



Course Title and Number: Understanding Civilisations: Islam and the West

Instructor: Hadi Enayat

Course Objectives:

The aim of this course is to focus on the historical, political and religious relationships between 'Islam' and the 'West'. Islam has for centuries been Europe's neighbour and cultural contestant with a history of conflict and co-existence. Since September 11 there has been increasing talk of a 'clash of civilisations', but globalisation has also created an interdependency of faiths which requires greater co-operation, understanding and dialogue. A recurrent theme of this course will be whether it is possible to separate the world into monolithic entities called 'Islam' and the 'West'. Why is one defined in terms of religion and the other a geographical designation? Further, we are increasingly witnessing 'Islam in the West'. Muslims are not confined to the Middle East but have spread in large numbers to Europe and the United States and there have been Islamic communities living in the Balkans and in parts of southern Europe for centuries. Another theme will be the relations between religion and state in Islam and Christianity. Is Islam inherently resistant to secularisation as some scholars and Islamic activists believe?

The first part of the course will examine the early history of Islam and Christianity and the main themes and episodes of the Crusades and the 'golden age' of Islamic Spain which witnessed the mingling of Islamic, Christian and Jewish cultures. The rise of the West will be considered in the context of capitalism and colonialism leading to the creation of the modern state system in the Middle East, the rise of 'Islamic fundamentalism' and the current 'war on terror'.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students should aim to demonstrate an increasing ability to put forward arguments based on assigned readings and current issues and debates, in written work and class discussions. By the end of the course students should have some appreciation of the diversity of 'Islam' and its various relations with Western modernity.

Due to the evolving situations, the topics, co-curricular activities and the readings used for this course are subject to change. An updated outline and schedule is given to students at the start of each course.

Required Text:

Hourani: *A History of the Arab Peoples*.

G. Kepel: *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West*.

M. Ruthven: *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*.

Further Reading will include:

- Roy, *Globalised Islam*
- G. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*
- T. Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*
- J. Cesari, *Islam and the West*
- F. Fukuyama, *After the Neo-cons*
- H. Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*
- J. Burke, *Al-Qaeda*
- Y. Courbage & P. Fargue, *Christians and Jews under Islam*
- M. Ruthven, *Islam in the World*
- 'Jihad: Idea and History' by Patricia Crone from the opendemocracy website
- 'Arab Achievements in Science and Philosophy' from .M. Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*'
- 'Trajectories of Political Islam: Egypt, Iran and Turkey', *Political Studies Quarterly*.
- 'What is Al-Qaeda?', Chapter 1 from J. Burke's *Al-Qaeda*, (2003)
- 'A New American Foreign Policy', Chapter from F. Fukuyama, *After the Neo-Cons*, (2005)

Topics covered will include:

- Overview of the course, What is Islam? What is the 'West'?
- The Early Expansion of Islam. The Islamic Middle Periods. The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe.
- The Crusades. Film: 'The Crusades' by Terry Jones. Islamic Empires in the Early Modern Period.
- The Coming of the West. The Making of the Modern Middle East: State Formation, Revolution and War.
- The Rise of 'Islamic fundamentalism'. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Film: 'People's Century'.
- The Rise of 'Islamic fundamentalism' (continued): Theories of Islamic fundamentalism and their critics. A Clash of Civilisations?
- Current Crisis: Al-Qaeda and the War on Terror
- Film: 'The Power of Nightmares' (part one)
- The Current Crisis (continued): The war in Iraq.
- Islam in the West. Muslim Communities in Europe and the United States.
- Islamic Political Movements: The Failure of Political Islam? Out of Class Excursion.
- Review of the Course. Islam and the West: A False Dichotomy?

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Co-curricular activities will include:

- **Maida Vale Mosque and Islamic Centre**

A local mosque for the Muslim population of this central London area, combined with an Islamic cultural centre. Students receive a presentation on issues concerning the practice of Islam in Europe and North America, concluding with a question and answer session leading to further discussion.

Instructional Methods:

A series of lectures, films and class excursions will make up the core of the course. Students will also give presentations based on assigned readings.

Assessment Plan:

Presentation and Informed Participation	15%
Mid-Term Exam:	35%
Essay:	45%

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Co-Curricular excursion: *Islam and the West*

Istanbul Study Tour

Fall 2007 marked the inaugural semester for a study tour to Istanbul, a co-curricular component of the *Understanding Civilizations: Islam and the West* elective course. More than twenty students opted to participate in this optional field excursion. The faculty teaching the course, [Hadi Enayat](#), asked students to review the book *Istanbul: Memories of a City* by Orhan Pamuk (The Nobel Prize in Literature 2006). The study tour was aimed at contextualizing the reading and give a firsthand experience of the city. The following locations were visited during the excursion.



Topkapi Palace. Topkapi is the former Imperial residence from where the Great Ottoman Empire was ruled. Today a spectacular museum that has one of the largest collections of Chinese and Japanese porcelain and the very famous treasury of the Royal Family.



Haghia-Sophia. The magnificent Byzantine Church is one of the finest and largest architectural works of art in the world. It has been nominated to be the eighth wonder of the world by many historians.

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Blue Mosque. Sultan Ahmet Mosque is also known as the Blue Mosque for the blue tiles adorning the walls of its interior. It was built between 1609 and 1616, during the rule of Ahmed I. Like many other mosques, it also comprises a tomb of the founder, a madrasah and a hospice.



Grand Bazaar. Grand Bazaar, with around 4000 shops, is Turkey's largest covered market offering excellent shopping, including beautiful Turkish carpets: glazed tiles and pottery: copper and brassware: apparel made of leather, cotton and wool: meerschaum pipes: alabaster bookends and ashtrays: and a variety of other goods.



Egyptian Bazaar. Egyptian Bazaar is an unforgettable excursion encompassing two continents, Europe and Asia. This is prime retail space, right at the southern end of the Galata Bridge on the Golden Horn in the Eminönü district. It was built in 1664 is filled with the fragrance of the exotic East. Spices, dried fruits, nuts and seeds, lokum (Turkish Delight) and other edibles fill most of the shops, though jewelry and other high-margin goods have begun to move in.

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Süleymaniye Mosque. This is the mosque of Sultan Süleyman "The Magnificent" built in the 16th century by Sinan, one of the most famous architects of all time.



Turkish Islamic Arts Museum. The Turkish Islamic Arts Museum, across from the Blue Mosque, is a treasure-house of beautiful objects from the Ottoman (14th to 20th centuries), Seljuk (11th to 13th centuries), and earlier periods beginning in the 8th century. The best art was religious art during the Ottoman Empire, just as it was in medieval Europe.



Archeological Museums. Turkey's archeological museums hold outstanding collections of art from the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome. When archeology became a science in the 19th century, most of the Near East was ruled by the Ottoman sultan, who gathered an impressive collection of items.

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