

Religious Studies 111

Women's Literature and Politics in the Muslim Middle East: Modern Iran Spring 2012

T-Th 12:30-1:45
HSSB 3001

PROFESSOR JANET AFARY

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Office Hours: Wed: 2:00-3:00, Thurs 11:00-11:45

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Course Description

This course will examine major turning points in modern Iranian history through the genres of women's memoirs, novels, academic publications, blogs, and films. Readings include harem memoirs, letters and diaries by nationalist and trade union leaders, autobiographies and blogs by feminist and Islamist activists. All readings will be in English. No prior course work on the Middle East is required. This class will be offered under a variable subtitle, focusing on different countries of the Middle East and may be taken for repeat credit

REQUIRED TEXTS

Afary, Janet. *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*. Cambridge UP, 2009. ISBN-10: 0521727081 or ISBN-13: 978-0521727082.

Al-Saltanah, Taj. *Crowning Anguish: Memoirs of a Persian Princess from the Harem to Modernity*. Editor Abbas Amanat. Mage Publishers, 2003. ISBN-10: 0934211361 or ISBN-13: 978-0934211369.

Ebadi, Shirin. *Iran Awakening: One Women's Journey to Reclaim Her Life and Country*. Random House, 2007. ISBN-10: 0812975286 or ISBN-13: 978-0812975284.

Nifisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tebran: A Memoir in Books*. Random House, 2008. ISBN-10: 0812979303 or ISBN-13: 978-0812979305.

Hakakian, Roya. *Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran*. Three Rivers Press, 2005. ISBN-10: 0609810308 or ISBN-13: 978-0609810309.

Books are on reserve in the library.

A copy of this syllabus and other course materials can be found at:

<http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/womenslit.html>

Important Dates

April 24: Guest Speaker Iranian Actress Gohar Kheirandish

May 8: Midterm Exam

June 11: Final Exam

Class Schedule

Week I: (April 3-5)

April 3: Chapter 1 of *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*

April 5: Chapter 2 of *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*

Week II (April 10-12)

Crowning Anguish, pp. 107-182, 194-214 and 236-262

April 12: Discussion of Group Presentations

Week III (April 17-19)

Sexual Politics, Chapters 6, 7

Week IV (April 24-26)

April 24: **Guest Speaker Iranian Actress Gohar Kheirandish**

Sexual Politics, Chapters 9 Guest Speaker: Claudia Yaghoobi

Week V (May 1-3)

May 1: Chapter 11,

May 3: Conclusion to *Sexual Politics*, Tohidi, "Iran's Presidential Election."

Week VI (May 8-10)

May 8: Midterm Exam

Ebadi, *Iran Awakening*, pp. 1-111

Week VII (May 15-17)

Ebadi, *Iran Awakening*, pp. 112-216

Week VIII (May 22-24)

Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tebran*, Parts 1 and 2 (Lolita and Gatsby)

Weeks IX (May 29-31)

Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tebran*, Parts 3 and 4 (James and Austin)

Week X (June 5-7)

Hakakian Journey from the Land of No (complete)

Final Exam: Monday June 11, 12-3 PM

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Group Presentation (20%):

Students will lead and facilitate discussions during weeks VI-X. Groups of 2-3 students will be assigned to lead the discussion on one particular book. You are expected to present a summary and analysis of the assigned readings and provide background information.

Please follow these guidelines in preparing your presentation:

Your group presentation should be no more than 50 minutes.

Divide the assigned reading among members of your group. There should be no gaps.

Read the entire book (even if you are speaking on a portion of it) and the assigned chapters several times and take good notes.

Look up the references and try to be creative with your presentation. For example when presenting on Reading Lolita in Iran, read the novel mentioned in the title of each chapter (such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* or Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*). Then in your presentation discuss what concepts Nafisi used and applied and what she disregarded from that author and why.

Create a power point presentation with bullet points.

Critically summarize and analyze your portion of the text.

Use available video clips and images from Google Image and YouTube.

At the end, provide the class with a list of discussion questions and encourage students to respond

Email the instructor a copy of your individual presentation after class

The entire class is expected to do the assigned readings for the week, take notes during presentations, and participate in the discussion.

2. Exams (60%)

There will be a midterm and a final exam. Exams will include short and long essay questions. Details will be discussed later.

3. Quizzes (20%)

There will be weekly quizzes on the assigned readings. Please come prepared to class.

Current Events: Current events will be discussed in class. Students are expected to read daily newspapers and follow both world events and discussions pertaining to gender and sexuality in Iran and the Middle East.

Attendance Policy: More than (2) excused or unexcused absences might bring your grade down

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. They are violations of university regulations. Please note the following: Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, presenting another author's ideas or words as one's own (this includes but is not limited to the worldwide web), or tampering with the academic work of other students. Such actions will be subject to disciplinary action. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please consult the instructor. **A single act of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade on that assignment.** Depending on the severity of the case, further disciplinary actions may be taken based on University policy.