GSWS 320-4: SPECIAL TOPICS IN GSWS: ISLAMIC FEMINISM

Professor: Itrath Syed  
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Office: SFU Vancouver Harbour Centre  
Office hours: Thursdays 12:15 – 13:15  
Lecture: Thursdays 13:30 – 17:20; HC 2510

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The idea of being at once Muslim and feminist continues to be constructed as an ontological impossibility by all sides. The combination of a hegemonic discourse that racializes Muslims as the irredeemable civilizational other, on the one hand, and the dominant patriarchal readings of Islam within Muslim discourses, on the other, threaten to render obsolete the resistant voices of Muslim women. Added to this mix is a western feminist tradition that has often objectified Muslim women as passive, infantilized and in need of being saved. And yet, Muslim women’s feminisms and their activism for social change continues to thrive despite this most inhospitable context.

This course will explore the voices of contemporary Muslim feminists and examine the strategies they have employed to create a viable third space – one that is neither apologetic to patriarchy nor a pawn in shifting global political realities.

Lectures, readings and tutorials are complementary aspects of the course. Students are expected to do the readings each week in advance of class and come to seminar prepared to participate.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS:
For more detailed information please see the GSWS website: http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/courses/Educational_Goals.html

COURSE TEXTS AND COURSEWARE:
Readings available as PDFs on the Canvas site for this course.

COURSE EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Seminar attendance and participation 15%  
Critical Response Essay – Due June 13 20%  
Critical Response Essay – Due July 11 20%  
Class Presentation 15%  
Take-Home Final Exam – Due August 9 30%

PREREQUISITE: 15 units