

The University of British Columbia  
Department of Educational Studies

**Professor Farid Esack, Summer Noted Scholar 2018**

EDST 565F/971 – Summer Term 2A (July 3-20)  
Monday to Friday from 10:30-1:00 p.m.  
at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, Room 264

**A Contemporary Global Muslim Engagement with Theology and Social Transformation**

Engaged Theology is the attempt to make sense of religion and religious texts while being seriously engaged with questions of social transformation.

This course is a somewhat unusual one; it is partly autobiographical and partly scholarly. I am aware that it may come across as rather presumptuous to use one's own journey as the basis of a course. I would not normally do this but am taking advantage of my status as a Visiting Professor. After providing some of my personal and socio-political context, coming from a Muslim minority community in an overwhelmingly Protestant Apartheid South Africa, I will connect my own religious journey with the foundational texts of Islam, the Hadith and *Sunnah* (Muhammad's paradigmatic precedent) in the quest for liberation on the one hand and simultaneously introduce the class to at least some of the major (OK, not all of them are major ☺) tendencies and developments in contemporary Islam.

Conscious of the pitfalls of typologies, these streams will cover the following:

- Traditional Islam (The Tablighi Jama'at, The `Ulama (religious scholars) and their formation and tensions between what has been described as folk and high Islam).
- Islamist Islam (Also described as 'political' and 'radical Islam', the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jam'at-i-Islami and the Taliban).
- Progressive Islam (Also described as, or intersecting with, 'Liberal or Modernist Islam, my case study here is the Progressive Union of North America).
- Islamic Liberation Theology (not to be confused with Islamic liberal theology, my case study here is the South African organization, *The Call of Islam*).
- Islamic Decoloniality. (Here I will consider some of the contemporary ideas on Islam and decoloniality as represented by the Summer School movements of Cape Town, Grenada and Kerala.)

In discussing each of these tendencies, I will provide three types of texts: autobiographical, sacred texts (Qur'an and Hadith) and scholarly writings on these tendencies or by one or more of the major thinkers representative of them.