SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Summer 2013  
Discipline: Comparative Politics  
PLCP 3500: Culture and Women’s Rights  
Division: Upper  
Faculty Name: Denise Walsh

Pre-requisites: At least one course in comparative politics or women’s studies.

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
This course explores conflicts over culture and women’s rights through a series of contemporary controversies prevalent in the Mediterranean region. Case studies include the Arab Spring, genital cutting in North Africa, “honor killings” in Turkey, women and the workplace in Turkey and the US, the headscarf in Europe, and same sex marriage in the US and France. Readings are drawn from a number of disciplines, including politics, anthropology, philosophy, and women’s studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES  
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the issue of competing human rights claims and normative political theory. Students will develop skills in reading political philosophy and gain a deeper understanding of cultural politics in the Mediterranean basin.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS  
AUTHOR: Linda Hirshman  
TITLE: Get to Work...And Get A Life, Before It’s Too Late  
PUBLISHER: Penguin  
All other readings and film clips will be available on the intranet.

Class Policies
No computers, cell phone, ipads, etc. should ever be used during class.
Follow the honor code. If you have a question about plagiarism, ask.
For information about my research, courses, advising, and letters of recommendation, please consult my webpage.
All students are expected to attend every class session, with the exception of illness or an emergency. All other absences will be unexcused and detract from your participation grade. In the event of illness, please arrange to get notes from another student in the class.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE
Please note: readings on contemporary events are likely to be updated before we disembark and will be announced in advance.

Part I: Multiculturalism, Universalism, and Women’s Rights

C1- June 19: Multiculturalism vs. Women’s Rights
Why can’t we just get along?

C2- June 20: Early 20th Century Arab Feminism
How did early Arab feminists balance culture and women’s rights?

C3- June 21: Late 20th Century Commitments to Women’s Rights
Why have countries in North Africa ratified international women’s rights agreements when the US has not?

Homework clip: Hilary Clinton’s famous [speech](#) at the Beijing Conference.

**C4- June 22: Culture and Women’s Rights in Contemporary Morocco**

*What is the relationship between culture and women’s rights in Morocco today?*


23 June-26 June Casablanca, Morocco

**C5- June 27: Imperial Feminism**

*What’s wrong with attacking sexism in Islam?*


**C6- June 28: Culture and Universal Rights**

*What’s wrong with respecting culture? Are universal rights better than culture?*


**C7- June 29: Culture, Women’s Rights, and the Arab Spring, I**

*How was the Arab Spring gendered?*

**Tunisia:**

“[Women’s Rights in Post Arab Spring Tunisia](#),” Cimorene, November 20, 2012.

Kristing Goulding, “[Tunisia: Arab Spring, Islamist Summer](#),” October 25, 2011.

**Egypt:**

Asmaa Mahfouz—[The video that fueled the Egyptian Revolution](#)


Ahdaf Soueif, “[Image of Unknown Woman Beaten by Egypt’s Military Echoes Around World](#),”
December 18, 2011.


C8- July 1: Culture, Women’s Rights, and the Arab Spring, II
Is there a “war against women” in the Middle East?


Mona Eltahawy, “Why Do They Hate Us? The Real War on Women is in the Middle East,” Foreign Policy, December 16, 2012.

Group A: “Debating the War on Women,” Foreign Policy April 24, 2012 (read all 6 responses).


Charli Carpenter, ‘Seriously, Guys!’: How (Not) to Write About Gender and Foreign Affairs,” The Duck of Minerva, April 26, 2012.

July 30 NO CLASSES
Part II: Case Studies from the Mediterranean, Europe, and the US
C9- July 2: Female Genital Cutting
When are body modification rights and when are they violations of bodily integrity?

Students will be assigned one reading from the following list to debate:

Group A:

Resolved: Female Genital Mutilation should be outlawed and eradicated
Group B:

Resolved: Female Circumcision should be medicalized

Group C:

Resolved: “Natural” bodies can be bodies that are circumcised.

3 July-5 July Antalya, Turkey

C10- July 6: Culture and “Honor Killings” in Turkey (4 homework entries due today)
What is the relationship between modernization and women’s oppression in Turkey?


C11- July 7: Bargaining with Patriarchy
Why and how do women bargain with patriarchy?


Discussion of field lab assignment.

8 July-11 July Istanbul, Turkey

C12- July 12: Field Lab Debriefing and Group Work
Students will work together in their groups to discuss the materials from their field lab and put together a powerpoint to present to the class tomorrow.

C13- July 13: Student Field Lab Presentations

14 July-17 July Piraeus (Athens), Greece

C14- July 18: Women and Work, I
Are US women more emancipated than Mediterranean women?

Linda Hirshman, 2007, *Get to Work...And Get A Life, Before It’s Too Late*, first half.

**C15- July 19: Women and Work, II**
Are US women more emancipated than Mediterranean women?

Linda Hirshman, 2007, *Get to Work...And Get A Life, Before It’s Too Late*, second half.

**C16- July 20: Culture and Racism in Italy**
How does racism reinforce sexism in Italy?


**21 July-23 July** Livorno (Italy)
**24 July-26 July** Civitavecchia, Italy

**C17- July 27: What Not to Wear in Europe**
Who has the right to freedom of expression and why?


**C18- July 28: Social Pressure or Choice?**
What are the constraints on our choices? Do they negate agency? Why or why not?


Film clip in class: [France Bans Burqas and Niqabs](#)

**29 July-31 July** Malta

**C19- August 1: Same Sex Marriage**
Who has the right to marry? Why? Should marriage even be a right?

Everyone reads:

Assigned Readings:
Group A:

Resolved: The state should not privilege marriage but the caretaker–dependent relationship.

Group B:

Resolved: The state should do away with civil marriage and legalize civil unions.

Group C:

Resolved: Gay marriage does not fundamentally change the institution of marriage.

C20- August 2: Same-Sex Marriage in France
*Why has same-sex marriage been so controversial in sexually liberal France?*


“*In French Gay Marriage Debate, a Political Star is Born,*” *International News 24/7*, February 2, 2013 (includes 3 minute video).

*International Progress Toward the Freedom to Marry*

3 August-5 August       Marseilles, France
6 August-8 August       Barcelona, Spain

C21- August 9: Multiple differences and Sexual Minorities in Spain (4 homework entries due today)
*How do multiple discriminations limit the right to same sex marriage and gender identity in Spain?*

C22– August 10: Mock Conference I
Half the class will present their short essay question, hypothesis, and evidence in a powerpoint presentation, which will be followed by a short Q&A from the class.

Presenters will send me a two-sentence summary of their topic by 8:00 am August 10.

Five percent of the essay grade for presenters will be based on the Mock Conference.

Bonus points will be awarded to the two students with the best questions and feedback to the presenters.

11 August-13 August  Cadiz, Spain
14 August-16 August  Lisbon, Spain

C23- August 17: Mock Conference II
The second half of the class will present their short essay question, hypothesis, and evidence in a powerpoint presentation, which will be followed by a short Q&A from the class.

Presenters will send me a two-sentence summary of their topic by 8:00 am August 17.

Five percent of the essay grade for presenters will be based on the Mock Conference.

Bonus points will be awarded to the two students with the best questions and feedback to the presenters.

August 18: Study Day

C24-August 19: Essays Due at the end of class time.

August 20: Reflection/Reentry

August 21: Convocation/Packing

August 22: Southampton, UK

FIELD WORK
FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

This field lab will explore how and why Ataturk created the Turkish Republic, and the methods that he used to secularize Turkish society, so that students might better understand the contemporary backlash against secularism and women’s rights in Turkey. Many countries, including the United States, embrace a national identity that is highly gendered. Women are symbols of the nation and tasked with raising the next generation of citizens. Men are not symbols; they are individual actors tasked with protecting and leading the nation. This gendering is more complex in post-colonial states or defeated empires. In these countries women are symbols, but they also are tasked with upholding traditions that distinguish the new nation from
the West, and they are expected to pass these national traditions on to the next generation. Men not only are tasked with protecting and leading the new nation, but also with being modern. Many political leaders in the Mediterranean chose a third path. During the first half of the 20th century they insisted that women and men both modernize, and they forcefully rejected “backward” cultural traditions. In Turkey, Ataturk led this revolution, forever altering women’s role and status.

Students will visit 4 museums and a public square related to the development of Turkish nationalism, modernity, and women, to see how the nation presents these themes to the public. First, for homework, they will view the Women’s Museum online, to learn about the history of women in Istanbul (the museum does not yet have a physical location). The field lab will begin at the Pera Museum, which houses the most revered paintings in Turkish history, including paintings of Istanbul before the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1922. Next, we will visit Ataturk Museum, a private home where Ataturk lived prior to the national revolution. After lunch we will visit The Military Museum, which has a room devoted to Ataturk and an afternoon concert by the world’s first military band. We will wrap up with a walking tour of Taksim Square to view contemporary art devoted to the Turkish nation: the Republic Monument, the public art in the Taksim metro station, and the Ataturk Cultural Center.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS
Before the field lab students will be divided into groups. Each group will have the task of creating a multimedia presentation on the relationship between Turkish nationalism, culture, and women’s rights with an assigned theme. During the field lab students will take notes, pictures, make video and audio recordings, obtain pamphlets, postcards and other media related to this theme. Students will then work together in their groups to discuss the materials and field lab, and put them together in a powerpoint or Prezi to present to the class.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC
Daily Participation (10%).
All students are expected to come to every class, to have done the reading with care, and to participate in class discussions. The instructor will keep a daily attendance and participation log.

Teaching Presentations (10%).
For two class sessions, students will present material on either Egypt or Tunisia, as assigned by the instructor. The one grade for each group will be based on how well each group communicates the key ideas from the readings, relates them to previous readings in the course, and the group’s integration of creative components and activities in the presentation (e.g., videos, powerpoints, debate).

Homework (20%).
Students will write a question or a comment about the readings for one session (which may include how her/his experiences in port directly related to the assigned course reading) for a total of 8 class sessions. Length should be approximately 3 sentences (for questions) to one paragraph (for comments). Quality matters more than quantity. Homework will be collected at the beginning of each class session and retained by the instructor. Each student’s file will be graded twice during the trip: 4 entries are due by 11 July 7; 4 additional entries are due by 21 August.
9.

Take-home Essays (35%).
Students will write two essays of their choice in response to three questions posed by the instructor.

Field Lab (25%)
See above under “Field Lab Assignment”

HONOR CODE
Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”