

HLS Administrative **Updates**

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MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: Multiculturalism, Cultural Clash, Human Rights- Discussion Group

Notice of Discussion Group to 2L, 3L, and Graduate Students

MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: Multiculturalism, Cultural Clash, Human Rights. Professor Emeritus Henry Steiner and Visiting Professor Chibli Mallat offer this interactive discussion group in the fall semester 2011. The group is a personal project of the two professors, and not a course offered for credit by Harvard Law School. Students joining the group, which will be limited to ten persons, gain no academic credit. The discussion group requires neither an examination nor a paper, nor does it require any previous HLS course. The group will meet at 5:00-7:00 p.m. on five Wednesdays during the fall semester. Materials of reasonable length will be provided and participants are expected to read them before class discussion.

The course examines heightened Muslim immigration to Europe in recent decades from North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, and nationalist reactions to this heightened presence. Our discussions address conflicts of a cultural, political and legal character arising in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the U.K., as well as comparative analysis about the growing Muslim population in the U.S. and banning by several states of references by state courts to Shari'a. After introductory readings on cultural relativism in the context of female genital mutilation in Africa, the materials illustrate the interrelated cultural, political and legal dimensions of the European conflicts through current issues about Muslim girls/women wearing headscarves/burqas, the building of mosques/minarets, speech or action viewed by Muslims as blasphemy or hate speech, and crucifixes in public classrooms that may offend Muslims. The human rights issues implicate freedoms of thought, expression, religion, and association; gender and ethnic discrimination; cultural identity and survival; self-determination; and rights of parents. Discussions will consider international and regional human rights systems in relation to national laws and constitutions.

Professor Mallat was born in Lebanon and principally educated there. An expert on Shari'a, he has taught courses on that topic, the Middle East, international law, and human rights at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London; St. Joseph's University, Beirut; the law school of the University of Utah; and HLS. Professor Steiner founded the HLS Human Rights Program in 1984 and served as its director until he became professor emeritus in 2005.

Students considering whether to join this group should send an email not later than September 14th to hsteiner@law.harvard.edu, indicating briefly why they wish to participate, attaching a c.v., and asking any questions they may have. The subject line of such emails should be marked: Discussion Group. Reply emails will give more information about meetings and topics. Those admitted will be notified not later than September 16th, and materials will then be distributed. The group will meet for its first session on Wednesday, September 21st. The four remaining sessions will take place on Wednesday October 5, October 19, November 2 and November 9.