Seeking Otherness: An analysis of the comparative turn in Western political theory
Friday 25 September

Institute for Social Justice Seminar Series
Speaker: Hassan Bashir

Date: Friday 25 September
Time: 1pm-3pm
Venue: Australian Catholic University
Level 16 - Meeting Room 16AB,
Tenison Woods House
8 – 20 Napier Street, North Sydney

Abstract
Since its introduction, in the mid 1990s, Comparative or inter-cultural political theory (CPT) has seen phenomenal growth as a subfield of western political theory. Comparative theorists believe that political theory may have originated as an academic discipline in the West but it is not coterminous with it, especially in context of the current and ongoing wave of globalization. Consequently, they argue in favor of incorporating non-western notions of the “political” in mainstream western theorizing. Methodologically the comparativists mostly prefer to construct imaginary East-West dialogues with the ultimate objective of achieving a fusion of horizons between the East and the West. This presentation critically reevaluates the scope and promise of the comparative project in Western political theory.

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Speaker Bio
Hassan Bashir is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University’s campus in Doha, Qatar. His research interests include inter-cultural political thought, religion and politics, and the moral dimensions of globalization. He is the author of Europe and the Eastern Other: Comparative perspectives on Politics, Religion and Culture before the Enlightenment. Bashir has also co-edited three volumes which focus on various aspects of globalization. His work on early American political thought appeared recently in the History of Political Thought. His forthcoming publications include a co-edited volume on moral and pedagogical difficulties involved in exporting Western higher education to non-western countries and a monograph on internal critiques of Islamic fundamentalist thought in South Asia. Bashir’s research has been funded through grants and industry sponsorships from the US National Science Foundation, Qatar National Research Fund, Texas A&M University and Qatar Petroleum. Bashir is a Fulbright fellow and has also received the H.B. Earhart fellowship three times.

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