The global Islamic revival of the last quarter century has garnered much attention from scholars and the general public, often related to concerns that it threatens women’s progress toward equality. Indeed, Islamic movements are known for emphasizing a return to "traditional” gender norms. Muslim women's clothing in particular has received much scrutiny, especially the veil, which has become a polarizing symbol of Islam. Yet women in many countries are increasingly attracted to pious Islam. In addition, some Muslim women are involved in movements to advance gender equality and democratization in their countries. These developments challenge monolithic portrayals of Muslim women and also force us to rethink long-standing sociological assumptions about women's empowerment and secularization. How are we to understand women’s involvement in Islamic movements and what can these phenomena tell us about gender, modernity, and globalization?

This seminar will explore these issues through recent scholarly accounts of Muslim women in different parts of the world, with emphasis on Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The comparative focus of this class will highlight broader patterns of Islamic revival and allow us to consider how these case studies of Muslim women speak to theories of gender, social change, and globalization.

TEXTS FOR THE CLASS
A list of books recommended to purchase for this class follows. It is up to you whether or not you want to purchase them, but they are required reading. You can order them online. You may need to make use of the library in this class. Many book chapters and journal articles will be posted on Collab. If not, you should search for them in the library’s electronic databases, or look for hard copies on reserve. It is relatively easy to find inexpensive used copies online of many of the books in this class, and a few may be available in electronic versions. Beyond the assigned readings, there are some suggested texts at the end of the syllabus which you may find helpful for background information. You are encouraged to skim them as supplements to the class.

**Ground Rules:**
Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Many of the readings are challenging, and it will be difficult to understand them if you do not attend class regularly. I expect that you will come to class having already read the assigned texts. You should be prepared to ask questions or make comments about them in class. Class participation is part of your grade.

Written work should be double spaced and use an 11 or 12 point font and include a list of references at the end. **Late work will be marked down a full grade for each 24 hour period.** If the deadline is noon, and you hand it in at 4 p.m., that counts as 1 day late. I occasionally grant extensions for emergency circumstances. However, you must request this at least 24 hours before the due date and be prepared to provide documentation of your emergency.

**Required and Recommended**
Required readings must be discussed in response memos and your papers. All readings on the syllabus are required unless they are listed as “recommended.” You will choose from the required readings for your final paper. Recommended readings are just that – enthusiastically recommended. You do not have to do the recommended readings. However, doing really well in this class means showing me that you are actively engaged with the readings, and one way to do so is to comment about the recommended readings in class or in your response memos.

The subject matter of this course is very timely and often in the news. You are therefore also encouraged to send relevant links or articles for me to send out to your fellow students. Again, these additional readings are recommended rather than required.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

1) **Attendance and Participation. 10%.** Attendance will be taken, but getting a good grade in this class is not only about showing up. You will need to make comments and ask questions in class. If you are shy, I suggest that you think ahead about questions to ask.

   a. **Attendance Policy:** You are allowed one unexcused absence and one excused absence. Further absences will lower your attendance/participation grade (unless you can prove to me that there was an emergency).

2) **Response Memos. 20%.** You will write four response memos during the course of the semester. You will sign up for dates during class. **Each memo should be around 300-500 words. Response memos will be due on Sunday evenings at 6 p.m. and should deal with at least one reading for the upcoming week.** You will post the memos on Collab as well as send them directly to me. The response memo should not be a summary, but an analysis of the reading. You are encouraged to relate the reading to your own experience or to contemporary events. You may ask a question about some aspect of the reading that you don’t understand, but that should not be the entire substance of your memo. You are encouraged to read your classmates’ memos and to write short posts that respond constructively to them. You will receive 100 for an exceptional memo, 90 for an
acceptable memo, and no credit if you fail to post on time or if your memo is unacceptable. Getting an A for this part of the class means completing all of the responses in a timely manner, as well as having something substantive to say in your responses. Grammatical errors or unclear phrasing will result in lower grades.

3) **Midterm Paper: 30%. Book Analysis.** For this paper, you will analyze the argument of one book from this class, or a book from outside class if it is relevant (you must email me first to check). It should be 5-7 pages. **This paper will be due on Friday, October 18.**

4) **Final Paper: 40%. You may choose from two options. 1). Media Analysis.** You will select an issue related to Islam and Gender and track it in the media during the semester. In your paper, you will analyze the media’s representation of this issue, comparing the approaches of at least two different major American news sources (national newspapers or websites) and critically evaluating them in light of at least two course readings. This paper should be 7-10 pages maximum. **2) Research Paper.** Choose a topic related to Islam and gender. You may investigate a particular issue of your interest. You should argue a specific point and use at least two readings from the class in your analysis. You should also incorporate readings from outside the class (primary or secondary sources). This paper should be 7-10 pages maximum. **Due on Monday, December 9. You must email me with your paper topic by November 1. Those who choose Option 1 should inform me of the news sources you plan to use.**

**Other Policies:**
It is understandable that some students will choose to take notes on their laptops. However, I request that you not use your laptop or any other device to surf the internet, send/receive text messages, etc. during class. Similarly, cell phone ringers should be turned off for class. These activities are not only inconsiderate to me, but they are also distracting to your fellow students. If I find that you are repeatedly engaging in this behavior, I will ask you to leave the classroom.

Arrive on time for class. It is disruptive to have students arrive after the lecture has begun, and you may miss important announcements or other information. If you make a practice of arriving late, I will deduct points from your grade or even ask you to drop the class.

Plagiarism will be taken very seriously. Make sure that you understand the UVA honor code and the policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Final grades are not negotiable. This course uses the following grade thresholds:

- 95-99 = A
- 90-94 = A-
- 88-89 = B+
- 84-87 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 78-79 = C+
- 74-77 = C
- 70-73 = C-
- 68-69 = D+
- 64-67 = D
- 60-63 = D-
**SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1**
**Wednesday, August 28**
Introduction to the class

**WEEK 2: Historical background and Islam in the Contemporary World**
**September 2**


**September 4**

**WEEK 3: Beginning to study women and gender in Muslim societies**
**September 9**

**September 11**

**WEEK 4: Influential theoretical/historical arguments**
**September 16**

**September 18**

In-class Film: The Light in Her Eyes

**WEEK 5: Modernity, Secularism, and Gender: The Case of Turkey**
**September 23**
Nilufer Gole (1996). The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling. Introduction, Chapter 4

**September 25**
In-Class Film: Women of Turkey: Between Islam and Secularism
WEEK 6: Veiling and Islamic Fashion
September 30

October 2

In-Class Film: Fashioning Faith

WEEK 7: Women and Islamic Law
October 7

October 9
IN-CLASS FILM: Divorce Iranian Style (1999)

WEEK 8: The Political Economy of Fundamentalism
October 14
No class – Reading Day

October 16


MIDTERM PAPERS DUE: Friday, October 18 at noon.

WEEK 9: Muslim Women and the War on Terror
October 21

October 23

**WEEK 10: Islam and Masculinity**  
**October 28**  


**October 30**  

**WEEK 11: Islam and Homosexuality**  
**November 4**  

In-Class Film: *A Jihad for Love*

**November 6: Islam and Feminism part 1**  

**WEEK 12: Muslim Women, Feminism, and Movements for Social Change**  
**November 11**  

Recommended: Margot Badran.

**November 13**  

[http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1288&context=jiws](http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1288&context=jiws)
WEEK 13: Case Study: Morocco
November 18
Zakia Salime. Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco. Chapters: Introduction, 1

November 20
Zakia Salime. Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco. Chapters: 2, 4

WEEK 14:
November 25
Salime. Chapter 5
In-class Film TBA

November 27
Thanksgiving Break: No Class

WEEK 16: Case Study – Indonesia
December 2

December 4

In-Class Film: Struggle for the Soul of Islam: Inside Indonesia

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Monday, December 9 by noon.
Graded papers can be picked up outside my office starting on December 16. Please indicate on your paper whether or not you plan to pick it up (if so, I will provide comments).

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READINGS:
Leila Ahmed. 2011. A Quiet Revolution