introduction, pp.41-63, Chapters 9-11.
- Barlas, Asma. (2002). *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran*. Austin: University of Texas Press: 1-28; 129-166.
- Wadud, Amina. (1999). *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1.
- Mahmood, Saba. (2005). *Politics of piety: the Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 1(1-39).
- Mahmood, Saba. (2005). *Politics of piety: the Islamic revival and the feminist*

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subject. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 2 (40- 79).
(Recommended)

- Welzel, Christian & Alexander, Amy. (2010). "Islam and Patriarchy: How Robust is Muslim Support for Patriarchal Values." *International Review of Sociology*, 21(2): 249-276 (Recommended).

Week 6

Tuesday, February 17: Research Questions, Research Design and Hypothesis Testing

- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 1 (1-27), Ch. 3 (76-85) and (99-114).
- Shively, W. Phillips. (2013). *The Craft of Political Research*. 9th Edition, Boston: Pearson: 1-85.
- Gerring, J. (2004). "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *The American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341-354.
- Clark, Janine. (2006). "Field Research Methods in the Middle East." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 39(3): 417-424. (Recommended)

Week 7 (Literature Review Due)

Tuesday, February 24: Gender Equality and (lack of) Democracy in MENA

- Donno, D., and Russett, B. (2004). "Islam, Authoritarianism and Female Empowerment: What are the Linkages?" *World Politics*, 56(4): 582-607.
- Fish, Steven. (2002). "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics*, 55(1): 4-37.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. (2004). "The Gender of Democracy: The Link Between Women's Rights and Democratization in the Middle East." *Arab Reform Bulletin* 2 (7): 2-3.
- Rizzo, H., Abdel-Latif, A.H., & Meyer, K. (2007). "The Relationship Between Gender Equality and Democracy: A Comparison of Arab Versus Non-Arab Muslim Societies." *Sociology*, 41(6): 1151-1170.
- Ross, Michael L. (2008). "Oil, Islam and Women." *APSR*, 102(1): 107-123.
- Neilan S. Chaturvedi and Orlando Montoya. (2013). "Democracy, Oil, or Religion? Expanding Women's Rights in the Muslim World" *Religion and Politics*, 6: 596-617.

Week 8: Spring Break: NO CLASS

Week 9

Tuesday, March 10:

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Politics of Identity Conference @ BIPP. Students' attendance is mandatory for a grade. Our panel is scheduled during the time of the class (1-4 PM)

Week 10 (Hypotheses and Research Design Due)

Tuesday, March 17: Operationalizing Gender in Political Science Research

- Burns, Nancy. (2005). "Finding Gender." *Politics & Gender*, 1(1): 137-141.
- Paxton, Pamela and Melanie M. Hughes. (2014). *Women, Politics, and Power*. Sage Publications: Introduction.
- Dahlerup, D. (Ed.). (2006). *Women, Quotas and Politics*. Abingdon: Oxford University Press. 3-31.
- Paxton, Pamela et al. (2010). "Growth in women's political representation: A longitudinal exploration of the democracy, electoral system and gender quotas." *European Journal of Political Research*, 49: 25-52.
- Jalalzai, F. and Krook, M. (2010). "Beyond Hilary and Benazir: Women's Political Leadership Worldwide." *International Political Science Review*, 31(1): 1-19.
- Schwindt- Bayer, L. (2010). *Political Power and Women's Representation in Latin America*. Oxford University Press: Introduction: 1-33. (Recommended)

Week 11

Tuesday, March 24: Gender and Political Participation in the Arab World

- Albrecht, Holger. (2008). "The Nature of Political Participation." *Political Participation in the Middle East*: 15-32.
- Abou-Zeid, Gihan. (2006). "The Arab region: Women's access to the decision-making process across the Arab nation." In Dahlerup, D. (Ed.), *Women, Quotas and Politics*, New York: Routledge.
- Dunne, Michele. (2008). "Women's Political Participation in the Gulf: A Conversation with Activists Fatin Bundagji (Saudi Arabia), Rola Dashti (Kuwait), Munira Fakhro (Bahrain)."
- Sater, J. (2012). Reserved Seats, Patriarchy, and Patronage in Morocco. In Krook, M. (Ed.), *The impact of Gender Quotas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fatima et al. (2008). "Critical Acts without a Critical Mass: The Substantive Representation of Women in the Turkish Parliament." *Parliamentary Affairs*, 61 (3): 461-475.
- Joseph, Suad. Women and Politics in the Middle East. *Women and Power in the Middle East*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 34-40. (Recommended)
- Amawi, Abba. (2007). "Against all Odds: Women Candidates in Jordanian Elections" in Moghadam, V. M. (Ed.), *From Patriarchy to Empowerment*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Week 12 (Research/Paper Methodology Due)

Tuesday, March 31: Gender and Political Mobilization in the Arab World

- Alatiyat, Ibtisam and Hassan Barari. (2010). "Liberating Women with Islam? The Islamists and Women's Issues in Jordan." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 11 (3): 359-378.
- Blaydes, Lisa & El-Tarouty, S. (2009). "Women Electoral Participation in Egypt: The Implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment and Mobilization." *The Middle East Journal*, 63(3): 364-380.
- Khatib, Lina. (2010). "Gender, Citizenship and Political Agency in Lebanon" *Gender and Diversity in the Middle East and North Africa*, 35(3): 437- 451.
- Gilman, S. (2007). Feminist Organizing in Tunisia. In Mogahadam, V. M. (Ed.), *From Patriarchy to Empowerment*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press: 97-120.
- Pandya, Sophia. (2010). " Women's Shia's Ma'atem in Bahrain." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 6(2): 31-58.
- Koolaee, Elaheh. (2014). " The Prospects for Democracy: Women Reformists in the Iranian Parliament" in Simone, Fereshtah (ed.) *On Shifting Ground: Muslim Women in the Global Era*. Feminist Press: City University of New York.

Week 13

Tuesday, April 7: Women and the Arab Spring (Last Book Report Presentation)

- Skalli, Lubna. (2014). "Defying Marginality: Young Women's Politics and Social Media in the Middle East" in Simone, Fereshtah (ed.) *On Shifting Ground: Muslim Women in the Global Era*. Feminist Press: City University of New York.
- Karolak, Magdalena. (2012). "Bahraini Women in the 21st Century: Disputed Legacy of the Unfinished Revolution." *Journal of International women's Studies*, 13(5): 5-16.
- Olimat, Muhamad S. (2012). "Arab Spring and Women in Kuwait" *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(5): 180-194.
- Shalaby, Marwa. (2014). Trajectories of change: Challenge and transformation in the wake of the Arab Spring: The case of Egypt and Tunisia. James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy.
- Sinha, Sangeeta. (2012). "Arab Spring: Women's Empowerment in Algeria." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(5): 144-159.

Week 14

Tuesday, April 14: Women and Nationalism in MENA & Start of Student Presentations

- Graham-Brown, Sarah. (2000). "Women Activism in the Middle East: A Historical Perspective." In Joseph, Suad and Susan Sylomovics (eds.) *Women and Power in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 23-33.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. (2001). "The Politics of Gender and the Conundrums of Citizenship." In Joseph, Suad and Susan Sylomovics (eds.) *Women and Power in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 52-58.

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- Amawi, Abla (2000). "Gender and Citizenship in Jordan" in Joseph, Suad (ed.) *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*. Syracuse, USA: Syracuse University Press: 158-184.
- Gerner, Deborah. (2007). "Mobilizing Women for Nationalist Agendas: Palestine." In Mogahadam, V. M. (Ed.), *From Patriarchy to Empowerment*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press: 17-40.

Week 15

Tuesday, April 21: Student Presentations & Review Session.

Research Paper Due (May 5th).

Instructions, Guidelines & Readings for Short Response Papers

As noted in the syllabus, you are to write four critical responses to the material assigned for that week. These response papers should be no more than **4 pages, double-spaced**.

In your papers, I am really looking for a **critical** response rather than a “weekly summary.” My goal was to get you thinking about the problems in the arguments or holes in the facts and offer constructive ways to remedy them. **Do not *simply* turn in a summary** of what you read. Although you should present a summary and synthesis as a first step and should be included as background, I am primarily grading you on your ability to critically analyze the material in the way a scholar would critique an article. This means bringing together (synthesizing) the discussion in the materials in a coherent and organized fashion as well as thinking beyond the material to an analysis of the text(s) itself. This may be a different way of writing than you are used to, but it will teach you (very quickly) to synthesize an author’s claims and craft your response to those arguments. I think the following questions to get your started:

Tips to get started:

Pick up one or two themes or arguments from the readings and really analyze them.

Evaluate the readings rather than editorializing.

Think about the work in relation to other theories or empirical findings we’ve read.

Connect the work’s methodology to other methodologies.

Think about what “conventional wisdom” holds – does the work contradict this?

Some questions to consider:

Did the authors say all there was to say?

What did they miss?

What should they have included?

Can you suggest counter-factuals?

What are the implications for studying the concept or issue the way they did?

Did they measure their variables correctly or sufficiently?

What limits are inherent in how the variables are measured or how the study is designed? How might it change if we change the approach or choose different data?

Does what they are talking about jell with the “real world”?

Are the conclusions generalizable?

Questions along these analytical and deconstructive lines are what I am looking for in your papers rather than a summary of what you thought about the readings. Ultimately, these short papers should give you a sense of what kinds of questions to ask in general and specifically a theoretical way to begin your final project for this class or your senior, MA or MPA thesis.

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I don't necessarily require you to do outside research or offer additional citations (although some in the past have incorporated readings from other classes and it made their papers better). Ideally, you will use the readings to critique *each other* -- the readings are usually diverse enough that they take different approaches to similar theoretical questions (or frequently come up with divergent conclusions), so feel free to play one off of another in a comparative sense.