

POSC 324: Rebels and Risk Takers: Women and War in the Middle East

Spring 2020

Location: wherever you are in the world

Official meeting times: MW 1:50 – 3:35PM CST

Professor Summer Forester

Office Hours via zoom

Mondays 3PM – 5PM CST

Thursdays 9AM – 11AM CST

By appointment

Course Description:

How are women (and gender more broadly) shaping and shaped by war and conflict in the Middle East? Far from the trope of the subjugated, veiled, and abused Middle Eastern woman, women in the Middle East are active social and political agents. In wars and conflicts in the Middle East region, women have, for example, been combatants, soldiers, activists, spies, homemakers, writers, and political leaders. This course surveys conflicts involving Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Iraq – along with Western powers like the U.S., UK, and Australia – through the wartime experiences of women.

Course Objectives

1. Interrogate and explore the myriad roles of women in conflicts in the Middle East
2. Deconstruct the Eurocentric notion that women in the West are more liberated or have more agency than those in the Middle East
3. Draw comparisons between the wartime experiences of differently located women in conflict and cultivate an understanding of the similarities and differences of these women and conflicts across the region

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand how women have shaped – and are shaped by – wars and conflicts in the Middle East
2. Understand the theoretical frameworks for conducting a gender analysis of women in conflict
3. Conduct a gender analysis of women in a Middle Eastern conflict

Course Requirements

All Carleton courses during the spring 2020 are mandatory S/CR/NC. What, then, does that mean for your coursework and my expectations? In essence, my expectations are that, to the best of your ability, you will show up, work hard, and be nice. I will give you feedback on your coursework and will keep you posted on any changes, issues, or problems that arise on my end. If something happens on your end, please reach out to me (or to your class dean or your advisor). Given that I won't see you live and in person every week, my primary request is that you keep in contact with me. You can reach me via email, through slack, Moodle, and/or Zoom. My virtual door is always open!

Course Components

Participation	30 points
Discussion Leader	30 points
Research Paper & presentation	<u>40 points</u>
	100 points total*

*I know that these points are somewhat arbitrary given that the course is mandatory S/CR/NC. However, I thought it might be helpful for you to see how these different components are weighted.

Participation

In an advanced level seminar, I rely heavily on your engagement with the material and with each other to carry the class. In our remote learning environment, your participation will include: responding to your colleagues' comments in the discussion forums, responding to your colleagues' text annotations (through hypothes.is), and through one-on-one discussions with me. (If we discover that any of these online platforms or plans are undermining our ability to connect as a community, then we'll try something different.)

More specifically, each Monday and Wednesday, you should plan to read and respond to the in-text annotations created by the discussion leaders (more on this below). This will, hopefully, engender a fruitful discussion of the daily texts. Then, sometime between Wednesday and Friday night, please respond to the weekly discussion forum that will bring together all of the texts for the week. I'll use both the threads from the in-text annotations and the discussion forums to inspire and inform my weekly video lectures.

Discussion Leader

During week 1, each of you [will sign up to be a discussion leader for a specific day](#). There are **two parts** to your role as discussion leader: in-depth comments on a reading or set of readings and a ~1,000-word critical analysis of the texts.

1. Part 1, In-depth comments: For most of the texts, we'll use hypothes.is to conduct collaborative annotations of texts. Again, given that this is an advanced level seminar, I'm not going to give you a minimum number of comments that you should provide on the text when you are the discussion leader. I want to see how you grapple with the texts and have you determine the key points from the readings. As you'll see on the google sheet, most days there will be two discussion leaders. I would suggest that you divide the readings in half and each of you comment on one half of the readings.
 - a. The annotations should serve as a springboard for discussions about the texts themselves. **On the days that you are NOT the discussion leader, you should read all of your colleague's annotations and respond to those that you find most provocative or compelling.** I will also use the annotations to inform my weekly lectures and the weekly discussion boards.
2. Part 2, critical analysis of the readings: In addition to commenting on the readings, please write a ~1000-word critical analysis of the day's readings. Your analysis should include a discussion of how the text connects to the course objectives and how the texts speak to other readings from either our course or your own research. Please feel free to use this document as a place for connecting the readings to other classes, to other films or books you've read independently, or to pose questions that you feel like the text raised but didn't fully answer. In general, your paper should *not* summarize the texts.

Research Paper

You will write a 15 – 20 page research paper for this class. In it, you should conduct a gender analysis of the role(s) of women in a Middle East conflict of your choice. I'll provide a separate document for this project outlining both the due dates for different sections of the paper and a more detailed explanation of the paper. For now, start thinking about what you find interesting vis-à-vis women in war in the Middle East!

Other Notes Regarding Remote Learning

We will attempt a few synchronous meetings throughout the term. I recognize, however, that some of you are outside of Central Time Zone, some of you may have unreliable internet service, and others may have unanticipated care work. As such, the synchronous meetings are not required. I'll record the meetings and make them available to all students.

In the immortal words of Forrest Gump: sh*t happens. I think the best thing that we can do during this term is expect the unexpected and approach each week with patience. We should drop whatever perfectionist tendencies we might have and recognize that we're all doing the best we can.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Jan Foley, Student Accessibility Specialist (x4464) or Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services (x5250) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Academic Integrity

In writing course papers, students must document all passages, paraphrases and/or ideas that are borrowed from any source, and direct quotations must be placed within quotation marks. Similarly, papers must represent research conducted for the course in which they are assigned and no other; it is not appropriate to submit a paper that has already been or will be submitted to another course. Finally, papers must be the product of students' own work. Papers written by anyone other than the student, including those purchased from commercial research services, are unacceptable.

All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources! A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>.

Well-Being

Now, perhaps more than ever, please make your own health and well-being your priority. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other resources, such as [Student Health and Counseling](#) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

An additional word¹ on wellness and health: Audre Lorde once said, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Please see your wellness as an act of power and perseverance. The core to your success. Hold each other – and me – accountable. Go for walks. Let your mind wander. Take a deep breath. Drink water. All of your work will wait for you, and your final product will be better when you are in balance.

¹ Thank you to Dr. Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve at Brown University and Dr. Simon Weffer at Northern Illinois Univ for this addition

Weekly Reading Plan

Intro & Theoretical Foundations

Week 1: April 6 – 10 Pedagogy, gender(ed) analyses, and more

Monday:

1. Cohn, C. (2013). Women and wars: Toward a conceptual framework. *Women and wars*, 1-35.
2. Murphy, Craig N. "Seeing women, recognizing gender, recasting international relations," *International Organization* 50, 3 (Summer 1996): 513-38.
3. [Ten reasons not to write your master's thesis on sexual violence in war](#)

Wednesday

1. Gentry, C. E., & Sjoberg, L. (2015). *Beyond mothers, monsters, whores: thinking about women's violence in global politics*. Zed Books Ltd. (Chapters 1 – 2)
2. Al-Ali, Nadje and Nicola Pratt. (2013). *Women and war in the Middle East: transnational perspectives*. Zed Books Ltd. (Chapter 1)

Discussion about how this should be a subversion of the traditional way that we've studied – and understood – wars, specifically in the Middle East.

Rebels

Week 2: April 13 – 17

Monday:

1. Excerpts from: Bloom, M. (2012). *Bombshell: women and terrorism*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Wednesday:

1. Haner, M., Cullen, F. T., & Benson, M. L. (2019). "Women and the PKK: Ideology, gender, and terrorism." *International Criminal Justice Review*.
2. Watch: "Women Against ISIS: Middle Eastern Women Lead Resistance Against the Jihadist Movement" (Available on Kanopy)

Research paper topic due by 9PM on Sunday, 19 April

Week 3: April 20 – 24

Monday:

1. Watch: [Leila Khaled: Hijacker](#)
2. Irving, S. (2012). *Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation*. Pluto Press. Chapters 1 - 3

Wednesday:

1. *Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation*, chapters 4 - 7

Middle Eastern Women in Wars & Revolutions

Week 4: April 27 – May 1

Monday:

1. [Lebanon's women warriors](#)

2. Eggert, J. P. (2018). Female Fighters and Militants During the Lebanese Civil War: Individual Profiles, Pathways, and Motivations. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1-30.

Wednesday:

1. Excerpts from Shehadeh, L. R. (Ed.). (1999). *Women and war in Lebanon*. University Press of Florida.

Research paper outline due by 9PM on Sunday, 3 May

Week 5: May 4 – 8

Monday: Midterm break

Wednesday:

1. Anna Jacobs [“Women of the Algerian Resistance”](#)
2. Excerpts from: Mortimer, M. (2019). *Women Fight, Women Write: Texts on the Algerian War*. Contemporary Women's Writing.
3. Watch: “The Battle of Algiers” (available on Kanopy)

Week 6: May 11 – 15

Monday:

1. Yazbek, S. (2012). *A woman in the crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian revolution*. Haus Publishing. Pages 1 - 86

Wednesday:

1. *Woman in the Crossfire*, pages 87 – 178

Paper rough draft due by 9PM on Sunday, 17 May

Transnational & National Connections

Week 7: May 18 – 22

Monday

1. Enloe, C. H. (2010). *Nimo's war, Emma's war: Making feminist sense of the Iraq war*. Univ of California Press. Chapters Intro – 5

Wednesday

1. Enloe, C. H. (2010). *Nimo's war, Emma's war: Making feminist sense of the Iraq war*. Univ of California Press. Chapters 6 – conclusion
2. Possible guest lecture!

Week 8: May 25 – 29

Monday:

1. *Homefire*, chapters 1 – 4

Wednesday:

1. *Homefire*, chapters 5 – end of book

Week 9: June 1 – 5

Monday

1. Sjoberg, L. (2018). Jihadi brides and female volunteers: Reading the Islamic State's war to see gender and agency in conflict dynamics. *Conflict management and peace science*, 35(3), 296-311.

2. Watch videos and read the article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/18/world/europe/jihad-and-girl-power-how-isis-lured-3-london-teenagers.html>

[Shamima Begum](#)

[Judge Rules That U.S.-Born Woman Who Joined ISIS Is Not A U.S. Citizen](#)

[Hoda Muthana](#)

Wednesday:

Project presentations

Final papers due by 9PM on Sunday, 7 June