English 201: Introduction to Fiction
Arab Women’s Fiction

Session: Fall 2018
Instructor: Dr. Rahman
Section 01: TT 12:30-1:45 pm Simpkins 14

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Office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10-11 am and Thursday 4-5 pm

Course Objectives
This course will introduce students to important aspects of fiction such as plot, character, setting, atmosphere, and so on, by focusing our study on fiction written by Arab women writers from across the Arab world. Before we read how Arabs represent themselves in fiction, we will consider representations of Arabs by Europeans and consider how Orientalism and Islamophobia function in our society. Then, as we read fiction by Arab women, we will explore the reasons why Arab women’s fiction finds a more sympathetic audience in our culture than Arab men’s stories. Keeping these larger issues in mind, we shall work our way through these women’s fiction to discover what we can about their art and their lives. To what extent do they reinforce the stereotypes? Do they resist? Throughout, our inquiry will focus on the ways in which the form reflects the content of the stories we read.

Prerequisites
English 180

Text
Arab Women Writers: An Anthology of Short Stories edited by Dalya Cohen-Mor (at the bookstore and on 2 hour reserve at Malpass Library)

Methods of Teaching and Learning
Our class will function primarily on the basis of discussion rather than lectures. While I may at times lecture, this is not a lecture class. This means that it will be very important for you to come to class prepared by having read the material carefully. The success and quality of this course is in your hands. I will expect you to raise questions, make comments, agree and disagree with each other in a respectful manner. Our discussions will help you think more deeply about the texts and eventually write better papers.

- Take readings notes, marking areas to help you understand and engage the material.
- Consider not only the texts but also the larger issues they raise.
- Interrogate the concepts and assumptions made by the reading.
- **Bring 2-3 critical comments/discussion questions to class every class meeting.** *(Though I will not regularly collect these, I will spot check depending on class discussion.)*
- Good discussion questions should be open-ended, have multiple answers, and provoke discussion that helps us understand not only the work in question but also how the work
shapes our understanding of the topic at hand. Avoid questions that can be answered with yes, no, or some other simple sentence.

**Required Work**
This course will require regular attendance and active engagement with the issues under discussion and writing. The major writing requirement of this course will be 3 formal essays of varying lengths. I expect you to bring the rough drafts of each of your formal essays to class for peer review. I also expect you to hand in your rough draft and your peer’s comments along with your essay so that I can track your improvement as well as your peer’s feedback. I will not accept the three formal essays without a rough draft and peer’s comments. As a result, you must attend all peer review classes. Your final copy of each of the three formal papers should be examples of good writing.

I require that you read before class. Expect to read everything twice in order to understand enough to comment in class and ask questions. Your reading grade will comprise not only in-class discussion based on your reading for that day but also the quality of the feedback you provide for your peers based on your reading of their papers. Your final exam will cover all the material discussed in class since the beginning of the semester. It will consist of three sections. The essay section will be worth the bulk of the points. The other smaller sections will contain identification and short answer questions. I do not provide study guides. Note taking as you read before class and during class discussion is your responsibility.

**Breakdown of grades:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>3 pages or 750 words</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>4 pages or 1000 words</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #3</td>
<td>5 pages or 1250 words</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>covering 15 weeks</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion; presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Grading Scale**

- **A** = 93-100%
- **A-** = 90-92%
- **B+** = 87-89%
- **B** = 83-86%
- **B-** = 80-82%
- **C+** = 77-79%
- **C** = 73-76%
- **C-** = 70-72%
- **D+** = 67-69%
- **D** = 63-66%
- **D-** = 60-62%
- **F** = 59% and below

**Class Policies**

- I am happy to accommodate special learning needs. Contact me ASAP.
• Attendance and active participation are required. If you do not read the assigned pages before class, or if you are absent more than twice, or if you do not take part in class discussion, your reading grade will suffer.
• Under-prepared students may be asked to leave class. Reading and bringing course texts is part of preparation.
• Ethical and professional conduct is required. I expect academic honesty and collegiality in class.
• Feedback from you regarding the course is welcome at any time. Contact me, put a note in my mailbox, or speak to the chair of English.
• Keep all graded assignments. Keep track of grades.
• Late work is not accepted unless you have prior permission from me.

WIU Policies

• Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.
• Sex discrimination: University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offences, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php.
• Student Rights and Responsibilities: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php
• Academic Integrity Policy: Scholastic dishonesty of any kind with respect to course assignments will result in an F in the course and will be reported to CAGAS. It is your responsibility not only to abstain from cheating but also to avoid making it possible for others to cheat. The submission of the work of someone else as one’s own constitutes plagiarism. Academic honesty requires that ideas or materials taken from another source for use in a course paper be fully acknowledged. Multiple submissions, “when one intentionally or knowingly submits substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without the explicit authorization of both instructors,” are also a violation of the academic integrity policy. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this. You should also consult the University policy at http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php
• Disruptive Student in Class Procedure: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/disrupst.php

Grading Criteria for Formal Papers
The final copy of your formal papers should be well-structured around a thesis, provide textual evidence for the argument and be written in standard English relatively free of mechanical errors.
An **A** paper is a tightly structured, well-written, nuanced argument which provides plenty of textual evidence to back up its claims. The first paragraph contains a clearly-articulated thesis with a roadmap briefly stating the points which will be elaborated later.

An **B** paper might provide a thesis in the first paragraph but the paper itself may not be as well-organized around that thesis. For instance, sometimes these papers do not clarify how each paragraph relates to the thesis. As a result, these papers may contain material that seems irrelevant. **B** papers are thus not as convincing as **A** papers.

An **C** paper might provide an argument that only reveals itself at the end of the paper. This kind of paper usually lacks a thesis in the first paragraph because the writer has not rewritten the introductory paragraph to match the final version of the paper.

An **U** paper is unacceptable. One reason for this might be that there is no thesis let alone an argument. Random thoughts are not a paper. Another reason might be that the thesis is completely negated by the paper itself. Or, sometimes too many mechanical errors will make it impossible for the paper to argue a thesis because the reader can’t follow the writer’s thoughts.

**The U paper and the University Writing Center**
The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Malpass Library (3rd floor, west side) and in satellite centers in Simpkins, Bayliss, and Tanner. Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment.

If you earn a **U** on either the first or second formal paper, **you must meet with me** to discuss how to improve. I will recommend that you go to the writing center for help in rewriting the paper, which will be due in a week. This will help you bring your grade up to a **C**. If you do not meet with me and rewrite within a week, you will receive the original **F** for that paper.

**Tentative Schedule**

**I: Growing Up Female**

- **Week 1:** Arab Women Writers  
  21 August 2018: Introductions  
  23 August 2018: On Orientalism: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g)

- **Week 2:** Islamophobia  
  28 August 2018: Read: [https://islamophobiaisracism.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/kahf-the-pity-committee.pdf](https://islamophobiaisracism.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/kahf-the-pity-committee.pdf)  
  30 August 2018: Read *Arab Women Writers (AWW)* pages 1-9, Read al-Khamis, “The Parting Gift” pages 32-37

**II: Love and Sexuality**
Week 3: Privileging Women  
6 September 2018: Read Latifa al-Zayyat, “The Picture” pages 65-72

Week 4: Taboo  
13 September 2018: Peer review; Essay #1 rough draft due

III: Male-Female Relations

Week 5: Syria  
18 September 2018: Read al-Khuri, “Where To?” pages 88-91; Essay #1 Due  

IV: Marriage

Week 6: Patriarchy  
25 September 2018: Read Rifaat, “My Wedding Night” and al-Muji, “The Dummy” pages 120-128  
27 September 2018: Read AWW pages 12-13, Read “The Dreadful Sea” pages 141-146

V: Childbearing

Week 7: Refusal to bear children  
2 October 2018: Read al-Tabi’a “Man and Woman” pages 178-180  
4 October 2018: Peer review; Essay #2 rough draft due

Week 8: Pressure to Reproduce  
9 October 2018: AWW pages 13-14, Kamal “The Spider’s Web” pages 172-177; Essay #2 Due  
11 October 2018: No class

VI: Self-Fulfillment

Week 9: Careers  
18 October 2018: Read Ba’labakki, “The Filly Became a Mouse” pages 199-204

Week 10: Reconciling Differences  
23 October 2018: “I Will Never Forfeit My Right” and “Waiting for Hayla” pages 206-208, 210-213  

VII: Customs and Values

Week 11: History, Tradition, and War  
30 October 2018: Read AWW pages 15-17, Azzam, “Tears for Sale” pages 222-226  
VIII: The Winds of Change

Week 12: Freedom
6 November 2018: Read AWJ pages 17-23, al-Idilbi “The Breeze of Youth” pages 258-264
8 November 2018: Read al-Qalamawi “A Successful Woman” pages 265-269, and Ashour, “In Need of Reassurance” pages 270-274

Week 13: Adaptation
13 November 2018: Read Bakr, “The Beginning” pages 280-284
15 November 2018: Peer review; Essay #3 rough draft due

19-23 November 2018: Thanksgiving Break; no classes

Week 14: Sharia

Week 15: Wrap-up and concluding discussion
4 December 2018: Watch: Deepa Kumar, “Gender, Sexuality, and Empire”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_WG5C5OIbI
6 December 2018: Review

Final Exam Schedule
11 December 2018: Tuesday, 1 pm