#### COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	Communications, Arts and Social Sciences	
Programme:	Political Science	
FHEQ Level:	5	
Course Title:	Islam and the West	
Course Code:	PLT 5410	
Course Leader:	Professor Alex Seago	
Student Engagement Hours:	120	
Lectures:	22.5	
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5	
Independent / Guided Learning:	75	
Semester:	FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER	
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits	

#### **Course Description:**

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 civilizations", but globalization 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 secularization as some scholars believe?

Pre-requisites: PLT 3100 or PLT 3105 or INR 4100 or INR 4105 or HST 3100 or HST 3105

# Aims and Objectives:

- Give students a critical perspective on debates surrounding 'Orientalism' and the 'clash of civilisations' thesis
- Give students a comparative perspective on Islam and its relationship with the 'Judeo- Christian' tradition both theologically and historically.

• Throw light on the diversity of contemporary Islamic movements and their attitude to various aspects of 'Western modernity' such as democracy, human rights, feminism and secularism.

### **Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme

outcomes. 5A(iii); 5B(i); 5B(ii); 5B(iii); 5C(i); 5C(ii); 5C(iii); 5D(ii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at: <u>https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/</u>

#### Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a critical engagement with major thinkers and intellectual paradigms in the study of 'Islam and the West'
- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the political implications of religious institutions, practices and systems as they affect relations between 'Islam and the West'.
- Demonstrates a critical and theoretical engagement with core problems and issues faced in the study of 'Islam and the West'
- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the continuities and transformations evident in the relations between 'Islam and the West'
- Completes assigned work with a degree of clarity, technical competence and critical thinking, and a degree of independence and capacity for self-evaluation, appropriate for a 5000-level course

# Indicative Content:

- An understanding of debates surrounding Orientalism and the 'clash of civilisations' thesis.
- An introduction to some of the key issues in Islamic theology and jurisprudence and the relationship between Islam and the 'Judeo-Christian Tradition'.
- An exploration of some of the key episodes in medieval Islamic history and their impact on the Christian West especially the Crusades and 'Islamic Science'.
- An introduction to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its implications for Islam-West relations.
- An analysis of contemporary 'Islamism' and 'Islamic fundamentalism' and the attitude of these movements to various aspects of 'Western modernity': secularism, human rights, democracy etc ..
- An introduction to debates surrounding Islam and Gender.
- An exploration of some of the central issues surrounding 'Islam in the West' i.e. Muslims living in Western contexts.
- Is 'Islam and the West' a valid paradigm?

#### Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

#### **Teaching Methodology:**

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of

documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes <u>prepared</u>.

### **Bibliography:**

- Malise Ruthven: 'Islam: A Very Short Introduction' (OUP, 2000)
- Reza Aslan, 'No God but God: The Origins, Evolution and Future of Islam', (Arrow, 2006).
- Sami Zubaida, 'Beyond Islam', (I. B Tauris, 2011).

Major	Nature of Change	Date Approved &	Change
or		Approval Body	Actioned
Minor		(School or LTPC)	by
Change			Academic
?			Registry

Change Log for this CSD: