

Name:	Dr. Nur Yasemin Ural
Email address:	nur.ural@fu-berlin.de
Course title:	Islam and the West – Islam in the West
Track:	A-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	4

Course description

More than fifteen years after the September 11 attacks and subsequent war on terror, the issue whether there is or in fact has ever been a “clash of civilisations” is still being highly debated among both scholars and politicians. In the meantime, a series of protests and demonstrations across the Middle East and North Africa – the Green Revolution in Iran, the Arab Spring, and the Gezi Protests in Turkey – have once more raised questions with regard to the viability of democracy in Muslim countries. Moreover, violent shootings that took place in Paris aiming at journalists and urban lifestyle, as in different parts of the world, on the one hand, and the increasing refugee flows from Muslim countries on the other, attributed the issue of Muslim presence in Europe utmost urgency and importance. While in Europe reports document a significant rise in Islamophobic and racist incidents over the last years, Muslims increasingly claim rights on the grounds that they are Europeans. In this regard, we will discuss the more recent rise of anti-Islamic currents in the political landscape of Europe as well as in the US.

In light of the current conjecture, “the West” and “Islam” – two seemingly opposing notions – gained a crucial role in the debates that structure the public opinion and political atmosphere in Europe as well as in North America. What does it mean to be “Western”? What does “Islam” stand for? Are these concepts as mutually exclusive as it is commonly believed? How do Muslims perceive the West and vice versa? Why and how do ideas about oneself and the other change over time?

This course aims at empowering students to critically examine the dichotomies – such as “Islam” vs. “the West” – that are prevalent in their everyday lives, the public sphere, and above all within the context of global conflicts. Hence, cross-cultural encounters and the emergence of new forms of identity as a result thereof will be of central interest. Excursions and meeting Muslims from Berlin will help us explore the diversity of Islam in the midst of a “Western” environment.

Student profile

Open to everybody

Prerequisites

None

Course requirements

1. Attendance and participation

2. Presentation

Students will be required to present a text from the reading list. The presentation should summarize the text, introduce the terminology that is used and conclude with investigative questions.

3. Essay

Participants are required to take an in-class examination in which they will answer two questions out of four in order to discuss and elaborate on the topics and issues addressed during the course.

Grading

- 1. Attendance and participation: 20%
- 2. Presentation: 30%
- 3. Essay: 50%

Reading

A course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Monday, July 24, 2017	<p>"Drawing a Line" - Social/Cultural Boundaries and the Construction of the "Other"</p> <p>Introduction: Deconstructing "the West" and "Islam"</p> <p>Film: "An Islamic History of Europe"</p> <p>David Waines, "The foundations of Islam" pp. 1-59.</p> <p>Discussion</p>
Thursday, July 27, 2017	<p>Religion and Religious Identities in the (Post-)Modern World</p> <p>In this section, the meanings of religiosities will be discussed with respect to its so-called opposition, namely secularism as an intrinsic component of the (post-)modern world. Is modernity compatible with religion at all?</p> <p>Charles Taylor, "Introduction", <i>A Secular Age</i>, Harvard University Press, London, 2007. pp. 1-22.</p> <p>José Casanova, "The Secular and Secularisms", <i>Social Research</i>, vol. 76, No: 4, Winter 2009, pp. 1049-66.</p>
Monday, July 31, 2017	<p>"The West and the Rest" - Colonial and Oriental Origins of Cultural Difference</p> <p>This session will be devoted to a discussion about the dichotomous construction of "the West" as a "modern, progressive, scientific, rational" entity and "the rest" as the "yet to be modern", backwards, traditional, irrational</p>

	<p>one within the framework of (post)colonialism. The mobilization of analytical categories of discourse, power and domination will come under scrutiny.</p> <p>Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" in Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben, (eds.) <i>Formations of Modernity</i>, 1992, pp.185-225.</p> <p>Edward Said, "Introduction", <i>Orientalism</i>, 1978 pp.1-28.</p>
<p>Thursday, August 3, 2017</p>	<p>What Place for Islam in the West? Production of Muslimhood</p> <p>This session will focus on the ways in which Islam is represented and narrated by the mainstream media as well as museum culture in the West. Special attention will be given to the power dynamics in the construction of Islam, its essence and history between modernity and tradition.</p> <p>Spielhaus, Riem, "Narratives of Belonging and Exclusion: Offering the Museum of Islamic Art as a lieu d'identité" pp. 75-92.</p> <p>Excursion: Museum of Islamic Art</p>
<p>Monday, August 7, 2017</p>	<p>Islam in the Western Public Sphere: An Ultimate Source of Conflict?</p> <p>This session will touch upon the public discussions in various Western countries in order to understand the daily experiences of Muslims in Europe and the strategies developed to cope with stigmatizations around the context specific concepts such as assimilation, integration, and accommodation along with their critical interpretations.</p> <p>Talal Asad, "Muslims as a "Religious Minority" in Europe" in <i>Formations of the Secular</i>, 2007, pp. 159-180.</p> <p>Nilüfer Göle, "Decentering Europe, Recentring Islam", <i>New Literary History</i>, 2012, pp. 665-685.</p> <p>Guest Lecture: TBA</p>
<p>Thursday, August 10, 2017</p>	<p>Islam in Europe and the Emergence of Hybrid Identities</p> <p>The controversies generated by new claims of the Muslims in Europe will be discussed with reference to three particular cases that were prominent in public representations: Rushdie affair in Britain, Cartoon controversies in Denmark and Headscarf issue in</p>

	<p>France.</p> <p>Mahmood, Saba, "Religious Reson and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide? pp. 836-62.</p> <p>Documentary: Headmaster and Headscarves, BBC.</p> <p>Amir-Moazami, Schirin, "Investigating the Secular Body: The Politics of the Male Circumcision Debate in Germany", <i>ReOrient</i>, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 2016), pp. 147-170</p>
<p>Monday, August 14, 2017</p>	<p>Craving for Democracy or Power? – New Social Movements in the World</p> <p>The last couple of years witnessed mobilizations of leftwing currents in the Middle East and rightwing ideologies in the West, including populist movements. This final section will scrutinize these recent claims for democracy and power in the Middle East and the rise of anti-Islamic currents in the West through the lens of the paradigm of "modernity vs. religion".</p> <p>Ahmed, Sara, "Politics of Fear", 2003, pp. 377-98</p> <p>Betz, Hans-Georg, "Mosques, minarets, Burqas and Other Essential Threats: The Populist Right's Campagne against Islam in the Western Europe", 2013, pp. 71-88</p> <p>Documentary: "Oecumenopolis: City without limits"</p>
<p>Thursday, August 17, 2017</p>	<p>Excursion: Mosque visit and discussion with local actors</p> <p>In-Class Exam</p>

*Field trips may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, it may be necessary to adjust the class meeting times.