



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

MOROCCAN WOMEN'S WRITING

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Gender Studies Curriculum: A Step For Democracy and Peace  
in EU-Neighbouring Countries with Different Traditions (GeSt)

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## MA TITLE: Gender Studies

### Instructor:

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Course code	Course title	Number of hours or number of credits	Course valid from*	Course valid to*	Course type (Obligatory /Optional)	Semester
Module 16	MOROCCAN WOMEN'S WRITING	2hours/week	November 2017	End of spring Term	Obligatory	2

### 1. A brief description of the course

The main focus of the course is to address the Maghrebin Women's Writing from a variety of time periods, backgrounds and genre as a means to discuss the difficulties of achieving a public voice and representing female experiences, the effects of female women's voices and experiences being silenced. It further addresses the narrative methods women use to challenge and even subvert social expectations about female identity.

By exploring what kind of stories women choose to tell, and what images and themes they have chosen to focus on over time, we will be able to determine how gender can unify women and provide them with a sense of power, while by paying particular attention to such elements of difference as class and culture we will be able to appreciate the word "women" as representatives of multiple experiences and possibilities.

### 2. Objective of the course

The course aims to explore Women's writing from the Maghreb and the literary theory of diverse places and historical periods.

The focus will be on Moroccan Women writers in the twentieth century and beyond, and to consider Moroccan Women's writing as a discursive space and a minority group in world literature. Subsequently, students will study a selection of fictional and nonfictional works that center on women's lives and reflect on what it means to be a woman and a feminist from various critical, cultural and traditional perspectives—including those of sexuality, class, history, postcolonialism, public culture and modernity.

Examples will be drawn primarily from works by Moroccan F. Mernissi and Leila Abouzid. The aim is to challenge cultural norms and limits of analysis/criticism to create a richer experience of the texts, including multiple interpretations of the text as a complex fabric.



### 3. Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the module, a student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- know some of the developments, themes, and narrative strategies of Maghreb in-language feminist fiction
- analyze literary texts through the perspective of gender
- know the central points of a selection of feminist theory and can use it as a context for reading literary texts
- can analyze and engage in theoretical and scholarly debates about Maghribin/feminist fiction
- Situate Maghreb in women's writing in Arabic literary history
- Demonstrate a critical understanding about recurrent themes and issues in the literature by women and understand the impact of gender on literature
- Appreciate the role of gender in shaping texts as a product of particular cultures and historical moments, especially unfamiliar ones.
- Consider women's writing as a significant influence in the construction of individual and cultural experiences within specific historical contexts

\*Asterisks means optional here

### 4. Teaching method

The course will be delivered in the form of theoretical seminars and in the form of presentations by students. It will also consist of debates and discussions on the assigned subjects, authors and intellects.

Provide students with the unique experience of the Maghrebin Women's Writing as a minority group in world literature

The seminars will be an opportunity for students to discuss, reflect on and debate different themes related to the course. The students will be exposed to the socio-historical and cultural background of some of the selected representative works, and they study how Maghrebin Women's Writers have used their socio-cultural experiences to write their own literature after years of marginalization

### 5. Distribution of workload for students (i.e. lectures, seminars, individual work in hours, and total)



Attendance and active participation in class.

- Attendance will be taken to “participation” grade. 15%
- Reading assignments, on schedule. 15%
- Discussion 15%
- Mid-term Exam 20 %
- Final Exam 35%

## 6. Assessment

### a. Methods of assessment

- Oral presentations
- A final written exam
- Percentages allocated to each method of assessment  
Attendance: 15%
  - Reading assignments, on schedule. 15%
  - Discussion 15%
  - Mid-term Exam 20 %
  - Final Exam 35%

## 7. Course schedule

### Week 1: Introducing the literature of Maghrebin's Women Writing

The session will start with an introduction to the course description content and the selected texts to be studied.

Your preparation for this class: Students are asked to come in class with some preparation/reading about Literature of the Maghreb. Students should come to class with a written answer to the following question: What make Maghrebin Women’s writing different from other types of writings?

Required readings:

- . Radwa Ashour et al (eds), Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide, 1873-1999 (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008).

### Week 2: The Art of Fiction

In this session, different literary periods/genre will be discussed and debated in class.



Students are required to Investigate the socio-historical and cultural background of some of the selected representative works of women's writing in general and the Arab, Maghrebin women's writing in particular. The focus will be on the latter via different representations and literary works.

Your preparation for this class: Students are asked to do some research on the role of women in ancient societies and the place they took in the art of fiction.

Required readings:

*Women in Ancient Greece and Rome*

*Plato and Aristotle*

#### **Week 3: Women's writing from the Maghreb**

In this session, the female's writing/writers from the Maghreb will be selected and discussed. Students will be provided with the unique experience of the Maghrebin Women's Writing as a minority group in world literature.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, students prepare talks/presentations on the issue to deliver in class.

Required readings:

*The Arabian Nights*

*One Thousand and One Nights*

*Mahfouz, Naguib. Arabian Nights and Days. New York: Doubleday, 1995.*

#### **Week 4: North African Narrative**

In this session, the focus will be on North African Women in 19th-Century French Orientalism and Post-1950s. The session will cover the relationship between gender and imperialism, and particularly feminism and imperialism. The major focus of this course is to highlight the multi-faceted agency of women in post-colonial and today's Maghrib.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you come to class with answers to the following questions: 1) "What is an Author?" Is there a difference between males and females writing? 2) Do we write according to our gender identity? 3) What are some features that characterize males and females' style of writing?



- . Mernissi Fatima. *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Muslim Society*. revised ed. 1985, 1987, reprinted London: Saqi Books.

### **Week 5: Feminisms and Power Relations**

In this session, the historical and cultural background of feminism will be presented. Focus will be put on the stories of female from the Maghreb in particular.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you come to class with an answer to the following questions: What is the impact of female 's writing on social and cultural Development? What does a successful female writer mean to you?

#### **Required readings:**

Elaine Showalter (ed), The New Feminist Criticism (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

Doris Gray. 2007 Muslim Women on the Move: Moroccan Women and French Women of Moroccan Origin Speak out.

### **Week 6 & 7: Female voices**

In these two sessions, we look at some of the innovative voices of recent writings of women and their wide range of influences on the national and cultural plurality that can contribute to greater human experience, understanding, and appreciation of the literary text.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, students will question women's social relationships, political views, and personal identity within a Maghrebin/Islamic tradition.

#### **Required readings:**

- Lazreg, Marnia. "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria" *Feminist Studies* 1 (Spring 1988) 81-107.
- Abouzeid, Leila. *Year of the Elephant: A Moroccan Woman's Journey Toward Independence*. Trans. Barbara Parmenter. Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, 1989,

### **Week 8 : Women in the Twentieth Century and Beyond**

The main focus of this class is to study the roles of women and the workings of gender and governance in the 19th, 20th, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.



Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, discussion about gender equality on the work place, and women's demand of change in politics, education, and business; these rights brought about the gender role debate into the national conscience.

Required readings:

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963

**Week 9 & 10: Maghrebin Women Writers and the Transnational Imaginary**

The courses stress the diversity of women's authorial worlds, both through time and/or space. The readings and specific focus seek to make students aware of the extensive body of literature written by women.

Your preparation for the class: In addition to the assigned readings, talks and discussions on the issues taken up during the whole semester will be debated.

Required readings

Lalami laila. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, Paperback – October 2, 2

Recommended reading

Abouzeid, Leila. Year of the Elephant: A Moroccan Woman's Journey Toward Independence. Trans. Barbara Parmenter. Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, 1989.

Al-Wazzani, Hassan. Al-adab al-magribî al-h:adîth, 1929–1999, Casablanca: Dâr alThaqâfa, 2002

Berque, Jacques. "La Littérature Marocaine Et L'Orient Au XVIIe Siècle." *Arabica*, Volume 2, Number 3, 1955, pp. 295–312

Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Doris Gray. 2007 *Muslim Women on the Move: Moroccan Women and French Women of Moroccan Origin Speak out*.

Elaine Showalter (ed), *The New Feminist Criticism* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Elaine Showalter (ed), *The New Feminist Criticism* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

Joseph T. Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Khatibi, Abdelkebir. *Maghreb Pluriel*. Paris: Denoel, 1983.



Lazreg, Marnia. "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria" *Feminist Studies* 1 (Spring 1988) 81-107.

Lakhdar, Mohamed. *La vie littéraire au Maroc sous la dynastie 'Alawide*, Rabat, 1971 - Roger, Allen and Richards, D.S. (ed.), *Arabic Literature in the Post-classical Period*, Cambridge University Press,

Lalami Laila. *The Moor's account*. Random House Company, New York. ISBN 978-0-307-91167-4 (e-book). Copyright © 2014

Lalami laila. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, Paperback – October 2, 2006

Nadje Sadig Al-Ali, *Gender Writing/Writing Gender* (Cairo: AUC Press, 1994).

Roger Allen et al (eds), *Love and Sexuality in Modern Arabic Literature* (London: Saqi, 1995)

Radwa Ashour et al (eds), *Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide, 1873-1999* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008).

Mahfouz, Naguib. *Arabian Nights and Days*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Mernissi Fatima. *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Muslim Society*. revised ed. 1985, 1987, reprinted London: Saqi Books.

Saadawi, el Nawal. *Woman at Point Zero*. Trans. Sherif Hetata. London, UK: ZED, 1983.

Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1969.

Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1969.