

**POSC 324: Rebels and Risk Takers: Women and War in the Middle East  
Spring 2021**

**Location: wherever you are in the world**

**Official meeting times: MW 7:00PM – 8:40PM CST**

Professor Summer Forester

Virtual Office Hours ([click to sign up for a time](#))

Mondays 1:30PM – 3:30PM CST

Thursdays 9AM – 11:00AM CST

By appointment

[Zoom link](#) for class & office hours

<https://carleton.zoom.us/j/8505071234?pwd=bnpRRitsa1YrcWdQRkU2cjNMB3V4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 850 507 1234

Passcode: Carls

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### **Overview**

#### **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 and deconstruct the Eurocentric notion that women in the West are more liberated or have more agency than those in the Middle East
2. 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
3. Provide students the methodological and theoretical skills necessary for conducting a sophisticated gender analysis of war

#### **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 violence and/or (in)security connected to a Middle Eastern conflict

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### **Classroom Culture & Community**

#### **Mutual Respect**

Treat each everyone in the class with respect. We will be discussing a variety of politically charged issues and I expect all of us to interrogate, critique, and discuss these issues in a safe environment free from judgement or fear of reprisal from any member of the class. In other words, I hope that you feel free to disagree with your colleagues, but I will require that you disagree *respectfully*.

### **What you can expect of me:**

- I will return assignments in a timely manner
- I will be available and accessible during my office hours. If you cannot meet me during my office hours, please do not hesitate to contact me and we will arrange for an alternative time to meet.
- I will strive to make this course understandable and accessible for everyone. If you have any questions about the content or structure of the course or about specific assignments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always happy to help if you come to me *before* assignments or exams are due. Please do not wait to ask for help until after the due date – come talk to me before if you have lingering questions or would like me to elaborate on some aspect of the readings or an assignment.

### **Confidentiality**

I believe in transparency and open communication, and strive to ensure you understand the purpose and intent of the readings, activities, grading, and other course-related materials/decisions. My goal is for us to create a collaborative environment where we can grapple with difficult topics and sharpen our intellect in a trusted and secure space. As such, I require that you treat our course, course content, and all communication (e.g., emails, Moodle posts, discussion forums, etc.) with confidentiality. I will not share your comments, communication, or other submissions and ask that you do the same for your colleagues and me.

### **Other Additions?**

As this is your class, too, I'd like to hear what you think we should include in our course's rules of engagement. Please reach out to me if you have additional ideas for building an inclusive and effective class.

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## **Course Requirements**

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, Moodle, and/or Zoom. My virtual door is always open!

### **Course Components**

Participation	25 points
Discussion Leader	35 points
Research Paper & presentation	<u>40 points</u>
	100 points total

## 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.

## Discussion Leader

During week 1, each of you will sign up to be the discussion leader for *one* week during the term. There are **three parts** to your role as discussion leader: in-depth comments on a reading or set of readings, a ~1,000-word critical analysis of the texts, and an in-class presentation & activity:

1. Part 1, In-depth comments: For most of the texts, we'll use hypothes.is to conduct collaborative annotations of texts. 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.**
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 (due on the Friday of . 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.
3. Part 3, presentation and class activity: During the week that you are the discussion leader, you and your partners will, in essence, serve as the instructors for the week. For both the Monday and the Wednesday classes, you should be prepared to present the readings to the class and create some sort of activity that will cultivate a deeper understanding of the readings and generate discussion. Be creative! Consider the different activities that you have participated in in different classes, workshops, or conferences, and allow those experiences to inspire you. We'll meet briefly ahead of your first day of leading the discussion to discuss your plan for the week.

## 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 (or gender more broadly) in war in the Middle East!

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## Resources

### 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](mailto: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 word<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 & Due Dates

### **Intro & Theoretical Foundations**

#### **Week 1: Pedagogy, gender(ed) analyses, and more**

##### **Monday, March 29:**

Course introduction

##### **Wednesday, March 31**

Phoebe Donnelly, 2021. "[Demystifying Gender Analysis for Research on Violent Extremism.](#)"

Cohn, C. (2013). Women and wars: Toward a conceptual framework. *Women and wars*, 1-35.

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

#### **Week 2: Theoretical Foundations**

##### **Monday, April 5:**

Murphy, Craig N. "Seeing women, recognizing gender, recasting international relations," *International Organization* 50, 3 (Summer 1996): 513-38.

Parpart, J. L., & Zalewski, D. M. (Eds.). (2013). *Rethinking the man question: Sex, gender and violence in international relations*. Zed Books Ltd., chapter 1 (pp 1 – 20)

[Ten reasons not to write your master's thesis on sexual violence in war](#)

##### **Wednesday, April 7**

Gentry, C. E., & Sjoberg, L. (2015). *Beyond mothers, monsters, whores: thinking about women's violence in global politics*. Zed Books Ltd. (Chapters 1 – 2)

Al-Ali, Nadej and Nicola Pratt. (2013). *Women and war in the Middle East: transnational perspectives*. Zed Books Ltd. (Chapter 1)

**Research paper topic due by 9PM**

### **Rebels**

#### **Week 3:**

##### **Monday, April 12:**

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

##### **Wednesday, April 14:**

Ora Szekely (2020): "Exceptional Inclusion: Understanding the PKK's Gender Policy," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2020.1759265

Watch: "Women Against ISIS: Middle Eastern Women Lead Resistance Against the Jihadist Movement" (Available on Kanopy)

#### **Week 4:**

##### **Monday, April 19:**

1. Watch: [Leila Khaled: Hijacker](#)

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

**Wednesday, April 21:**

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

**Middle Eastern Women in Wars & Revolutions**

**Week 5:**

**Monday, April 26:**

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, April 28:**

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

**Research paper outline due by 9PM on Thursday, April 29**

**Week 6:**

**Monday, May 3: Midterm break**

**Wednesday, May 5:**

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 7:**

**Monday, May 10:**

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

**Wednesday, May 12:**

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

**Paper rough draft due by 9PM on Friday, May 14**

**Send copy to Prof. Forester and your peer reviewer**

**Transnational & National Connections**

**Week 8:**

**Monday, May 17**

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, May 19**

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

**Send peer review comments by 9PM on Friday, May 21**

**Week 9:**

**Monday, May 24:**

1. *Homefire*, chapters 1 – 4

**Wednesday, May 26:**

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

**Week 10:**

**Monday, May 31**

Required readings + **day 1 of project presentations**

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, June 2:**

Project presentations and course wrap-up

**Final papers + revision memo due by 9PM on Sunday, 6 June**