

SYLLABUS  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY — FALL 2016  
HIST 362: WARRIORS, MILITANTS, AND MARTYRS: WOMEN AND VIOLENCE IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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office: ICC 611  
Hours: W 9:30-11:30, and by appointment

CLASS TIME: W 12:30-3:00

LOCATION: ICC 223B

### DESCRIPTION

The media is currently full of sensationalist examples of women in combat in the Middle East, most notably those fighting with or against the “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” (ISIS). This course is an undergraduate colloquium exploring the topic of women and war in the context of the Middle East and North Africa from the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula to the contemporary conflicts in Iraq and Syria. We will look at the political, economic, social, religious and ideological trends that shaped women’s experiences during various conflicts.

The course will begin by looking at women in armed conflicts during the early Islamic period, with a particular emphasis on portrayals of these women in early Arab histories, popular literature (*siyyar*) and poetry. In addition, we will look at the lives of several key figures, such as ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr, Khawla bint al-Azwar and al-Khansā’, whose memory is mobilized in contemporary debates about women in the Islamic World. The course will then briefly address the topic of women who took up arms during the Middle Ages and participated in military invasions, piracy and the Crusades. Subsequently, the course will move to the modern period and evaluate women’s involvement in anti-colonial resistance, national liberation struggles, militias, state militaries, terrorism, civil wars and revolutions from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present. In addition, we will evaluate the overall historical context in order to explore how armed struggle fits within the larger experiences of women during wartime. Finally, the course will briefly address the lasting impact of armed conflict on women’s lives. When possible, students will read primary sources from various historical periods that address the themes of this course.



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### GOALS

1. Encourage you to evaluate the ways in which women’s participation in armed struggles has changed from the rise of Islam to the present.
2. Motivate you to identify factors that shaped women’s involvement in armed struggles, including the social structure of their given society (nomadic, pastoral, settled, rural, urban), their social and economic background (elite, non-elite, marginalized), ideology (religious, secular, nationalist, leftist), and the nature of the conflict, as well as their individual motivations.

3. Inspire you to reflect on the role of women in current conflicts in the region from an informed and historical perspective.
4. Teach you to think like historians and use the tools of historians to evaluate the past.
5. Encourage you to hone your reading, writing, and oral communication skills.

## READINGS

Textbook:

Mir Tamim Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes* (**optional**)  
 William Cleveland and Martin Burton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (**optional**)

Novels:

Al-Shaykh, Hanān. *The Story of Zahra*. London: Quartet, 1986.  
 Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003.

Blackboard:

The additional readings are available on the course blackboard (BB) site in the “Readings” folder under “Course Documents.”

## GRADE REQUIREMENTS

- |                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Two 500-word reading responses: | 20% |
| 2. Short Presentation              | 5%  |
| 3. Short Outline                   | 5%  |
| 4. Draft of the Final Paper        | 5%  |
| 5. Final Paper                     | 40% |
| 6. Attendance and Participation    | 25% |

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all class meetings is essential. Nevertheless, I recognize that we are all human and that legitimate things do come up. Consequently, everyone gets one free, unexcused absence for whatever they might need. After your first unexcused absence, each additional absence will lower your participation grade by 7%. Any student who misses more than 4 classes will receive a failing grade for participation (and likely for the course). For those extra-diligent students with no absences during the semester, I will drop your lowest participation grade.

**Excused absences:** In certain circumstances, additional absences may be excused. These include:

- **Absence for religious observances:** Students must notify me in writing before the Add/Drop deadline of any planned observance of major religious holidays and related travel that conflicts with classes. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with a dean.
- **Absence for athletic travel:** Student-athletes must provide me with a travel letter before the Add/Drop deadline which highlights potential absences so we may discuss suitable arrangements. Students who cannot be accommodated for some or all absences should discuss the matter with the relevant Academic Coordinator for Student-Athletes.
- **Predictable Absences:** Students must provide me with a travel letter before the Add/Drop deadline which highlights potential absences so we may discuss suitable arrangements.
- **Absence for documented illness:** Students who miss multiple classes due to prolonged illness should seek medical care and provide documentation of such to the Dean’s Office, which will then communicate with me. A prolonged absence may necessitate the student’s withdrawal from the course for the semester.
- **At the discretion of the professor:** There may be cases where an absence is undocumented but is, nevertheless, excused by me (e.g., absence due to a death in the family). Students should initiate a conversation with me about the nature and duration of the absence, in

advance of the absence whenever possible. Students who anticipate missing multiple classes should inform the Dean's Office.

When absences are excused, students remain responsible for all assigned work, and shall be provided with the opportunity to make up, without penalty, any work that they have missed. This may include writing an additional response paper in lieu of the missed class depending on the nature and duration of the absence.

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment so I ask that all students do their best to arrive on time. Any student arriving more than 30 minutes late will be counted as absent for the day.

**Instructional Continuity:** Should classes be canceled (e.g. inclement weather, illness of the professor, etc.); students should wait for case-by-case directions from me.

## PARTICIPATION

As this is an undergraduate colloquium, discussion is central to this course. For those looking for a lecture course on the Middle East, I can recommend HIST 160 or HIST 161 next semester. Students are expected to prepare for each class. Discussions are the major way in which I determine which students are completing the reading, so students who attend class but do not participate in the discussions will receive an overall participation grade of C- for the day. I understand that some people may feel uncomfortable speaking before groups. If you are struggling to participate in class, please come speak with me and we will devise some strategies for improving your participation. For extra points towards your participation grade, you may also do a 2-3 minute presentation at the beginning of class on a female fighter or soldier from any period in Middle Eastern history who is not discussed in detail in our reading (examples: Asma' bint Yazid, Azdah bint al-Harith, Dokuz Khatun, Nene Hatun, Fatma Ghazzal, Sabiha Gökçen or Sana'a Mehadli).

Please note that I do not agree with all of the writers assigned, nor do they always agree with each other. This class discusses a topic that some students may find troubling at times: women as perpetrators and victims of violence, including sexual violence. I have not shied away from controversial topics, including violence committed by non-state actors that could be characterized as terrorism. Given these topics, everyone should do their best to create a respectful and collegial environment for discussion. Please come speak to me in private if you have any particular concerns.

**Accommodations:** Students with documented and qualifying learning, physical and psychological disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC), which arranges for reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and University policies. In order to arrange accommodations in each course, the student must present me with a letter from the ARC outlining the recommended accommodations at the beginning of the semester.

## All Students:

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, harassment, or assault. University policy requires faculty members to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role it is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Resources are available for students when they experience life events or academic pressures that leave them feeling anxious, confused, depressed, lonely, or overwhelmed. Although such students may not be eligible for accommodations through the Academic Resource Center, they are encouraged to:

1. Visit the Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) in Darnall Hall. A free intake can be arranged by walk-in, or by calling 202-687-6985 during normal business hours (202-444-PAGE (7243) for emergencies).
2. Talk to their deans, who can connect students to the appropriate resources and help them work through their academic options.
3. Communicate proactively with faculty if anxiety or depression have disrupted class attendance and/or productivity.

Students who are not registered with the ARC are not entitled to accommodations (including extensions), nor are registered students who fail to follow established ARC procedures. Any student with a *chronic* condition which affects class performance is urged to contact the ARC to pursue whether accommodations may be appropriate for future coursework.

### ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments for this class are designed to help students meet the goals of the course. First, students will develop their writing and analytical skills and deepen their knowledge of the role of women in armed conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa by preparing a well-written and thoughtful research paper on a primary source. Students will also improve their writing skills over the course of the semester by submitting two short reading response papers. In addition, students will have an opportunity to develop their oral communication skills through in-class discussions and an oral presentation.

### PRESENTATION

At the beginning of each class one or more students will present for ten minutes on the reading for the week. Students should not simply summarize the reading but instead should help situate the readings in their historical context as well as draw connections between them. At the end of the presentation, the student(s) should put forward three to five discussion questions for the class.

### READING RESPONSE

At the beginning of any two classes during the course of the semester, students will be asked to hand in a brief 500 word reading response. If you do not attend the discussion section that day, you may not hand in a paper. You also may not submit a paper on a day you are giving an oral presentation. These short papers should reflect careful analysis or critique of the readings and should demonstrate that you have done all the readings for that day. The reading response should consist of two parts. In the first part, briefly identify and summarize an argument from the reading(s). Be as specific as possible. The second part should be your critical thoughts on this argument, using evidence from the reading to support your point(s). It is highly recommended that students complete at least one response before **Oct. 11**.

### PAPER GUIDELINES

Paper due **Dec. 12**: Primary Source Research Paper - 10 to 15 pages (12pt font) double-spaced.

The paper topic should be discussed with me by **Sept. 28**.

A short paper proposal that includes a citation for your source, three secondary sources, a working thesis and a photocopy of your source is due in class on **Oct. 12**.

On **Nov. 30** we will be having a peer writing workshop in class. Please bring 4 paper copies of your draft to class on **Nov. 16**. In order to participate in the workshop, you must submit your completed draft (minimum 9.5 pages) on time. Those students who do not submit a draft will receive a zero for the workshop.

Your final paper is a primary source research paper related to some aspect of women and violence in the Middle East and North Africa from the rise of Islam to the present day. While I would like students to focus on the issue of women and combat, a focused topic related to the issues of gender, violence and/or war will be acceptable. Due to the fact this is a history course, those students choosing a contemporary subject will be expected to provide a strong historical background for their argument. The goal of this paper is to use what you have learned in the course in order to make a clear and original argument, utilizing your primary source as your central piece of evidence.

### **Steps to Writing a Research Paper:**

1. **Find a topic.** During the first three or so weeks of class, you should spend time investigating possible topics. Make sure the topic is relevant to the course and raises one or more compelling questions or problems for historical analysis but is focused enough to write a strong 10-15 page paper. Part of the process of searching for a topic is reading relevant secondary literature, such as monographs and journal articles, to see what has been written on the subject that interests you and what questions have yet to be fully explored. You should discuss the topic or possible topics with me by **Sept. 28**.
2. **Identify at least one primary source.** Primary sources are those created during the period under investigation and could include documents, state papers, laws and legal treatises, speeches, interviews, travel accounts, census data, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, literary works, newspaper articles, films and photos. The primary source will serve as the major evidence for your paper and you be analyzing it closely. Those students who read foreign languages should feel free to work with sources in languages other than English.
3. **Identify several secondary sources.** Additional outside research utilizing academic secondary sources will help frame, situate and provide context your argument. Beware of the internet!
4. **Craft your paper.** A well-crafted paper will pose an interesting problem or issue you are addressing and provide a thoughtful thesis in response. A title page is followed by an introduction in which you outline the topic, raise the questions that you hope to answer in the main body of the paper, and clearly state your thesis as well as indicating the methods by which you intend to answer the questions you have posed. The body of the paper pursues the thesis by making an argument or arguments supported by ample evidence from the primary materials. Be sure to include a conclusion in which you summarize your findings and clarify the contribution you have made to our understanding of the issue.

The essay should include footnotes fully citing any reading that you quote or to which you refer and a bibliography in Chicago Style. For more information on citing sources correctly, please go to [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Any paper submitted late without an extension granted in advance through your Dean (in cases of health and family emergency) will be penalized a full grade for each 24 hours it is late. While very annoying, a computer meltdown is not a valid excuse and students are expected to back up their work regularly (Dropbox, Google Drive, iCloud, etc.).

### **GRADING:**

With the exception of the final paper (see above for information on late penalties), no assignments will be accepted late, so please plan accordingly.

Written assignments will be evaluated on five criteria: 1) thesis, 2) evidence, 3) development of ideas, 4) structure and organization and 5) grammar and spelling.

An “A” paper is an absolutely excellent and outstanding paper. It is full of original, thoughtful and exciting ideas with a sharp thesis. It consistently, clearly and effectively communicates its purpose using the primary source as evidence. It has crisp writing, solid development, and is coherent in terms of organization and style. The reader is never confused. Inspire me!

A “B” paper is a good paper with strong ideas and a thesis to guide it. All the basic requirements of the assignment are met and the facts are correct. It has deficiencies in no more than two of the five areas outlined above. For example, it may lack some coherence in terms of organization or the thesis might need further development. Overall, a “B” paper is a good one, in which the writer basically got their ideas across.

A “C” is a fair paper and the writer has clearly engaged with the topic. There is an attempt to support a thesis. However, a “C” has minor deficiencies in three or more areas or a major deficiency in any of the five areas that reduces clarity. It may contain inaccuracies or contradictions or the organization makes the writer’s ideas difficult to follow. A “C” paper shows potential but still needs significant work for that potential to be realized.

A “D” is a paper which the writer has barely met the requirements of the assignment. The paper has major problems with the thesis, evidence and/or style and fails to communicate its purpose to the audience. For example, the thesis is absent or very unclear or the writing is confusing. The writer has made some attempt to engage with the question asked but the paper reads like a very rough draft.

A F paper fails to meet the requirements of the assignment

*Every student is expected to understand and abide by the Georgetown University Honor System. Please review it in your Honor System booklet. Suspected violations of the Honor System will be reported to the Honor Council. If a student is found in violation of the Honor System, I reserve the right to reduce the student’s grade on the assignment and /or the course (in addition to any sanction the Honor Council may impose).*

## **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

### **SEPT 7: INTRODUCTION**

- Syllabus
- Afshar, “Women and Wars: Some Trajectories Towards a Feminist Peace.” (BB)
- Coughlin, Kathryn M. “Women, War and Veil: Muslim Women in Resistance and Combat.” (BB)

### **SEPT 14: WOMEN IN EARLY ISLAM: THE TIME OF THE PROPHET**

- Ahmed, “Women and the Advent of Islam.” (BB)
- Spellberg, *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of ‘A’isha Bint Abi Bakr*. (Ch. 4) (BB)
- Wāqidi, “Khawla bint al-Azwar” in *The Islamic Conquest of Syria: A Translation of Futūhushâm*, 352-353. (BB)
- Ṭabarī, “Hind bint ‘Utbah” in *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 7*, 118, 129-131. (BB)
- Ibn Sa’d, “Nusayba b. Ka’b al-Anṣārīyya” in *The Women of Madina*, 270-73. (BB)
- Bewley, “Khawla bint al-Azwar” in *Muslim Women: A Biographical Dictionary*. (BB)

#### SEPT 21: WARRIOR WOMEN IN ARABIC LITERATURE

- Meri, "Women Poets" *Medieval Islamic Civilization*, 865-67.
- Excerpt from the poetry of Tumāḍir bint ' Amr ibn al-Ḥarth ibn al-Sharīd al-Sulamīyah's (al-Khansā').
- Sonbol, "Women in Eastern Arabia: Myth and Representation," 42-44. (BB)
- Excerpt: Poem about Ghazalah Shaybania - 'Imran ibn Hittan mocks al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf. (BB)
- Kruk, *The Warrior Women of Islam*. (Ch. 1-3) (BB)
- Excerpt from *Sirat Dhat al-Himma*. (BB)

#### SEPT 28: WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE AGES: WARRIOR PRINCESSES, CRUSADERS, PIRATES AND SLAVES

- Hambly, "Becoming Visible: Medieval Islamic Women in Historiography and History." (BB)
- Lourie, "Black Women Warriors in the Muslim Army Besieging Valencia and Cid's Victory." (BB)
- Ibn Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*, 153-160.
- Tessera, "Women warriors during the Crusades, 1095-1254." (BB)
- Tabīb, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, 26-27. (BB)
- Mernissi, "Sayyida al-Hurra," 18-19. (BB)
- **Optional:** Grimau, "Sayyida al-Hurra, Mujer Marroqui de Origen Andalusi" (Spanish). (BB)

#### **Deadline to discuss paper topic with the instructor**

#### OCT 5: ANTICOLONIAL RESISTANCE IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

- Pennell, "Women and Resistance to Colonialism in Morocco: The Rif 1916–1926." (BB)
- Yeaw, "Gender, Violence and Resistance under Italian Rule in Cyrenaica, 1923-1934." (BB)
- Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women*. (Ch. 5) (BB).
- Irgun Zeva'i Le'ummi (I.Z.L.). Available at <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/irgun-zevai-leummi-izl>
- Lehi (Lohamei Herut Yisrael (Stern Gang). Available at <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/lehi-lohamei-herut-yisrael>

#### OCT 12: THE ALGERIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

- Salhi, "Algerian Feminist Movement between Nationalism, Patriarchy and Islamism." (BB)
- Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled." (BB)
- *Battle of Algiers*. Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo. Italy. 1966. (Sharestream)

#### **Recommendation: Submit first reading response by today**

#### **Paper outline due**

#### OCT 19: *THE ISRAELI-PALESTINE CONFLICT*

- Sharoni, "*Every Woman is an Occupied Territory*" (BB)
- Weinraub, "Woman Hijacker Feels 'Engaged to the Revolution'." (BB)
- Parashar, "The Committed Revolutionary: Reflections on a Conversation with Leila Khaled." (BB)
- Holt, "The unlikely Terrorist: Women and Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories." (BB)
- Sasson- Levy, "Feminism and Military Gender Practices: Israeli Women Soldiers in "Masculine" Roles." (BB)

## OCT 26: THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND AFTER

- Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. (Ch. 9) (BB)
- Ibrahim, “Iran's ‘New’ Women Rebel at Returning to the Veil.” (BB)
- Randal, “Militant Women Demonstrators Attack Khomeini Aide Who Heads Iran Radio.” (BB)
- Janjigian, “What Next for ‘Mary’ of Tehran?” (BB)
- Excerpts from Satrapi, *Persepolis*.
- Wright, “Women Pull Rank on Centuries of Gender Discrimination in Iran: Female Soldiers show Military Leadership in Iraq-Based Rebel Army.” (BB)

## NOV 2: THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR

- Shedadeh, “Women in the Lebanese Militias.” (BB)
- al-Shaykh, Hanān. *The Story of Zahra*. London: Quartet, 1986.
- **Optional:** *Lebanon's Women Warriors*. Al-Jazeera. Available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5K949l\\_qs0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5K949l_qs0).



## NOV 9: WOMEN AS SOLDIERS

- Massad, *Colonial effects*, pp 214-216. (BB)
- Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire* (Ch. 6). (BB)
- Khawla Bint al Azwar Military School is Ready to Welcome Female Conscripts. (2014, Aug 16) (online)
- Cojean, *Gaddafi's Harem* (Ch. 2) (BB)

## NOV 16: THE IRAQ WAR

- Jeffreys, “Double Jeopardy: Women, the US Military and the War in Iraq.” (BB)
- Corbett, “The Women’s War.” (BB)
- Sjoberg, “Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others.” (BB)
- Alison, “Al-Qaeda's use of Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq: a Case Study.” (BB)

### **Draft of Final Papers Due**

## NOV 23: 21ST CENTURY CONFLICTS: SYRIA AND IRAQ

- Fischer-Tahir, “Gendered Memories and Masculinities: Kurdish Peshmerga on the Anfal Campaign in Iraq.” (BB)
- Del Re, “Female Combatants in the Syrian Conflict in the Fight against or with the IS and in the Peace Process.” (BB)
- Gowrinathan, “The Women of ISIS.” (online)
- Williams, “The Women Who Face Death.” (online)
- **Optional:** “Her War: Women vs. ISIS.” RT Documentary Channel Films. Available <http://rtd.rt.com/films/her-war-women-vs-isis-documentary/>

## NOV 30: **Paper Workshop**

## DEC 7: MAKING PEACE: WOMEN AFTER ARMED CONFLICTS



- Jabbra, "Family Change in Lebanon's Biqa Valley: What were the Results of the Civil War?."(BB)
- Sajjad, "Women Guerillas: Marching toward True Freedom? (BB)
- Giacaman, "Political Representation and Armed Struggle." (BB)
- Al-Ali, "Women's Organizing and the Conflict in Iraq since 2003." (BB)

### DEC 13: Final Paper Due

Congratulations, you have read the entire syllabus! Please email me one question you have about the class. This will go towards your participation grade for September 7.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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