

**30 November 2012, Friday ✦ 10.00am – 12.00pm ✦  
Lee Sheridan Conference Room, NUS (BTC)**

***The Conflation of Ethnicity and Religion: The  
Malaysian Constitution Revisited***

**by Dr. Kartina A. Choong**

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**ABSTRACT**

According to Article 160 of the Malaysian Constitution, a ‘Malay’ is one who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay custom. However, legally equating profession of Islam with being ‘Malay’ has the effect of superimposing upon this ethnic group a religion which is not necessarily a result of individual choice, the departure from which is legally barred.

This paper explores the extent to which this constitutional conflation of ethnicity and religion, and the socio-legal consequences which flow from it, cohere with Islamic Law itself. By identifying fundamental points of divergence, it seeks to question the sustainability of this aspect of the Constitution and highlight the significance of an informed public debate on the matter.

**ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Dr. Kartina Aisha Choong studied Law at the University of Cardiff before qualifying as a Barrister (Lincoln’s Inn). She holds Masters degrees in Health Care Ethics and Applied Social Research from the University of Manchester, and in Islamic Studies from the University of Leeds. Her PhD degree was obtained from the University of Manchester. She currently holds a Senior Lectureship in Law at the University of Central Lancashire, having previously taught at the Universities of Reading, Durham and Leeds Metropolitan. She is a Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy.

**Admission is free.**

Please RSVP via email at [cals@nus.edu.sg](mailto:cals@nus.edu.sg)

**Closing Date of registration : 29 November 2012, Thursday, 5pm**