

Seminar Syllabus: Women, Peace, and Security in the Afghan Context

Instructor: Aziz Amin and Palwasha Hassan

Semester: Fall 2024

Class Schedule: Weekly on Mondays, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM ET

Format: Online via Zoom

Course Description:

This seminar aims to delve into the multifaceted role of women in Afghanistan's peace and security landscape. By examining their historical struggle for rights and emancipation, their participation in formal and informal peace processes, and the impact of conflict on their unity and participation, we seek to shed light on the challenges and opportunities for women in building a more peaceful and democratic Afghanistan.

Objectives:

- Explore the historical journey of women's rights emancipation in Afghanistan
 - Examine the role of women in traditional institutions and local dispute resolution mechanisms.
 - Analyze women's participation in formal peace processes and its implications for democratic development.
 - Identify hurdles hindering women's participation in future peace processes and strategies to overcome them.
 - Assess the impact of conflict on women's unity and participation in peacebuilding efforts. Evaluate the "youthification of governance" strategy of the Ghani government and its investment in young Afghan women and men.
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Week 1: Introduction to the Course and the WPS Agenda

- **Overview:** Introduction to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and its relevance to Afghanistan.
- **Reading:**
 - United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325)
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2000/10/un-security-council-resolution-1325>
 - "What is UNCR1325? What is the explanation of landmark Resolution" (2022) UN Women/Ryan Brown
[What is UNSCR 1325? | United States Institute of Peace \(usip.org\)](https://www.usip.org/publications/what-is-unscr-1325)
 - "The Afghan Peace Jirga: Ensuring that Women are at the Peace Table" (2010) Palwasha Hassan
[The Afghan Peace Jirga: Ensuring that Women are at the Peace Table | United States Institute of Peace \(usip.org\)](https://www.usip.org/publications/the-afghan-peace-jirga-ensuring-that-women-are-at-the-peace-table)

- o Q&A with students

Week 2: Historical Context: Women in Afghanistan Pre-2001

- **Overview:** Historical roles and status of women in Afghanistan prior to the U.S. invasion in 2001.
- **Reading:**
 - o "The Breadwinner" by Debora Ellis
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Breadwinner-Deborah-Ellis/dp/0192734024>
 - o ["Afghan Women: Between Tradition and Change"](#) by Rina Amiri, Swanee Hunt, and Jennifer Sova
- **Activities:**
 - o Lecture and discussion on the pre-2001 status of women in Afghanistan
 - o Reflection on key historical events impacting women
 - o Q&A with students

Week 3: Post-2001 Developments: Gains and Challenges

- **Overview:** Examination of changes in the status of Afghan women post-2001, including progress and ongoing challenges.
- **Reading:**
 - o "Women's Agency in Afghanistan: From Survivors to Agents of Change," Palwasha Hassan published (2009) in a special edition of the Middle East Institute's publication *Viewpoints*, "Afghanistan, 1979-2009: In the Grip of Conflict."
 - o ["The Rise and Fall of Women Rights in Afghanistan"](#) by LSE
 - o "Women's "Empowerment" in Post Conflict Afghanistan" 2006 Palwasha Hassan
[Microsoft Word - Scratching_the_surface_2007_formatiert.doc \(boell.de\)](#)
- **Activities:**
 - o Veteran Human Rights activist, Palwasha Hassan as lead scholar
 - o Discussion on the impact of international interventions

Week 4: Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

- **Overview:** The role of Afghan women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts.
- **Reading:**
 - o Women's agency in Afghanistan: From Survivor to Agent of Change
[Women's Agency in Afghanistan: From Survivors to Agents of Change | Middle East Institute \(mei.edu\)](#)
 - o " Women's participation in the Afghan peace process: A case study
<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/women-s-participation-afghan-peace-process-case-study-september-2020>

- o “Beyond Kabul: Women peacebuilders’ reflections on the peace process and the impact of COVID-19” UN Women Afghanistan

[Beyond Kabul.pdf\(Review\)- Adobe Document Cloud \(baag.org.uk\)](#)

Activities:

- o Q&A with students
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Week 5: Impact of Conflict on Women’s Health and Education

- **Overview:** The effects of ongoing conflict on Afghan women’s health and education.
 - **Reading:**
 - o “Women’s Health and Human Rights in Afghanistan” by [Physicians for Human Rights](#)
 - o “[The crisis of maternal and child health in Afghanistan](#)” by Nancy GLass, Rabia Jalalzai, Paul Spiegel & Leonard Rubenstein
 - **Activities:**
 - o Lecture on health and education challenges
 - o Q&A with students
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Week 6: Legal and Policy Frameworks Supporting Women’s Rights

- **Overview:** Review of national and international legal frameworks aimed at protecting and promoting Afghan women’s rights.
 - **Reading:**
 - o “[A Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Elimination of Violence against Women Law in Afghanistan](#)” by UNAMA
 - o “[CEDAW and Afghanistan: A Report](#)” by Journal of International Women’s Studies
 - **Activities:**
 - o Examination of key legal documents
 - o Q&A with students
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Week 7: The Role of Civil Society and Women’s Organizations

- **Overview:** The impact of civil society and women’s organizations on the WPS agenda in Afghanistan.
- **Reading:**
 - o “[The Participation of Afghan Women in the Reconstruction Process](#)” by Laura Grenfell
 - o “[Voices of Afghan Women: Human Rights and Economic Development](#)” by Huma Ahmed Ghosh
- **Activities:**
 - o Panel discussion with representatives from Afghan women’s organizations

- o Q&A with students
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Week 8: Media, Representation, and Women's Voices

- **Overview:** The portrayal of Afghan women in media and their own narratives.
 - **Reading:**
 - o "[Picturing Afghan Women: A Content Analysis of AP Wire Photographs During the Taliban Regime and after the Fall of the Taliban Regime](#)" published by Sage Journal
 - o "[We Are Afghan Women: Voices of Hope](#)" by George W. Bush Institute
 - **Activities:**
 - o Q&A with students
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Week 9: The Future of Women, Peace, and Security in Afghanistan

- **Overview:** Prospects for the future of the WPS agenda in Afghanistan given recent political changes.
 - **Reading:**
 - o "[Taliban Restrictions on Women's Rights Deepen Afghanistan's Crisis](#)" by Crises Group
 - o "[The fate of women's rights in Afghanistan](#)" by Brookings Institute
 - **Activities:**
 - o Q&A with students
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Week 10: Final Presentations and Course Wrap-Up

- **Overview:** Students present their final projects and reflections on the course.
 - **Activities:**
 - o Student presentations
 - o Course reflection and feedback session
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