HISTORY 017

FAMILY, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST

FALL 2004

Class location: Science Center 145
Class meeting times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:40-3:55 pm

Instructor: Professor Mario Ruiz
Office: Trotter 219
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-5:30 pm
Phone Number: x2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an upper-division course designed to give students a historical understanding of family, sexuality, and gender in the Islamic Middle East from 610 C.E. to the twenty-first century. Within a thematic framework, this course will analyze the production and reception of Islamic sexualities in a select number of geographic contexts, most notably in the lands of the former Ottoman Empire. The primary emphasis of this course is on the historical development of gendered and Islamic identities and the fluid manner in which different Muslim communities have responded to shifting ideas of sexuality, reproduction, and the family. Specifically, we will study Muslim efforts to shape and redefine sexual and familial identities from the earliest days of Islam to the present, as well as examine contemporary notions of pleasure and desire. Topics to be covered include: Islamic notions of the body, the politics of marriage, divorce, and reproduction, same-sex relations, and the crafting of virtual selves and identities on the Internet.

COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

This course is guided by two primary objectives. The first objective of this course is to introduce students to the various historical processes and ideas that have shaped the development of gender, family, and sexuality in the Islamic Middle East. Secondly, this course is meant to refine students’ critical thinking and writing skills. This class will not only deepen students’ historical knowledge of Islam and the Middle East, but also provide them with a theoretical framework that will enable them to interpret and analyze contemporary notions of sexuality and the family in the Islamic world. By the end of this course, students will be able to evaluate reading material critically, to identify important theoretical ideas and concepts, and to place facts in a meaningful context.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

GRADING

Grading Procedures: Grades for this course will be based on the following percentages:

1) Attendance & Participation 25%
2) Reaction Papers 25%
3) 7-10 page Research Paper 50%

1. You are expected to attend class regularly and to participate actively in class discussions. Readings must be completed before the beginning of each class. While you are allowed two unexcused absences, you are expected to make up any work that you have missed. Students with three or more unexcused absences will not pass this course. Regular attendance and active participation are worth 25% of the final grade.

2. All students are required to submit a two-to-three page reaction paper in response to a discussion question that will be distributed prior to class. These papers are due one week after the discussion question has been distributed in class and are worth 25% of the final grade. Each reaction paper will be assigned a grade based on whether or not the paper has made an honest attempt to answer the question posed by the instructor and, in turn, to communicate it clearly. Late papers will not be accepted. These reaction papers will assist you in preparing for the research paper and will also allow me to identify and address issues, themes, and ideas that require further clarification in class.

3. Students will complete a seven-to-ten page, double-spaced research paper on a topic of their choice. The paper will be worth 50% of the final grade. Collecting and organizing relevant information, critical argumentation of evidence presented, conceptual analysis, and effective communication of your ideas are the criteria by which I will assess your papers. Papers should include all of the following points: an original and clearly written thesis statement, effective organization, clearly marked page numbers, no typos or misspellings, and a bibliography of sources used. Students are required to meet with the instructor before selecting a topic and may submit a draft of the paper if they feel it is necessary.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Although all work submitted by you for academic credit will be your own, you are encouraged to discuss information and concepts covered in class with other students. However, this cooperation should never involve one student copying all or part of the work done by someone else, whether in the form of an e-mail attachment, a diskette, memory card, or a hard paper copy. Students who copy others’ work, as well as students who are copied from, will not receive credit for a given assignment. Other penalties can include failure of the course and disciplinary action. The same policy also applies to plagiarism. All written work that is completed for this course is expected to be original. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failure in the course.
ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. With the exception of unusual circumstances, requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

COURSE READINGS AND CLASS SCHEDULE

I. COURSE READINGS:

REQUIRED TEXTS:


• Blackboard Coursepack

II. CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Tuesday, August 31: Introduction to the Course

Thursday, September 2: Islamic and Women’s History

*BlackBoard Readings:*

• Judith Tucker, “Gender and Islamic History,” 37-73.
WEEK TWO: BACKGROUND ON THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY

Tuesday, September 7: The Repressive Hypothesis and the Deployment of Sexuality

• Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 17-131.

Thursday, September 9: Inventing Sex

*BlackBoard Readings:*

• Lynn Hunt, “Foucault’s Subjects in The History of Sexuality,” 78-93.
• Thomas Laquer, “Destiny is Anatomy,” 25-62.

*FIRST REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*

WEEK THREE: ISLAMIC VIEWS OF SEXUALITY

Tuesday, September 14: Sex and the Meaning of Islam

*BlackBoard Readings:*


Thursday, September 16: The Omnisexual Woman

*BlackBoard Readings:*


*SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*
WEEK FOUR: THE INTIMATE AND PUBLIC PRACTICES OF EARLY MUSLIMS

Tuesday, September 21: Sexual Practices Reconsidered

BlackBoard Readings:

• Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, “Certain Practices,” “In the Kingdom of Mothers,” 159-230.
• Everett K. Rowson, “The Effeminates of Early Medina,” 671-693.

Thursday, September 23: Female Impurity and Autonomy

BlackBoard Readings:

• D. A. Spellberg, “Writing the Unwritten Life of the Islamic Eve,” 305-324.
• Denise A. Spellberg, “‘A’isha and the Battle of the Camel,” 45-57.

*THIRD REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*

WEEK FIVE: MEDIEVAL BOUNDARIES AND BODIES

Tuesday, September 28: Sexual Boundaries and Behavior

BlackBoard Readings:

• Leila Ahmed, “Arab Culture and Writing Women’s Bodies,” 41-55.
• Everett K. Rowson, “The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists,” 50-79.

Thursday, September 30: The Gendered Body

BlackBoard Readings:

• Vern L. Bullough, “Eunuchs in History and Society,” 1-17.
• Paula Sanders, “Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law,” 74-95.

*FOURTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*

**WEEK SIX: HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES, AND SEXUALITIES (PART ONE)**

Tuesday, October 5:  Families and Households in Ottoman Aleppo

*BlackBoard Readings:*


Thursday, October 7:  Parenting in Ottoman Syria and Palestine

*BlackBoard Readings:*


*FIFTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*

*OCTOBER HOLIDAY (NO CLASS FROM OCTOBER 8-17)*

**WEEK EIGHT: HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES, AND SEXUALITIES (PART TWO)**

Tuesday, October 19:  Mamluk Families and Slave Households

*BlackBoard Readings:*

• Aafia Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, “Political Struggles: The Search for Leadership,” “Society in Mamluk Egypt: The Elites,” 17-68.

Thursday, October 21:  Sexual Reproduction of Egyptian Households
BlackBoard Readings:

• Abdel Rahmin Abdel Rahman, “The Family and Gender Laws in Egypt During the Ottoman Period,” 96-111.
• Mervat Hatem, “The Politics of Sexuality and Gender in Segregated Patriarchal Systems,” 251-274.

*SIXTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*

WEEK NINE: SEX AND THE MODERN STATE

Tuesday, October 26: Medical and Legal Regulations of Sexuality

BlackBoard Readings:

• Mervat Hatem, “The Professionalization of Health and the Control of Women’s Bodies,” 66-80.

Thursday, October 28: Law, Sexual Assault, and Rape

BlackBoard Readings:

• Amira Sonbol, “Rape and Law in Ottoman and Modern Egypt,” 214-231.

*SEVENTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS*

WEEK TEN: THE POLITICS OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Tuesday, November 2:  ‘Til Death Do us Part? The Politics of Marriage and Divorce

• Margaret Meriwether, The Kin Who Count, 111-152.

BlackBoard Readings:

• Beth Baron, “The Making and Breaking of Marital Bonds in Modern Egypt,” 275-291.
• Bahihat al-Badiya, “A Lecture in the Club of the Umma Party: 1909,” 228-238.

Thursday, November 4: Love, Marriage, and the Europeanization of the Family


*BlackBoard Readings:*

• Sarah Graham-Brown, “Family Portraits,” 92-117.

**EIGHTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

**WEEK ELEVEN: PLEASURE AND DESIRE**

Tuesday, November 9: Coming of Age in Morocco

• Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass*, all.

Thursday, November 11: Film: TBA

**NINTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

**WEEK TWELVE: FAMILY PLANNING AND BIRTH CONTROL**

Tuesday, November 16: Fertility and Birth Control

• Alan Duben and Cem Behar. *Istanbul Households*, 159-193.

*BlackBoard Readings:*

• Basim Musallam, “Population and Middle Eastern History,” 105-121.

Thursday, November 18: Familial Choices and Behavior


**TENTH REACTION PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

**NO CLASSES: THANKSGIVING BREAK (NOV. 23-NOV. 29)**
WEEK FOURTEEN: SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Tuesday, November 30: Modern Masculinities and Homosexuality

BlackBoard Readings:

• Andreas Eppink, “Moroccan Boys and Sex,” 33-41.
• Thijs Janssen, “Transvestites and Transsexuals in Turkey,” 83-91.
• Jehoeda Sofer, “Sodomy in the Law of Muslim States,” 131-149.

Thursday, December 2: Lesbianism and the Present-Day ‘Crisis’ of Sexuality

BlackBoard Readings:


Please examine the following sites before class:

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/
http://www.al-fatiha.net/index.html
http://huriyahmag.org/main.html
http://www.well.com/user/queerjhd/index.htm
http://www.glas.org/lazeeza.html

WEEK FIFTEEN: NEW MEDIAS, NEW SELVES

Tuesday, December 7: Conclusion to the Course

BlackBoard Readings:

• Gary Bunt, “Islam in the Digital Age,” 1-24, 205-211.

*RESEARCH PAPERS DUE ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 5PM*