RELIGION, GENDER, AND ENVIRONMENTALISM IN THE MENA:
Old Frontiers and New Directions

Presented by:
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This talk explores current debates in sustainable development as they relate to the ways in which environmentalism, gender, and social justice have been framed in the past few decades. Focusing on the MENA region, Dr. Pemberton looks at how criticisms of development policies among environmental and women’s rights activists have shifted in recent years. Activists more recently have moved away from so-called “ecofeminist” paradigms that posit a privileged bond between women and nature and towards a more gender-inclusive, grassroots model of environmentalism. This model draws upon locally sourced knowledge, seeks out social actors as strategic partners in creating and managing sustainable development strategies, and marshals religiously significant paradigms of environmental and social justice (including Qur’anic notions of khalifah). Finally, the discussion proposes that the relatively recent emergence of development-entrepreneurship models, coupled with religious grassroots activism, offers a series of best practices that have the potential to build transformational, gender-sensitive environmental movements that can achieve long-term success in addressing some of the most pressing environmental dilemmas in the region.

Kelly Pemberton is Associate Professor of Religion and Women's Studies at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and advisor to the M.A. Program in Hinduism and Islam in the department of religion. She received an M.A. in international studies and comparative religion from the University of Washington, Seattle, and a Ph.D. in religion from Columbia University. Her research focuses on South Asia and the Middle East in four key areas: Sufi mysticism, questions of religious and spiritual authority, civil society, and Islamic activism, especially as these relate to gender. Her current research projects are two monographs: one on Islamic Medicine in Pakistan, India, Turkey, and Egypt, and a global comparative study of Islamic gender activism.

DATE:
Tuesday May 5th, 2015

TIME:
6:00 pm

VENUE:
Auditorium

This lecture will be conducted in English