

SOCIOLOGY OF THE VEIL
Nazanin Shahrokni, Assistant Professor of Sociology
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This is a discussion-based seminar that aims to improve students' analytical skills by focusing on the veil as an object of sociological inquiry. To be sure, veiling has a history and current use in various religious traditions such as Islam, Judaism and Christianity, to name a few. However, it is the Muslim veil that has become the subject of controversy and public debate. Therefore, in an attempt to unpack these debates, this course will focus exclusively on the Muslim veil.

While there is a debate focusing on prescriptions emanating from Islamic texts, we do not aim to situate the practice of veiling in scriptures and religious traditions. We thus do not ask whether or not veiling is mandatory in Islam. Rather, we are interested in the social, political and economic factors that enable or disable the practice of veiling, and in the diverse meanings such practices can acquire in a given social-historical moment.

This course brings together various resources from across multiple disciplines (sociology, geography, political science, international relations, media and communications studies, etc.) to discuss and explore the place of the veil in a wide range of macro and micro level socio-political developments. These include issues ranging from the domain of personhood to nationhood, and from self-perceptions to media representations.

Through transnational and trans-regional comparisons, this course provides an opportunity for global awareness. The case studies cover various national settings including Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, France, the United States, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan to mention but a few. The cases address issues pertaining to nation/state building projects, identity formation, state-religion relationship, citizenship, media representation and fashion. We explore the ways wearing the veil is encouraged, enforced, discouraged, forbidden or stigmatized and the modes of compliance and resistance in each instance.

In the current conjuncture, the attention and scrutiny to which Muslims worldwide are subjected often acquires a gendered dimension. The veil, in particular, as a piece of clothing and as a sartorial practice has been the subject of, and, mobilized in, political projects and controversies. Our role as social scientists is to contextualize these debates and projects and to provide evidence-based sober analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Explain the social, political and economic dimensions of the veil.
- Examine the social and political processes through which the various meanings and functions of the veil are produced.
- Apply social scientific theories and approaches to contemporary social issues such as the veil.
- Discuss how socio-political events and currents shape people's lives and their choice of clothing.
- Observe their social world more carefully and critically.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND TEXTS

All course materials will be posted to blackboard. You do not need to buy any books, but you are **REQUIRED** to download and print an assortment of readings that have been posted electronically on the course Blackboard site. You must print these out and bring the hard copies with you to class. Failure to bring readings with you to class will result in a lowered participation grade and, if done repeatedly, dismissal and therefore absence from class.

CLASS FORMAT

This class meets twice a week for one hour and twenty-minute sessions. Most classes will be comprised of a brief recap of what was covered in the prior class, discussion of the readings for the day, and in-class activities that allow us to apply what we have learned in the readings. You are required to bring your readings along with your notes to class, participate in group works, and always come equipped with questions and examples.

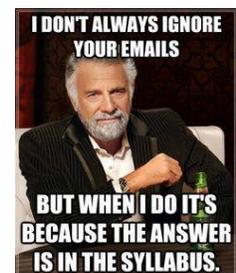
OFFICE HOURS

I love meeting with students during office hours! Office hours are a great opportunity for you to ask additional questions about the course, discuss your research projects in more depth, and to talk about your educational careers more generally. Feel free to come to office hours in pairs or groups. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, please email me to set up a time to meet. You should expect an appoint no earlier than 3 (business) days after, and no later than a week after, your email is received.

EMAILS

I will be available over email if you need to contact me for any reason. During the week, you should expect to wait at least 24 hours to get a response. If you email on Friday or over the weekend, do not expect a response until Monday. Please use professional language, tone, and style in your written correspondence.

For starters, my name is not “Hey!” This piece might help: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>.



COURSE WEBSITE

There is a Blackboard site and we expect you to follow it regularly. If you are enrolled in the class, you should automatically have access to the site. Please notify us if, at any point, you cannot access the site. We will use Blackboard as a means for updating the syllabus, making announcements, collecting some assignments and posting additional readings and resources. All students must be in the habit of using and regularly checking their .syr email accounts.

GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course assignments are varied and aimed towards helping you achieve the learning objectives listed above. Your final grade will be calculated according to the following charts:

A 93-100 | A- 90-92 | B+ 88-89 | B 83-87 | B- 80-82 |
C+ 78-79 | C 73-77 | C- 70-72 | D 60-69 | F below 60

*Please note that if you seek to contest a grade, you must wait 48 hours and do so in writing, explaining in specific and substantive terms why you believe your grade should be reconsidered. You must submit grade contestations within one week of the assignment being returned. Upon further review of your work, your grade may be adjusted up, down or remain the same. *

All your papers/assignments will be graded within two weeks. If you are missing a grade for any of your submitted assignments, it is your responsibility to inform us. If your assignment is missing, we will need proof of submission. If you fail to do so, or if you wait until the end of the semester to inform us about the missing assignment, you will not receive a grade for that assignment.

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF GRADING	
Class Attendance and Participation (Come to class with the readings in hand. Be ready to ask questions and participate in discussions. There will be occasional pop-up quizzes.)	10 %
5 Reflection Papers (Write your reflections on the videos and documentaries that you watch. Engage with the class material in your reflections.)	25%
Midterm Paper (Write a 1000-word essay in response to the questions that you will be given a week in advance)	30%
Final Project (Write a 1000-word photo essay engaging thoroughly with at least 4 of the themes discussed during the semester)	35 %

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

Your active and engaged participation in class sessions is absolutely essential! Therefore, attendance and participation will count for a total of 10% of your final grade. There are several things taken into consideration when assigning participation grades. All students are expected to be active, attentive and respectful members of the class and participants in class discussion and activities. The beginning 10 minutes of each session is allocated to you to shine and share your thoughts and observations with us. This could be your reflection on the readings. This means coming to class prepared, with the readings in hand, ready to discuss the main points raised in the readings. With that in mind, if I find that students are not keeping up with the course readings, I reserve the right to administer pop quizzes.

Attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance at each class. At the beginning of each class, we will provide you with index cards. You are required to write your names on these index cards. Those arriving on time will receive a pink index card, those arriving late will receive a yellow index card, those arriving more than 15 minutes late will be marked absent for that class. Unexcused absences will significantly impact your final grade. Students with THREE unexcused absences may fail the class entirely. I will excuse an absence if it has been negotiated with me in advance and is verified by legitimate sources. This does not mean emailing me right before class to inform me you will not be coming to class. Whenever you miss a class, and for whatever reason, it is YOUR responsibility to catch up on the material that we covered. I encourage you to consider exchanging email addresses with at least two other classmates that you can turn to in the case of an absence.

REFLECTION PAPERS (25%)

Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to turn in 5 reflection papers on the videos and documentaries that we watch as part of our course work. You will have some liberty to choose which videos you want to engage with. These short responses are a way to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading and attempting to grapple with it prior to coming to class. They are also meant to help you improve your ability to write clearly and concisely about abstract material. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

Reflection papers must be turned in both to Blackboard AND in hard copy prior to or at the start of next class. No late papers accepted.

Reflection papers must engage with and quote and parenthetically reference the reading(s). Responses that do not explicitly engage with the text or the documentary will be significantly marked down. So, take notes as you read the texts and as you watch the documentaries.

Reflection papers should be written in the format of an essay (no bullet-points) and should be concise (max 400 words). Indicate word count at the bottom of your paper.

There are numerous ways to approach these papers and we will spend some time in class discussing what makes a successful reflection paper. In general, we ask that you try to summarize the video/documentary, define or clarify what you see as the key concepts/themes in your own words, and draw on the course materials to discuss these points. You may also compare and contrast the readings and the videos with one another. Reflection papers will be graded on a scale from 0-5. Each will be worth 5% of your overall grade, 25% collectively.

MIDTERM PAPER (30%)

The midterm is comprised of a 1000-word essay in response to the questions that you will be given in advance. This is a take-home and you will be asked to apply some of the concepts we will be exploring in class on real life issues and phenomenon.

FINAL PROJECT: PHOTO ESSAY (35%)

The course concepts enable us to wear different lenses and “see” the social, political and economic dimensions of the veil.

In an effort to encourage you to see your surrounding through a social lens, you will be required to generate one photo essay. The photo essay should be fun to work on and will force you to see things in your day-to-day life through the theoretical lenses you are learning in this class! You will be able to choose the themes/perspectives/concepts you wish to portray/explore in your photo essays. Each photo essay will consist of the following:

- A minimum of 5 photographs taken by you.
- Short captions (up to 100 words) for each photo, highlighting its sociological/theoretical significance.
- A 500-750 word preface in which you explain/analyze the photos through the concepts/perspectives you’re learning in class. You should draw on at least 4 themes/sections discussed during the course of the semester.

The photo essays will be evaluated and graded based upon the following criteria: your storyline/argument, the quality of the photos, your ability to caption those photos by drawing upon class materials, the strength of your analysis in your short preface, and the creativity with which you present your photo essay. The top 5 photo essays will be selected and those students will be asked to present their work to the rest of the class for up to 3 extra credit points.

DO NOT ASK FOR EXTRA CREDITS. Instead focus on what you are supposed to do in class and for your take-home exams!

PAPER FORMATTING AND SUBMITTING: All papers should be double spaced, written in 12pt. Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. You must upload your papers on Blackboard AND bring a hard copy to class (or the drop off location).

LATE PAPERS: Will be penalized one full letter grade each day late (10%). After three days, late papers will not be accepted. The late penalty begins 15 minutes after the deadline. It is your responsibility to make sure that your paper has been submitted properly. For online submissions, keep the receipt or proof of submission.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our community values diversity and seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Syracuse University is committed to your success and to supporting Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This means that no individual who is otherwise qualified shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activities solely by reason of having a disability. If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), located at 804 University Avenue, Room 309, or call 315-443-4498. The ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation

Authorization Letters” to students with documented disabilities, as appropriate, which you should then give to me. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible. For more information, see: <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Syracuse University’s academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should



understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is

course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university’s academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during preterm check-in on MySlice. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Syracuse University recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For spring semester, an online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class. For more information, see: http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

I have outlined the course readings in this syllabus prior to the beginning of the term but I reserve the right to modify the syllabus if the need arises. I also encourage your feedback, so please let me know if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions. Please note all readings should be completed by the date listed.

1 INTRODUCTION

What do we mean when we talk about the politics of clothing? When/How/Why do our clothes gain political meaning?

Hanse, KT. 2004. "The world in dress: Anthropological perspectives on clothing, fashion, and culture," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 369-292.

Crane, Diana. 2006. "Approaches to Material Culture: The Sociology of Fashion and Clothing." *Poetics* 34 (6): 319-333.

Friedman, Vanessa. 2016. "When Politics Became a Fashion Statement," *The New York Time*, December 13, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/13/fashion/the-year-in-style-politicsdressing.html>

Brown, Calin. 2017. "The Politics of Your Clothes." *The Huffington Post*, October 19, 2017. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-politics-of-yourclothes_us_59e7c85de4b0e60c4aa367a8?guccounter=1

2 (UN)VEILED NATION



What role has (un)veiling played in nation-state building processes? How do governments assign meaning to the veil? How does the veil reflect broader social and political transformations?

Korteweg, Anna and Gokce Yurdakul. 2014. *The Headscarf Debates: Conflicts of National Belonging*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (1-15 & 175-189).

Zahedi, Ashraf. 2007. "Contested Meaning of the Veil and Political Ideologies of Iranian Regimes" *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 3(3): 75-98.

Saktanbar, Ayse and Gul Corbacioglu. 2008. "Veiling and Headscarf-Skepticism in Turkey" *Social Politics*: 514-538.

Allen-Ebrahimian, Bethany. 2015. "China: The Best and the Worst Place to be a Muslim Woman," *Foreign Policy*, July 17, 2015. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/17/china-feminism-islam-muslim-women-xinjiang-uighurs/>



Watch: Leila Ahmad's *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from Middle East to America*. Lecture at Harvard Divinity School. 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiM8oa_1CAs

3 (UN)VEILED RESISTANCE



What does resistance through clothing mean? How do women resist through (un)veiling? Does women's (un)veiling always carry a political message? Can we read the Muslim veil outside the subordination/resistance binary?

Fanon, Frantz. "Algeria Unveiled." *The New Left Reader*. 161-185.

Parvez, Z. Fareen. 2011. "Debating the Burqa in France: The Antipolitics of Islamic Revival" *Qualitative Sociology* 34: 287-312.

Sreberny, Annabelle. 2015. "Women's digital activism in a changing Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47(2): 357-361.

Bilge, Sirma. 2010. "Beyond Subordination vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of Veiled Muslim Women" *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31(1): 9-28.

Moruzzi, Norma. 2008. "Trying to Look Different: Hijab as the Self Presentation of Social Distinctions." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28(2): 225-234.



Watch: *The Battle of Algiers*. 1966. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_N2wyq7fCE

4 VEILED MOBILITY



Under what circumstances does (un)veiling enable/disable mobility? How does our perception of the veil impede/facilitate mobility?

MacLeod, Arlene. 1992. Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo. *Signs* 17(3): 533-557.

Hamzeh, Manal. 2017. "FIFA's double hijabophobia: A colonialist and Islamist alliance racializing Muslim women soccer players," *Women's Studies International Forum* 63: 11-16.

Alvarez, Anya. 2017. "Hijab in Sports: How Muslim Women Athletes Are Fighting for Acceptance." *Rolling Stone*. March 15, 2017.

<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culturesports/hijab-in-sports-how-muslim-women-athletes-are-fighting-for-acceptance-115443/>



Watch: TV Series: *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, "Swimming Up Stream," 2007, CBC [Canada]

5 (UN)VEILED MODERN



What is the connection between (un)veiling and modernity? How is this connection understood in various contexts and historical moments? Can a 'modern' woman be veiled?

Göle, Nilufer. 1996. *The Forbidden Modern*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press. (Selected pages).

Deeb, Lara. 2006. *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. Princeton University Press.

McBrien, Julie. "Mukadas's Struggle: Veils and Modernity in Kyrgyzstan" *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*: S127-S144.

Besio, Kathryn. 2007. "Depth of fields: travel photography and spatializing modernities in northern Pakistan" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25: 53-74.

Smith-Hefner, Nancy. 2007. "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66: 389-420.

6 VEILED EUROPE



What role does the veil play in European politics around citizenship? How does the headscarf appear in the debates about secularism in Europe?

Sauer, Birgit. 2009. "Headscarf Regimes in Europe: Diversity Policies at the Intersection of Gender, Culture and Religion" *Comparative European Politics* 7: 75-94.

Najmabadi, Afsaneh. 2006. "Gender and Secularism of Modernity: How can a Muslim Woman be French?" *Feminist Studies* 32 (2): 239-255.

Asad, Talal. 2006. "French Secularism and the 'Islamic Veil Affair'" *The Hedgehog Review*, Spring and Summer 06: 93-106.

Korteweg, Anna and Gokce Yurdakul. 2014. *The Headscarf Debates: Conflicts of National Belonging*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (137-175).

7 VEILED IDENTITY



What role does the veil play in the identity formation of Muslim women? How do (un)veiled women react/adapt to cultural pressures and stereotypes about women's (un)veiled bodies?

Williams Rhys and Gira Vashi. 2007. "Hijab and American Muslim Women: Creating the Space for Autonomous Selves" *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 68(3): 269-287.

Meer, Nasar et. al. 2010. “Embodying Nationhood? Conceptions of British National Identity, Citizenship, and Gender in the “Veil Affair.” *The Sociological Review* 58 (1): 84-111.

Wagner, Wolfgang et. al. 2012. “The veil and Muslim women’s identity: Cultural pressures and resistance to stereotyping [in India and Indonesia],” *Culture and Psychology* 18 (4): 521-541.



Watch: *Lifting the Veil: Muslim Women Explain Their Choice.* 2011. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2011/04/21/135523680/lifting-the-veil-muslim-women-explain-their-choice?t=1561314167096>

The Veil. 2008. Al Jazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/rewind/2016/11/veil-161121105212227.html>

8 VEILED FASHION



What is the connection between modesty and fashion? Can a Muslim woman be a fashion model? What is Islamic about Islamic fashion?

Simmel, Georg. 1957. “Fashion,” *American Journal of Sociology* 62 (6): 541-558.

Moors, A. 2007. “Burka” in Parliament and on the Catwalk. *ISIM Review*.

Gokariksel, Banu and Anna Secor. 2010. “Islamic-ness in the life of a commodity: Veiling-fashion in Turkey” *Transactions* NS35: 313-333.

Amrullah, E.F. 2008. “Indonesian Muslim Fashion Styles and Designs” *ISIM Review* 22(1): 2223.

Gokariksel, Banu and Anna Secor. 2009. “New transnational geographies of Islamism, capitalism and subjectivity: the veiling-fashion industry in Turkey,” *Area*: 6-18.

Naib, Fatima. 2015. “Sweden’s ‘hijabista’: Selling Muslim fashion” Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/10/sweden-hijabista-selling-muslim-fashion-151022111549949.html>



Watch: *Hijabi fashion in Turkey*. 2015. Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2015/05/cover-story-150505121122072.html>

9 VEILED (MIS)REPRESENTATION



How are Muslim women portrayed in the media? How do we explain the (mis)representation of (un)veiled women in the media? What are the effects of such (mis)representations?

Macdonald, Myra. 2006. "Muslim Women and the Veil" *Feminist Media Studies* 6(1): 7-23.

Le Renard, Amelie. 2014. "The Politics of 'Unveiling Saudi Women': Between Postcolonial Fantasies and the Surveillance State" *Jadaliyya*. 15 December 2014.

Ahmad, Dohra. 2009 "Not Yet Beyond the Veil: Muslim Women in American Popular Culture" *Social Text* 27(2): 105-131.

Hauser, Christine. 2017. "New Barbie Is Modeled After American Olympian Who Wears a Hijab." *The New York Times*, November 14, 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/14/business/barbie-hijab-ibtihajmuhammad.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FMuslim%20Veiling>



Watch: *Secret Life of Muslims: Ibtihaj Muhammad*. 2017. USA Today.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0FicQ_LXS0

Listen: Podcast: *Huda Fahmy: "Yes, I'm hot in this!"* <https://onefootinthesink.com/hudafahmy/>

10 (UN)VEILED EMPIRE



How is the image of veiled Muslim woman being used to promote the War on Terror? Do Muslim women need saving?

Abu Lughod, Leila. 2002. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" *The American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.

Shams, Alex. 2017. "The Weaponization of Nostalgia: How Afghan Miniskirts Became the Latest Salvo in the War on Terror." *Ajam Media Collective*, September 6, 2017.

<https://ajammc.com/2017/09/06/weaponization-nostalgia-afghan-miniskirts/>

Riley, Robin Lee. 2013. *Depicting the Veil: Transnational sexism and the war on terror*. Zed Books. (Chapter 4 and 5).