

Islam, Politics, & Britain: A Case Study of London's East End

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: LNDN 3759

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Instructor: joyfrith@gmail.com

Course Description

In the early twenty-first century, the religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity of British society remains highly relevant, controversial, and often politically-charged. This course examines how this complex diversity shapes and defines our understanding of modern Britain, through a specific focus on Muslim communities in London and the nature of their interactions with wider society. Students analyse the ways in which imperialism and its legacy, as well as Britain's global relationships, have influenced political policies and social attitudes toward multiculturalism and Muslim groups in particular. Emphasis is placed on an analysis of intercultural relations and how they have shaped the political landscape, ideas about the meaning of Britishness, and citizenship debates. Theories of the ways in which cultural "subjects" are constructed, contested, and negotiated are examined in relation to the racial ideologies that characterised British imperialism and continue to shape post-colonial society. Main themes include: the politics of immigration and race relations; varieties of experience among ethnic groups; gender, religion and politics; Islamic artistic and cultural forms; representations of Muslim communities within British culture and the media; the construction and expression of ethnic identities; violence and racial oppression; and the rise and consequences of Islamic fundamentalism.

Taking advantage of our location, the course highlights spaces of diaspora identity in London, such as Banglatown in Spitalfields, and the west London borough of Southall. We also examine the social, economic and cultural impact of ethnic diversity and Islamic culture upon the urban environment, focusing on architecture, commerce, style, food cultures, music, and religion within the cityscape. Explorations of the city's neighbourhoods, galleries, museums,

and cultural venues allow students to more fully understand the complex political and social relations that have shaped and continue to characterise multicultural Britain.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to key themes in the development of multiculturalism and Muslim Britain in particular. Emphasis is placed on creating a context in which to understand both the personal and collective experiences of ethnic communities from a wide range of cultural, religious, ethnic, and national back-grounds. Students are encouraged to understand contemporary race relations in Britain through their own observations and travel experiences in the UK, which are subsequently integrated into class discussion and assessment. Through seminar discussions, field classes, and the interpretation of a variety of sources, including personal narratives, literature, film, government reports, and secondary texts, students will further develop their analytical skills and ability to engage in critical debate. Written work will enable students to conduct research, devise complex arguments, and present their findings to the class. The course better enables students living in London to understand critically the cultures in which they are immersed.

Methodology

Field visits

Field classes form an important element of the course; attendance at these classes is mandatory. Field classes present a valuable opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the varied spaces and places of multicultural Britain and provide direct interaction with a wide range of ethnically diverse communities. They also illuminate the ways in which British and „British Muslim“ cultures and identities are showcased in contemporary London. In these classes we will learn about the forces which have structured, and continue to influence, Muslim cultures and society in Britain. We will interpret the sites we visit through class discussion as well as in written work.

Field studies for this course include: walking tours of Spitalfields and Brick Lane; a visit to the Central London Mosque and Islamic Centre, and a guided tour of the Islamic gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the My Education calendar in order to gain further insights into the nature of multicultural London. The following in particular are recommended: Brixton Market; Neasden Temple; Tibetan Buddhist Centre; and walks of Chinatown and Southall.

NB. Students are responsible for ensuring that they sign the class register at the beginning of each class and field study. Students arriving late to any class must ensure they sign the register at the end of class.

Required Reading / Materials

Tahir Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure* (London: Zed, 2005).

- paperback available from the book depository.co.uk or Amazon.co.uk from £11

Ed Husain, *The Islamist* (London: Penguin, 2004).

- paperback available as above

Recommended Readings

**denotes fiction

Tahir Abbas, ed. *Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

**Monica Ali, *Brick Lane* (2004).

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *Mixed Feelings: The Complex Lives of Mixed-Race Britons* (London: The Women's Press, 2001).

John Eade et. al. eds. *Tales of Three Generations of Bengalis in Britain*, Oral History and Socio-Cultural Heritage Project,

Nirmul Committee, (London 2006).

Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Ed Glinert, *East End Chronicles: Three Hundred Years of Mystery and Mayhem* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).

Rahila Gupta, ed. *From Homebreakers to Jailbreakers: Southall Black Sisters* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

Tarquin Hall, *Salaam Brick Lane: A Year in the New East End* (London: John Murray, 2005).

James Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging: Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871 –1971* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

Peter Hopkins and Richard Gale, eds. *Muslims in Britain: Race, Place and Identities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

J. Jacobson, *Islam in Transition: Religion and Identity among British Pakistani Youth* (London: Routledge, 1998).

**Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991)

**Andrea Levy, *Small Island* (London: Review, 2005).

Rachel Lichtenstein, *On Brick Lane* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2007).

J. M. Mackenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: MUP, 1986).

Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1994).

**Colin McInnes, *City of Spades* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964).

Robert Miles, *Racism after Race Relations* (London: Routledge, 1993).

Tariq Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

David Morley and Kevin Robins, eds. *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Kwesi Owusu, ed. *Black British Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 2000).

Panikos Panayi, *Spicing Up Britain: The Multicultural History of British Food* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008).

Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997).

Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: Harper Collins, 1999).

Richard Phillips, ed. *Muslim Spaces of Hope: Geographies of Possibility in Britain and the West* (London: Zed Books, 2009).

E. Poole, *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (London: Runnymede Trust, 2002).

Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism* (London: Granta, 1991).

**Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (Dover: The Consortium 1988).

Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, revised edition (London: Penguin, 1994).

**Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956)

**Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000)

John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain 3rd. Ed.* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

Ian Spencer, *British Immigration Policy since 1939 – The Making of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Sandhu Sukhdev, *London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004).

Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992).

Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945 -64* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

R. Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London: Abacus, 2004).

Useful Websites for Islamic & Multicultural Britain

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/society_culture/multicultural/

http://www.visitlondon.com/maps/multicultural_london/index

<http://eastlondonhistory.com/>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/>

<http://www.blackpresence.co.uk/>

<http://www.muslimwomentalk.com/index.htm>

<http://www.muslimparliament.org.uk/>

<http://bubl.ac.uk/link/b/britishpoliticalhistory.htm>

Muslim Council of Britain: <http://www.mcb.org.uk/>

London – The World in One City, Guardian Unlimited Online:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/flash/0,5860,1398299,00.html>

Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees, Museum of London:

<http://www.museumofLondon.org.uk/English/EventsExhibitions/Special/Belonging/>

Moving Here: 200 years of migration to England:

<http://www.museumofLondon.org.uk/English/EventsExhibitions/Community/MovingHere.htm>

Untold London: www.untoldlondon.org.uk/

Grading

CAPA Program & Instructor Policy

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. This means to gain full attendance you must attend all classes, you must not be late (unless with a valid reason) and you must be respectful of the professor and of other students by not talking/whispering in class when others are talking or presenting. Persistent lateness or lack of attention in class, i.e., reading materials other than the work assigned, may result in a low or zero grade for participation, and possible referral to the CAO. **No electronic equipment will be used in class**, including laptops, phones, ipods, cell phones, etc, unless you have written permission from the Chief Academic Officer prior to the course. If you are caught using any electronic equipment, you may receive a zero grade for participation.

Plagiarism will be dealt with very seriously, and will be referred to the Chief Academic Officer in London. You may receive an F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, you will receive an F for the course.

Class Participation & Attendance

Attendance at all classes is mandated by CAPA; students who miss a class without permission from CAPA's Chief Academic Officer will have their grade for the course lowered. Informed participation is expected in every class, so students must have read the full assignment carefully before coming and be ready to discuss it if called upon. At any meeting there may be a brief, pass-fail two-minute quiz on some utterly obvious fact in the assigned reading. Students will also be asked to complete informal in-class writing assignments on a regular basis, which will require them to demonstrate their familiarity with the assigned materials. Students who repeatedly demonstrate unsatisfactory performance on these quizzes and exercises will be penalized in the participation grade.

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Seminar Participation	20%
Field Study Analysis (4–5pp)	15%
Presentation of Current News Item (10–15min)	15%
Research Paper (6–8pp)	25%
In-class Debate	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Seminar Participation

Weekly class seminars will allow students the opportunity to discuss and analyse a wide range of topics based on assigned readings, field studies, and other course material such as film, student presentations, and My Education events. Regular participation in seminar discussion is a vital component of the course. Students are expected to have completed the readings prior to each class and to contribute to discussion in an informed manner. Participation accounts for 20% of the final grade.

Field Study Analysis Due

This assignment is based on a written analysis of the guided walk of Spitalfields in the East End. The paper should interpret how the field class enhances an understanding of multicultural Britain and the impact of immigration. Your analysis should be analytical rather than descriptive, based on a clearly-stated thesis, and supported by secondary readings together with specific details from the field class. Specific assignment details and questions will be provided in advance of the field class. This assignment is worth 15%.

In-class Presentation of Current News Story

Each week, students will give individual presentations to the class based on a current story in the news relevant to one (or more) of the main topics of the course. Presenters will address the main points of interest and significance of the story, demonstrating how it connects with the

broader themes of the course. Presenters should incorporate questions for the class in order to generate discussion and debate.

Presentations should be approx. 10 minutes duration, and students are encouraged to be creative in their presentation technique through the use of audio/visual display etc. Students will be evaluated on their ability to introduce and analyse the main issues raised by the news story, assess its significance for an understanding of multicultural Britain, and to generate discussion. The presentation is worth 15% of the final grade. News stories can be found in newspapers such as: *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *Financial Times*, and online sites such as BBC News, Guardian Unlimited www.guardian.co.uk/ and political news at <http://www.politics.co.uk/>. Please email your story to me at joyfrith@gmail.com no later than Monday of the week of your presentation.

Research Project

This analytical essay involves an investigation of a specific topic relating to a particular aspect of multicultural Britain. Research papers must present a clearly stated thesis and a well-developed argument based on original analysis of primary and secondary sources. Students may develop their research project from one of the topics examined in class, drawing on relevant readings and field study material. Topics to consider include: representations of ethnic communities; Islamic culture in the East End; London as „showcase“ of ethnic & racial diversity; political extremism; women and Islam; and the evolution of government policy toward immigration. Students are urged to consult with me early in the term to determine potential topics for their research.

In-Class Debate

A team debate will be held in the final class based on material covered in field studies, weekly seminars, readings, films, and presentations. Students will be required to demonstrate their understanding of the main themes of the course as well as their ability to make connections among the various topics examined throughout the course. The debate is worth 25% of the final grade.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the borrowing, appropriating, or using of another author's words or ideas without acknowledging their source. Whenever you use words or ideas that are not your own, you must provide a reference (either footnote or endnote). If you have any questions about plagiarism, or want to determine if you are referencing your work correctly, I will be pleased to help.

Course Content

Unit 1

Section 1: Multicultural Britain – Historical & Theoretical Perspectives

Topic: Introduction to the Course

- The Race Map of Britain (2006)

Unit 2

Section 1: Multicultural Britain – Historical & Theoretical Perspectives

Topic: The Making of Multicultural Britain

- Peter Ackroyd, “Maybe it’s because I’m a Londoner,” in *London, The Biography* London: Chatto & Windus, 2000, pp. 701 -16.
- Humayun Ansari, “Muslim Migration and Settlement in Britain before 1945” in *The Infidel Within – Muslims in Britain since 1800* London: C. Hurst & Co, 2009, 24-51.
- Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* London: Abacus, 2004. “Introduction” and “Identity Parade,” pp. 1-16, 455 -80.
- Benjamin Zephaniah, *The London Breed* - www.britishcouncil.org/arts-literature-publications-and-resources-poetryquartetshome.htm
- ***George Orwell, from *The English People* (1947)

Film: “A Night on Brick Lane”

Unit 3

Section 1: Multicultural Britain – Historical & Theoretical Perspectives

Topic: Field Study - Guided Walk of Spitalfields

- Meet at exit to Whitechapel Station at 1:50 for 2 pm start
- Ed Glinert, *East End Chronicles: Three Hundred Years of Mystery and Mayhem* London: Allen Lane, 2005, pp. 117 -147, 242 – 69.
- Tarquin Hall, from *Salaam Brick Lane: A Year in the New East End* (2005).

- Panikos Panayi, "Cosmopolis: London's Ethnic Minorities," in *London: From Punk to Blair* Joe Kerr & Andrew Gibson, eds. London: Reaktion Books, 2003, pp 67-71.

Unit 4

Section 1: Multicultural Britain – Historical & Theoretical Perspectives, Research Plan due in class

Topic: Orientalism and the Legacy of Imperialism

- Tahir Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chapter One.
- Edward W. Said, Introduction to *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* revised edition, London: Penguin, 1994, pp; 1 -28.
- E. Said, "Islam Through Western Eyes," *The Nation*, April 26, 1980.
- Laura Tabili, "A Homogenous Society? Britain's Internal „Others“ – 1800 to the Present," in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds. *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* Cambridge: CUP, 2006, pp. 53 -76.
- ***Diane Abbott, *Multi-racial Britain*
- ***Enoch Powell, "Rivers of Blood" (1968)

Unit 5

Section 2: Muslim Britain – History, Politics, Culture, Identities

Topic: Field Study – Islamic Art & Culture at the V&A

- Guided tour of the Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art at the V&A
- Meet at entrance to the Victoria & Albert Museum
- J. M. Mackenzie, "Orientalism in Art," and "Orientalism in Design," in *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* Manchester: MUP, 1995; 43-70; 105-37.

Unit 6

Section 2: Muslim Britain – History, Politics, Culture, Identities

Topic: Muslim Britain – Histories, Communities, Identities

- Tahir Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chapters 1 & 3.

- Humayun Ansari, “Is there a British Muslim Identity?” in *The Infidel Within – Muslims in Britain since 1800* London: C. Hurst & Co, 2009.
- Tariq Modood, “Muslims and the Politics of Difference,” in Peter Hopkins, ed. *Muslims in Britain: Race, Place and Identities* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, pp. 193-209.
- “Is London’s Future Islamic?” *Time Out*, 2007

Documentary: “Muslim Driving School

Unit 7

Section 2: Muslim Britain – History, Politics, Culture, Identities

Topic: Field Study - Central London Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre

- Visit to Central London Mosque - Meet at exit to Baker St station at 2 pm
- T. Abbas, *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chap 4.
- Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within – Muslims in Britain since 1800* London: C. Hurst & Co, 2009, Chapter 11.
- Simon Naylor and James R. Ryan, “Mosques, Temples and Gurdwaras: New Sites of Religion in Twentieth-Century Britain,” in D. Gilbert et. al. eds. *Geographies of British Modernity* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2003.
- Holloway, S. (2005), „Identity and Difference: age, dis/ability and sexuality“, Chapter 29
- P. Cloke, P. Crang & M. Goodwin, eds., *Introducing Human Geographies* 2nd ed, pp.400-410 Screening & Discussion: Inside I’m Dancing (Damien O’Donnell, 2004)

Unit 8

Mid-term break

Unit 9

Section 3: Apartheid: Muslim Community Politics in London

Topic: Citizenship & community Activism in Tower Hamlets

- Tahir Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chapters 5, 11, 14.
- H. Begum & J. Eade, “All Quiet on the Eastern Front?” in Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chapter 12

- from John Eade et. al. eds. *Tales of Three Generations of Bengalis in Britain*, Oral History and Socio-Cultural Heritage Project, Nirmul Committee, London 2006.
- “Muslims in Britain,” *Britain Today* (2007)

Unit 10

Section 3: Apartism: Muslim Community Politics in London

Topic: Field Study– The East London Mosque

- Meet at Whitechapel tube - 2pm
- Tahir Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chapters 12 & 13.
- Rachel Lichtenstein, *On Brick Lane* London: Hamish Hamilton, 2007, selections.

Unit 11

Section 3: Apartism: Muslim Community Politics in London

Topic: Women’s Activism & Community

- Tahir Abbas, ed. *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure*, Chapter 9.
- Claire Dwyer, “Where are You from?": Young British Muslim Women and the Making of “Home”, in Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, eds. *Postcolonial Geographies* New York: Continuum, 2002, pp. 184 –199.
- Claire Dwyer, “The geographies of veiling: Muslim women in Britain,” *Geography* 93:3 (Autumn 2008) pp. 140 -47.
- ***”Drawing back the Veil”

Documentary: *Muslim Driving School*

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).