

**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](mailto: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 7<sup>th</sup>: 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/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/introduction-women-gender-roles-middle-east/>
- <https://teachmideast.org/articles/communal-identities-and-ethnic-groups/>

### **Week 2. September 14<sup>th</sup>: Middle East Politics and Governments**

- Yom, Sean (2018). *Governments and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*. Chapter 1, p.1-35.
- Lynch, Marc. (2021). "Taking Stock of MENA Political Science after the Uprisings," *Mediterranean Politics* 26 (5): 682-695.
- Blaydes, Lisa. (2017). "State Building in the Middle East." **(Recommended)**.
- Nonneman, Gerd. (2001) "Rentiers and Autocrats, Monarchs and Democrats, State, and Society: The Middle East Between Globalization, Human 'Agency,' and Europe." *International Affairs* 77 (1): 141-162. **(Recommended)**.

### **Week 3. September 21<sup>st</sup>: Realities and Misconceptions on the Study of Gender in MENA**

- Barnes, Tiffany. (2021). "Middle East and North Africa" in *Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective*, edited by Pamela Paxton et al. Ch. 13: 307-320.
- Mikdashi, Maya. (2012). "How Not to Study Gender in the Middle East." *Jadaliyya*. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4775/how-not-to-study-gender-in-the-middle-east>
- Keddie, Nikkie (2007). *Women in the Middle East.*, "Issues in Studying Middle Eastern Women's History." p. 9-13.
- Why Do they Hate us? Mona Eltahawy, *Foreign Policy*

- Hadiya Abdelrahman, “Are We Weak or Are We Terrorists? Here’s How Muslim Women Are Caught in The Web of Violent Stereotypes,” *Everyday Feminism*, October 30, 2017, <https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/10/muslim-women-stereotypes/>.
- 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)**
- The World Bank MENA Development Report. (2013). *Gender Equality and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere.*: Overview. **(Recommended)**

#### **Week 4. September 28<sup>th</sup>: Gender, Citizenship, and Legal Reforms: A Historical Perspective**

- Charrad, Mounira. (2001). “State and Gender in the Maghrib” in Joseph, Suad, and Susan Slyomovics (Eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 61-71.
- Hatem, Mervat. (1992). “Economic and Political Liberation in Egypt and the Demise of State Feminism,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24 (2): 231–251.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. (2001). “The Politics of Gender and the Conundrums of Citizenship” *Women and Power in the Middle East*: 52-58. **(Recommended)**
- 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 5<sup>th</sup>: Women and the Arab Uprisings**

- Sika, Nadine and Khodary, Yasmin (2012). “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? Egyptian Women within the Confines of Authoritarianism.” *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(5), 91-100.
- Khalil, Andrea. (2014). “Tunisia’s Women: Partners in Revolution.” *The Journal of North African Studies* 19 (2): 186-199
- Gilbert, Victoria. (2021). “Sister Citizens: Women in Syrian Rebel Governance.” *Politics and Gender* 552-579. **(Recommended)**.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> Response Paper is October 18<sup>th</sup>.**

#### **Week 6. October 12<sup>th</sup>: Gender and Political Power**

- Welborne, Bozena C., and Gail J. Buttorff. (2022). “Gender Quotas in the Arab World - 20 Years On.” *Digest of Middle East Studies* 31 (4): 340–58.
- Shockley, Bethany. (2018). “Competence and Electability: Exploring the Limitations on Female Candidates in Qatar.” *Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy* 39(4): 467-489.
- Shalaby, Marwa. (2020). “Gender Stereotypes and Women’s Political Representation in MENA” APSA-MENA Newsletter, Volume 3, Issue 2.

- Benstead, Lindsay (2016). "Why Quotas are Needed to Achieve Gender Equality." *POMEPS Studies* #19:55-58. **(Recommended)**.
- Blackman, Alexandra and Marlette Jackson (2019). "Gender Stereotypes, Political Leadership and Voting Behavior in Tunisia." *Political Behavior*. **(Recommended)**.

#### **Week 7. October 19<sup>th</sup>: Women and Political Parties**

- Ben Shitrit, Lihi. (2016). "Authenticating Representation: Women's Quotas and Islamist Parties." *Politics & Gender* 12 (04): 781–806.
- Belschner, Jana. 2022. "Electoral Engineering in New Democracies: Strong Quotas and Weak Parties in Tunisia." *Government and Opposition* 57 (1): 108–25.
- Tajali, Mona. (2016). "Women's Rise to Political Office on Behalf of Religious Political Movements" *POMEPS Studies* #19:17-22.
- Clark, Janine and Jillian Schwedler. (2003) "Who Opened the Window? Women's Activism in Islamist Parties." *Comparative Politics* 35 (3): 293-312. **(Recommended)**
- Škrabáková, Katarína. 2017. "Islamist Women as Candidates in Elections: A Comparison of the Party of Justice and Development in Morocco and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt." *Die Welt Des Islams* 57 (3–4): 329–59. **(Recommended)**

#### **Week 8. October 26<sup>th</sup>: Gender, Democratization, and Authoritarian Politics**

- Tripp, Aili. (2019). *Seeking Legitimacy: Why Arab Autocracies Adopt Women's Rights*. Introduction (pp. 1-20).
- Moghadam, Valentine M. (2004). "The Gender of Democracy: The Link Between Women's Rights and Democratization in the Middle East." *Arab Reform Bulletin* 2 (7): 2-3. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/21226>
- Donno, D., & Russett, B. (2004). "Islam, Authoritarianism and Female Empowerment: What are the Linkages?" *World Politics*, 56(4): 582-602. **(Recommended)**
- Rizzo, H., Abdel-Latif, A.H., & Meyer, K. (2007). "The Relationship Between Gender Equality and Democracy: A Comparison of Arab Versus Non-Arab Muslim Societies." *Sociology* 41(6): 1151-1170. **(Recommended)**

#### **Week 9. November 2<sup>nd</sup>: Women and Local Politics**

- Berriane, Yasmine. (2015). "The Micro-politics of Reform: Gender Quota, Grassroots Associations and the Renewal of Local Elites in Morocco." *Journal of North African Studies* 20 (3): 432-449.
- Nanes, Stefanie. (2015). "'The Quota Encouraged Me to Run': Evaluating Jordan's Municipal Quota for Women." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 11 (3): 261–82.
- Sbaity Kassem, Fatima. 2012. "Can Women Break Through? Women in Municipalities: Lebanon in Comparative Perspective." *Women's Studies International Forum* 35 (4): 233–55. **(Recommended)**.
- Barnett, Carolyn, and Marwa Shalaby. (2021). "Success Beyond Gender Quotas: Gender, Local Politics, and Clientelism in Morocco." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3947099>. **(Recommended)**.

The deadline for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Response Paper is November 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Week 10. November 9<sup>th</sup>: The Outcomes of Women’s Representation**

- Moghadam, Valentine M. & Fatemeh Haghighatjoo. (2016). “Women and Political Leadership in an Authoritarian Context: A Case Study of the Sixth Parliament in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” *Politics and Gender* 12 (1): 168-197.
- Bush, Sarah Sunn, and Lauren Prather. 2021. “Islam, Gender Segregation, and Political Engagement: Evidence from an Experiment in Tunisia.” *Political Science Research and Methods* 9 (4): 728–44
- Shalaby, Marwa (2016). “Women’s Political Representation and Authoritarianism in the Arab World” *POMEPS Studies* #19: 45-52. **(Recommended)**.
- Ayata, Ayse Gunes & Fatma Tütüncü. (2008). “Critical Acts without a Critical Mass: The Substantive Representation of Women in the Turkish Parliament.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 61 (3): 461-475. **(Recommended)**.

**Be Ready with the Research Question for the Final Paper**

**Week 11. November 16<sup>th</sup>: Activism in Difficult Settings**

- Jad, Islah. (2014). “Local Power and Women’s Empowerment in a Conflict Context” in *Women in Politics*, edited by Mariz Tadros. (pp. 135-166)
- ElMasry, Sarah & Neil Ketchley. (2020). “After the Massacre: Women’s Islamist Activism in Post-Coup Egypt.” *Middle East Law and Governance*, 12: 86-108.
- Women’s activists in MENA face online bullying and sexual harassment (2020): <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/women-activists-middle-east-face-online-bullying-and-sexual-harassment/>

**No Class: Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 12. November 30<sup>th</sup>: Student Presentations**

**Week 13. December 7<sup>th</sup>: 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):**
  - Class Participation: 5%
  - Discussion Leader: 5%
  - 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.

<b>Class Participation Rubric</b>					
<b>Points</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of contribution</b>	Always well-prepared for class; shows critical thought; poses questions; moves dialogue forward; stays on topic; engages with both instructor and classmates	Well-prepared for class most of the time; shows effort in critical thinking; poses questions; helps move dialogue forward; often stays on topic; shows effort to engage with both instructor and classmates	Sometimes well-prepared for class; makes attempts to engage in critical thought; makes attempts to move dialogue forward; sometimes goes off topic; shows some effort to engage with instructor and classmates	Rarely prepared for class; few attempts to engage in critical thought; seldom moves dialogue forward; often goes off topic; shows little effort to engage with instructor and classmates	Almost never prepared for class; does not attempt to engage in critical thinking; does not move dialogue forward; purposes goes off topic; does not engage with instructor or classmates
<b>Frequency of contribution</b>	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>Respect of ground rules</b>	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

**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 18<sup>th</sup>, and the second response paper is due on November 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **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 15<sup>th</sup>**. 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).

Grade Scale	Range	Single Grade Value
A	100% to 94%	100%
AB	<94% to 88%	90%
B	<88% to 82%	85%
BC	<82% to 76%	80%
C	<76% to 70%	75%
D	<70% to 60%	65%
F	<60% to 0%	0%

**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 18<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup>** 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/>
- **Gender Event:** <https://mideast.wisc.edu/uw-event/arab-womens-revolutionary-art-between-singularities-and-multitudes/>

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

**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/#rulesrightsandresponsibilitiestext>

**[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](#))