Women in the Arab World: Beyond Stereotypes
Dr. Rana Zaher

Course Number: 702.2374
Class Time: TBA
Class Location: TBA
E-Mail: ranazaher@gmail.com

“There is another possibility for realizing our pursuit rather than defeat, since we are determined not to die before we try to live” (Ashour, R., 2013, p. 393).*

Course Objective:
This course brings the case of women in the Arab world to the forefront of the academic discussion, yet from a non-Orientalist angle that defies the overgeneralizations and dichotomizations that usually characterize discussions about Arab women. Arab women may share many issues and challenges in common, ethnographically speaking, but they may also differ in their choice of struggle and resistance to oppression in accordance with the difference in their political, social, and cultural context.

The course will expose the students to the different realities of Arab women in different contexts, embarking on different fronts, and will re-define certain classical concepts such as feminism and struggle to better reflect the dynamics of these women’s solution-seeking patterns. The main topics that will be discussed in class include Orientalism, different forms of Feminisms: Islamic feminism vs. Arab secular feminism, resistance and empowerment from within, Arab Spring’s effect on women, Arab women’s political representation, and patterns of change among Arab women.

The course is based on multiple learning resources: academic material, films, and guest speakers when possible.

Course Requirements:
Attendance is obligatory for at least 80% of the classes, and active participation in classes is expected. All relevant material and articles can be found in and downloaded from the course Moodle website. All exams are open-book.

Course Evaluation:
Midterm exam: 40%
Final exam: 40%
Essay: 20%

Bibliography by topic:

**Week 1+2:**

Introduction
  

**Week 3+4:**

Orientalism

Optional

**Week 5:**

Secular Feminism:


**Week 6+7:**

Islamic Feminism
- Iman Hashim (1999) Reconciling Islam and feminism, Gender and Development 7:1, PP. 7-14

Optional:

Week 7:
Midterm

Week 8+9:
Patterns of Change and Resistance

Weeks 10+11:
Arab Spring – Gender Spring?

Optional

Week 12:
Final Exam
This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the lecturer.