

REL 4361: Women and Islam
RLG 5937: Topics in Religious Studies
Spring 2020

Class Meeting Times: Tuesday 10:40-11:30 AM & Thursday 10:40 AM-12:35 PM

Class Venue: Tuesday MAT 0112 and Thursdays TUR L011

Instructor: Professor Ali Altaf Mian, Ph.D.

E-mail: alimian@ufl.edu

Office Phone: 352-273-2940

Office Location: Anderson Hall 107-A

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:40-12:40 PM and Wednesdays 3:15-5:15 PM

Course Synopsis

This course surveys the key debates in Muslim gender studies and is divided into three thematic cores: (1) Historical Foundations, (2) Feminist Interventions in Texts, and (3) Critical Observations of Practice. The first set of readings will give students a solid grounding in the history of gender in Islam using Leila Ahmed's *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (Yale University Press, 1992) and Nadia Maria El Cheikh's *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Harvard University Press, 2015). In the second part of the course, we will examine how feminist scholars intervene in both historical and contemporary Islam by re-interpreting scriptural, legal, and moral-theological texts. Students will benefit from the work of amina wadud (*Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*), Kecia Ali (*Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*), and Zahra Ayubi (*Gendered Morality: Classical Islamic Ethics of the Self, Family, and Society*). The final set of readings will turn to anthropological scholarship to examine lived religion and situated practices in various contexts, including Senegal, India, and the US. Students will read Joseph Hill's *Wrapping Authority: Women Islamic Leaders in a Sufi Movement in Dakar, Senegal* (University of Toronto Press, 2018), Katherine Lemons' *Divorcing Traditions: Islamic Marriage Law and the Making of Indian Secularism* (Cornell University Press, 2019), and Shabana Mir's *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016). This course is discussion-based and will enable students to conduct research and complete several writing projects.

Required Texts:

- Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (Yale University Press, 1992)
- Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Harvard University Press, 2015)
- amina wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*, Expanded and Revised Edition (Oneworld Publications, 2016)
- Zahra Ayubi, *Gendered Morality: Classical Islamic Ethics of the Self, Family, and Society* (Columbia University Press, 2019)

- Joseph Hill, *Wrapping Authority: Women Islamic Leaders in a Sufi Movement in Dakar, Senegal* (University of Toronto Press, 2018)
- Katherine Lemons, *Divorcing Traditions: Islamic Marriage Law and the Making of Indian Secularism* (Cornell University Press, 2019)
- Shabana Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is expected, and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You can miss two sessions without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will detract 50 points from your grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies as listed in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. Class will begin and end on time. Five late arrivals (anything over 5 minutes) will be considered one absence.

Assignments/Grade Breakdown:

Item:	Points:
Class Participation	150
Weekly Reading Responses	300
Film Review	100
Annotated Bibliography for Final Paper	100
Final Paper Workshop and Presentation	50
Final Paper	300

Detailed Guidelines for Each Assignment will be provided

Grading Scale

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
940-1000	94-100	A	4.00
900-939	90.0-93.9	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
834-866	83.4-86.6	B	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.00
600-633	60.0-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0.00

More information on grades and grading policies can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Late work will not be accepted. A makeup quiz and makeup final exam will be provided for students who miss either due to extreme, documented circumstances. Students should arrange with the instructor for makeup material.

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all. The use of laptops or tables is only allowed for purpose of note-taking.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Week 1: Historical Foundations, part I

Tuesday 7 Jan

Introduction to the Course; Introductions

Thursday 9 Jan

Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*

Week 2: Historical Foundations, part II

Tuesday 14 January

Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*

Thursday 16 January

Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*

Week 3: Historical Foundations, part III

Tuesday 21 January

Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*

Thursday 23 January

El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*

Week 4: Historical Foundations, part IV

Tuesday 28 January

Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*

Thursday 30 January

Rana Mikati, "Fighting for the Faith? Notes on Women and War in Early Islam."
Aisha Geissinger, *Gender and Muslim Constructions of Exegetical Authority: A Rereading of the Classical Genre of Qur'ān Commentary* (excerpt)

Week 5: Feminist Interventions, part I

Tuesday 4 February

amina wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*

Thursday 6 February

amina wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*

Week 6: Feminist Interventions, part II

Tuesday 11 February

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*

Thursday 13 February

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam*

Week 7: Feminist Interventions, part III

Tuesday 18 February

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam*

Thursday 20 February

Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam*

Week 8 (25 February): Feminist Interventions, part IV

Tuesday 25 February

Zahra Ayubi, *Gendered Morality: Classical Islamic Ethics of the Self, Family, and Society*

Thursday 27 February

Zahra Ayubi, *Gendered Morality*

Week 9 (3 March): NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Week 10 (10 March): Feminist Interventions, part V

Tuesday 10 March

Zahra Ayubi, *Gendered Morality*

Thursday 12 March

Zahra Ayubi, *Gendered Morality*

Week 11 (17 March): Anthropological Interventions, part I

Tuesday 17 March

Joseph Hill, *Wrapping Authority: Women Islamic Leaders in a Sufi Movement in Dakar*

Thursday 19 March

Hill, *Wrapping Authority*

Week 12 (24 March): Anthropological Interventions, part II

Tuesday 24 March

Hill, *Wrapping Authority*

Thursday 26 March

Katherine Lemons, *Divorcing Traditions: Islamic Marriage Law and the Making of Indian Secularism*

Week 13 (31 March): Anthropological Interventions, part III

Tuesday 31 March

Lemons, *Divorcing Traditions: Islamic Marriage Law and the Making of Indian Secularism*

Thursday 2 April

Shabana Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity*

Week 14 (7 April): Anthropological Interventions, part IV

Tuesday 7 April

Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus*

Thursday 9 April

Mir, *Muslim American Women on Campus*

Week 15 (14 April): Paper Workshops & Presentations

Tuesday 14 April

Thursday 16 April

Week 15

Tuesday 21 April—Wrap-Up Discussion

Final Paper Due Date: 4/26/2020 by midnight

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the

University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.