ISLAM AND EUROPE: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS

Course description:

This course provides an overview of the history and present condition of Muslims and Islam in non-Muslim majority settings in Western Europe. It will introduce students to basic theoretical concepts, necessary for studying Muslims from a sociological perspective as well as the recipient societies in which they have settled in Europe.

The first part of the course is devoted to the analysis of key terms and concepts that will serve as the foundation for the remaining parts of the course. Different concepts such as “Islam”, “Islamism”, “Shari’a”, and “Secularism” will be discussed in their historical context. In the second section, the institutionalization of Islam in Europe will be examined in its complex and highly nation-specific relationship to religious state policies, especially in France, Germany, and Great Britain. Finally, we will look at the different aspects of the construction of religious authority. Emphasis will be put on the shaping of Muslim religiosity, i.e., the discursive conceptions and social practices of Shari'a within European contexts.

Required texts:

Tariq Ramadan, Western Muslims and the Future of Islam (Oxford University Press, 2004)

Photocopied course reader

Course work:

Midterm exam: 20%
Paper: 25%
Final exam: 25%
Attendance and participation: 30%
Schedule:

Session 1: Introduction to the topic and the course program

Film: “Inside Islam” or “Paradise found”

Session 2: Islam, Shari’a, Islamism, and Secularization: Introduction to elementary concepts


Session 3: Islam and arrangements of state, nation and religion (I): Britain – multiculturalism at work


Session 4: Islam and arrangements of state, nation and religion (II): France and the concept of laïcité


Session 5: Islam and arrangements of state, nation and religion (III): Germany and the discours of integration

Session 6: Mid-term exam

Session 7: The Headscarf Controversies in France and Germany


Documentary: “Headmasters and Headscarves”

Session 8: Religious authority and its transformation in Europe (3.11.2010)


Session 9: At home in Europe - Muslims in Europe (Project of the Open Society Institute)

Guest speaker: Nina Mühe

Session 10: Media-mediated Islam: The case of IslamOnline.net


Session 11: The Danish Cartoon Affair


Session 12: Conceptions of Islamic Law in Western Europe


Session 13: Final exam