

Name: Aydin Sür

Email address: aydin.suer@web.de

Course title: Islam & the West - Transcending the Dichotomy

Track: B-Track

Language of instruction: English

Contact hours: 48 (6 per day)

ECTS-Credits: 4

Course description

The creation of boundaries is essential when it comes to constituting collective identities. For it is those boundaries which define the group, i.e. determine who belongs to "us" and who does not. Thus identity constructions always contain processes of both inclusion as well as exclusion. The "others" are regarded as different in terms of race, religion, language, sex etc.

This act of "othering" will be the subject of a theoretical introduction at the beginning of our course. Key aspects of this approach will be the constructedness of identities and the idea that collectives are to be seen as "imagined communities".

Using our newly acquired terminology we will then focus on the mutual otherings of both "the West" and "Islam". After reflecting on religion as an identity factor in the modern world we will discuss the strategies that Islam in particular has been developing with respect to the challenges of modernity.

The 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 crosscultural 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

Everybody 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. Report or synopsis

Students will be asked to hand in either a report of one session or a synopsis of one of the texts from the reading list.

4. Essay

Participants are required to hand in a five-page essay in which they will discuss a question that seems relevant to them with regard to our course topic. The essay should contain references to at least three of the texts from the reading list.

Grading

1. Attendance and participation: 15%
2. Presentation: 20%
3. Report/Synopsis: 15%
4. Essay: 50%

Literature

A course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program
Tuesday, July 20, 2010	"Drawing a Line" - Social/Cultural Boundaries and the Construction of the "Other"
Friday, July 23, 2010	Religion and Religious Identities in the (Post-)Modern World
Tuesday, July 27, 2010	"The West and the Rest" - The Cultural Construction of Global Conflicts
Friday, July 30, 2010	Islam and the Challenge of Modernity - The Dichotomy of Islamisation vs. Westernisation
Tuesday, August 3, 2010	Excursion
Friday, August 6, 2010	Assimilation vs. Integration - Islam in Europe and the Emergence of Hybrid Identities Excursion
Tuesday, August 10, 2010	Guest Lecture Excursion
Friday, August 13, 2010	Alternative Discourses - State and Outlook