GEOG 447/ASIAN 447: GENDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST
TR 2:00-3:15, Saunders 204

Banu Gökarkin, banug@email.unc.edu, Office: Saunders 307, Office hours:
Tuesdays 11:00-1:00 and Thursdays 11:00-12:00

Gender relations and spaces are central to historical and contemporary cultural and political formations in the modern Middle East. Our knowledge and imaginations of this region are also mediated through gendered representations. In this course we will examine relationships of gender and geography in the modern Middle East. We will question how the representations of the Middle East are gendered and analyze such icons as the “veiled women” and “terrorist men.” What are the political implications of such representations? What kinds of political projects and discourses do they enable or serve? Moving from representations to material spaces, we will investigate the ways in which colonialism, as well as anti-colonial nationalist movements, attempts to create new kinds of feminine and masculine identities and spaces. We will then examine the implications of gendered constructions of national identity and modernity for the use of, mobility in and access to spaces of power. The topics we will discuss include the emergence of new femininities, masculinities, and sexual identifications, social movements, and the paradoxes of Islamism, globalization, and neoliberalism in various settings including Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Through the lens of gender, we will develop a new understanding of Middle Eastern geography and politics.

Objectives
The goals of this course include:
(a) Developing a spatial approach to studying gender in the Middle East,
(b) Providing a basic historical and geographical knowledge of the Middle East,
(c) Developing critical analysis skills for understanding current social and political debates, changes and challenges concerning gender and sexuality across the Middle East,
(d) Honing reading and oral communication skills by preparing discussion leading assignments and participating in class discussions,
(e) Improving research and writing skills through assignments.

Course requirements:

Participation (20%): Students’ active participation will be key to productive class discussions. Students are expected to come to class with a set of questions and ideas based on assigned readings. Students are expected to come to class regularly and on time. Even more important is active participation in class discussions. Attendance without participation will not receive full points at the end of the semester. Students will also have the opportunity to continue discussion outside of class, by posting further comments and questions on Sakai Discussion Board/blog.

Discussion leading (20%): Students will lead two classes during the semester. A sign up sheet will be circulated at the beginning of the semester for this purpose. As a discussion leader you will play an active role in introducing and analyzing that day’s readings. In this role, you will be expected to formulate 3-4 questions that examine the topic at hand, to stimulate conversation about its connection to other readings, and to present supplementary materials to advance the analysis. The supplementary materials should include a 1-page hand out and a Powerpoint presentation that gives a summary of key points, questions, and brief information about the authors. A combination of relevant video clips, maps, or photos would be helpful to further the discussion as well.

Exams (30%): There will be two exams that aim to evaluate your understanding of course readings and class discussions. The exams will consist of short answer (definition, explanation of a concept) and short essay questions.

Research paper (30%): You can pick a topic of interest to you and of relevance to the course, conduct research, and write an analytical paper. This research paper is expected to demonstrate a deep engagement with the course materials, to effectively use a number of readings, as well as to help develop your independent research skills. The length of the paper should be up to 10 pages for undergraduate students and 15 pages for graduate students. We will complete this research in multiple steps. First step is to submit a 1-2 page proposal with a description of your topic, research question, preliminary argument/thesis and a short list of key sources.
The second step is to prepare an annotated bibliography and a revised proposal (15% of your grade).

Grading:
Participation 20%
Discussion leading 20%
Exams 30%
Research paper 30%

Readings:
Our readings will include a selection of articles and book chapters (available on e-reserves or Blackboard). In addition, we will read the following books:
- *Persepolis I&II*
- *Girls of Riyadh*
- *JMEWS* Special Issue, Fall 2010: Muslim Women, Consumer Capitalism, and the Islamic Culture Industry
  (http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=jmiddeastwoms
tud).

Important dates:
- September 27: Research proposal due
- October 11: Exam 1
- November 8: Annotated bibliography and revised proposal due
- December 4: Research paper due
- December 8: Saturday, 12pm: Final Exam

Resources for the Course:
- **UNC libraries**: Davis (the main library) and the House Undergraduate Library have many useful resources for this course: http://www.lib.unc.edu/
- **The Writing Center**: The Writing Center is a very important resource particularly for your assignments. I encourage all of you to become familiar with their services. Information on those services and many useful ideas on research and writing are at WWW.UNC.edu/depts/wcweb/.

**Special Needs Students:**
If you have any special needs, please talk to me during the first two weeks of the semester. I will be happy to work with you and/or the relevant centers on campus to accommodate your needs.
Schedule

MODULE I: ORIENTALISM AND COLONIALISM
This module examines the role of gender and sexuality in Orientalism and colonialism. How was (and is) the Middle East represented and understood by Western Europe in gendered and sexualized ways? How have such representations enabled and furthered European colonization? We will also discuss the critiques of imperialist tendencies and assumptions within Western feminism towards the “Third World” or the Middle East.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION
August 21: Introduction: Why Study Gender and Space in the Middle East?
August 23: “Arab Spring” and Women: Breaking Down Stereotypes?
Please bring a news article that deals with a gender issue in the Middle East. I will ask you to share your article with the class.
http://www.thenation.com/article/160179/arab-spring-women
http://www.ifex.org/middle_east_north_africa/2011/05/25/arab_spring_women_targeted/

WEEK 2: SPACE, GENDER, AND IMPERIALISM
August 28: Gender and Geography

August 30: ‘Are We All Women?’: The Question of the Transnational and the Imperial in Feminism
Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind, 2002, “Feminism, the Taliban and the politics of insurgency,” http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/777777190136/

WEEK 3: ORIENTALISM, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY
September 4: Gendering Orientalism and Colonialism
Edward Said, “Introduction”, from Orientalism

September 6: Visual Representations as the ‘Fertilizers of the Colonial Vision’ --[STUDENT LED DISCUSSIONS BEGIN]
WEEK 4: ORIENTALISM CONTINUED
September 11: Western women’s travel writing
Lady Mary Montagu, selections from Turkish Embassy Letters.
Harriet Martineau, Eastern life: past and present.

September 13: Harem as gendered space: historical perspectives vs. stereotypes
Leslie Pierce, Introduction. The Imperial Harem.
Irvin Cemil Schick, “The harem as gendered space and the spatial production of gender” in Marilyn Booth ed. Harem Histories, pp.69-84.

WEEK 5: COLONIALISM AND GENDER
September 18: Colonial Paternalism: French Syria
Elizabeth Thompson, Chapter 2 (“Soldiers and Patriarchs: The Pillars of Colonial Paternalism”), in Colonial Citizens

September 20: Colonizing the Domestic Space, Decolonization, and Gender: French Algeria
Zeynep Celik, “The Indigenous Home” (available as e-book: http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/search/acelik/acelik/1,4,13,B/l856~4006330&FF=acelik+zeynep&8,9,1,0)
Film: The Battle of Algiers

MODULE II: NATIONALISM, REVOLUTION, WAR
How have nationalist movements, including those of decolonization, constructed the new nation and gender roles? What are the ideal femininities and masculinities that they have formulated? What role women have played in revolution and war and how have they been impacted?

WEEK 6: NATIONALISM, GENDER, AND SPACE
September 25: Nationalism and Women: Turkey

September 27: Nation-Building in the Home: Turkey
Research paper proposal due
WEEK 7: NATIONALISM CONTINUED: PALESTINE AND ISRAEL
October 2: Nationalism, Femininity, and Masculinity
   Tamar Mayer, “From Zero to Hero: Masculinity in Jewish Nationalism”, in Esther
   Fuchs ed. Israeli Women’s Studies: A Reader, pp. 96-117. Rutgers University Press.
   Simona Sharoni, “Homefront as Battlefield”
   Film: My Israel

October 4: Gender Perspectives on the Palestine/Israel Conflict
   Film: Rana’s Wedding

WEEK 8: GENDER AND REVOLUTION
October 9: Gender and Revolution: Iran
   Persepolis
   Snapshots of Women’s Movement in Iran:
   http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Fall06/Sanam/timeline.html
   NPR: “Despite odds women’s movement persists in Iran” (February 1, 2009):

October 11: Women and War: Iraq
   Nadje al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, 2010, What Kind of Liberation? Women and the
   Exam 1

WEEK 9: Men and War
October 16: Masculinities and War: Lebanon
   Haugbolle, Sune. 2012. The (little) militia man: memory and militarized masculinity

October 18: Fall break

MODULE III: NEW PERSPECTIVES: THE YOUTH, MUSLIM SUBJECTS, SEXUALITIES,
COMMODITIES
This module introduces some of the most recent research trends in Middle East women’s
studies, including a new interest in understanding the recent uprisings across the Middle
East, new formations of Islamic piety, questions about sexuality (especially homosexuality
and gay/lesbian identities), and the rise of consumerism and commodification.

WEEK 10
October 23: New Public Visibilities
   Culture, 14, 1, 173-
   Dorothea Shulz, 2011, “Renewal and enlightenment: Muslim women’s biographic
   narratives of reform in Mali,” Journal of Religion in Africa, 41, 1, 93-123.

October 25: No class—research paper work day
WEEK 11: NEW MUSLIM SUBJECTS
October 30: Piety and women’s movement—Egypt

November 1: Women and Mosque Spaces: Women Preachers in Turkey
   DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0020743811000614

WEEK 12: SEXUALITIES
November 6: Sexuality in Medieval Middle East
   Film: Jihad for Love

November 8: Sexuality and tourism

WEEK 13: CONSUMER CAPITALISM, ISLAM, AND WOMEN
November 13: Consumer Capitalism and Muslim Women
   Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies, 2010, 6, 3, Marketing Muslim Women Special Issue. Introduction.

November 15: New Muslim Women’s Lifestyle Magazines
   Reina Lewis, Carla Jones articles in JMEWS Marketing Muslim Women special issue.

Week 14
November 20: New ‘Islamic’ Fashion
   Banu Gökarıksel and Anna Secor article in JMEWS; 2010, “Islamic-ness in the life of a commodity,” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers

November 22: Thanksgiving holiday

Week 15
November 27: Literary representations of Muslim women
   Girls of Riyadh
   Marilyn Booth article in JMEWS
November 29: Arab Spring
    http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/23/why_do_they_hate_us
    http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/debating_the_war_on_women
?page=0,5

Week 6
December 4: Current and future challenges

    Research paper due

December 8  Saturday, 12pm: Final Exam