McGill University  
Faculty of Arts  

Women in Islam  
ISLA 310 | W 2020  
Schedule: T,R - 2:35-3:55  
Location: BIRKS 111

Instructor: Kausar Bukhari  
Email: kausar.bukhari@mcgill.ca  
Office hours: MORRICE 313, Thurs 1:30-2:25 or by appointment

Introduction  
This course explores the histories, conditions, experiences and intellectual contributions of various groups of women in Middle Eastern societies and beyond. The course highlights historical scholarship on women and Islam. The historical focus is then used as a background in discussions and debates over the experiences and status of Muslim women in the modern postcolonial world. Socio-economic divisions, state policies, patriarchy, and colonialism are investigated as factors in understanding continuations and transformations of gendered relations and women's roles. The frameworks of Islamic feminism and Western feminist discourses are also explored, with an examination of the tensions and conflicts between them.

Required Reading: All readings are available online through the McGill Library

Evaluations

Weekly Reflections 20%
Participation 25% comprised of:
  Attendance 10%
  In class discussion 5%
  Question/comment on reading 10%
Profile of a Notable Muslim Woman 15% comprised of:
  Written Submission 10%
  Oral Presentation 5%
Final Paper 40% comprised of:
  Proposal 5%
  Paper presentation 10%
  Final Paper 25%

Grading Information

Weekly Reflection
A weekly reflection of 200-250 words is due every Sunday of the semester by 5 PM latest (excluding Week 1 and March Break). It should pertain to the week’s readings and class discussions. Your reflections can be open-ended and take a free-writing/journal entry form. All reflections should be submitted on MyCourses. Reflections are graded Excellent/Pass/Fail, with a grade of Fail only given to non-submissions. Your lowest 2 grades will be dropped.
Participation Grade

1) **Attendance** is mandatory as this course is discussion based. Students are granted 2 unexplained absences. Further absences will result in a zero for your attendance grade, unless they are due to a health-related condition or other valid reason. In this case please provide a medical or other relevant note as soon as possible.

2) **In class discussion:** Come to class prepared to discuss and raise questions on the readings. Participation involves active listening to peers and contributions to the weekly discussion topics.

3) **Question/comment on reading:** **Before 11:30 AM on the days we have class,** you are required to submit a brief (a few sentences will suffice) thought/comment/question about the day’s assigned reading. Graded submitted/not submitted.

Profile of a Notable Muslim Woman

You will be expected to write and present a biographical style profile of a notable Muslim woman, either contemporary or historical. The entry should be 1-2 pages long, double spaced. The written profile is **due on March 12 at 2:00 PM** and should be submitted on MyCourses. Presentations will take place in class on **March 12.**

Final Paper:

1) Provide a 1-2-page double-spaced proposal of your final paper, including a preliminary bibliography. Due **Thursday February 20, 11:59 PM.** Proposals should be submitted on MyCourses.

2) Present the main themes, discussions and arguments of your paper to the class. You may use visual aids or other supporting media. Presentation should be 5-7 minutes. Presentations will take place in class on **April 7 and April 9.**

3) Final paper: The final evaluation is a term paper of 8-10 pages, double spaced, which considers any topic pertaining to women and Islam. The paper is due **Wednesday April 15, at 11:59 PM latest,** and should be submitted on MyCourses. Any paper submitted after the due date will not be accepted without a valid and documented medical or psychological reason.

Weekly reading schedule

**Week 1: Introduction**

**TUESDAY JANUARY 7**
Introduction to the course and syllabus run through

**THURSDAY JANUARY 9**

**TUESDAY JANUARY 14**
THURSDAY JANUARY 16
Leila Ahmed’s *Women and Gender in Islam*. Read Part 2: “Founding Discourses; The Transitional Age”.


**Week 3: Courts and politics**

TUESDAY JANUARY 21

THURSDAY JANUARY 23


**Week 4: Mysticism and Sufi practice**

TUESDAY JANUARY 28

THURSDAY JANUARY 30


**Week 5: Social history and scholarly traditions**

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 6

Week 6: Muslim women in the Americas

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13

Week 7: Muslim women in the modern Middle East

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18

Video: Four Women of Egypt https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcrAVNM6it8 published Aug 19, 2013 on YouTube by NFB

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20

Paper Proposals due 11:59 PM

Week 8: Reflections on writing history

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 25

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27


---MARCH BREAK -----

Week 9: Muslim women and feminist discourse

TUESDAY MARCH 10
THURSDAY MARCH 12
Short biographies due. In-class presentations.

Week 10: New approaches

TUESDAY MARCH 17

THURSDAY MARCH 19
Masooda Bano’s (2017) Female Islamic Education Movements: The Re-Democratisation of Islamic Knowledge. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Read Chapter 3 p. 84-127

Week 11: New approaches

TUESDAY MARCH 24

THURSDAY MARCH 26

Week 12: Women in Islamic Studies

TUESDAY MARCH 31

Video: Dr. Kecia Ali’s “Muslim Scholars, Islamic Studies, and the Gendered Academy” Presentation for The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) fourth annual Ismail Al Faruqi Memorial Lecture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ai5XF-bP3KE. Uploaded Dec 1, 2017 by IIITMedia.

THURSDAY APRIL 2

Week 13: Presentations

TUESDAY APRIL 7
Paper presentations

THURSDAY APRIL 9
Paper presentations
University Honor System and Students’ Rights

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).