

Spring 2010

WMNS2500
Women and Social Change in the Middle East
 Dr. Daphne Tsimhoni

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:50-4:30
 Class: Ryder Hall 124
 Office: 214A Lake Hall
 Office hour: Wednesday 13:00-14:00 and by appointment
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Description and aims:

The course's aim is to introduce the students to the complex position and the changing role of women in the Middle East. For the last 200 years, the Middle East has been going through a tremendous socio-economic and political transition. The changing position of women has been the touch stone of this process.

The course will discuss the traditional position of women among the various religions, ethnic and social groups in the Middle East, their role in modernization and other socio-political processes, economy and public life. It will further discuss the main issues and challenges that women share in the Middle East; women's organizations, their struggle for the improvement of women's position, their achievements and failures. The course will further discuss women's role in the nation building and struggle for independence. Did their struggle improve their position in the independent states of the Middle East? The course will discuss the position of women the various states of the Middle East including Israel where East meets West. How far does women's position in Israel reflect the position of women in the Middle East? What achievements and problems do women of the Middle East share with women in the west?

Course Requirements:

You are required to attend at least 80 per cent of classes, come to class in time and read the assignments prior to class. If you are unable to attend a class due to illness or family emergency please contact me as soon a possible. Both full attendance and contribution to class discussions as based on the class readings are essential in order to earn an A.

Breakdown of final grade:

Map Quiz (in class Monday, Feb. 8) 10 per cent
 Two midterm papers (due Feb. 22 and Mar. 22) 20 per cent each
 Final essay (due April 22) 40 per cent
 Active participation in class 10 per cent

Required books available at the Northeastern University Bookstore and at the Snell Library on reserve:

Keddie, Nikki, *Women in the Middle East, Past and Present*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007

Moghadam, Valentine, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003

El Saadawi, Nawal, *The Hidden Face of Eve, Women in the Arab World*, London: Zed Books, 2007

Course Outline and Reading:

Note: This syllabus is subject to change as needed. Adequate notice will always be given for any change in the schedule.

I. Introduction:

M Jan. 11

The traditional position of Middle Eastern women in Islam, Judaism and Christianity

W Jan. 13 Reading: Keddie, pp. 13-47

M Jan. 18: Martin Luther – No class

II. The traditional position of women under Islamic Caliphates

W Jan. 20: Keddie, pp. 48-59

III. The position of women under the Ottomans and Safavids;

The beginnings of change in the 19th century

The impact of the West and modernization under colonial rule

M Jan. 25: Keddie, pp. 60-74

IV. Early calls for the improvement of the position of women:

Muhammad Abduh and Qasim Amin

W Jan. 27: Saadawi, pp. 251-258; Qasim Amin (on Blackboard)

V. Nationalism and Women's movements 1914-1945

Turkey and Iran

M Feb. 1: Keddie, pp. 75-88; Moghadam, pp.90-93

Arab States

W Feb. 3: Keddie, pp. 89-101; Saadawi, pp.258-273

VI. Women's struggle for liberation and their changing position in Middle Eastern states since 1945

Turkey and Iran

M Feb. 8: Keddie, pp. 102-121; Moghadam, pp. 98-101

The Arab States

W Feb. 10: Keddie, pp. 121-140, 149-165; Moghadam, pp. 95-98

M Feb. 15: Presidents Day – no class

- VII. Issues of women in the family
 Polygamy
 W Feb. 17: Moghadam, pp.124-130; Keddie, pp. 203-221;
 Saadawi, pp.171-184
 Divorce
 M Feb. 22: Saadawi, pp. 288-311
 Women's circumcision
 W Feb. 24: Saadawi, pp. 13-19, 50-65; Cohen-Almagor (on Blackboard)
 M Mar. 1: Spring break – no class
 W Mar. 3: Spring break – no class
 Prostitution, Rape and sexual assault:
 M Mar. 8: Saadawi, pp. , 20-37, 76-93
 Murder for the honor of the family
 W Mar. 10: Saadawi, pp. 38-49
- VIII. Israel: Where East Meets West
 Women's quest for equality
 M Mar. 15: Kadari, pp. 43-65
 Issues of women's legal position
 W Mar. 17: Kadari, pp. 227-262
 Women and Politics
 M Mar. 22: Yishai in Fuchs, pp. 190-207
 Women in the quest for peace
 W Mar. 24: Svirsky, Peace Movements, pp. 113-132
 Mizrahi women
 M Mar 29: Dahan-Kalev in Misra-Rich, pp. 96-112
 Palestinian Arab women in Israel
 Hasan, Honor, in Naveh, pp. 1-37
- IX. The role of education
 W Mar. 31: Moghadam, pp. 135-144
- X. Women in the economy
 M Apr. 5: Moghadam, pp. 33-71; Saadawi, pp. 274-287
- XI. Women in public life and in politics
 W Apr.7: Moghadam, pp. 6-28
- XII. Women and the war in Iraq
 M Apr. 12: Al Ali, 2005, Iraqi women pp. 739-758 (on Blackboard);
 Al Ali, 2007, Iraqi women in Iraq war (on Blackboard)
- XIII. Islamist movements and women's response

W Apr. 14: Moghadam pp. 151-186
M Apr 19: Patriots Day – no class

XIV. Iran and Islamic feminism
W Apr. 21: Moghadam pp.193-222