

# ***Muslim Diasporas and the West: Re-negotiating Multiculturalism?***

**Wednesday, March 23, 2005  
2:30-4:30 pm**

*Room 305, York Lanes  
York University, Toronto*

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The influence of Islam as a religion, or a political ideology is increasing among migrants of Islamic cultures. This seminar discusses whether it is Islam that defines the identity of Muslim diasporas or it is the diasporic experience that defines their Islamic identity? I argue that Muslims who use religious symbols (such as Islamic dress code *Hijab*) as a signifier of their cultural identity and to claim a voice, find themselves the target of anti-Muslim sentiments, stereotypes, discrimination and exclusion. The anti-Muslim racism, global political conditions, including military intervention in the Middle East and unresolved Palestinian-Israeli conflict tap into the diasporas' grievances. All this helps the development of an emotional and psychological detachment from the 'host-land'; increased religiosity; revitalization of tribal customs; and creation of a vicious cycle.

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