GWS 435 Politics of Gender and Women’s Rights in the Middle East  
Department of Gender and Women’s Studies  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Fall 2023

Instructor: Marwa Shalaby, Assistant Professor, Departments of Political Science and Gender and Women’s Studies: https://gws.wisc.edu/staff/shalaby-marwa/

Instructional mode: In-person, Sterling Hall 2301

Meeting Time and Location: Thursdays 2:30-5:00 PM.

Virtual office hours: Thursdays: 1:00 -2:15 PM or by appointment.

Email: shalaby2@wisc.edu

Canvas Course URL: https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/372860

Course Description: This course aims to provide students with a sound understanding of the intertwined relationship between gender and politics in the contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The first part of this course will focus on familiarizing students with the region’s historical, socio-political, and cultural context that has mainly contributed to shaping the current discourse and realities on gender. The second part of this seminar will explore theoretically and empirically- the role of Arab women in influencing the political processes across the Middle East. The seminar will conclude by highlighting real-world examples of Middle Eastern women from different parts of the region who have succeeded in challenging the status quo and pushing for change.

Learning Outcomes
• Develop a concrete understanding of the history and politics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the ways they shape gender power relations across the region.
• Apply comparative politics frameworks and feminist theories toward understanding patterns of female political participation and enable them to better understand current events and complexities of the region’s politics and governance structures.
• Sharpen students’ critical and analytical skills through exposure to different, even contradictory, points of view and contemporary debates relating to the role of women in shaping MENA’s politics post-Arab uprisings.
• Develop and present ideas and arguments to audiences with diverse interests and backgrounds.

Requisites: Sophomore Standing.

Course Level: Intermediate.

Number of Credits: 3

Course Designations and Attributes: L&S Credit- Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit.
Credit Hours are met by the Course: This class meets for one 150-minute class period each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc.) for about 6 hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

*This syllabus may change. Any changes will be distributed via email and posted on Canvas.*

Course Schedule and Readings

**Week 1. September 7th: Course Introduction and Role Assignments**
Please review this collection of background essays on the Middle East to be discussed during our first two weeks of class. These essays can be accessed online from TeachMiddleEast/University of Chicago.

- [https://teachmideast.org/articles/what-is-the-middle-east/](https://teachmideast.org/articles/what-is-the-middle-east/)
- [https://teachmideast.org/articles/arab-middle-eastern-and-muslim-whats-the-difference/](https://teachmideast.org/articles/arab-middle-eastern-and-muslim-whats-the-difference/)
- [https://teachmideast.org/articles/understanding-middle-eastern-history-an-interview-with-william-cleveland/](https://teachmideast.org/articles/understanding-middle-eastern-history-an-interview-with-william-cleveland/)
- [https://teachmideast.org/articles/introduction-women-gender-roles-middle-east/](https://teachmideast.org/articles/introduction-women-gender-roles-middle-east/)
- [https://teachmideast.org/articles/communal-identities-and-ethnic-groups/](https://teachmideast.org/articles/communal-identities-and-ethnic-groups/)

**Week 2. September 14th: Middle East Politics and Governments**


**Week 3. September 21st: Realities and Misconceptions on the Study of Gender in MENA**

- Why Do they Hate us? Mona Eltahawy, *Foreign Policy*
• In Class Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z0DB2XOoHc (Debate with Leila Ahmed).
• Shalaby, Marwa. 2016. Empowering Women after the Arab Spring. Introduction. 1-19. (Recommended)

**Week 4. September 28th: Gender, Citizenship, and Legal Reforms: A Historical Perspective**

- Angrist, M. (2012). War, Resisting the West, and Women's Labor: Toward an Understanding of Arab Exceptionalism. Politics & Gender, 8(1), 51-82. (Recommended)

**Week 5. October 5th: Women and the Arab Uprisings**

- Shalaby, Marwa. (2016) “Challenges Facing Women’s Political Participation Post Arab Spring: The Cases of Egypt and Tunisia.” In Empowering Women After the Arab Spring. Edited by Marwa Shalaby and Valentine Moghadam, 171-191. (Recommended)

**The deadline for the 1st Response Paper is October 18th.**

**Week 6. October 12th: Gender and Political Power**


Week 7. October 19th: Women and Political Parties


Week 8. October 26th: Gender, Democratization, and Authoritarian Politics


Week 9. November 2nd: Women and Local Politics


The deadline for the 2nd Response Paper is November 8th.

Week 10. November 9th: The Outcomes of Women’s Representation

- Shalaby, Marwa (2016). “Women’s Political Representation and Authoritarianism in the Arab World” POMEPS Studies #19: 45-52. (Recommended).

Be Ready with the Research Question for the Final Paper

Week 11. November 16th: Activism in Difficult Settings


No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Week 12. November 30th: Student Presentations

Week 13. December 7th: Student Presentations

Absence, Assignments, and Grading Policies: Our class will be a combination of lectures, class discussions, and student-led presentations. Students must keep up with the assigned reading, attend meetings, and participate in class discussions. Students’ evaluation will be based on attendance (10% of grade), two response papers (40% of grade), weekly discussion posts (5% of grade), one class presentation (5% of grade), class participation (5% of grade), and a final paper (35% of grade).

- Attendance (10% of course grade): Each student will be granted one unexcused absence during the semester. Missing classes will result in a 2-point grade reduction for each additional absence unless there is a compelling reason that you would need to communicate directly with me.
• Class Participation and Discussion Session Leaders (15% of course grade):
  o Class Participation: 5%
  o Discussion Leader: 5%
  o Discussion Posts: 5%

Students are required to participate actively and intelligently in our class meetings (5% of total grade). Students’ discussions are an integral part of the class, and students should have read the assigned readings for the day and be ready to discuss them before coming to class. I am including below the rubric for grading students’ participation in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Participation Rubric</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Points</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of contribution</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of contribution</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of contribution</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Respect of ground rules</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Each student is also required to be a discussion leader once during the semester (5% of the total grade). Discussion leaders’ roles will be assigned on the first day of class. The discussion leader for a specific week will be responsible for preparing a PowerPoint with the following slides:

- One slide on what they found most interesting about the reading.
- A slide demonstrating the points of strengths and/or weaknesses in the readings’ arguments.
- A slide providing a list of questions that we should collectively answer during class.
- Don’t summarize the reading on the slides—only the points mentioned above. Your presentation should not exceed 10 minutes.

Instead of presenting on the class readings, students may choose to work on a group project on a topic that we will agree on the first day of class.

Each student is also required to contribute weekly to the discussion section on Canvas (5% of total grade). Students are expected to submit 2-3 sentences about any of the weekly assigned readings. Entries should highlight the most interesting, puzzling, (un)surprising, or significant gaps in the readings’ arguments or methodology. The discussion section will open on Thursday @ 6 PM CT till Wednesday at 6 PM CT. Late entries will not be accepted and will lead to a reduction in your grade.

- **Response Papers (40% of course grade):** Students are required to write two 3-4 pages (double-spaced, Font 12) response papers based on the readings. These assignments should demonstrate your ability to think analytically rather than simply summarizing the readings. I will provide further guidelines on formulating your papers. These papers are due by the beginning of the classes you chose to write about. You are expected to upload your paper to Canvas before the deadline. The first response paper is due October 18th, and the second response paper is due on November 8th.

- **Final paper and presentation (35% of course grade):** Students are required to write a 10–12-page (double-spaced, Font 12) research paper on the topic of their choice. The deadline to submit your paper is December 15th. The final paper should demonstrate your mastery of the key concepts, approaches, and the different research tools introduced in this class. This assignment should also demonstrate your ability to think analytically and develop a clear and logical argument. It should also be written in a clear, scholarly format, with an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and a properly referenced bibliography (APA/Chicago). I will provide further guidelines and instructions on formulating and designing your paper. However, it is essential to start working early on your paper. Final papers should be uploaded to Canvas before the deadline. Students are also required to present their papers to the class by the end of the semester. Final paper presentations count for 5% of the grade).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Single Grade Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% to 94%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>&lt;94% to 88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&lt;88% to 82%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>&lt;82% to 76%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&lt;76% to 70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt;70% to 60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60% to 0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Returning Papers:** While I will make every effort to return your work in a timely fashion, usually within two weeks, please understand that it may not always be possible for me to do so.

**Extra Credit Opportunities:** Attend the Middle East Program event on **September 18th and October 16th** for an extra credit point. Mark your calendars and remember to register for the events in advance.

- **Climate Change Event:** [https://mideast.wisc.edu/uw-event/a-lecture-with-karen-rignall/](https://mideast.wisc.edu/uw-event/a-lecture-with-karen-rignall/)
- **Gender Event:** [https://mideast.wisc.edu/uw-event/arab-womens-revolutionary-art-between-singularities-and-multitudes/](https://mideast.wisc.edu/uw-event/arab-womens-revolutionary-art-between-singularities-and-multitudes/)

**Important Dates for This Course**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Submit your Discussion Post</td>
<td>Once a week before 6 PM on Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit your first response paper</td>
<td>October 18th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit your second response paper</td>
<td>November 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post the research question for your final paper on the discussion section on Canvas</td>
<td>November 16th-30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit your final research paper</td>
<td>December 15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-up for a discussion leader role in class</td>
<td>Once in the semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend MESP Event for Extra Credit Point</td>
<td>September 18th (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend MESP Event for Extra Credit Point</td>
<td>October 16th (optional)</td>
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</table>

**Email:** The best way to reach me outside of class and office hours is by email. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours during the weekend. Given the high volume of emails I receive daily, please write to me only if there is an urgent matter that cannot wait until the next class or office hours. For example, if you are absent, please refrain from emailing me to ask what was covered in class (check the syllabus or ask your classmates instead). Please include the course number in the subject heading of your message.
Use Of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools: The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including, but not limited to ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) for course assignments and assessments does not support the learning objectives of this course and is prohibited. Using them in any way for this course is a violation of the course’s expectations and will be addressed through UW–Madison’s academic misconduct policy, specifically UWS 14.03(1)b (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise.

Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement: The privacy and security of faculty, staff, and students’ personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully evaluates and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through learning analytics, and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university’s full teaching and learning data transparency statement.

Privacy Of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement: Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university’s policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct. See more information about the privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures.

Evaluations: Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and their learning experience. Students’ evaluations are integral to this course, and your confidential feedback is essential to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

Students Rules, Rights & Responsibilities: https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#rulesrightsandresponsibilities

Academic Calendar & Religious Observances: https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances

Diversity & Inclusion Statement: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public
mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who, as students, faculty, and staff, serve Wisconsin and the world.

**Academic Integrity Statement:** By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct that may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include but are not limited to failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**Accommodations For Students with Disabilities Statement:** The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations at the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. The professor will work directly with you or with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))