

ENLT 230-01: **Images of Muslim Women**; spring 2015.

Dickson 275, Tues/Thurs 2:30-3:45pm

Prof Fawzia Afzal-Khan

off hour: TR: 4-5 pm. and by appt; D-120; ext 7309; khanf@mail.montclair.edu

Course aim: *The aim of this course is to provide you with some tools of analysis for the study of Muslim women in a variety of cultural settings, through attention to literary and filmic texts.*

Texts (available at bookstore):

Covering Islam by Edward Said

Scheherezade Goes West by Fatima Mernissi (Morocco)

Lahore With Love. by Fawzia Afzal-Khan (Pakistan)

God Dies By the Nile by Nawal el Saadawi (Egypt)

Persian Girls by Nahid Rachlin (Iran)

So Long a Letter by Miriama Ba (Senegal)

On Canvas:

The Colonial Harem, Introd and chaps 1 and 2 by Malek Alloula

“Unveiling Algeria” by Winifred Woodhull

Pakistan’s Blasphemy Laws: From Islamic Empires to Taliban, Ch 1, by Shemeem Burney Abbas

Films:

Not Without My Daughter 1991; dir. Brian Gilbert (American dir; about Iran)

Battle of Algiers 1996; dir Gillo Pontecorvo (Italian dir. about Algerian War of Independence)

Orientalism 1998; prod by Sut Jhally, narrated by Edward Said

Reel Bad Arabs 2006; dir. Sut Jhally based on Jack Shaheen’s book

Khuda Key Leey 2007; trans: **In the Name of God**, Pakistani feature film

Caramel 2007; dir. By Lebanese female filmmaker Nadine Labaki

Requirements:

Since this is primarily a discussion-centered class, you are expected to keep up with ALL the readings that have been assigned, to be present in class, and to participate in the actual discussions. More than three absences during the course of the term will be grounds for a failing grade--be forewarned! Other requirements are as follows:

- Class participation=15%
- 3-4 pp. written responses to the texts, which can be **in the form of questions for discussion** due first day of discussion of the particular texts in question; **you must hand in ALL 4 responses to qualify for a grade. LATE entries will NOT be graded!** 25%
- Group oral reports/provocations on works studied. You may use your response-sheet to begin raising discussion questions, but in addition you should be prepared to tell the class something about the author/s, something about the reception of the work/s (book reviews, scholarly articles etc.), information on historical/geographical/cultural context (a lot of this can be gleaned from the work itself, if carefully studied). Each student will be responsible for participating in one group oral report/discussion—please sign up for one, **and come to class EACH day your group is responsible for leading discussion. 20%**
- **Group#1=** responsible for provoking discussion/providing some context on **Covering Islam, Not Without My Daughter, and Persian Girls**
Group#2= *Battle of Algiers, Colonial Harem, “Unveiling Algeria”* and **Scheherezade Goes West.**
Group#3= *Khuda Key Liye (In The Name of God), Blasphemy Laws of Pakistan, Lahore With Love.*
Group#4= *God Dies By the Nile, So Long a Letter* and *Caramel*
- *I also suggest you each sign up to receive google alerts about Muslim Women for the duration of the course, which may be used as additional reference for your group provocations*
- Midterm exam 15%
- Final paper, see ideas for topic below. Approx.7- 8 pp double-spaced. 25%

Grading Policy:

You will be graded holistically; that is to say, your performance on ALL assignments counts about equally. The final paper will weigh a bit more heavily--but I am loathe to break this down in term of percentages. My sense of the overall quality and consistency of your work in the course is what I will base your final grade on.

Unit#1: ISSUES OF MEDIA/REPRESENTATION: Muslim Women as Objects and Subjects of Discourse

Q to think about: Who is representing whom? How? Why? What is the power dynamic between those doing the representing and those being represented?

Week 1 Tues Jan 20:

Introductions; group sign up, discussion of syllabus etc.

Week 1 Thurs Jan 22: Watch *Orientalism* in class and discuss

Week 2 Tues Jan 27: Watch *Reel Bad Arabs* and discuss

Week 2, Thurs Jan 29 Plus Week 3 Feb 3: Covering Islam, by Edward Said: Introduction plus entire first chap; plus Ch Two: The Iran Story: "Holy War" and Ch on "Loss of Iran"; **Group 1** will discuss the readings/their questions about these chapters for 15 mins each class, referencing any pertinent materials from the films we've seen; then we will all jump into the discussion.

Week 3 Thurs Feb 5 and Week 4 Tues Feb 10: in-class viewing of film: *Not Without My Daughter*; plus discussion on tues Feb 10, led by **Group 1**.

Week 4 (thurs Feb 12) and Week 5 Tues Feb 17: **Persian Girls** by Nahid Rachlin; **Group 1** continues to lead discussion. (**Response #1 must be uploaded on Canvas prior to class on Feb 12; you should comment on/tie together/share your questions about ALL of the works studied and discussed thus far**)

Week 5 (thurs Feb 19): View **The Battle of Algiers** in class; remainder you must see on your own

Week 6 (Feb 24,26): Discuss entire film alongside chapters of Malek Alloula's **The Colonial Harem** (posted on Canvas) plus Woodhull's article. **Group 2**

Week 7 (March 3,5): Mernissi, **Scheherezade Goes West** (select chapters); **group 2** (group should also look up Orientalist paintings by Delacroix, Ingres etc. mentioned by Mernissi, and show us some of their most famous paintings in class). (**Response #2 due March 5; same guidelines as before**)

End of Unit#1 Mid term Exam, questions will test your understanding of basic concepts and issues discussed through the readings so far. You must submit your exam via Canvas March 6th By 9 am.

WEEK 8 (March 10, 12): SPRING BREAK

Unit#2: Muslim Women as Subjects of Discourse. Themes/topics: Sexuality and the Veil, Postcolonial Nationalism, War, Class issues, Polygamy, Spiritualism and East-West Comparisons.

Week 9: (March 17, 19): View film, **Khuda Key Liye (In the Name of God** in Sprague Library

Week 10 (tues, March 24): Discussion of Film. Led by **Group 3**

*ALSO: In the evening, the documentary film **The Square** (about the Arab Uprising in Cairo) will be screened and one of the filmmakers will be present for Q and A. Please make every effort to attend—extra credit will be given.*

(thurs, March 26): Dr Shemeem Abbas lecture on Blasphemy Laws of Pakistan during class time.

Week 11 (tues March 31): Ch 1, pp 1-17 of Dr Abbas book, **Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws**; led by **Group 3**

(thurs April 2): Begin discussion **Lahore With Love**

Week 12 (tues april 7): **Lahore With Love**; *Question to consider: Is this a blasphemous book?* (**Group 3**)
(Response #3 due on Canvas april 7)

Week 12 thurs apr 9 and Week 13 Tues apr 14: **God Dies By The Nile (Group 4)**

Week 13 Thurs april 16 and Week 14 Tues April 21: **So Long a Letter (group 4)**

Week 14 Thurs April 23 and Week 15 Tues April 28: View film, *Caramel*

Week 15 Thurs April 30th: Discussion of *Caramel* (**Group 4**) (**Response#4 due on Canvas April 30**)

Week 16 (Tues may 5): submit final paper via Canvas. **7-8 pp double spaced** in which you bring together 3 writers we have read (one each from beginning, middle and end of term)--by isolating a question or issue that is raised in their work, then showing me how they each treat that issue in ways that are similar and/or different. Plenty use of egs and quotes from each text you've chosen, to illustrate your points and observations, should be made.

Example of questions or themes might be: how do the writers selected address the question of oppression of Muslim women? Or the strength of Muslim women? Or, better still, how do they force readers to confront the very premise of such questions as "is the Muslim woman oppressed"? Or what are their attitudes toward the veil? Or toward the role of western imperialism in understanding Muslim women? Or the importance of sexuality and women's political rights in Muslim societies and cultures?

Use the MLA format for in-text citations and Works Cited page. Here is a link:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>