

**SC-556: Women in the Qur'an**  
**Fall 2021**

**Instructor: Colleen M. Keyes, Ph.D.**

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**office hours: by phone or Zoom by appointment**

In this course, we examine what the Qur'an says about "woman" and we consider both classical and contemporary exegetical approaches to Quranic interpretation. We explore Quranic portrayals of women, sex, sexuality, and gender relations and how they have been understood in diverse communities of Muslim interpretation. Furthermore, we come to understand the basis for differing interpretations of Qur'anic verses concerning women, gender relations, marriage and the family. This course aims to familiarize students with the key contemporary Quranic debates on woman/women and as such provides essential background to those pursuing scholarship, religious leadership, or chaplaincy.

**Course Schedule (tentative and may be revised according to class needs):**

**Full assignments will be found in Canvas. Be sure to access the course in Canvas before the first day of class.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Selections from readings</b>
9/14:	Framing the Questions and Course overview: "Woman" in the Qur'an/ "Women" in the Qur'an	
9/21:	The Qur'an, its Exegesis and Hermeneutics: Abou El Fadl, Ch. 4.; Wadud, Introduction and both Prefaces and Ch. 1)	
9/28:	The Qur'an, its exegesis and Hermeneutics—Barlas (2002)—Preface and Ch. 1	
10/5:	The Qur'an, its exegesis and Hermeneutics—Barlas (2002)—Ch. 2	
10/12:	Gender in Near Eastern Societies in Late Antiquity/ 7 <sup>th</sup> century Arabia— Ahmed (1992)- Ch. 2 and 3)	
10/19:	The Qur'an and "Women"—Ibrahim, Introduction and Ch. 1	
10/26:	The Qur'an and "Women"—Ibrahim, Ch. 2 (Essay 1 due)	
11/2:	The Qur'an and "Women"—Ibrahim – Ch.3	
11/9:	The Qur'an and "Women"-Ibrahim—Ch. 4 and Conclusion	
11/16:	"The Interpretive Legacy of Qiwwah as an Exegetical Construct"—Abou Bakr in Mir Hosseini (2015),44-64; "An Egalitarian Reading of the Concepts of Khilafah, Wilayah, and Qiwwah", Lamrabet in Mir Hosseini,pp.65-87; "A Case Study of Guardianship (Wilayah) in Prophetic Practice", Chaudhry in Mir Hosseini, pp. 88-105.	
11/23:	<b>No class—Reading Week—Thanksgiving holiday</b>	
11/30:	Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition—Chaudhry, Introduction, Ch. 1,2	
12/7:	Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition—Chaudhry, Ch. 4 (3 and 5-recommended)),	
12/14:	Final class session: Student Insights and Assessments	
12/21:	Final assignment due (Essay 2 due)	

**Course Learning Objectives:** Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

1. Coherently discuss the Qur'anic narrative of the creation of male and female human beings, its meaning and its implications.
2. Demonstrate comprehension of the significance and impact of key Quranic narratives concerning women and gender relations
3. Be able to identify the hermeneutics operative in interpretations of key verses concerning women and the bases for the differing interpretations.
4. Coherently express your own understanding of key Quranic verses concerning women, sex, sexuality, gender relations, marriage and the family and the hermeneutic approach you use in your interpretation
5. Demonstrate basic familiarity with the elements of traditional, neo-traditional, progressive and reformist approaches to Qur'anic interpretation and be able to identify some of the major scholars representing each of these categories of interpretation as concerns woman/women in the Qur'an.

(Program-related learning outcomes will be added.)

**This is a fully online synchronous course which means that all class meetings are conducted via Zoom, all communication and submission of work implements distance technology and does not require students to be on the Hartford Seminary campus to meet its requirements.**

**Course Requirements:**

- Class attendance, evidence of preparation, and discussion of readings/lectures: Students shall attend class each week for two hours via Zoom having done the assigned reading and any required assignments to be posted in Zoom in advance of the class hour. More than 2 absences shall require you to withdraw from or fail the course. 50%
- 2 essays of 5-7 pages each on a topic related to assigned readings. Chicago Manual of Style, proper format and citations. Week 7 and Week 15 (more information to come) (40%) **or** 1 research based essay of 10-14 pages, Chicago Manual of Style, proper format and citation. Rubric (Standards) for evaluation will be provided for essays.
- One presentation of 15 minutes on an assigned reading or topic (10%)

Grading scale for all assignments A=4, B=3,C=2,D=1, F=0

**Required texts:** Please note that most of the required readings for this course will be available on the Digital Theological Library (DTL) to which all students have access and or will be provided in digitized form/ PDF and placed in Canvas under Course Resources.

Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority, and Women.* Oneworld Press, 2001. (Ch. 4)

Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam.* New Haven, 1992. (Ch. 2 and 3)

Barlas, Asma. *“Believing Women” in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur’an*. Austin, 2002. (Ch. 1,2)

Ibrahim, Celine. *Women and Gender in the Qur’an*. Oxford University Press. 2020. (all)

Mir-Hosseini, Mulki Al-Sharmani, and Jana Rumminger, editors. *Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in the Muslim Legal Tradition*. Oneworld Publications, 2015. (pp.44-105)

Wadud, Amina. *The Qur’an and Woman: Reading the Qur’an from a Woman’s Perspective*, Oxford University Press. 1999. (Prefaces, Introduction, Ch. 1)

### Highly Recommended

Nasr, Syed Hossein, Caner K. Dagli, Maria Massi Dakake, Joseph E. B. Lumbard, Mohammed Rustom, eds. *The Study Qur’an: A new Translation and Commentary*. Harper One, 2015. (contains selected exegesis by several classical scholars)

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. University of Chicago Press. 2018. (really any edition is fine)

### Suggested additional reading:

All of Wadud and Barlas, Ch. 2 of Abou Fadl

### Course Policies:

1. Attendance is mandatory. Attend each class session prepared (having read and digested assigned readings.)
2. Treat instructor and other students with complete respect.
3. All assignments are due on time and late work will not be accepted.
4. When you write, cite and documents the sources of your words and ideas properly according to the Chicago Manual of Style (Turabian). Familiarize yourself with the rules of academic papers. Know what constitutes plagiarism. (See student handbook and Turabian or other manual.). If you plagiarize, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Feel free to consult with me or with the writing tutor, Ms. Emily Holcombe, on how to write an essay and the rules of plagiarism.

### **Additional Resources (partial list)**

Al-Tabari, Tafsir, Vol. 1- <https://www.scribd.com/doc/237275012/Tafsir-at-Tabari-Vol-1>

Ali, Kecia. *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Perspectives on Qur’an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*. One World Press, 2006.

Chaudhry, Ayesha. "The Ethics of Marital Discipline in Premodern Qur'anic Exegesis." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 30.2 (2010):123-130.

----- "Mariyya the Copt: Gender, Sex, and Heritage in the Legacy of Muhammad's *umm walad*." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relation* 21.3 (July 2010); 221-243.

Hidayatullah, Aysha. *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*. Oxford University Publishers. 2017.

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir (Exegesis of the Quran in English translation )—

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tafseer.ibnekathir.english&hl=en\\_US&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.tafseer.ibnekathir.english&hl=en_US&gl=US)

Lambrabet, Asma. *Women in the Qur'an: An Emancipatory Reading*. Kube Publishing. 2016.

Maududi, Maulana, Tafsir (Exegesis of the Quran in English translation)—Tafhim ul Qur'an—<https://www.englishtafsir.com/>

Shaikh, Sa'diya. 1997.'Exegetical Violence: Nushuz in Qur'anic Gender Ideology.' *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17: pp. 49-73.

Stowasser, Barbara Freyer. *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretations*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1992.

Wadud, Amina. *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*. One World Academic. 2013.

Hassan, Riffat. "The Issue of Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition." *Women's and Men's Liberation: Testimonies of Spirit*, Edited by Leonard Grob, Riffat Hassan, and Haim Gordon. Greenwood Press, 1991. 65-82.

----- " ' Jihad Fi Sabil Allah': A Woman's Faith Journey from Struggle to Struggle to Struggle." 11-30.

----- "An Islamic Perspective on Domestic Violence." *Fordham International Law Journal* 27.1 (2003): 195-219.

cooke, miriam. "Modern Women, Traditional Abrahamic Religions and Interpreting Sacred Texts." *Feminist Theology* 15.2 (2007): 145-159.

Safi, Omid, editor. *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*. Oneworld Publications, 2003.

[Islam, Women and Modernity/Post-modernity](#)

Afkhami, Mahnaz, ed. *Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World*. Syracuse University Press, 1993.

Ayubi, Zahra. *Gendered Morality: Classical Islamic Ethics of the Self, Family, and Society*. Columbia University Press, 2019.

Mack, Beverly B. and Jean Boyd. *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Mahmood, Saba. *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press. 2011.

Tanner, Jerusha Lamptey. *Divine Words, Female Voices: Muslima Explorations in Comparative Feminist Theology*. Oxford University Press. 2018.

Lamptey, Jerusha Tanner, *Never Wholly Other: A Muslima Theology of Religious Pluralism*. Oxford University Press, 2014. (Especially chapters 3-5.)

**The Six Authentic (Sahih) Hadith Collections in English online:**

Sahih al-Bukhari-- <https://sunnah.com/bukhari>

Sahih Muslim-- <https://sunnah.com/muslim>

Sunan Abu Dawood-- <https://sunnah.com/abudawud>

Sunan Ibn Majah-- <https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah>

Jami al Tirmidhi-- <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi>

Sunan al Sughra (an-Nasa'i)- <https://sunnah.com/nasai>