



MLitt in Muslims, Globalisation, and the West

Postgraduate Taught Programme

NEW AGENDA: MUSLIMS, GLOBALISATION, AND THE WEST

'We cannot avoid the real challenges of living in a diverse, multicultural and multireligious British society. The London bombings in July 2005 ... and ongoing media coverage of what some call a "clash of civilisations" all shout out to us to respond to these very real challenges. There is an urgent need to look for better ways of understanding religious and cultural diversity, in particular the role of Islam and Muslims in this dynamic, globalised context...

'The common experience of the twenty-first century is one of rapid technological change leading to unique historical experiences of fast and easy long-distance travel; almost instantaneous communication across continents; and widespread access to media, communication and information that transcends particular boundaries and cultures. These experiences of globalisation open up all individuals, cultures and countries in unprecedented ways and lead to unique challenges and opportunities which are probably unlike any that have been in the past...

'Within these experiences of globalisation, and in the face of global forces that cannot be ignored, the response of isolation and ghettoisation is no longer available. The Study of Islam and Muslims again urgently needs to be able to reflect the complications of such new realities.' (El-Awaisi and Nye, *Time for Change: Report on the Future of the Study of Islam and Muslims in Universities and Colleges in Multicultural Britain*)

Aims of the programme

This programme provides an introduction and exploration of the complex issues and relationships between Muslims and what is referred to as the 'West'. The programme mainly focuses on the analysis of issues related to the contexts in which globalisation, dialogue and clash of civilisations emerged. Key issues for students taking the programme include the emergence of globalisation and its overriding impact on politics and international relations issues relating to Islam and Muslims across the world.

Within the programme, we also look into the debate of dialogue or non-dialogue and ongoing concepts and discussions on the perceived threats of Islam to 'Western' values, reinforcing the claim made by proponents of clash of civilisations. The programme also highlights the Quranic discourse on peace, dialogue, understanding, the concept of humanity (*insaniyyah*) and universalism. Thus, globalisation in its political but also sociological underpinnings is examined by identifying areas of similarity and difference between the two. In addition, the programme discusses issues about the concept of political Islam, understandings and

misunderstanding about it and whether or not Muslim political thought is incompatible with principles of governance in the 'West'.

Background

This innovative and unique programme is aimed to enable students to contribute in an informed and intelligent way to current debates on how Muslims (and more broadly Islam) can be seen to be engaging with the contemporary issues of globalisation and international relations.

One important element of this programme is its uniqueness within the field of Islamic Studies, with the focus on the combination of approaches including both studies of Islamic sources and concepts (in particular the Qur'an and other core sources) and contemporary social/political studies of issues relating to international relations. This makes the programme distinct from any other programmes in either Islamic Studies and politics or sociology.

Programme Structure

Six taught courses:

Autumn semester:

1. Islam and the West: Multiculturalism, Globalisation and Muslims

This course will introduce contemporary academic debates on the complex interactions between what is broadly labelled 'Islam and the West'. Looking at these issues mainly from a social scientific viewpoint, the course will emphasise the contemporary factors of multiculturalism and globalisations which frame these transnational relations and networks. Students will be expected to reflect on the history of encounters between Muslims and 'the West' (in particular European nations and cultures), exploring concepts such as the 'clash'/'dialogue' of civilisations. This will be related to sociological literature on globalisation and multiculturalism, particularly with reference to specific case examples of Muslim cultures and societies in contemporary contexts.

2. The Theoretical Framework of Islamic Jerusalem

This course will examine the theoretical and conceptual framework within which Muslims approach the region of Islamic Jerusalem. It will address the key social, religious, historical, geographical, and political aspects of Islamic Jerusalem. Several questions will be key to the study of this course: What are the reasons for Muslims' having close links and concern with Islamic Jerusalem? What is the significance of Islamic Jerusalem to Islam and Muslims? Does Islamic Jerusalem have any special status compared with any other region? Particular attention will be paid to the vision of Islamic Jerusalem, its boundaries, and the Circle Theory of Islamic Jerusalem.

3. Multiculturalism in theory and practice

This course will examine theoretical issues within academic debates on multiculturalism. Thus we will be looking at perspectives on the 'politics of recognition', the construction of ethnic identities, the creative interface between national, ethnic, and religious boundaries, and the political implications of multicultural diversity. Students taking the course will be expected to engage not only with the theoretical concepts that shape these academic debates – such as concepts of ethnicity, nationality, identity, integration, and assimilation – they will also be encouraged to explore and examine the practicalities of specific contexts of multicultural practice, using mostly examples from European countries.

Spring semester:

4. Postgraduate Research Methods

This course addresses various research methods in the humanities and social sciences, such as analytical, comparative, historical, and social, introducing an in-depth critical analysis of contemporary research methods. In particular the students will engage with methodologies in the following disciplines: historical, textual, anthropological (ethnographic), and social scientific (both qualitative and quantitative). Students taking this course will be expected to reflect on different methodologies and select appropriate methodological approaches for their own research.

5. Globalisation and Political Islam

This course will focus on the analysis of the broad frame of globalisation, its history, ramifications and impact on relations between peoples, nations and states. It will specifically look into the different models of responses that different Muslim states and ideologues have taken to face up to the challenges of globalisation and the opportunities it has provided. Thus, the historical contexts of globalisation will also be examined. On one hand the course will review issues relating to dialogue of civilisations and its foundations in Islam, it will also examine the competing thesis of whether there is an inevitable 'clash of civilisations' on the other. Thus, students will be introduced not only to the theses of Clash of Civilisation and End of History Huntington and Fukuyama respectively but also to proponents of cyclical patterns of civilisation like Ibn Khaldun, Toynbee and Spengler. The course will examine the debates about the so-called political Islam and the background to its emergence, and the different Muslim responses to globalisation and civilisational dialogue

6. Islam and Muslims and international relations: contemporary issues and twenty-first century challenges

This course will examine politics and international relations with particular reference to how Muslim international relations have developed both in the light of Islamic political and legal frameworks and also contemporary issues and challenges of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It will look at the dialectics of ideal and application by exploring the concepts and ideals of justice, humanity and equality within Islamic sources in relation to particular case studies and theories of international relations. The course will also examine and critically evaluate relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim states and the political concepts of *shūra* (consultation), caliphate and *ḥakimiyyah/siyadah* (sovereignty) along with the *Madinah wathīqah* (document/agreement/constitution) and its application within contemporary political contexts. The course will also look into implications of 9/11 tragedy for respective foreign policy and international politics. The course will allow students to learn and critically review the different theories in politics and international relations from both Muslim and 'Western' perspectives

Summer:

(MLitt candidates): Dissertation (15-18,000 words)

The dissertation is an independent piece of work and should be regarded as an exercise in the analysis, interpretation and presentation of information and ideas to the standards of current scholarly practice in an area related to the programme of study. The student will choose a topic in consultation with a member of academic staff, under whose supervision they will develop and write the dissertation.

Assessment

All assessment is by coursework, with most courses assessed by a combination of i) a critical review of 2,000 words, ii) an essay of 3-4,000 words, and iii) a seminar presentation. There

are no exams. Students who take the MLitt will also be required to complete a research dissertation of 15-18,000 words.

What is so special about Al-Maktoum Institute?

Al-Maktoum Institute is a unique institution in many ways:

- It is based on the vision of Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum for multiculturalism, civilisational dialogue, and mutual understanding and respect;
- Research and studies at Al-Maktoum Institute are designed as postorientalist, post-traditionalist, and multicultural, the approaches are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary;
- The Institute is relatively small, which allows for intense academic training and a friendly atmosphere, students form a lively community in and outside the classroom;
- Excellent facilities at the Institute foster successful studies;
- The Institute is located in multicultural Dundee and maintains vibrant ties with the local and national communities.
- Teaching and research at Al-Maktoum Institute is designed to be of the highest standard, and is linked to a School of the internationally renowned University of Aberdeen which was evaluated as grade 5 in the most recent research assessment exercise (RAE).

Entrance Requirements

To enrol at Al-Maktoum Institute for the Masters programme in Muslims, Globalisation, and the West you will have, normally, an upper second-class Bachelors degree (2.1) or above in any of the Arts, Humanities, Islamic Studies, or Social Sciences from a recognised university or institute of learning or a qualification or experience which is acceptable as equivalent.

Teaching takes place solely in English. Any applicant whose first language is not English is required to have an IELTS score of 6.5 (with a score of at least 6.0 in the writing section of the test) or equivalent (e.g. TOEFL 580) as a condition of entry. Applicants who do not meet these criteria should contact the Institute to establish how to develop their language skills.

Would you like to do a PhD in Muslims, Globalisation, and the West?

The Masters programmes (taught or research-based) offered at Al-Maktoum Institute can be the road leading to a PhD in Muslims, Globalisation, and the West; alternatively, you can join the Institute to do a PhD after having received a Masters degree in the field from another recognised university. The research areas that can be supervised include any issues related to the study of Muslims, globalisation, and the west.

Application Deadline

Candidates for the MLitt in Muslims, Globalisation, and the West programme are advised to apply as early as possible. Intending candidates should be aware that the number of places available is limited in order to allow the individual attention and contact appropriate for graduate study to be maintained. The academic session begins in mid September. Applications for entry in September 2007 should be received by 1 June.

Scholarships

Al-Maktoum Institute do not have any funding available to support postgraduate study.

Students looking for funding are advised to try the following possible sources:

- Al-Maktoum Foundation, www.almaktoumfoundation.com – competitive partial scholarships for MLitt and PhD programmes

- Islamic Research Academic (ISRA) www.isra.org – competitive funding for MLitt programme in Islamic Jerusalem Studies
- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk> (home students only)
- Economics and Social Science Research Council (ESRC): <http://www.esrc.ac.uk> (home students only)
- The Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme (ORSAS): <http://www.orsas.ac.uk>
- British Chevening Scholarships: <http://www.chevening.com>
- British Council Awards: <http://www.britishcouncil.org>
- Commonwealth Scholarship Commission: <http://www.acu.ac.uk>

Further programmes

Al-Maktoum Institute also offer MLitt programmes in the following areas:

- [Multiculturalism](#)
- [Islamic Studies](#)
- [Islamic Jerusalem Studies](#)
- [Islamic Education](#)

For further details see our website (www.almi.abdn.ac.uk).

For more information please contact:

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