



## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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University Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, Morocco

January 2017

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

561785-EPP-1-2015-1-LT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP



**MA TITLE: Cultural Studies: Cultures, Identities and Nationhood in Morocco**

**Instructor:**

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Course code	Course title	Number of hours	Study Form	Course valid from	Course valid to	Course type (Obligatory)	Semester
	Gender and Religion	2	Face to face	September 2016	September 2020	obligatory	1

**1. A brief description of the course**

The course is designed to First Year Master's students in the MA program : Cultural Studies: Cultures, Identities and Nationhood in Morocco. The main focus of the course is to address

- a. The relation between interpretation of the Sacred Texts and social changes
- b. Muslim Theology and gender-inclusive approach

**2. Objective of the course**

The course aims to make the students aware of the religious and political debate on gender in Morocco:

To be aware of the strong connection between the interpretation of religious texts and the status of women

**3. Learning outcomes**

After successful completion of the course, the students should be able to:

Acquire the necessary theoretical and methodological skills and knowledge to explore gender and religion

**4. Teaching method**

Cite the method (s) to be used for teaching the course.

Lecturing; short videos, field-trips

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

Workload for students:

Lectures: 40 %    Seminars 40%    Assignment: 20%

### Assessment

- a. Methods of assessment:  
Written exams, oral presentations, class participation
- b. Percentage allocated to each method of assessment  
Final Exam: 40%; Mid-term presentation: 10%;  
Attendance and participation: 30%;  
Presentations of short research projects: 20%

## 6. Course schedule

Week 1: Introducing the Feminist Movement in Morocco:

This session traces the major phases of the evolution of women's status in Morocco

The first Phase: State Building and the status of women: 1956-1974

The Second Phase: Pre-democratization Phase 1975-1994. Nationally: The shift from class-based to gender based struggle led by Marxist Leninist women's movement; towards the amendment of the Family Code. Internationally: Ratification of the CEDAW in 1993.

The Third Phase (1994 to the Present): Democratization Phase, the Civil Society and the institutional Reforms (the Family Code and the Constitution). Focus will be here on the gender moment movements; the conservative and the liberal women's rallies in 2000.

This session is meant to map the field in order to contextualize the Moroccan specificities of gender and women's issues

In this session, the major phases of evolution of women's status in Morocco will be discussed and debated in class. Through lecturing students will be made aware of how Morocco moves from the first phase through the second phase of democratization to the third phase of democratization, the civil society and the Institutional reforms.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1) What are the specificities of the feminist movement? 2)...What are the major actors in the formation of gender politics in Morocco? 3)...What are the political and religious affiliations of the feminist group involved in shaping gender politics?.

### **Required readings:**

1. **Zakia Salime**, *Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco* . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
2. Fatima Sadiqi, *Women, Gender and Language in Morocco* (Leiden: Brill, 2003)

### **Week 2 Course schedule**

Before this session, the students are supposed to read the Family Code and conduct short interviews with lawyers, family judges, divorced women, married and unmarried women, educated and uneducated women, rural and urban women about their evaluation of the provisions and the implementation of the family code enacted in 2004. In class, the discussion of the family code will be held based on a close textual analysis of some articles as well as a discussion of the findings of the students will be discussed.

This session closely examines the new Moroccan family Code within the context of the State's reform of the religious field at the wake of the Casablanca terrorist attacks of 2003. It also compares the 1957 and the 2004 family codes within the framework of the tension between the liberal and conservative interpretations of the Sacred Texts. Attention will be equally given to the socio-economic transformations of the Moroccan society together with the cultural and social impact of the family code on the society. Equally important is the crucial effect of Morocco's subscription and ratification of the international covenants relative to human rights, women's rights and child's rights on the enactment of the Family Code. Reference is also made to the advanced provisions of the New Constitution (2011) relative to women's rights in Morocco. The students will be asked about their own opinions and positionality about the religious and ideological implications of the reformed family code.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What are the major differences between the 1957 Women's Personal Status and the 2004 Family Code? What is the impact of the Family Code on the status of Moroccan women? What are the political and religious dimensions of the Family Code?

### **Required Reading:**

- The Family Code in the Official Gazette (2004)
- the New Constitution (2011)

- Laura Feliu “Feminism, Gender Inequality and the Reform of the Mudawana in Morocco.” *Scientific Journal of Humanistic Studies* 4: 6. (2012)
- Josep Lluís Mateo Dieste, “Demonstrating Islam”: the Conflict of Text and the *Mudawwana* Reform in Morocco *The Muslim World* 99 : 1 (2009)

### **Week 3:**

In this session, the new concept of “Muslima Theology” as well as Muslim Feminism are introduced. This session addresses the gender-inclusive interpretation of the Sacred Texts to counterbalance the prevalent conventional male exegesis tradition. It looks at the nascent Muslim feminism as a critical tool to understand the status of women that has been prisoner to two exclusive paradigms: the Western colonial and orientalist exclusive approach and the fundamentalist conservative misogynistic patriarchal approach. It is based on practical and intellectual processes of revisiting and rethinking the status of women through a feminist rereading the Quran and the Hadith. It provides a balanced and nuanced view of feminism and womanhood, by showing a considerable awareness of the complexity of the spectrum of both feminism and Islamism: secular, liberal, conservative, orthodox, extremist and the contradictions and slippages between Islamic texts and cultural and social practices and realities. Students are supposed to read works by Muslim feminists including Amina Wadud, Asma Lamrabet, and Fatima Mernissi before they come to class. The students are supposed to provide written responses to at least one of the assigned books.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. What are the major characteristics of Islamic feminism and Muslima Theology? Why is a gender-inclusive interpretive tradition important to exegesis? What is the positive impact of Muslima Theology on the cultural and political status of women in Morocco?

### **Required Reading:**

Amina Wadud, *Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Asma Lamrabet, *20 Questions and Answers on Islam from a Reformist Vision*. 2016

### **Week 4: Muslima Theology and Muslim Feminism 2**

This session continues up the discussion and issues of the previous session. Besides, a guest speaker (Ilyass Bouzghaya from the Center for Women's Studies in Islam of the Rabita Mohammedia of Ulema (religious scholars) of Morocco) is invited to speak to the students.

### **Required Reading:**

**Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil*. Indiana Univ. Press, 1987**

**Wadud, Amina. *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*. Oneworld Publications, 2006; reprt. 2008**

### **Week 5:**

This session examines “Religion and Sexual politics in Morocco” and homosexuality in Morocco and the Quranic and Prophetic statements about it. It looks at the State’s promotion of human rights and ratification of related international agreements on the one hand and the provisions of the religious texts. The works of Moroccan writers such as Tahar Benjelloun, Rashid O., and Abdellah Taia will be discussed with the students. Short videos and excerpts from the Quran, the Hadith, and literary and political science works will be sent to students before the class. The students are encouraged to articulate their opinions and positionality about homosexuality in Morocco

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. What is the relation between textuality in sexuality? What are the slippages between sexual identity and religious constraints? How can the social networks and youtube for example be viewed as platforms of articulation of sexual identity?

### **Required Reading:**

Gibson Ncube: “Sexual/textual politics: rethinking gender and sexuality in gay Moroccan literature” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 32:4, 476-490

Excerpts from Tahar Benjelloun’s *Leaving Tangier* (Penguin, 2009)

Two Short Videos on Homosexuality in Morocco and Abdellah Taia

### **Week 6:**

In this session Zakia Salime will be invited to speak to the students on Gender: Political Parties and Religious Groups in Morocco. This session engages Moroccan women’s political participation and affiliation to religious groups. On the one hand, it examines the systematic exclusion of women from the political scenes based on the male domination of cultural politics and the limited presence of women in religious parties. It also probes the male hermeneutic basis of religion as a tool of the exclusion of women from public spaces, workplace, education, and power structures.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. How do secular political parties and religious parties impact gender politics in

Morocco? How is the political use of Islam deployed in cultural politics? What are the major gender paradigm shifts in contemporary Morocco?

**Required Reading:**

**Fatima Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam and Beyond the Veil***

**Zakia Salilme's *Between Islamism and Feminism***

**Week 7**

Gender and Sufism. This session introduces Sufism in general and Sufism in Morocco in particular. It discusses the place of women in the High Sufi Tradition and the State's adoption and support of Sufism at the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca terrorist attacks. Focus will be on the Sufi narrative and the empowerment of women. Besides, it stresses the creation of the murshidat (female guides), the appointment of women in the High Council of Religious Scholars, and the Center for Women's Studies affiliated to the League of Religious Scholars. The students will be asked to conduct short interviews with female Sufi adepts and religious guides in Fez. Their findings will be discussed in class side by side with their reaction to the required readings

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. How does Sufism link up to Islam? How is the involvement of gendered Sufism and murshidat in the religious field a means to combat fundamentalism?

**Required Reading:**

1. Bekkaoui K., R. Laremont, "Moroccan Youth Go Sufi," *J M E A*, 2: 1 (2011): 31-46.
2. Bekkaoui K., R. Laremont, S. Rddad, "Survey on Moroccan Youth: Perception and Participation in Sufi Orders/Evaluation and Interpretation," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 2: 1 (2011): 47-63.

**Week 8**

**Mid-Term Exam**

**Week 9**

Gender and Popular Sufism: This session looks at how popular Sufism subverts the orthodox conservative religious practices. The shifts of religious rituals from the mosque as male-dominated spaces to the houses (lilas) dominated by women contributed to the subversion of male-female dynamics. The students are supposed to interview female Sufi adepts who organize popular Sufi rituals (Gnawa and Aissawa) outside of the male dominated spaces following visits

of Sufi orders in Fez. Besides prior to the session, the students will attend a female Sufi ‘concert’ to have an immediate experience of Sufi rituals.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. How do the female Sufi rituals subvert the male female dynamics? **How does female Sufism shake the conventional gender roles in Morocco?**

### **Required Reading**

1. Meryem El Haitami, “Restructuring Female Religious Authority: State-Sponsored Women Religious Guides.” *Mediterranean Studies*, v20 n2 (20121101): 227-240.
2. Meriem El Haitami, “Women and Sufism.” *Mediterranean Studies*, v22 n2 (201411): 190-212.

### **Week 10: Women in the Quran**

This session focuses on women in the Quran. It is based on close analysis of the place of women in the first source of religious legislation and jurisdiction in Islam. It looks at the most controversial issues relative to women including inheritance, repudiation, creation, social justice, polygamy, and agency.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. How can the Koranic perception of creation and social justice help us rethink the misogynistic tradition in Muslim countries? What is the difference between the cultural and the Koranic perception of woman?

### **Required Reading:**

Excerpts from Translations of the meanings of the Quran with particular focus on verses and Suras devoted to women.

Excerpts from some exegeses of the Quran relative to women

### **Week 11**

Women in the Prophetic Tradition. This session focuses on misogynistic hadiths and the patriarchal ideological bases of male interpretation. It discusses the discrepancy between the hadith as divine and fiqh as human and the slippages between the religious and the political. Hadiths will be analyzed in light of liberal, holistic, and gender inclusive perspective.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. What is the relation between the Quran and the Prophetic Tradition? How can we read the ‘contradictions’ between the Quran’s and the hadith’s perception of woman?

## Required Reading

- Excerpts from Hadiths relative to the status of women
- Khadija El Battar's *Criticism of al-Bukhari* (Rabat: Publications al-Ahdath al-Maghribiya, 2003) (In Arabic)

## Week 12:

The politics of veiling and re-veiling in Morocco. This looks at veiling from a religious, social, and political perspective and the most recent narratives of blurring zones of the veil as a sign of ideological and religious affiliations.

Your preparation to this class: You come to class with your own written answers to these questions: 1. How is veiling or unveiling an articulation of ideological affiliations? What are the main religious and human rights foundational arguments for veiling and unveiling?

## Required Reading:

- Marnia Lazreg, *Questioning the Veil: Open Letters to Muslim Women* (2011)
- 3. Chapter 5 of Zakia Salime's *Between Feminism and Islamism: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011

## Week 13

Students' short oral presentations on issues of gender and religion 1

The students will be giving short oral presentations on different issues of gender and religion in Morocco. The topics are chosen by the students prior to this session. Teamwork is encouraged.

## Week 14 Students short oral presentations on issues of gender and religion 2

## Week 15 Revisions

## Week 16 Final Exam

### 7. Recommended readings

4. Aslan, Ednan and Hermansen Marcia (eds). *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Edition, 2013
5. Ahmed Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992
6. Alami M'Chichi Houria *Genre et politique au Maroc: les enjeux de l'égalité hommes-femmes entre islamisme et modernisme*. Paris; Budapest ; Torinp : l'Harmattan, 2002

7. Bekkaoui, Khalid. Ed. *Moroccan Sufism: Youth, Gender, Politics and Globalized Spirituality*. Fez: Publications of the Moroccan Cultural Studies Centre (in Arabic) 2012.
8. Benjelloun, Tahar. *Leaving Tangier*. Pengouin, 2009
9. Dieste, Josep Lluís Mateo. “Demonstrating Islam”: the Conflict of Text and the *Mudawana* Reform in Morocco *The Muslim World* 99 : 1 (2009)
10. Dieste, Josep Lluís Mateo. *Health and Ritual in Morocco: Conceptions of the Body and Healing Practices*
11. Feliu, Laura “Feminism, Gender Inequality and the Reform of the *Mudawana* in Morocco.” *Scientific Journal of Humanistic Studies* 4: 6. (2012)
12. Geoffroy, Eric. *Introduction to Sufism: The Inner Path of Islam*, Translated by Roger Gaetani. World Wisdom, 2010
13. Kapchan, Deborah A. *Gender on the Market: Moroccan Women and the Revoicing of Tradition*. Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
14. Lambrabet, Asma. *Women in the Quran: An Emancipatory Reading*. Translated by Myriam François Cerrah, 2015
15. Lambrabet, Asma. *20 Questions and Answers on Islam from a Reformist Vision*. 2016
16. Mernissi, Fatima. *Beyond the Veil*. Indiana Univ. Press, 1987.
17. Muedini, Fait. *Sponsoring Sufism: How Governments Promote ‘Mystical Islam’ in their Domestic and Foreign Policies*. Palgrave, 2015
18. Gibson Ncube: “Sexual/textual politics: rethinking gender and sexuality in gay Moroccan literature” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 32:4, 476-490
19. Fatima Sadiqi, *Women, Gender and Language in Morocco* (Leiden: Brill, 2003)
20. Salime, Zakia. *Between feminism and Islam: human rights and Sharia Law in Morocco* . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
21. Sandberg Eve Nan; Kenza Aqertit *Moroccan women, activists, and gender politics: an institutional analysis*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014.
22. Terem, ETTY. *Old texts, new practices: Islamic reform in modern Morocco*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014.
23. Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the global justice movement* . Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009)
24. Van Bruinessen, Martin, and Day Howell, Julia. *Sufism and the ‘Modern’ in Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007
25. Wadud, Amina. *Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
26. Wadud, Amina. *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women’s Reform in Islam*. Oneworld Publications, 2006; reprinted. 2008
27. Bekkaoui K., R. Laremont, “Moroccan Youth Go Sufi,” *J M E A*, 2: 1 (2011): 31-46.
28. Bekkaoui K., R. Laremont, S. Rddad, “Survey on Moroccan Youth: Perception and Participation in Sufi Orders/Evaluation and Interpretation,” *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 2: 1 (2011): 47-63.

29. Benson, Kristina The Moroccan Personal Status Law and the Invention of Identity: A Case Study on the Relationship between Islam, Women, and the State (2013) <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/69g371nw>  
El Haitami, Meriem. “Restructuring Female Religious Authority: State-Sponsored Women Religious Guides.” *Mediterranean Studies*, v20 n2 (20121101): 227-240.
30. El Haitami, Meriem. “Women and Sufism.” *Mediterranean Studies*, v22 n2 (201411): 190-212.