Gender, Labor and Development in MENA  
MAAS 641  
Tuesday’s 4:15-6:05, ICC 209B

Course Description
Central to the projects for and concerns about development in the Middle East and North Africa today are labor and all that encompasses from women’s labor force participation, to the gendered division of labor, to the global flow of labor to the gendered impacts of economic restructuring around the world. Specifically the course will examine the following:

⇒ Brief examination of some of the feminist and theoretical treatments that have shaped basic assumptions about women and work and the gendered division of labor more broadly.
⇒ The history of women’s economic participation and a gendered division of labor paying special attention to how both colonialism and increased incorporation into a global capitalist system transformed the gendered division of labor – redefining spheres of work, the private and the public, and ultimately what has come to constitute valuable economic contributions.
⇒ The contests and negotiations surrounding work, gender and labor in a post-colonial context. Here we will discuss the role of the state and its detractors in framing debates and discourse about gender, labor and development.
⇒ Development discourse and the way in which it frames issues of gender and development in Middle East and North Africa. Here we consider both the empirical research and the ideological assumptions about what women’s work represents via development.
⇒ Examination of recent economic transformations – brought about by globalization, neoliberal economic prices and shifts in oil prices – and their gendered implications.
⇒ Finally we will also consider issues of migration out of and into the region and their gendered dimensions.

The course aims to both broaden our basic knowledge about gender, labor and development in the region and to challenge our basic assumptions about how they interact. To that end, I draw on a variety of sources with a specific effort to seek out qualitative and ethnographic sources (although not exclusively) as these are less easily available. In addition, throughout I have incorporated sources from other regions so that we might consider how the issues at hand play out in different contexts, and how they are or are not connected by global economic forces.

ASSIGMENTS

Class participation: I expect you to come to class having done all of the reading and to be prepared to participate intelligently in class discussions every week. In addition, each week you will turn in one thoughtful and intelligent discussion question for the week’s readings via Blackboard. These must be received by 2 pm on Tuesday, the day of class. (20%)

Group Project: Short report and Presentation: The class will be divided into small groups (2-3) to work on a policy question for this class. Some of the possible questions for this project are: Increasing female labor force participation in a particular country; increasing female labor force participation in certain sectors; providing quality and affordable child care for working families; protecting the rights of domestic servants (or some other group of migrant laborers); migration out/in in particular countries; unions and workers rights in a particular country, sector, etc. you
are welcome to suggest topics. Each group will be asked to give a 15 minute presentation and to write a policy brief (6-8 pages single spaced) on their topic. Briefly this document should include (1) a description of the policy issue/question (2) identify key areas of concern (3) propose a number of policy recommendations to address what you have identified as the priority issues in your review. Recommendations should be made based on a review of previous efforts, initiatives and the experiences of other countries and/or organizations. Depending on your topic you will have a different imaginary audience. It may be the World Bank, the Ministry of Labor in a particular country, the UNDP, or any number of development agencies/NGOs working on worker rights, advocacy, training, etc. In addition your classmates will be an audience; everyone will be asked to assess the papers and presentations of their classmates as well. I will ask each group to meet with me to discuss further early in the semester. Presentation (15%). Policy Brief (25%)

Final Paper: A final paper, related to the course, which will consist of three steps: (1) Submit a paper proposal on Mar 6. Proposal should be at least two paragraphs long and should articulate the major research question and/or topic with which you are concerned. (2) Submit a revised proposal with bibliography on Apr 2. Although the final bibliography may differ somewhat, this initial bibliography should be indicative of the types of sources you plan to draw on for your paper and the coherence of your research topic/question. It should include at least 10 sources. (3) Final Papers are due on May 5th at 5pm in my mailbox at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. Papers should be 20-25 pages in length (double spaced & one inch margins). (40%)

Academic Integrity – All students are expected to adhere to the mandates of academic integrity in all of their work for this course. Undergraduates please make sure you are familiar with the Georgetown University Honor System: http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53516.html Graduate students please refer to the Graduate School of Arts and Science’s Information on Academic Integrity: http://grad.georgetown.edu/pages/info-acad-integrity.cfm. You are expected to abide by all of these guidelines for all work submitted for this class.

SCHEDULE

(1) Jan. 13 -- Introduction
Overview of the course
A look at some cases

(2) Jan. 27 – Theoretical perspectives on gender, labor and development


Additional sources that may be of interest:

(3) Feb 3 – Capitalist Transformations and the changing nature or Labor and Labor Relations

Additional sources that may be of interest

(4) Feb 10 – (Re) Negotiating the Gendered Division of Labor

Additional sources that may be of interest:

(5) **Feb 17 – Male Migration Out and its Gendered Implications**


Additional sources that may be of interest:


**Ethnographic Perspectives on Gender Labor and Work**

(6) **Feb 24 – Jenny White, Money Makes Us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey.**


* Paper proposals due Mar 6 by e-mail.

**Re-structuring Gender, Labor and Development: The impact of Liberalization, Neoliberalism and Global Economic Transformations**

(8) **Mar 17 – Economic Restructuring, Globalization and the Changing Nature of Work**

Additional sources that may be of interest:

(9) Mar 24 – The Shifting Social Contract: Social Services and Worker Vulnerability
• St. George, Donna (December 21, 2008)“Squeezed on all sides, parents forgo daycare”, Washington Post, page A01 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/20/AR2008122002113.html?referrer=emailarticle

Recommended:

(10) Mar 31 – The Current Picture of Gender, Labor and Development in the Region

*Revised proposal and bibliography Due on April 2 by e-mail.

April 7: Factories, the Garment Industry and Free Trade Zones

(12) Apr 14 – The Global Flow of Labor: Domestic Servants in the Arab World
• Esim, S. & Smith, M. (2004). Gender and migration in Arab states: The case of domestic workers. Beirut: IL; Regional Office for Arab States. Chapter 1; Chap. 2 (Chloe & Christian); Chap. 3 (Jaime & Joe); Chap. 4 (Olivia & Delphine); Chap. 5 (Lindsay & Harald) http://www.siyanda.org/docs/gender_and_migration_in_arab_states_the_case_of_domestic_workers_040813041046.pdf
• Nagy, Sharon (1998). "This Time I Think I'll Try a Filipina": Global and Local Influences on Relations Between Foreign Household Workers and Their Employers in Doha, Qatar. City & Society 10 (1): 83-103.

Recommended:

(13) Apr 21 – Final class

Brainstorming – A research agenda? A development agenda? An advocacy agenda?

---

Related articles on Muslim Brotherhood’s website: http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Article.asp?ID=16899&SectionID=0