

GEHAD ABDELAL

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ADDRESS E-MAIL	Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30601 abdelal@uga.edu 517-505-0695
AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION	Applied Ethics [Feminist Philosophy and Religion, Water and Climate Change Ethics] and Decolonial Studies in the Middle East
AREAS OF COMPETENCE	Social and Political Philosophy, Critical Race Theory, AI Ethics Phenomenology (Aesthetics) , Non-Western Philosophies [Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Philosophies], and Logic
LANGUAGES	Arabic (native), English (near-native)

EDUCATION

The University of Georgia

Athens, GA, USA

- **Ph.D. in Philosophy** expected in Dec 2024

Committee: Prof. Chris Cuomo (Supervisor), Prof. Piers Stephens, and Prof. René Jagnow.

- **MS in Artificial Intelligence** at the Institute for Artificial Intelligence is expected in 2026.
- **Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies**, Institute of Women's Studies, Summer 2020.

Cairo University

Giza, Egypt

- **MA in Philosophy**, 2013

Dissertation Title: "The Phenomenological Approach to Environmental Philosophy"
Supervisor: Prof. Said Tawfik.

- **BA degree with Honors** and First Class in Philosophy, 2008

MY DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Islamic Feminism as a Neocolonial Project

In my dissertation, I explore the impact of Islamic feminism, which is often viewed as a progressive religious moral scholarship that unites Islam, modernism, and feminist ideals of freedom and equality. My analysis reveals that Islamic feminism can also become a neocolonial project that harms Muslim women, especially in North African countries.

I analytically criticize the political approach of Islamic feminism, which proposes that feminist projects for women in non-Western societies must be situated within a fixed political context of identity and values. This approach can be oppressive, as it requires non-Western feminist projects to conform to a predetermined specific identity, including often unjustifiable cultural, historical, social, religious, and political contexts. Islamic feminists' political and epistemic approach to this fixed identity only extends to the history, culture, and politics that emerged after the Arab colonization of North African countries. Any deviation from this identity results in the feminist project being labeled as Westernized. Additionally, according to Islamic feminists, non-Western feminist projects must establish principles of freedom and equality that *differ* significantly from those advocated by Western feminists; otherwise, those non-Western feminists would be unauthentic.

In contrast, feminist projects for Western women do not face the same limitations. They can assert their rights without being accused of adopting values and rights from other cultures or being mentally colonized by different cultures. Non-Western feminists are often compelled to defend themselves and their fixed identities, which can be exhausting and limit their advocacy efforts.

I have four papers that present my argument that Islamic feminism is a neocolonial project. The first paper delves into the definition of Islamic feminism and its underlying arguments and politics. Rather than being a feminist project rooted in religion, I argue that Islamic feminism is actually a religious project with significant political implications. It functions as a neocolonial project that supports the cultural imperialism that defines the Islamic revival movement.

The second paper focuses on pro-choice Islamic feminist arguments and their impact on society and the self. I argue that advocating for a static version of virtue based on the conservative version of Islam (which is the Islamic revival movement's version of Islam) ultimately creates a neo-colonized society that disregards its own culture and ethics in favor of adopting the culture of the Gulf region, where the Islamic revival movement's version of Islam originates.

The third paper examines the impact of Islamic feminism on the wider feminist discourse. While its goal is to empower Islam rather than Muslim women, Islamic feminism should be criticized for adopting a harmful, toxic religious positivity that tends to silence other feminist advocates. Moreover, this toxic positivity—that says everything about Islam is good and criticizing Islam is completely Islamophobic action—has been used as a means of supporting the political agenda of the Islamic revival movement by enabling it to disown Islam from the connection to the ongoing religious conflict. By promoting the conspiracy theory that secularism and the West are conspiring to destroy Islam, the Islamic feminist movement maintains its relevance and garners more support from the Muslim majority. However, in reality, these countries suffer more from the adverse effects of the Islamic revival movement.

In the fourth paper, I advocate for feminism that focuses on the practical issues Muslim women face rather than focusing on a religious-based identity. This form of identity fails to capture the issues that women in North Africa face and that hinder their rights. This type of feminism will be grounded in the identity that each Muslim-majority country has formed through its economy, land, and history. This method allows each country—Egypt, for instance—to concentrate on the unique economic, social, political, historical, geographical, religious, and epistemological concerns that impact their identity. According to Islamic feminism, it is crucial to discuss Muslim women's rights through their religious identities, which are defined by their culture and version of Islam. However, I contend that feminism for North African women should be anchored in land and history to liberate North African countries from the cultural hegemony of the neo-affluent Gulf countries. I suggest linking Egyptians' current identities to the history of ancient Egypt and resurrecting the ancient Egyptian principles of gender equality.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- **Georgia College & State University**
- **Lecturer** **2024-2025**
Department of Philosophy
- **The University of Georgia**
- **Instructor/ GTA** **2017-2024**
Department of Philosophy
Institute for Women's Studies
Writing Intensive Program, Athens, GA
- **Michigan State University**
- **Visiting Scholar** **2015-2016**
Department of Philosophy, East Lansing, MI
- **Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna**
- **International Graduate Researcher** **2014-2017**
Department of Philosophy, Science, Cognition, and Semiotics, Bologna, Italy
- **International Graduate Fellow** **2014-now**
Institute of Advanced Studies, Bologna, Italy
- **Cairo University**
- **Lecturer** **2019-**
2020
Department of Philosophy, Giza, Egypt
- **Assistant Lecturer** **2014-2019**
Department of Philosophy, Giza, Egypt
- **Teaching Assistant** **2012-2013**
Theoretical and Applied Philosophy Program, Open Education Center, Giza, Egypt.
- **Teaching Assistant** **2009-2013**
Department of Philosophy, Giza, Egypt.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

- 2017, 'The Epistemic Oppression of The Veil,' in *Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(9): 1-12
- 2014, 'The Mechanisms of De-anthropocentrism in Contemporary Environmental Philosophy,' in *Journal of the Department of Philosophy*, 2014, 2(2): 58-70, Cairo University Press, Egypt (in Arabic).
- 2012, 'Fear Circles: The Female Human,' in *Journal of Egyptian Philosophical Association*, 22 (2): 120-132, Cairo, Egypt (in Arabic).

Books

- 2014, *The Phenomenological Approach to Environmental Philosophy*, Cairo University Press, Egypt (in Arabic)

Book Chapters

- 2009, 'The Mechanisms of Linguistic Domination,' in "*Twelve Eyes on Domination*," special book issue in *Journal of Egyptian Philosophical Association*, 18 (2): 45-55, Cairo, Egypt (in Arabic).

Book Reviews

- 2014, "Eco-Phenomenology: Back to the Earth Itself." Invited book review for *Journal of the Department of Philosophy*, Cairo University Press, Egypt (in Arabic)

Works in Progress

- "Water Ethics and Post-Colonialism" (Manuscript/ Under Publishing)
- "What is Islamic Feminism?" (Manuscript).

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- 2025, "What is Islamic Feminism?" to be presented at the APA Eastern, January 8-11, 2025, New York City, New York.
- 2024, "The Fear of God Does not Lead to Virtue," to be presented at the 33rd Annual APPE International Conference, February 22-25, 2024, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- 2022, "Islamization of Facebook: Exclusive Freedom," presented at Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, February 24-27, Cincinnati.
- 2020, "Water Ethics: The Problem of Uncertainty and Colonial Implication on The Nile River Conflict, presented in the American Philosophical Association (APA Eastern Division 2020), Philadelphia, January 8-11.
- 2019, "The Veil and The Sexual Politics" in 26th Annual Women's Studies Student Research Symposium "Feminist Research Across the Disciplines," University of Georgia, Athens, March 29.
- 2019, "The Epistemic Disturbance of Moral-religious Disagreement among Epistemic Peers," in *Abrahamic Reflections on Philosophy, Science and Religion*, Bahçeşehir University's Civilization Studies Centre in Istanbul, Turkey, March 11-14.
- 2018, "Taking off the Veil and the Sexual Politics of Nationalism: The Epistemic Oppression of Resistance" in *Sexual Revolutions - Sexual Politics*, A two-day workshop organized by INSEP International Network for Sexual Ethics and Politics, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, February 22- 23.

- 2017, 'Urban Agriculture in Egyptian Cities: The Epistemological Struggle for Identity,' The Philosophy of the City IV Conference, University of Porto, Portugal, October 11-13.
- 2016 'The Problem of The Right to The Land in The Developing Countries,' The ISUD World Congress in Warsaw, Poland, July 11-15.
- 2015, 'The Female Body in The Urban Street: Sexual Harassment and Game Theory,' The of the City II Conference, Portland State University, Oregon, November 21-22.
- 2013, 'The Mechanisms of De-anthropocentrism in Contemporary Environmental Philosophy,' The Third International Conference "Philosophy and The Future" of Department of Philosophy, Cairo University, November 18-20.
- 2011 'Fear Circles: The Female Human,' The Egyptian Philosophical Associational Department of Philosophy, Cairo University Annual Conference, Swedish Institute, Alex, Egypt, October 9-11.
- 2008, 'The Mechanisms of Linguistic Domination,' The Egyptian Philosophical Association Meeting, Egypt, April 25.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

- 2024 Summer Doctoral Research Assistantship, Graduate School, University of Georgia, USA.
- 2022 Gittler Fellowship, Dept of Philosophy, University of Georgia, USA.
- 2022 Graduate Research Award, Willson Center for Humanities & Arts, University of Georgia, USA.
- 2022 Association for Practical and Professional Ethics scholarship, USA.
- 2017 Foreign Travel Assistance Award, Graduate School, University of Georgia, USA.
- 2017 Graduate Assistantship, Philosophy Dept, University of Georgia, USA.
- 2016 Marco-Polo Scholarship, University of Bologna, Italy.
- 2015 Brains-Fellowship, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Bologna, Italy.
- 2014 University of Bologna president fellowship, Department of Philosophy, Bologna, Italy.
- 2014 Cairo University Award for Best MA thesis, Egypt.
- 2014-2009 Mostafa Abdelrazik Prize for MA in philosophy, Cairo University, Egypt.

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- 2013-2009 Zaki Naguib Mahmoud Prize for a distinguished MA in Philosophy, Cairo University, Egypt.
- 2009 André Lalande Prize for Excellence in Philosophy, Cairo University, Egypt.
- 2009 Atef El-Iraqi Prize for Excellence in Philosophy, Cairo University, Egypt.
- 2009 Ismat Kandil Prize for Excellence in Philosophy, Cairo University, Egypt.
- 2008 Cairo University Award for First Class with Honors in Philosophy, Egypt.

CERTIFICATES

- 2019, Critical Thinking Certificate, Faculty and Leadership Development Center, Cairo University.
- 2019, Exams and Students Evaluation Systems, Certificate, Faculty and Leadership Development Center, Cairo University.
- 2019, Research Ethics Certificate, Faculty and Leadership Development Center, Cairo University
- 2012, Effective Teaching Skills Certificate, Faculty and Leadership Development Center, Cairo University.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- **Classes I Taught as a Lecturer at GCSU**
- - Survey of Philosophy, Fall 2024
- **Classes I Taught as Instructor of Record at UGA:**
- - Social and Political Philosophy PHIL 4210, PHIL 6210 (Writing Intensive Program), Spring 2024.
- - Multicultural Perspectives on Women in the United States WMST 1110, Fall 2022.
- - Introduction to Ethics PHIL 2030, Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Spring 2020, Fall 2019.
- - Introduction to Philosophy PHIL 2010, Spring 2023, Fall 2021, Fall 2020. (I focused in this class on Western and non- western philosophies).
- - Introduction to Ethics PHIL 2030E, Summer 2021 (Online).
- - Introduction to Philosophy PHIL 2010, Summer 2020 (Online).
- **Classes I Taught as a Teaching Assistant at UGA:**
- - Biomedical Ethics PHIL 3220, Spring 2024, Spring 2021 (Grader).
- - Symbolic Logic PHIL 2500, Spring 2019, Fall 2017
- - Introduction to Ethics PHIL 2030, Fall 2018.
- - Introduction to Philosophy PHIL 2010, Spring 2018.

- **Classes I prepared to Teach:**
- - Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, Undergraduate.
- - Ethics of Depression, Undergraduate and Graduate.
- - Climate Change and Ethics, Undergraduate.
- - Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Philosophies, Undergraduate and Graduate.
- - Water Ethics and Postcolonial Policies, Undergraduate and Graduate.
- **Classes I am competent to Teach:**
- - Artificial Intelligence.
- - Symbolic Logic.
- - Cognitive Science

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

- 2024-now, Referee at Hypatia Journal.
- 2020-2021, World Leader at International Student Life at UGA, The University of Georgia, Athens.
- 2017-now, Editor at Journal of Agricultural & Environmental Ethics (JAGE);
<https://www.editorialmanager.com/jage/Default.aspx?pg=login.asp&username=&a=r>
- 2011-2014 Student Outreach Advisor, Cairo University, Egypt

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Admin/Influencer in the following feminist movements on social media groups:
 - The Hijab is not an Obligation (in Arabic, عائدون، فريضة، الحجاب ليس فريضة)
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/alhigaab>
 - Why did they take the hijab off? (women's revaluation) (in Arabic, لماذا خلعن الحجاب!-، (ثورة النساء))
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2027788424199119>
 - Our identity is Egyptian, not Arabian (in Arabic, هويتنا مصرية لا عربية)
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/633129680040916>
- A member in translation groups on the following topics
 - Epistemic and psychological issues of current Egyptian Muslim women at Dar Al Yasmien for Publishing and Distribution, Giza, Egypt.

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

University of Georgia (Classes for Ph.D., Graduate Certificate, MS, MA)

Philosophy Dept, Women's Studies Dept, Artificial Intelligence Dept, Political Science Dept, and Writing Intensive Program.

Spring 2024

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WIPP 7001 Pedagogy of Writing Intensive Program

Fall 2022

PHIL 6550 Artificial Intelligence

WMST 7770 Teaching in WMST

Fall 2021

WMST 6250 Special Topics in WMST (Climate Change and Gender)

Spring 2020

WMST 8011 Feminist Research Methods

Fall 2019

SOCI 8290 Global Gender

Spring 2019

POLS 8060 Systems in Political Philosophy

WMST 7010 Graduate Introduction to Women's Studies

WMST 8070 Media and Diversity

Fall 2018

PHIL 6510 Deductive Systems

PHIL 8610 Seminar in Epistemology

Spring 2018

PHIL 6700 Philosophy and Race

PHIL 8010 Seminar in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

PHIL 8210 Seminar in Political Philosophy

Fall 2017

PHIL 7010 Teaching Philosophy

PHIL 8200 Seminar in Ethics

WMST 8020 Feminist Theories

Cairo University (Classes for MA)

Philosophy Department

Fall 2009

Methods of Philosophical Research.

Latin.

Philosophical Texts in a Modern European Language.

Spring 2010

Sources of Islamic Philosophy.

Sources of Modern Philosophy.

Sources of Contemporary Philosophy.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- APA- American Philosophical Association, USA.
- APPE- Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, USA.
- ISEE – International Society for Environmental Ethics, USA.

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- FEAST- Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory, USA.
- Institute of Advanced Studies, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, Italy.
- Egyptian Philosophical Association, Egypt.
- Middle East Studies Association, USA.
- Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), USA.
- National Council for Women, Egypt.

REFERENCES

Prof. Chris Cuomo
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Prof. Piers Stephens
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Prof. René Jagnow
rjagnow@uga.edu

Prof. Melissa Fahmy
meseymou@uga.edu