

REL 4145: Gender, Women, Sex, and Religion
RLG 5365: Studies in Islam

Meeting Times: Tuesday 4:05-4:55 PM (Period 9) and Thursday 3:00-4:55 PM (Periods 8-9)

Class Venue: MAT 0102 (Mattingly Hall)

Instructor: Professor Ali Altaf Mian, Ph.D.

E-mail: alimian@ufl.edu

Office Location: Anderson Hall 107-B

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-5:30 PM

Course Synopsis

This course consists of two objectives: (1) to provide students with a theoretical introduction to scholarship on gender and sexuality in religious studies, and (2) to furnish students with an empirically-grounded and multi-genre study of gender and sexuality in contemporary Islam. Our key questions at the intersection of religion and gender/sexuality include: What are the limitations of secular liberal feminism and how might this formation of feminism move beyond its negative assessment of religion? How are women's rights and womanist causes pursued in the non-West? What resources does queer theory offer to think about religious traditions?

Course Objectives:

- To develop critical thinking skills
- To introduce students to philosophical discourses on religion, gender, and sexuality
- To introduce students to religious studies questions and methodologies
- To develop analytical writing skills
- To develop analytical speaking skills

A Note on the Syllabus: This syllabus is like a contract that is semi-binding. It is binding insofar as the assignments and points allotted to them, rules about grades, and the grading scale. It is also binding in terms of attendance policy. However, it is not binding in terms of the reading schedule and reading assignments. The instructor reserves the right to cancel or amend the reading schedule based on the class's performance.

Assignments/Grade Breakdown:

Item:	Points:
Attendance and Participation	200
Three Essays on Film	300
Group Presentation on Feminist and/or Queer Activist/Organization	100
Presentation on the Fine Arts	200
Oral Exam	200

Attendance and Participation (200 points)

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You can miss three 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.

Three Essays on Films (300 points)

We will view three films as a class. Our viewing method will be to watch segments of the film in class, then discussing those segments, and then writing/brainstorming about the key questions posed by the films. This method of watching the films as a class will allow students to develop both conversational skills as interlocutors and argumentative skills as writers. Students will be responsible for developing their notes from class discussions into three polished essays. Each essay is worth 100 points. The essay should be at least 500 words.

Group Presentation (100 points)

You will work in groups of 3-4 persons to prepare a 15-minute presentation on a religious feminist and/or queer activist or activist organization.

Presentation on the Fine Arts (200 points)

Each student will make a presentation on a contemporary practitioner of the fine arts who treats religious themes and gender/sexuality. The student will discuss how the artist's work illuminates this course's key themes. A writing component also needs to be submitted along with the in-class presentation.

Oral Exam (200 points)

The oral exam tests your knowledge of the content as well as skills to effectively communicate your argument. The oral exam will take place during the final weeks. A pool of possible questions will be posted on Canvas two weeks prior to this exam.

Grading Scale

Score	Percent	Grade
945-1000	94.5-100	A
900-944	90.0-94.4	A-
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+
834-866	83.4-86.6	B
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+
734-766	73.4-76.6	C
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+
634-666	63.4-66.6	D
600-633	60.0-63.3	D-
0-599	0-59.9	E

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

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

Student Honor Code:

As a UF student, you have agreed to follow the university's Honor Code, meaning you will not give or receive unauthorized assistance in completing assignments. Violations can result in failing an exam,

paper or the course. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>. On all work submitted for credit by University of Florida students, the following pledge is implied, “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from Chatgpt or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

Disabilities:

“If you are a student with a disability and would like to request disability-related accommodations, you are encouraged to contact me and the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible. The Disability Resource Center is located in 001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). Their phone number is 392-8565.”

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

Recording of Class Sessions:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent

may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Critical Thinking

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Note: All readings are provided in PDF form on Canvas (E-Learning). Please print out the readings and/or read them on either a laptop or tablet. Please do not access and read on your smart phones.

R August 22—Course Introduction

T August 27—Ali Altaf Mian, “Religion.” *The Routledge Global History of Feminism*

R August 29—Eric Tranby and Samantha Zulkowski, “Religion as Cultural Power: The Role of Religion in Influencing Americans’ Symbolic Boundaries around Gender and Sexuality.” *Sociology Compass*

T September 3—Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy* (excerpt)

R September 5—Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass* (excerpt)

T September 10—Anjali Arondekar, *Abundance: Sexuality’s History*, pgs. 1-62

R September 12—Anjali Arondekar, *Abundance: Sexuality’s History*, pgs. 63-127

T September 17—In-Class Viewing and Discussion of *Joyland*

R September 19—In-Class Viewing and Discussion of *Joyland*

T September 24—In-Class Viewing and Discussion of *Joyland*

R September 26—Gwendolyn S. Kirk, “Spaces of Critique, Spaces of Desire: Gender-Crossing in Pakistani Cinema,” in *Pakistan Desires*, ed. Omar Kasmani

T October 1—Sana Sayed, “Hidden Voices, Hidden Agendas: Qubaysiat Women’s Group in Syria.” *Women Rising: In and Beyond the Arab World*.

R October 3—In-Class Viewing and Discussion of *Q*

T October 8—In-Class Viewing and Discussion of *Q*

R October 10—In-Class Viewing and Discussion of *Q*

T October 15—Presentations on the Fine Arts

R October 17—Presentations on the Fine Arts

T October 22—Presentations on the Fine Arts

R October 24—Presentations on the Fine Arts

T October 29—Ahmed Afzal, “Beyond Hooking Up: Tales from Grindr in Pakistan,” in *Pakistan Desires*, ed. Omar Kasmani

R October 31—In-Class Viewing of *Zindagi Tamasha*

T November 5—In-Class Viewing of *Zindagi Tamasha*

R November 7—In-Class Viewing of *Zindagi Tamasha*

T November 12—Group Presentations

R November 14—Group Presentations

T November 19—Group Presentations

R November 21—No Class (Dr. Mian is presenting at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion)

T November 26—No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)

R November 28—No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)

T December 3—Wrap-Up Class Discussion