

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

**SOCI 5806G**

**FALL 2022**

**POLITICAL ECONOMY AND FRAMING OTHER CULTURES: MUSLIMS AND THE AMERICAS**

**Course Description**

This course explores the ways settler colonial institutions in North America have imagined and engaged Muslims as well as how Muslim institutions and Muslims outside of North America have imagined and engaged North America. This has implications at all levels of political economy, ranging from grassroots labour organizing to economic ties in the military-industrial complex. We will use movies, novels, travel narratives, and the news media, among other sources, to explore the ways that people in these regions have understood, and misunderstood, each other, and how these have influenced material inequalities.

We will examine key instances of overt conflict and their underpinnings in colonial or capitalist processes, such as interconnected extractive and arms trade industries, the Iran hostage crisis, Islamophobia, 9-11, and wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Palestine, Syria, and elsewhere, attending to how culture and policy inform each other. Finally, we will consider decolonialism, Indigenous sovereignty on Turtle Island, social justice and anti-oppression movements, and new understandings of possible solidarities and the complicating challenges amidst them.

The course will examine and interrogate material such as film (e.g., David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*), television, social media, and literature. It will also discuss examples of notable challenges to anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, and Orientalizing mindsets and tendencies within academic and intellectual venues. Edward Said's critique of Orientalism will serve as the principal point of departure and pedagogical anchor. Other readings informing the course will include well-known studies by Zachary Lockman, Douglas Little, Ella Shohat, Jack Shaheen, Joseph Massad, Norman Finkelstein, Christopher Hitchens, Noam Chomsky, Deborah Root, Derek Gregory, and John Maier.

This course will examine a range of texts, genres, and visual media. Works will be explored as we attempt to unearth the ways in which knowledge about the Arab world has been constructed from the pre-modern period to the present, and to present them with opportunities in terms of situating their own scholarship within the canon of theorists and writers who have supported or critiqued the theses of Said's work. It aims to develop students' capacities in close reading and their abilities in terms of applying concepts and theories to both primary and secondary sources, which will be of broader value across their studies.