Women’s Studies Program
Northern Arizona University
Spring 2007
Hours: Monday, 5 pm to 7:30 pm
Room: SBS West 103
Instructor: Philippa Winkler PhD
Email: Philippa.Winkler@nau.edu. Through VISTA, WebCT
Office: SBS West 276
Office hours: Friday 9 am to 11 am or by appointment.

This course draws on history, current events and feminist consciousness to explore women’s struggles while living under wartime conditions in the Middle East region. This course surveys conflicts involving the United States, the United Kingdom, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Israel/Palestine and Iran. Because of the US and UK’ intertwined military campaigns in the region, course content will also focus on Afghanistan and North African countries such as Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

One theoretical starting point is that war, whether perpetrated by nation-states, militias or individuals, is linked to, and sustained by, domestic, sexual and structural violence. This leads us to question how women’s identities are constructed in the pursuit of nationalism, resources and capital by competing patriarchies. Above all, this course will transcend stereotypes of ‘grieving mother’ and ‘veiled victim’, images which reinforce in Western minds the supposed need to civilize ‘backward’ societies in Islamic countries. We will learn about women as active social agents -- citizens, activists, theorists, combatants, heads of households, workers, and civic and political leaders.

Learning Objectives

WST 360 is a liberal studies course in the Cultural Understanding block with a thematic focus on Valuing Diversity in the Contemporary World. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Obtain an overview of Middle East her-story
- Deconstruct the Eurocentric notion that women in the West are more liberated than those in the Middle East
- Appreciate the nature and scope of women’s ideological and activist response to armed conflict
- Improve the basic skills of critical thinking and effective writing, the verification of claims, and the examination of underlying assumptions.
Course Structure and Approach

The class is conducted as a mixture of lectures and debates, based on readings, handouts, speakers, and films. Student assignments are posted on VISTA. Participation is fundamental to learning. Assignments may be used to develop and expand on the final Research Paper and Presentation. This course will take the Study Action Group approach which pays attention to the process of engagement as well as the content of the subject. Therefore attention will be paid to students’ subjective and affective reactions to course content.

Please note: This course makes extensive use of VISTA. Prompts for assignments will be delivered to students via VISTA email only. All assignments are to be entered into a VISTA Assignment Box; some assignments are also to be handed in ‘hard copy’ in class. Additional weblinks and files will be placed in VISTA folders by the instructor during the course of the semester. All correspondence with the instructor is on VISTA. Therefore, it is the students’ responsibility to pay attention to discussion boards, student publications, announcements, prompts, time/date deadlines, expanded readings, video links and other course content on VISTA.

You are strongly advised to save all VISTA assignments as documents on your personal computer.

Assignments past the due dates will not be accepted and assignment deadlines on VISTA will not be extended, unless proof of a medical or institutional excuse and/or emergency is supplied by the student.

The instructor reserves the right to change the content of the syllabus. Lectures may not always reflect weekly readings, in order to cover the most current situations in the Middle East.

Required Texts
Available at NAU Bookstore, Flagstaff


Readings on VISTA.

RECOMMENDED DATABASES, BLOGS, LINKS
Middle East Studies Internet Resources
http://www.nawalsaadawi.net/statements.htm
http://arabwomanblues.blogspot.com/
http://www.distel.ca/womlist/womlist.html (list of global women’s organizations, including Middle East)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*The instructor reserves the right to change course content and schedule.*

**WEEK ONE**

Monday January 15
NO CLASS

**WEEK TWO**

Monday January 22
Introduction to Course Themes and Content
Students are assigned countries in the region.

**WEEK THREE**

Monday January 29
Understanding Islam Through the Lens of Gender
DUE: Reading Question. See prompt on VISTA.
Speaker: Sayeed Ahmed


**WEEK FOUR**

Monday February 5
Women’s Her-Story
DUE: Bring images of women in a Middle Eastern country (including Afghanistan) assigned to you, with a brief description of the social and political meaning of women’s dress. See prompt on VISTA.

Ahmed, Leila “Veiling Made its first appearance…” Women and Gender in Islam, Historical Roots of a Modern Debate, Part One, Yale University, 1992, pgs 220-225

Lerner, Gerda, Chapter 4 ‘The Woman Slave” Chapter 4 and ‘Veiling the Woman’ Chapter 6 from The Creation of Patriarchy, Oxford University Press, 1986.


WEEK FIVE
Monday February 12
Islamic Feminism, Activism and Human Rights

DUE: Bring to class and summarize on VISTA, an example of women’s activism in your assigned country in the Middle East including Afghanistan, that ‘fits’ this week’s readings. See full prompt on VISTA.

Lecture Notes in VISTA Folder: Categories of Islamic Feminism

Women for Afghan Women, Foreword and Introduction


Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock “Islamic Feminism Finds a Different Voice” American Foreign Service Association, n/d, http://www.afsa.org/fsj/may00/fernea.cfm


Nidal El Saadawi’s website: http://www.nawalsaadawi.net/statements.htm
WEEK SIX

Monday February 19
Feminist Definitions of Terrorism
DUE: Research Questions. See prompt on VISTA.


Statement by International Educational Development Inc, at the Commission on Human Rights, Sixty-first session, Agenda item 11, 2006
http://www.webcom.com/hrin/parker/comm05item11.html


WEEK SEVEN
Women’s Status: Iran

Monday February 26


Burke, Jason, “The Afghan women who saw freedom ebb away”
The Observer (UK), September 30, 2001
http://observer.guardian.co.uk/waronterrorism/story/0,,560740,00.html


About Shirin Ebadi, Iranian Noble Peace Prize Winner:

WEEK EIGHT

Monday March 5
DUE: Book Report
Women for Afghan Women
Discussion in class.

WEEK NINE

Women’s Status in Iraq
Reading Question: See prompt on VISTA.

Monday March 12


**WEEK TEN**

**Monday March 19**
**Lebanon**

**Research Question:** See full prompt on VISTA. Research health and other impacts on women’s lives, resulting from the Israeli-Lebanese war of 2006


Maksidi, Jean Said “Teta, Mother and I” Chapter 1 in Joseph, Suad, Intimate Selving in Arab Families, Syracuse University Press, 1999

Frank, Libby, Whose Wars Are They,Anyway? Israel Pulls the Trigger, the U.S. Pulls the Strings, Peace and Freedom. Philadelphia: Fall 2006. Vol. 66, Iss. 2; p. 5


**WEEK ELEVEN**
**SPRING BREAK Monday March 26 – NO CLASS**

**WEEK TWELVE**
**Monday April 2**

**Women’s Peace Activism in Israel/Palestine**

DUE: See prompt on VISTA. Research the life and actions of women peace activists working in Israel/Palestine


WEEK THIRTEEN
Monday April 9
International Women’s Peace Activism in Middle East Conflicts


“No Palestinian Women Political Prisoners and Detainees In Israeli Jails” by Women Against Occupation, Canada, October 25, 2001.
http://nonprofitnet.ca/wao/wao.php?show&179

http://www.awakenedwoman.com/peace_security.htm


http://www.hrea.org/lists/hr-headlines/markup/msg00237.html

WEEK FOURTEEN
The Challenges of Diversity: Feminism and Nationalism

Monday April 16


WEEK FIFTEEN
Monday April 23
Presentations

WEEK SIXTEEN
Monday April 30
Presentations

WEEK SEVENTEEN
Monday May 7
Presentations
Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- **Methods of Assessment**

  1. Familiarity with the material presented in class and in the readings will be demonstrated through continued class participation.
  2. Reading and Research Questions are designed to allow students to engage critically with a wide variety of feminist theories, topics and themes.

- **Timeline of Assessment (see syllabus for deadlines)**

Class Participation and Attendance.
This includes leading class discussions, formulating questions, sharing insights, active listening and engagement with the class process. Using the week’s readings as a descriptive and thematic guide, students will be expected to summarize these key findings and analysis in class. As more familiarity is gained with the issues/concepts under examination, and as more feedback is received from the instructor, students are expected to cogently develop, state, explain the theories of ecofeminism, taking into account the diversity of global, historical, and domestic factors that may account for a specific position.

Reading Questions and Related Research
These must be submitted on Vista shell for WST 360. The instructor will provide regular feedback. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor to discuss progress made during the semester.

Final Project/Paper

This is a research paper based on course content. You are also encouraged to exercise your imagination in developing original research, an activist project or an artistic/literary endeavor. Prompt to be distributed in class. Includes a 15 minute oral presentation with visual aides, in class.

Students may use this exercise to participate in an internship with an independent news program and/or with a UN-accredited nongovernmental organization.

**Grading System**

Total points= 200
Class participation/attendance = 40
10 Reading/Research Questions = 100
Final Research Paper and Oral Presentation= 60
A - 180 to 200  B - 160 to 179  C - 140-159  
D - 130 to 139  E - 120 to 129  F - below 120

**Course Policy**

**Make-up exams**, re-writes and late papers will be allowed only in the case of a documented medical emergency.

**Assignments** will be handed out to students during the first five minutes of class.

**Attendance** Students will be expected to sign an attendance record. Nobody will be penalized for the observation of religious holidays (which must be noted as such in the attendance record, by the student). Students had the right not to include their names on the attendance record, and an alternative arrangement must be established with the instructor.

**Plagiarism** and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated.

**All absences** from class must be documented via a prior e-mail and documentary evidence given to the instructor (unless in a situation beyond the student’s control).

**Students must communicate via e-mail using the Dana account**, which is NAU’s official means of communication. Students must email through Vista shell.

**Incomplete grades** will be given only for documented medical emergencies and must be negotiated. A contract must be written four weeks before final grades are DUE. Students must complete assigned work 11 months after the course has ended.

**Dropping after the deadline** is allowed only in a medical emergency or a work/study conflict.

**Changes in the syllabus** will be announced in class and on Vista shell. It is the students’ responsibility to check for all course-related announcement on Vista.