

Christopher Newport University  
Study Abroad Syllabus  
MLAN 220/RSTD 295: Gender in the Arab World  
Professor Diana Obeid, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures  
Dr. Hussam Timani, Philosophy and Religion

**Course Description:**

This course examines changing gender in the Arab world. Gender issues in the Arab world vary with the variations of the 22 countries that form the Arab world. The situation of the women in Saudi Arabia, for instance, is different from the situation of those in the United Arab Emirates, in spite of the fact that both countries are predominantly Muslim and adjacent to each other geographically. In this course, Students will be able to recognize the intersection of sexism with class, race, and ethnicity in the construction of women's identities in the Arab world, and in particular in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**United Arab Emirates**

The UAE's rich history is rooted in Islam, which came to the region in 630 AD. Its location between Europe and the Far East, attracted merchants from India and China and was prized by Europeans, in particular the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. While Europeans sought control of the coasts, the ancestors of the Bedouin made the sandy deserts of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah their home. The shift from the maritime trading industry to oil production and exportation has spurred rapid globalization. In addition to the culturally rich historic sites located in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, we will also explore contemporary sites that have become renowned across the world for its architectural spectacle. The evidence of globalization seen in the UAE is indicative of a region undergoing rapid political and cultural transformation. There is much to do in the UAE beyond Dubai and Abu Dhabi. First settled during the Bronze Age, Sharjah is the cultural capital of the emirates. The Heritage Area of Sharjah City includes a Maritime Museum, an Islamic Museum, and museums for traditional and contemporary Arabic art, among many others. Highlighting the importance of gender in policy dialogue, in 2015, the UAE announced the establishment of the Gender Balance Council, a federal entity that increases the role of women in leadership positions and strengthens institutional capacity. Women's participation is particularly strong in the public sector.

Women graduates in the UAE excel in government, engineering, science, health care, media, computer technology, law, commerce and the oil industry. The UAE has four women fighter pilots and has also trained over 30 women to work with the country's special security forces. In September 2014, the UAE opened the region's first military college for women, Khawla bint Al Azwar Military School. The state-of-the-art military college provides world-class training and includes physical fitness sessions and development of leadership skills and character.

**Course Objectives**

Students should be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of an outcome or consequence that results from interactions between different cultures or subcultures;
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge how Islam plays a great role in society; and
- 3) Differentiate between misconceptions and facts that are associated with women in Islam today

### **Disabilities Statement**

We will accommodate students with documented disabilities according to the guidelines provided to me by the Dean of Students. If you have a documented disability, I highly recommend you meet with the Dean of Students to discuss accommodation(s). Please do not hesitate to contact me at any point during the semester to discuss your performance and/or accommodations. Any student with a documented disability should consult with Student Disability Services and the instructor prior to departure.

### **Disabilities:**

In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Dean of Students' Office, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Dr. Kevin Hughes, Dean of Students (594-7160) to discuss your needs. Dean Hughes will provide you with the necessary documentation to give to your professors.

Students with documented disabilities are required to notify the instructor no later than the first day on which they require an accommodation (the first day of class is recommended), in private, if accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide students with disabilities with all reasonable accommodations, but students are not exempted from fulfilling the normal requirements of the course. Work completed before the student notifies the instructor of his/her disability may be counted toward the final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.

### **Success:**

I want you to succeed in this course and at CNU. I encourage you to come see me during office hours or to schedule an appointment to discuss course content or to answer questions you have. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well being, I will speak with you first. I also may submit a referral through our Captains Care Program. The referral will be received by the Center for Academic Success as well as other departments when appropriate (Counseling Services, Office of Student Engagement). If you are an athlete, the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator will be notified. Someone will contact you to help determine what will help you succeed. Please remember that this is a means for me to support you and help foster your success at CNU.

### **Academic Support:**

The Center for Academic Success offers free tutoring assistance for CNU students in several academic areas. Staff in the center offer individual assistance and/or workshops on various study strategies to help you perform your best in your courses. The center also houses the Alice F. Randall Writing Center. Writing consultants can help you at any stage

of the writing process, from invention, to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft. The Center is not a proofreading service, but consultants can help you to recognize and find grammar and punctuation errors in your work as well as provide assistance with global tasks. Go as early in the writing process as you can, and go often!

You may drop by the Center for Academic Success to request a tutor, meet with a writing consultant, pick up a schedule of workshops, or make an appointment to talk one-on-one with a University Fellow for Student Success. The Center is located in Newport Hall, first floor, room 123.

### **CNU Honor Code**

*"On my honor, I will maintain the highest possible standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. As a member of this academic community, I am committed to creating an environment of respect and mutual trust."*

### **Student Academic Responsibilities**

CNU is a community comprised of students who:

- Establish the "job" of learning as their top priority;
- Take initiative as active participants in their own learning;
- Attend class regularly and arrive at class on time;
- Adopt behaviors in class that are appropriate to the seriousness and importance of the learning process taking place in the class;
- Complete all assignments outside of class on time and prepare for upcoming classes;
- Treat fellow community members with respect;
- Follow proper procedures and lines of authority for pursuing concerns and complaints;
- Know, understand and follow the *Code of Academic Work*, the *University Honor Code*, and the *General Requirements for Graduation*;
- Take responsibility to seek help from faculty, staff, and fellow students as needed to succeed academically.

### **Required Materials:**

Joseph, Suad. Ed. *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2000.

Additional Materials will be provided by the professors.

### **Course Grading**

Participation in discussions (20%)

Response papers (40%)

Research paper (40%)

### **Grading System**

A (94 and above); A- (90-93.99); B+ (87-89.99); B (84-86.99); B- (80-83.99); C+ (77-79.99); C (74-76.99); C- (70-73.99); D+ (67-69.99); D (64-66.99); D- (60-63.99); F (59.99 and below).

*Participation:* Pose questions, share observations, formulate new insights, challenge and evaluate others' views, mediate differences.

*Response papers:* The students are required to write a one-page response paper on one aspect of each day's assigned reading. Each student will write a total of 8 response papers.

*Research Paper:*

Choose a topic, develop a one-page, single-spaced proposal (thesis statement and implications), and write a research paper. The paper is due after returning from U.A.E.

Research paper (8-10 pages) will conform to the MLA handbook, typed with 12 point font, double-spaced, and have a bibliography. The student must have at least four bibliographic sources not including encyclopedic, dictionary, or required texts. Students may use Internet sites as a source but they will only count as one source.

Rubric for paper evaluation:

**Thesis:** Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear.

**Structure:** Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.

**Use of evidence:** Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences.

**Analysis:** Author clearly relates evidence to "mini-thesis" (topic sentence); analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material.

**Logic and argumentation:** All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other parts of the class, or other classes), which illuminate thesis.

**Mechanics:** Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices.

### **Pre-Trip Sessions**

There will be three pre-trip sessions. Students are required to attend all three pre-trip sessions as their attendance will be part of their participation grade.

*Pre-trip sessions schedule:*

Tue., Mar. 27, 12:20-1:20pm Introduction to the history and culture of the Arab world

Tue., Apr. 10, 12:20-1:20pm Role and status of women in Islam

Tue., Apr. 24, 12:20-1:20pm UAE: An Overview

(Lecture/teaching: 180 minutes total).