The University of Texas at Austin – Department of Anthropology

Spring 2013

ANT 391 • Gender and Masculinities in the Middle East
Instructor: Sofian Merabet

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Office Hours: TH 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. or by appointment in SAC 5.164

Unique Numbers: 31475/41810/41965/47505   Time: Tuesday 2:00 PM-5:00 PM
Location: SAC 4.118

The subject matter of this graduate seminar is the analysis of gender and masculinities in the Middle East. While the methodological focus of the class will be an anthropological one, an interdisciplinary attention will be given to such concepts as sexuality, power, and desire. Running the gamut of anthropology, history, and fictional literature, the readings on which the seminar is based focus mostly on Arab and Turkish culture, and include writings on Israeli society. While the course does not provide an inclusive overview over the extensive body of work on the subject of gender and masculinities, it attempts to communicate important theoretical concepts and understandings that are at the forefront of current debates within the social sciences. This includes the close reading of newly published monographs on Middle Eastern societies, but also novelistic writing published over the last couple of years on the subject of sexuality, authority, and violence in the region. Next to examining some of the major theoretical discussions in gender/queer studies around issues of securitization, counterterrorism, and (homo)nationalism, the seminar will consider critically how the issues raised in class can be contextualized in terms of differing understandings of what constitutes gender and gender identities in the contemporary world.

Required Texts: [listed alphabetically by the author and ordered through the University Co-Op, www.universitycoop.com, 2246 Guadalupe St, Austin, (512) 476-7211]


**Course Requirements for Registered Graduate Students:**

The class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. It will be run primarily as discussions within a seminar format. In order for the course to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed and ready for in-depth discussion for each class. Regular attendance is required. Attendance in class, however, does not constitute participation. You must come to class having carefully read all materials and be prepared to discuss, question, and argue about issues raised in the readings. It will be beneficial for you to take excerpts/notes on any material that you find enlightening, controversial, or objectionable. You should also take notes in class on themes, key terms, and debates we tackle. These note-taking strategies will be crucial when you write your research/term paper. In short:

**I.** Do all assigned readings (while taking excerpts/notes!) by the date indicated on the syllabus and participate actively in the general class discussion.

**II.** Regular two 15-minute presentations on the weekly readings to be assigned to students. They are intended to launch the general seminar discussions. The goal of the 15-minute oral presentations is two-fold: one, identify and explain the argument(s) that the author is making, and two, provide your own take on that argument. Begin with a short summary of the work and then focus on the author’s argument(s). Try to be concise in all parts of your analysis. An outline can help to remain focused on your analysis and avoid summary or irrelevant description. Following is a sample outline for your oral presentation:

1. Introduction (includes the author’s and your argument[s]).
2. Short summary of the text (focus on one or two central aspects of the work).
3. Development and substantiation of your critique based on a set of key questions to be submitted to the class for wider discussion.

**III.** Two to three-page description of the research/term paper (“Project Proposal”) to be distributed and shared in class with peers for feedback on **Tuesday, March 19th**. An updated version will be submitted to the instructor on **Tuesday, March 26th**.
IV. 10-minute presentations on the respective final research project during the two last meetings of the semester.

V. 15 to 20-page (no more no less!) term paper on any relevant topic dealing with the study of gender and masculinities in the Middle East due on Friday, May 3rd. Focused topics that raise a central research issue or query are best. Avoid general or overview topics. You must include/discuss at least 25% of the previously assigned readings in your term paper.

The writing assignment is designed to develop and enhance your critical reading, analytical, and writing skills. Evaluation criteria include: critical and integrative analysis of texts, clarity of thought, ability to synthesize readings and, occasionally, class discussions into your own argument, and ability to formulate a theoretical grounding for it.

**Grading Procedure:**

- Term paper: 70%.
- General participation and presentations of weekly readings: 20%.
- Presentations of own work (in process as well as final): 10%.

*Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives.*

**Reading Schedule:** (this schedule is tentative and subject to possible revision)

**Week 1: Gender and Masculinity Studies in the Middle East**
- Tuesday, January 15th  
  Introduction to the seminar

**Week 2: New Domestic Relationships and the Responses they Provoke (1)**
- Tuesday, January 22nd  
Week 3: New Domestic Relationships and the Responses they Provoke (2)

- Tuesday, January 29th

Week 4: Religion, Secularism, and the Feminist Subject (1)

- Tuesday, February 5th

Week 5: Religion, Secularism, and the Feminist Subject (2)

- Tuesday, February 12th

Week 6: Female Muslim Intellectual Production in the US (1)

- Tuesday, February 19th

Week 7: Female Muslim Intellectual Production in the US (2)

- Tuesday, February 26th
Covers and Other Matters: Concluding Thoughts” in
Hammer, Juliane (2012) *American Muslim Women,*
*Religious Authority, and Activism: More Than a Prayer,*
UT Press, 100-207

Week 8: *Fictional Excursus: Gender, Violence, and Identity in Lebanon and Palestine*

- Tuesday, March 5th
  - Khoury, Elias (2012) *As Though She Were Sleeping,*
    translated from the Arabic by Marilyn Booth, Archipelago
    Books

Week 9:  
**Spring Break**

- Monday, March 12th  
  No class

Week 10: *Ethno-religious Segregation and its Pitfalls*

- Tuesday, March 19th
    *Arabs, and the Limits of Separatist Imagination,* Princeton
    University Press, pp. 1-72  
  **Two to three-Page Term Paper “Project Proposal” to be**
  **distributed and presented in class**

Week 11: *Palestinian-Israeli Masculinity Between Security and Citizenship*

- Tuesday, March 26th
  - Kanaaneh, Rhoda Ann (2009) *Surrounded: Palestinian*  
    *Soldiers in the Israeli Military,* Stanford University Press  
  **Updated two to three-Page Term Paper “Project**
  **Proposal” to be submitted to the instructor**

Week 12: *Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Face of Securitization (1)*

- Tuesday, April 2nd  
  - “Preface: Tactics, Strategies, Logistics,” “Introduction:
    Homonationalism and Biopolitics,” “1. The Sexuality of
    Terrorism,” and “2. Abu Ghraib and U.S. Sexual
    Exceptionalism” in Puar, Jasbir K. (2007) *Terrorist
    Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times,* Duke
    University Press, pp. ix-xxviii and 1-113
Week 13: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Face of Securitization (2)


Week 14: The Historical Process of Identifying as a Turkish Citizen (1)


Student Presentations on Final Paper Projects (1)

Week 15: The Historical Process of Identifying as a Turkish Citizen (2)


Student Presentations on Final Paper Projects (2)

Final Papers due as an email attachment on Friday, May 3rd