

**THIRD WORLD WOMEN**  
**History 387- Section 0001**

Professor Andrea Barron  
 e-mail: a.barron@erols.com  
 Last Day to add classes-February 2  
 Last day to drop classes-February 19

Spring 2010  
 Class Meets: Wednesday  
 7:20-10:00 PM  
 Classroom: Robinson B 222

*Office Hours: Wednesdays, by appointment*

This course examines the contemporary history of women and women's movements in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America-- the so-called "Third World." The course is divided into three units: Women and Religion; Women, Nationalism and Social Movements; and Women and Human Rights. In Unit One, we will study how religious traditions have influenced women, especially how these traditions often have been interpreted to subjugate them. We will also look at how Muslim, Christian and Jewish feminists have reinterpreted their sacred texts and religious practices to make them more "female-friendly." Then we will examine the interaction between women and the domestic and international political environment, including their participation in nationalist, Marxist and social movements. In Unit Three, we will examine the evolution of "Women's Rights as Human Rights" in international law and the tension between human rights universalists and cultural relativists. Then we will focus on four human rights topics: Female Genital mutilation (FGM); "honor crimes," rape and forced marriage; reproductive rights; and the global sex trade. Films will be used extensively in this course.

**Course Requirements**

Mid-Term	25% of grade
Final Exam	30% of grade
Short Research Paper (7-8 pages)	20% of grade
Weekly journals	15% of grade
Class Participation	10% of grade

- *Participation, especially by attending class every week, is extremely important for this class.*
- *A 1-2 page journal summarizing and reacting to assigned readings (sent as pdf files) is due every week, with a hard copy submitted before class.*
- *You are required to bring a print-out of the readings to class.*
- *Exams will include identifications and essay questions and will be distributed one week before each exam. Students will be able to select three out of five essay questions.*

The following books are required and are available in the bookstore.

*The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam.* By Fatima Mernissi. New York: Perseus Books Group, 1992.  
*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* By Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

**WEEK ONE—January 20**

## Course Introduction

*UNIT ONE—WOMEN AND RELIGION*

## Confucianism and Women in Traditional Chinese society

- “A Frog in a Well: Mechanisms of Subordination” from *Feminism and Socialism in China* by Elizabeth Croll

## Women and Judaism—traditional Jewish Law and the evolution of women’s rights

- Selections from *Women and Jewish Law* by Rachel Biale
- Selections from *On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition* by Blu Greenberg

**WEEK TWO –January 27**

## Traditional Christian views on women and the feminist challenge

- Introduction and Chapter Seven: “One Thousand years of Feminist Bible Criticism” in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness* by Gerda Lerner

Film: “*The Magdalene Sisters*.” “A group of young women find themselves remanded to life inside the Magdalene Asylum, one of a chain of Irish convents devoted to the atonement of sins by virtue of indefinite sentences of servitude. The asylums specialize in impeccable laundry, turning out pristine linens laundered by young women who are rescuing themselves from eternal damnation by exposure to inhumane brutality and vicious slave labor.”

**WEEK THREE-February 3**

## Women and Islam—Qur’an, Hadith and Sharia

## Masculinist vs. women-friendly interpretations of Women in Islam

- Selected verses from Qur’an and Hadith. Discussion on male authority, marriage, divorce, adultery, virginity, spiritual equality, gender segregation and “Islamic dress.”
- *The Veil and the Male Elite* by Fatima Mernissi
- *Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*. By Yusuf Qaradawi
- Selection from *Women in the Qur’an, Traditions and Interpretations* by Barbara Stowasser

**WEEK FOUR-February 10**

## Women and Islam- Masculinist vs. women-friendly interpretations of Women in Islam

- *The Veil and the Male Elite*, Mernissi
- “Tunisia as an Arab Women’s Rights Leader” by Andrea Barron in *The Globalist* (July 11 & 12, 2007)

*UNIT 2- WOMEN, NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS***WEEK FIVE –February 17**

## Women’s Participation in the Chinese Nationalist movement: How women influenced and were influenced by the Communist Revolution, contemporary issues

- “Feminism and Revolutionary Struggles in China” in *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* by Kumari Jayawardena
- Selections from *Feminism and Socialism in China*, Croll
- Pages 59-66 in *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink

- Chapter 12 in “*Half the Sky*”

*Identities and Questions for Mid-Term exam distributed*

### **WEEK SIX-February 24**

The Indian Women’s Movement and contemporary issues

- “From Chipko to Sati: The Contemporary Indian Women’s Movement, by Radha Kumar in *The Challenge of Local Feminisms*, edited by Amrita Basu.
- “Gandhi’s Daughters,” by Mary Anne Weaver in *The New Yorker*, January 10, 2000

Film: “*Water*” which takes place in India in the 1930s. Focuses on “widow wastage,” the tradition in which widows, including girls forced into arranged marriages, are blamed for their husbands’ death and isolated from society in an ashram.

### **WEEK SEVEN – March 3**

*Mid-Term Exam*

*Suggested Paper Topics distributed*

### **WEEK EIGHT – March 10- SPRING BREAK**

### **WEEK NINE —March 17**

#### **Latin American popular and feminist movements**

- *The Politics of Abortion in Nicaragua: Revolutionary Pragmatism, or Feminism in the Realm of Necessity?* By Maxine Molyneux. **Feminist Review**, No. 29 (Summer 1988)
- “Sandinista Family Values” in *The Means of Reproduction: Sex, Power and the Future of the World* by Michelle Goldberg.
- “Building Bridges--The Growth of Popular Feminism in Mexico” by Marta Lamas et. al. in *The Challenge of Local Feminisms*

### **WEEK TEN -March 24**

#### **Egyptian Nationalism and contemporary women’s issues**

- Selections from *Feminists, Islam and Nation* by Margot Badran

### **UNIT THREE- WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **WEEK ELEVEN — March 31**

The Evolution of Women’s Rights as Human Rights, Universal Human Rights vs. Cultural Relativism, and the global movement to combat violence against women

- Selections from *Women’s Rights, Human Rights*, edited by Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper
- Primary Documents: Universal Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW
- “Transnational Networks on Violence Against Women” in *Activists Beyond Borders*.

### **WEEK TWELVE – April 7**

Violence Against Women and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- “Female Genital Mutilation” by Nahid Toubia in *Women’s Rights, Human Rights*, Peters and Wolper
- Selection from *Facing Mt. Kenya*- Jomo Kenyatta

- Pages 66-74 in *Activists Beyond Borders*, Keck and Sikkink
- “Rights vs. Rites” (Chapter 5) in *The Means of Reproduction*, Goldberg
- Chapter 13 in *Half the Sky*

Film: *Moolaade*, by Ousmane Sembene, one of Africa’s greatest filmmakers about how a “circumcised woman who has helped her only daughter escape from the ritual of purification protects four young girls fleeing to escape excision. Demonstrates the confrontation between two kinds of values: the right to protection and the attachment to tradition symbolized by excision.”

### **WEEK THIRTEEN -April 14**

“Honor Crimes,” rape and forced marriage: Focus on the Arab and Islamic World

- Selections from *Murder in the Name of Honor* by Rana Husseini
- “Reexamining Femicide: Breaking the Silence and Crossing “Scientific Borders”” by Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*
- Chapters 4,5 and 9 in *Half the Sky*

Film: *Crimes of Honour*—Shelley Saywell. “Filmed in Jordan and the West Bank, this film documents the terrible reality of femicide—the killing of sisters or daughters suspected of losing their virginity, refusing an arranged marriage or leaving a husband.”

*Research Paper Due (Must be turned in before class. Grades for late papers reduced by one full grade).*

### **WEEK FOURTEEN -- April 21**

#### **Reproductive Rights and the Politics of Abortion**

- “Cairo and Beijing” (Chapter 4) and “The Globalization of the Culture Wars” (Chapter 6) in *The Means of Reproduction*, Goldberg
- Chapter 8 in *Half the Sky*
- Reports from Human Rights Watch on reproductive rights and abortion politics in Latin America

### **WEEK FIFTEEN – April 28**

#### **Global Sex Trafficking**

- Chapters 1-3 in *Half the Sky*, Kristof and WuDunn
- *Trafficking in Persons Report*, 2009, The US Department of State
- Selections from Human Rights Watch/Asia

Film: *Human Trafficking*: “Made for TV movie that follows the fictional cases of young women around the world, lured or abducted, sometimes right off the street into a world of unspeakable brutality.”

*Final Exam Questions Distributed*

**FINAL EXAM –Wednesday, May 5**

**7:30-10:00 PM**