



The Academy

Course: "In Search of the History and Reality of Islam"

8-session course for political, civic and church leaders

Course description:

The ongoing dialogue between Christianity and Islam is much spoken about today, especially where it regards the way in which individual countries and regions deal with mass immigration of people from the Middle East and parts of Africa that adhere to the Mohammedan faith, and their integration into democratic and pluralistic societies. Countries around the world also continue to grapple with the threat of Islamic terrorism that is both home-grown and imported. The public statements by political and church leaders surrounding these challenging issues are often hampered by a lack of understanding about the reality of Islam. This course seeks to provide a factual and unbiased insight into its history, practices and way of thinking by a scholar who was born and raised in the Middle East, whilst now living in Europe, and who studied and experienced the relevant texts and traditions from his youth onwards.

Course structure:

Eight sessions of 50 minutes each, taught online in English and through the seminar method, allowing for active participation of the attendees (the recording can also be watched later).

Course outline:

Session 1: History of the Arab region before Islam

Session 2: Who is the Prophet Muhammad?

Session 3: The emergence of Islam

Session 4: The most important books in Islam: The Koran and the Hadith - and al serra

Session 5: What does Islam teach? Sunnis and Shiites

Session 6: Law in Islam: Sharia - Marriage and the Status of Women

Taqiyya - The relationship of Islam to non-Muslims

Session 7: Law in Islam: Sharia - Politics and Morals

Session 8: Psychology of the Muslim; how does the Muslim community work?

Course outcomes:

1. Having identified the principle tenets of Islam
2. Understanding how these tenets affect society and public policy
3. Understanding the distinction between the Muslim and Islam

Course work:

- Preparatory readings as assigned by the instructor (selections from the texts below)

- In-class seminar-style discussion
- A concluding 3-page essay (only if the participant wishes to count the course towards the ICLN Academy official “Certificate in Public Leadership Studies”.)

Course texts:

- The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude, by Bat Ye'or
- Islam and Terrorism: What the Quran Really Teaches About Christianity, by Mark A. Gabriel

Instructor:

Manuel Maan Baghdi was born and raised in Syria and belongs to the Armenian Catholic faith. He also did his studies there and worked for various public institutions in Syria during his professional career. In 1989 he moved to Austria and since arriving in Europe he has focused on providing legal assistance and housing services for refugees from the Middle East, as well as being involved in the mission towards Muslims in Europe. He is the co-founder and Chairman of the Association "Movement with People - Maria Loley", an organization focused on assisting people in need. Manuel is also a member of the missionary work of the Lazerist community. For the past 25 years, he has served as an Advisor and Representative of His Eminence Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, for Migration and Middle East Issues. In this capacity he amongst others served as the principal mediator for the resettlement program for Iraqi and Syrian refugees run by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior. Since 2016 he furthermore serves as Vice President of the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN).

Practical details:

Please register [here](#). The course fee is €250, - per person (advance payment, non-refundable). At the end of the course and having completed all 8 sessions and the concluding essay, an ICLN Academy course participation certificate with full course details will be provided. The completed course counts towards the official ICLN Academy “Certificate in Public Leadership Studies”, which requires the completion of 12 core-curriculum courses.

Contact: office@icln.at - www.icln.at

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