

**Tanya Olson. Vance- Granville Community College**

**HUM 150. Intro To American Women's Studies**

### **Feminism in the Islamic World**

**Description-** This module will introduce students to the idea that “feminism” is a culturally contingent concept through an exploration of feminist issues in Islamic cultures. This module should be introduced after the student understands basic issues of American feminist thought from at least one era; that timing will allow students to see the tensions between national feminist movements and the challenges inherent to global feminist thought. (This tension is particularly present in American feminism.) During the 16 week semester, this module corresponds to 3 weeks of class.

**Objectives-**

1. Determine basic human rights issues that women face in traditional Islamic cultures.
2. Assist students in a basic understanding of both conservative, moderate, and progressive Islamic theology, as it pertains to women.
3. Discuss factors other than religion that influence women's lives in Islamic societies.
4. Examine how women within Islamic societies have struggled for specific rights.
5. Examine how outside groups have worked for women's rights within Islamic societies.
6. Discuss what strategies are appropriate when working for an international feminist agenda.
7. Explore how issues of war and education affect women's rights within Islamic cultures.

**Lecture/Discussion-** Lectures will provide students with background information on conservative, moderate, and progressive Islamic thought regarding women. Group/class discussions will help students come to other factors that may affect the lives of women in Islamic societies. These discussions will be supported by class readings.

**Readings-** Articles will provide students with both historical and theoretical information regarding specific countries, particular issues, and philosophical explorations related to transnational feminisms. (1) education of women (2) small business loan programs (3) trafficking in women (4) women at/in war (5) wearing of the burqa or hijab (6) access to housing and clean water (7) cultural contingency of values

**AV-** Clips from any of the below can help students understand a particular issue women face in a specific cultural context. (1) *Beauty School of Kabul* (2) *Osama* (3) *Afghanistan Unveiled* (4) *Dispatches: Iraq, The Women's Story*

**Assignments-** Students will take 1-2 quizzes to make sure they understand basic concepts from the readings. This module should end with a test that asks students, through essays and short answers, to illustrate they understand the tensions between basic human rights, international feminist and local feminist groups, religious organizations, and cultural colonialism. Students should also be able to give specific examples of how these tensions are affected by political decisions and addressed by international groups. Students will also be asked to read an article and write a synopsis and response.

## Resources-

Amnesty International. Stop Violence Against Women.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/campaigns/stop-violence-against-women>

Badran, Margot. Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt. Princeton UP. 1995.

Basu, Amrita. "The Challenge of Local Feminisms." A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.

Brodsky, Anne. With All Our Strength: The Revolutionary Association of the Women in Afghanistan. Rutledge. 2003.

Enloe, Cynthia. "Updating the Gendered Empire: Where Are the Women in Occupied Afghanistan and Iraq?" The Curious Feminist. U of Cal. Press. 2006.

Human Rights Watch. Women's Rights. <http://www.hrw.org/women/>

Khattak, Saba Gul. "In/Security: Afghan Refugees and Politics in Pakistan" Critical Asian Studies. 35:2 June 2003. 195-208.

Morgan, Robin. Sisterhood Is Global. The Feminist Press. 1996.

PeaceWomen. <http://www.peacewomen.org/>

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society. U of Chicago Press.

Zack, Naomi. "Inclusive Feminism." A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality. Rowman and Littlefield. 2005.