



The Islamic Seminary of America

Islam & Gender in the Contemporary Context

Fall 2021 Syllabus

Part 1: Course Information

Instructor Information

Instructor(s): Dr. Julie Lowe & Dr. Yasir Qadhi

Course Description

This course will introduce students to contemporary controversies regarding gender and sexuality in the Quran and scholarly texts, with particular emphasis on modern Islamic feminism. Students will examine common radical reinterpretations of gender and sexuality, as well as the methodology behind them. Throughout the course, participants will explore the overarching theme of the boundary between divine imperatives regarding gender and sexuality and human interpretation.

Prerequisite

- N/A

Course Schedule

Friday, August 20: 5pm-9pm CT
Saturday, August 21: 8am-4pm CT
Friday, November 12: 5pm-9pm CT
Saturday, November 13: 8am-4pm CT

Weekly Monday evening sessions 6-8pm CT, August 30-November 1

Textbook & Course Materials

Required Text

- N/A

Recommended Texts & Other Readings

- Readings will be made available on the Populi course site.

Course Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)

Course Structure

This course will meet on two weekends (Aug 20/21 and Nov 12/13), in addition to ten online 2-hour sessions. The in-person class time will be used for case studies and skill-building. Reading assignments and online class meetings will provide the foundational concepts and information that will be applied during the weekend classes.

Online Resources

Online classes will be delivered via Populi and Zoom. Assignments will be posted and submitted via Populi. All articles will be available on Populi.

Part 2: Student Learning Outcomes

- Understand key controversies in contemporary times regarding gender and sexuality in the Quran, sunnah and Islamic thought.
- Identify key figures in modern debates over gender and sexuality.
- Engage with key arguments underlying contemporary radical reinterpretations.
- Explore the boundary between divine imperatives regarding gender and sexuality and human interpretation.

SCHEDULE:

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Aug 20/21	Gender and sexuality: a primer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic discourse on gender and sexuality (introduction to Women, Gender and Sexuality studies) • Gendered rulings in the Islamic tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gendered Bodies: Feminist Perspectives</i> by Judith Lorber and Lisa Moore – introduction and chapter 1 • <i>Statement on Pronouns</i> (poem) by George Elliott Clark • <i>Women in Classical Islamic Law</i> by S. Spectorosky, Chapter 	None
Aug 30	Western feminism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of all waves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism • Charlotte Krolokke and Anne Scott Sorensen, 'Three Waves of Feminism: From Suffragettes to Grrls' • Simone de Beauvoir, <i>The Second Sex</i> – pp. 8-15 (Beauvoir's biography); 23-39 (Introduction to <i>The Second Sex</i>). • Sara Salem, 'Feminist Critique and Islamic Feminism: The Question of Intersectionality' 	Prompt 1
Sept 6	Early Islamic feminism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qasim Amin • Women such as Hind Nawfal, Huda Sha'rawi, Bint al-Shati 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Liberation of Women (Taḥrīr al-Mar'a)</i> by Qasim Amin • <i>Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (Mudhakkirātī)</i> by Sha'rāwī. 	Prompt 2
Sept 13	Contemporary Islamic feminism: Figures and Issues (part 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatima Mernissi • Amina Wadud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mernissi F, <i>The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam</i> (Mary Jo Lakeland trans, Basic Books 1992) • Wadud A, <i>Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a</i> 	Prompt 3

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
		<i>Woman's Perspective</i> (Oxford 1999)	
Sept 20	Contemporary Islamic feminism: Figures and Issues (part 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kecia Ali Ayesha Chaudhry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ali K – excerpts from various works Chaudhry AS, <i>Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition</i> (Oxford 2014) 'Right Possessions' TBD 	Prompt 4
Sept 27	Contemporary Islamic feminism: Figures and Issues (part 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayesha Hidayatullah Khaled Abou El Fadl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hidayatullah AA, <i>Feminist Edges of the Qur'an</i> (Oxford 2014) Abou El Fadl K, <i>Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women</i> (Oneworld 2001) 	Prompt 5
Oct 4	Moderate gender reformers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fadel M, 'Two Women, One Man: Knowledge, Power and Gender in Medieval Sunni Legal Thought' (1997) 29(2) <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> 185 Celene Ibrahim, <i>Women and Gender in the Qur'an</i> Aisha Hasan lecture 	Prompt 6
Oct 11	Historical critiques of gendered legal rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sadeghi B, <i>The Logic of Law Making in Islam: Women and Prayer in the Legal Tradition</i> (Cambridge 2013) Jalajel DS, <i>Women and Leadership in Islamic Law: A Critical Analysis of Classical Legal Texts</i> (Routledge 2016) 	Prompt 7 -
Oct 18	Case study: rape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hina Azam – book or articles TBD Quraishi A, 'Her Honor: An Islamic Critique of the Rape Laws of Pakistan from a Woman-Sensitive Perspective' (1997) 18(2) <i>Michigan Journal of International Law</i> 287 	Prompt 8
Oct 25	Case study: al-Nisa 4:34	TBD	Prompt 9
Nov 1	Topic TBA	TBA	Prompt 10
Nov 12/13	Guest speaker (Fri) Trans issues Conclusion	Mobeen Vaid <i>Can Islam Accommodate Homosexual Acts</i> Kugle, Scott:	Final papers

Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

All assignments will be graded. See Course Schedule for required readings and assignments. All readings must be completed BEFORE the scheduled class.

There will be weekly reflections on the readings due BEFORE the class, and these will be via prompts (there are ten prompts in total). You will find them in the 'Assignments' section. These reflections will form the bulk of your grade, 80% of the final grade will be based on them. There will be NO dropped or excused reflections; late reflections will be penalized according to the syllabus rules below. Hence EACH prompt is worth 8% of your entire grade. The goal of the prompts is to show us that not only have you done the readings, you have a fair degree of understanding of them as well. Reflections should be approximately 500 words and engage critically with the readings. Make sure that you do not simply summarize the readings; rather, critically engage, for example, by comparing viewpoints, providing reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with an author, etc.

Lastly, there is a term research paper, consisting of a topic of YOUR choice, with our approval. It would be wise to start research on these topics as soon as the semester begins. The research papers will consist of an in-depth discussion, utilizing classical authors/sources and contemporary ones, and demonstrating not just a mastery of the taught material, but an attempt at making a unique contribution to your topic, whether it be via synthesis of material, or questioning gaps in previous scholarship, or attempting to explore new avenues.

The topic must be finalized by Oct 4th, and submitted Nov 12th at the latest. The final paper will be worth 20 % of your grade.

Late Work Policy

Late submissions will receive a full letter grade deduction unless an extension has been approved in writing by one of the instructors in advance of the deadline. Extensions may be given for extenuating circumstances (illness, death in the family, etc), not for regular work conflicts. Any assignment that is submitted more than one week late will receive a zero.

Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work
C	73-76%	Average Work
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

Important note: For all TISA courses a B- is required as a passing grade.

Part 5: Course Policies

Attend Class

Students are expected to attend all class sessions as listed on the course calendar.

- Regular students must attend the intensive weekend sessions, as well as online sessions. The only acceptable excuse is some type of emergency like illness. Regular students must provide in writing the excuse before or during the sessions. Online sessions will be recorded; however, reading assignments and online posts must be completed before the scheduled online class.
- Auditors will be allowed on a case by case basis, with the requirement of online and in person class attendance and participation.

Participate

Students are expected to post online assignments and participate in class discussions both online and in person.

Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructors know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective student. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructors when difficulties arise during the semester so that they can help you find a solution.

Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Populi unless otherwise instructed. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from instructor *before the due date*.

All discussion assignments must be completed by the assignment due date and time. Late or missing discussion assignments will affect the student's grade.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the TISA Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and

compelling reason is required to drop from the course.

Incomplete Policy

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade.

Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed

Disability Statement: If you are a student with a disability requesting reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact academics@islamicseminary.us.

Commit to Integrity

As a student in this course (and at TISA) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class, as well as commit to integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

1. Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. It usually involves an attempt by a student to show possession of a level of knowledge or skill that they do not possess.
2. Course instructors have the initial responsibility for detecting and dealing with academic dishonesty. Instructors who believe that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred are obligated to discuss the matter with the student(s) involved. Instructors should possess reasonable evidence of academic dishonesty.

Course policies are subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to check Populi for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted in Populi.