

## UNH Sidore Lecture March 23 to Explore Gender Roles in Islamic Scripture

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*UNH News Bureau*

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The Saul O Sidore Memorial Lecture Series continues at the University of New Hampshire this month with guest speaker Barbara Stowasser of Georgetown University.

Stowasser will present "Scripture and Gender in Islam: A Changing Religious Discourse," Thursday, March 23, 12:40 to 2 p.m., in the Memorial Union Building theater II. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Director of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown, Stowasser is also the author of "Women in the Qur'an: Traditions and Interpretations." This study in scripturalist literature and its symbols has two goals, according to Stowasser: "to fully tell the tales themselves and report the lessons and laws revealed about, and for, the women of Islamic sacred history, and to show the importance of the female symbol in the Islamic formulation of self-identity."

Of continued importance to Stowasser is the greater search for Islam's identity and role in the modern world as viewed by those who support social change and scriptural reinterpretation of Muslim philosophy. Her Sidore talk will focus on the ways the contemporary age has brought new perspectives on reading scripture, new scripturalist readings of gender and their relationship in both religious and political discourse.

The 1999-2000 Sidore Lecture Series complements a campus-wide project focused on the changing roles of women and religion. The final lecture will be presented Thursday, April 20, by Catherine Wessinger, an expert in new religions and women's leadership in so-called "cults."

The Sidore Lecture Series was established in 1965 in memory of Saul O Sidore, of Manchester. The purpose

of the series is to offer programs that raise critical and sometimes controversial issues facing society. The series is sponsored by the Sidore Foundation, the UNH Center for Humanities and the UNH Foundation.

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