988:396:04 Special Topics in WGS: Feminism, Ecological Crisis, and the Anthropocene

M/W 1:10-2:30, HH-A6, CAC

Professor Harriet Davidson

The anthropocene is a recent term used to describe our latest geological age as the time when humans have changed the geological state of the earth, from large scale building and engineering projects to man-made pollution, carbon deposits and radiation that changes the atmosphere of the earth, leading to climate change and what some have called the "sixth great extinction."

Feminists have been in the forefront of protesting ecological crisis but have also created a body of theory and literature that grapples with a new understanding of human beings on earth, an understanding of the interconnectedness and fragility of the human and non-human in time and space which questions the hierarchical boundaries between human and nature, human and animal, human and machine. This class will read the major feminist theory on this topic by writers such as Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Elizabth Grozs, and Clare Colebrook, supported by works of literature by novelists and poets.

988:396:05 – Special Topics in WGS: Gender, Sexuality & Women’s Rights Movements for Social Justice in the Muslim World

W 5:00-8:00pm -- Center for Middle Eastern Studies, LSH – B304 / LIV

Cross-listed with 01:685:499:01

Professor Fakhri Haghani

Course Description:
The question of feminism and women’s rights in the Middle East and North Africa has generally been represented through a universalizing image of the negative relationship between feminism and modernity and the existing incompatibility between Islam and secularism. But how often does our analysis include the ways that the question of women have formed, and been shaped by the historical and contemporary debates and discourses on women’s sexuality and body, construction of gender, and women’s rights for justice? This seminar introduces students to key texts and debates from/about the Middle East and North Africa since the dawn of the twentieth century. A wide range of readings from autobiographies to historical essay, writings of women, fiction, memoire, and recent sources in popular culture, media, and online sources will be analyzed.
Some of the topics we discuss include power, private property and the Institution of Patriarchy; women’s awakening; women and the nation; state feminism; Islamist feminisms; Orientalist discourse, colonialism, and Muslim women; women, wars and conflicts; women and global consumer culture; body, sexuality and the question of citizenship; social media, women, activism, art and the rise of social justice and revolutionary movements.

By taking this course, students develop a critical approach to the question of feminism, women, gender, sexuality, and women’s mobilization for social justice in Modern Middle East and North Africa through class discussions, and improve their writing and research skills by producing a final research paper and several reports. Students are expected to regularly attend class sessions (10 Points), to participate in lively weekly discussions on the readings (15 Points), to do presentations (15 points), to produce a midterm project (20 Points) and to write response papers (20 Points), and a final research paper (20 Points).

Required Books:
Sha’rawi, Hoda. Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (Additional readings on Sakai)

Sample Films
When a Woman Sings by Marianne Khoury, 2013
Nose, Iranian Style by Mehrdad Oskui
Women Without Men by Shirin Neshat
Be Like Others by Tanaz Eshaghian
Nawal El Saadawi: “Creativity, Women and Dissidence”