

## Understanding Civilisations: Islam and The West



### Faculty Contact Information

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Office Hour information:**

### Course Information

#### Course Description

This course focuses 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, 2001 there has been increasing talk of a 'clash of civilisations', but globalisation has also created an interdependency of faiths that requires greater co-operation, understanding, and dialogue. A recurrent theme of this course is 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 geopolitical 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 on the course is the issue of 'alternative modernities'. Is modernity Western or are there viable alternatives rooted in non-Western civilisations such as Islam? The first part of the course examines 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. In the second part, the rise of the West is 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 Goals

Through selected readings this course explores the changing locus and significance of the "cultural other" in the constructions of Islam and the West in the contemporary world. Islam and the West have become powerful connotations, discursive realities, and influential constructions beyond their mere terminological meaning. They inform people's behaviour and have become inscribed in everyday social and political practice. This course addresses and analyses the implications of these powerful discursive constructions on politics as well as the role and function of the ubiquitous notion of intercultural dialogue.

This course is not designed to find out who is right or who is wrong between Islam and the West. Rather, the task is to deconstruct commonly assumed ideas about the other and to look at the

historical development within the specific context of abstract ideas like secularity, religiosity, gender, human rights, freedom, and many more.

### Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Produce arguments based on assigned readings and current issues and debates, in written work, and class discussions
2. Differentiate the diversity of 'Islam' and its various relations with Western modernity

### Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Presentation	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Midterm Exam	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Term-paper	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

### Brief Assessment Overview

#### Assessment 1: Presentation

##### Due:

For this assignment students are required to research, analyse, and evaluate one aspect of Islam and the West and facilitate a 15-minute presentation via PowerPoint which includes images, with an additional 5 minutes for Q&A.

#### Assessment 2: Mid-term Exam

##### Due:

An exam covering content explored so far in the class.

#### Assessment 3: Research Essay (3,000 words)

##### Due:

3,000 words on one of the topics, below. Students may choose their own essay topics but they must be approved in advance.

- 1) How did Islam respond to the rise of the West? (Here you should choose one Islamic movement e.g. the Muslim Brotherhood and write a critical exposition of their interpretation of Islam and its relations with the West).
- 2) In what sense are contemporary Islamic movements 'fundamentalist'?
- 3) Why is the issue of women and the family so important to Islamic fundamentalists?
- 4) Discuss the significance of the veil in Islam. Why has the veil become so popular amongst some Muslim communities?

- 5) Can Islam liberate women? (Here you should give a critical exposition of the ideas of an Islamic feminist e.g. Fatima Mernissi).
- 6) Is Islam incompatible with democracy?
- 7) Why did the French government ban the veil from classrooms in 2004? Was it right in doing so?
- 8) 'American Muslims are better integrated and less attracted to radicalism than European Muslims'. Discuss.

## Grading

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
<b>A</b> (93- 100%) <b>A-</b> (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
<b>B+</b> (87-89%) <b>B</b> (83-86%) <b>B-</b> (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
<b>C+</b> (77-79%) <b>C</b> (73-76%) <b>C-</b> (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of cultural impact with few examples

		or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors		
<b>D (60-69%)</b>	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact
<b>F (0-59%)</b>	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact

### Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise notes. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible

to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

### Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

### Required Readings

Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, Third Edition, Wiley Blackwell, 2017.

### Additional Resources and Readings

J. Cesari, When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States

R. Euben and M. Zaman (eds), Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought

N. Hashemi, Islam, Secularism and Liberal Democracy

O. Roy, Globalised Islam

O. Roy, Secularism Confronts Islam

P. Mandeville, Global Political Islam

T. Ramadan, Western Muslims and the Future of Islam

P. Lewis, Young, British and Muslim

D. Mcgoldrick, Human Rights and Religion: The Islamic Headscarf Debate in Europe

F. Mernissi, Beyond the Veil

R. Meijer (ed), Global Salafism

Vali Nasr, The Shii Revival

S. Huntington, The Clash of Civilisations

G. Salibi, Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance

M. Said, Interpreting the Quran

A. Wadud, Inside the Gender Jihad

S. Zubaida, Beyond Islam

### [MyStudy@FIE](#)

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

### [FIE's Values in the Curriculum](#)

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

### [Topics](#)

- What is 'Islam'? What is the 'West'? Islam, Muhammad, and the Quran
- The Early Expansion of Islam; the Sunni-Shii Schism
- The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe; Islam and Science
- The Crusades
- Islamic Art and Architecture
- The Ottoman Empire; The Emergence of Modern Turkey
- The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the West
- The Rise of the West and the Making of the Modern Middle East
- Contemporary Islamic Movements: Fundamentalism and Islamism; Al-Qaeda and the 'War on Terror'; Liberal Islam
- Islam and Gender
- 'Islam in the West'; Muslim Communities in Europe and the United States; Turkey and the European Union
- A Clash of Civilisations?

### [Possible co-curricular activities](#)

- Study Tour to Leicester

- Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington
- Suleymaniye Mosque and UK Turkish Islamic Cultural Centre, Shoreditch
- Al-Manaar: Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, North Kensington

### Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

### Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit [www.fie.org.uk/wst](http://www.fie.org.uk/wst).

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

### Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

### Additional Policies and Resources

#### Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE's qualified and accredited counsellor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, simply email [studentlife@fie.org.uk](mailto:studentlife@fie.org.uk).

If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

### Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.