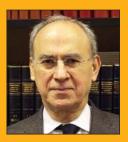
The Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (2013-2016) Broaden Your Horizons

Welcome

Message from the Director of the IIS



The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) was established in 1977 with the object of promoting scholarship and learning on Muslim societies and cultures, historical as well as contemporary, and a better understanding of its relationship with other societies and faiths. The above objectives are realised through programmes and activities organised and implemented by the various Departments of the Institute. The Department of Graduate Studies currently offers two post graduate level programmes, the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH) and the

Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP).

In pursuit of these objectives, the Institute periodically collaborates, on a programme specific basis, with other institutions of learning. In this spirit, the IIS works with the Institute of Education at the University of London to deliver the Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP). The collaboration is designed to address the training of teachers within a framework that links their Muslim heritage to the intellectual methods and best practices available in the academic environment.

STEP is a pioneering, collaborative programme for producing teachers who will teach the interdisciplinary Secondary Curriculum (developed by the IIS) to young people globally. This programme culminates in an MA and MTeach, both awarded by the IOE.

GPISH is an innovative, interdisciplinary three year programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, the first two years of which are spent at the IIS. All GPISH students attend a British university for their Masters in their third year. The majority of students attend either a Russell Group or Group of 1994 institution including Oxford, Cambridge, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Both programmes are designed to meet the human resource needs for educators, intellectuals and leaders for the community, ummah and society at large.



Introduction

Introduction

The Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities encourages a perspective which is not confined to the theological and religious heritage of Islam, but seeks to explore the relationship of religious ideas to broader dimensions of society and culture. It thus encourages an inter-disciplinary approach to the materials of Islamic history and thought. Particular attention is also given to issues of modernity that arise as Muslims seek to relate their heritage to contemporary circumstances.

Within the Islamic tradition, GPISH seeks to promote research on those areas which have had relatively lesser attention devoted to them in secondary scholarship to date. These include the intellectual and literary expressions of Shi'ism in general, and Ismailism in particular.

In the context of Islamic societies, GPISH is informed by the full range and diversity of cultures in which Islam is practiced today, from the Middle East, Southern and Central Asia and Africa to the industrialized societies of the West, thus taking into consideration the variety of contexts which shape the ideals, beliefs and practices of the faith.





Statement of Philosophy

The principles outlined here inform all the intellectual programmes of the Institute, including the two graduate programmes of study, as well as research, seminars or conferences, and public lectures. The Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, in particular, reflects a basic re-assessment of conventional, academic programmes in this field. Essentially, it seeks to integrate areas and methodologies that have become separated in many existing programmes. The philosophy of the graduate programme also reflects the premises guiding the Institute's intellectual activities as a whole. Among the levels on which integration as well as new perspectives are intended, the following are noteworthy.

Intellectual Disciplines

The programme seeks to avoid a division of pertinent disciplines – e.g. history, anthropology, political science, philosophical analysis, linguistic and literary criticism – in the study of Muslim societies. It aims to do more than merely encourage cross-references between them. Its objective is rather to promote an approach in which the disciplines are intertwined at their roots, to produce an integrated analysis of the subject, conceived as broadly as possible.

Integrated subject matter

Behind this approach to methods of study there lies a specific approach to the subject-matter too. The premise here is that "Islam" can more fruitfully be treated as a civilization rather than a religion only. This premise has implications for the treatment of the subject-matter. Instead of conventional divisions such as theology, law and mysticism, representing distinct religious interpretations of Islam, the programme treats these and other issues in the common framework of a cultural history. This means, first, that religious developments will be seen as part of the development of thought and culture in Muslim societies. Secondly, those aspects of culture, like art, poetry and architecture, which are not always treated at par with doctrine, law or religious practice, will be so regarded in this programme. Thirdly, as culture cannot be studied in isolation from society, the programme will treat this inter-relationship (of ideas and meanings to social and political forces) as one of the keys to an integrated understanding of the subject.

Historical emergence of forms and definitions

If the inter-relationship of cultural factors to socio-political ones (as indicated above) is of importance, it means that the diverse definitions and schools of thought which emerged in Islam must be understood historically. The division of Islam into its existing sects and schools was not

always a neat or hard and fast phenomenon at all periods of history. The number and boundaries of the groups tended to fluctuate with time and place. The programme will show the emergent character of these divisions, rather than assuming them as a given fact. Similarly, assumptions (even where these are implicit rather than explicit) like "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" have a strong influence on the way in which Islam is understood. Again, the historically-based approach in this programme will seek to understand how and where these or similar concepts were arrived at, rather than taking them as given.

Poetic and imaginative discourse

An historical approach to Islam must be balanced by a due appreciation of the meaning religious ideas have for their followers, and the centrality of spiritual and ethical aspirations in their lives. The programme will give due attention, therefore, to the role of poetic and imaginative discourse in the shaping of spiritual life in Muslim cultures.

Cultural diversity

While the approach to Islam as a civilization is intended to integrate as well as enlarge both the subject-matter and the angles of study, this does not preclude an appreciation of the enormous diversity of Muslim societies. One of the objectives of the programme is to re-examine all explicit and implicit descriptions of Islam as a monolithic phenomenon. It will examine the dialectic of cultures whereby a variety of older, existing traditions were assimilated, transformed and synthesized, in most areas, into regional expressions of Islam. The diversity of these expressions must be noted without normative preconceptions about their validity. The programme will study the diverse features of Islamic culture in such significant areas as the Middle East, South-east Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Africa south of the Sahara, without assuming such distinctions as that between "peripheral" and "central" Islamic lands. Similarly, the programme will examine the important role of not only "classical" languages (Arabic, Persian) but also national, regional or local vernaculars in the evolution of Islamic sensibilities.

Two other implications of this non-normative approach may be noted. One is to re-examine the one-sided emphasis, in many scholarly accounts, on "learned" (or textual) Islam to the relative neglect of "popular" and oral traditions, and to note the validity of these varying



Statement of Philosophy



expressions in their respective contexts. The other, related objective is to avoid exclusive concentration on doctrinal and intellectual formulations, and to balance these by full attention to the practical manifestation of Islamic ideals in living societies.

Because of the last-mentioned issue, anthropology will have no lesser place as a tool of analysis in the programme than the "classical" disciplines of philology, history, etc. However, the insights of anthropology will be marshalled widely in the study of the civilization as a whole. This will enable anthropological analysis to range well beyond its traditional concentration on local rather than national and international societies and cultures.

Bridging history and contemporary societies

Despite recent attempts to link the two, there is a persisting tendency for research into the past to proceed along separate lines from the study of contemporary Muslim societies. This is in part reinforced by academic departmentalization, whereby those trained in economics, sociology and politics tend to focus on contemporary developments, to the relative neglect of religious and historical topics, and vice versa. The intellectual framework of this programme is designed to bridge this gap. It assumes that spiritual or existential issues are as relevant to contemporary Muslim societies as they were in history. The study of the vast changes introduced in these societies in the modern period will pay attention to the meaning and images of the past which are current in these societies. It will focus as much on the spiritual implications of social change as on the reverse relationship, both in history and contemporary life.

Re-examining the boundaries of civilizations

The polarity of "Islam" and the "West", assumed in much of contemporary discourse about the subject, needs to be subjected to critical analysis. The graduate programme (as well as parallel research, public lectures and publications) will examine the origins, logic and the consequences, political and cultural, of this categorization. The overlap of some of the more fundamental issues of society and culture today (across Western and non-Western lands, or across the developed and developing worlds) need to be noted without the distortions inherent in too facile an opposition between the "West" and "non-West".

For the same reasons, some of the key issues addressed in the programme (as, for example, the module on Reason and Imagination) will be treated in a global or comprehensive rather than regional context.

GPISH as seen by its Students



"GPISH is all about learning to find out what you are

passionate about and pursuing it. It exposes you to a variety of disciplines that open up various possibilities. If you believe in growing through your education, GPISH is definitely going to facilitate that."

Naureen Ali Class of 2013



"GPISH provides students with a unique opportunity

to be both immersed in an Ismaili setting, while looking at it through a scholarly lens. GPISH will challenge the way one looks at the world and encourage students to think in new ways."

Rozina Kanchwala Class of 2011



ovits Students





"In GPISH, the value of community is paramount. The emphasis to grow with

your classmates is within the very structure of the program from orientation to the academic excursion to Cairo and Spain. It is an honor to study at The Institute of Ismaili Studies not only because of its calibre of faculty and reputation as an institution, but because of the people in the classroom learning beside you."

Naveed Nanjee Class of 2014



"GPISH
is very
challenging,
with its
intensive
language

study and expectations in work with our other courses. It is through this process that students learn skills to adapt to ever-changing circumstance, which may be encountered in our future careers, whatever they may be."

Karim Mitha Class of 2011



"Unlike traditional academic institutions, GPISH offers

a rare opportunity to experience an education that aimed at bypassing traditional boundaries of disciplines to enrich your thought with broadness of knowledge and understanding. Now I am very confident about benefitting from my training in Humanities and Islamic Studies in my future career in architecture and development."

Wisam Elhamoui (Class of 2011)



"We are all looking for paths which can lead us to success

and contentment. For me, being accepted in GPISH would be one of them, a route which would inspire me as I traverse it, and would add zest to my life, encouraging me to nurture my aspirations rationally."

Afshan Mohammad Class of 2014



orits Students



Programme

Language Study: Arabic or Persian

Arabic is compulsory in the first two years of the programme for all students not proficient in this language. The Department runs three levels of Arabic and students are placed according to their prior knowledge and experience. The overall aim is to equip students with the skills needed to read primary texts in Arabic in different disciplines and from different periods. Prior to the start of the first year, students undertake a four week Intensive Arabic Pre-sessional course at the IIS. At the end of the first year, students participate in a summer Arabic immersion programme in an Arabic speaking country.

Students who are already fluent in Arabic take Persian, in order to read and understand core Persian texts. Persian language study includes participation in a summer Persian immersion programme in Iran. Students may also have the opportunity to study other languages used in Muslim societies.

Proposed Modules

(The GPISH curriculum is undergoing a review process and these modules are subject to change)

Muslim Societies and Civilisation (History) (3 terms in the first year)

The Qur'an (2 terms)

The Prophet Muhammad through History (1 term)

Law, Ethics and Society (2 terms)

Key Moments in Shi'a History, Thought and Society (1 term)

Key Moments in Ismaili History (1 term)

Research Methods (I term)

Topics in the Philosophy of Religion (1 term)

Intellectual Traditions (1 term)

The Arts (2 terms)

Ritual, Worship and Practice (I term)

Ismailis in Modern Times (1 term)

Religion, Literature and identity in South Asian Muslim contexts (1 term)



Programme

Field projects carried out by students include:

Exploring media use among students in Dar-es-Salam'

'A study of the theatrical performance of the Shahname in Post-Soviet Tajikistan'

'People's experiences of microfinance in Booni, Chitral: Is there a way to think beyond the current Impact Assessment Indicators of the FMFB?'

'Exploring identity through ritual: A comparison of Khojah Ismaili and Lohanas Hindu wedding rituals in Maliya, Gujarat'

'Senses and perceptions on place in Khorog: A phenomonology of the Pamir home'

'The role of the curriculum as a mediating agency at Horizons Al-Ummah Camp in Canada'

Field Projects

The field project is an integral part of the Graduate Programme and is designed to encourage each student to formulate and conduct a research project which can serve as a basis for continued post-graduate study or career development. Students will conduct research during the summer of their second academic year. The field project is an opportunity for students to produce an original piece of research.

A research supervisor is allocated to each student to guide them in planning, preparing, conducting and writing up their field reports. A module on Research Design and Methods is also taught in the second year to provide students with the necessary tools to plan and conduct an empirical study. Towards the completion of this module, students will be expected to submit a project proposal, including a budget proposal for their project. Each student's project has to be approved by a committee comprising of the Course Director, Module Convenor, GPISH Coordinator and Research Supervisor. Approved projects are awarded modest funding to contribute to the cost of travel to and from the place of research and project-related expenses.

Students will be evaluated on the presentation of their research project, in the form of a report of 10,000 words. The report will be evaluated by an internal examiner and an external examiner. Students must pass the field project in order to be conferred with The IIS' post-graduate award in Islamic Studies and the Humanities. Students should also be aware that funding for their Master's work in the third year is dependent on the timely receipt of their research reports.

Language Immersion trips

The study of Arabic (Persian for those fluent in Arabic) is central to the programme as it enables students to read and understand the Qur'an and other primary texts. In addition to two years of language training at the IIS, students also attend a four week intensive language immersion programme in an Arabic speaking country (Iran or Tajikistan for those studying Persian) at the end of their first year. This is an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the language and culture of an Arab/Persian-speaking country. In the past students have also attended language immersion programmes in Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.

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Students have carried out field projects in: Australia 
Canada 
China 
Egypt 
Germany 
India 
Iran 
Japan 
Kenya 
Kyrgyzstan 
Lebanon 
Malaysia 
Mali 
Morocco 
Pakistan 
Switzerland 
Syria 
Tajikistan 
Tanzania 
Turkey 
Uganda 
UK 
USA 
Yemen
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Over the past three few years, the following presentations have been made by GPISH students at conferences around the world:

"Portraiture as Diplomatic Communication in the time of Mehmed II" Sabrina A. Bandali (Class of 2008)

International Congress of Turkish Art

- September 2007

"Belonging to the Nation' A Perspective From the Pamir, Tajikistan"

Laila Kadiwal (Class of 2009)

AMSS UK

conference - March 2009

"Home Away From Home: The Return of Ismaili Muslims to Uganda" (A documentary film) Aleem Karmali (Class of 2009)

Duke-UNC Graduate Islamic Studies Conference - April 2009

Field Trips

Students will undertake field trips in order to have a direct encounter with two of the societies being studied. First-year students visit Cairo, Egypt and second-year students visit Andalusia, Spain. Prior readings and orientation are complemented by a lecturer who accompanies students on these trips and to ensure that it is an academically and culturally enriching experience.

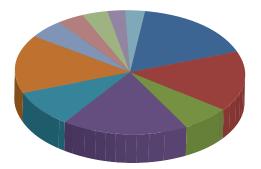


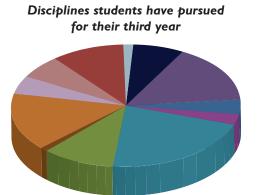
Third Year Master's degree

Students spend the third-year studying for a Master's degree at a UK degree-granting university in a subject area that resonates with the aims of the Graduate Programme. Although no longer resident at the IIS, all third year students are considered to be students of the Department of Graduate Studies. Students must keep the Department aware of their academic progress and career plans. The Department may also invite third year students to return to the IIS to present their work.

- University of Oxford
- SOAS
- LSE
- University of Cambridge
- Institute of Education
- Sussex University
- University of Edinburgh
- UCL
- Goldsmiths
- Kings College London
- Other

Universities students have attended





- Islamic Studies
- Education
- Anthropology
- Development
- Social Sciences
- Political Science
- Law
- Media
- Literature
- Architecture
- Other Humanities
- Other



Faculty

The faculty comprises lecturers who have made significant contributions to scholarship and are engaged in innovative research projects in their respective fields. Each student is assigned an Academic Advisor, to provide them additional academic support. Lecturers include IIS and visiting scholars from leading international academic institutions:

Prof. Ali Asani
Dr. Karen Bauer
Dr. Stephen Burge
Prof. Clive Bush
Dr. Maria De Chillis
Dr. Farhad Daftary
Dr. Aziz Esmail
Prof. Benjamin Fortna

Dr. Laila Halani

Dr. Shainool Jiwa

Dr. Reza Shah Kazemi Prof. Hermann Landolt Prof. Wilfred Madelung

Farhana Mayer

Dr. Toby Mayer Anna McSweeney Professor Eric Ormsby Dr. Maryam Rezaee Dr. Farouk Topan Dr. Fayyaz Vellani





Resources

Department of Graduate Studies

The Head of Graduate Studies oversees all the activities of the Department.

The GPISH Course Director is directly responsible for all academic aspects of the programme and provides strategic input in all other aspects of the programme. The GPISH Coordinator has oversight responsibility for the management and implementation of the academic programme and all programmatic activities, and is the first point of contact for the students on academic matters. Student Services are responsible for overseeing all student services, office systems, administrative matters related to student welfare such as accommodation, immigration and academic records within the Department, and liaising with students and lecturers for assignments and grades. The English for Academic Purposes Coordinator works with all students to develop and enhance their critical reading and writing skills required for post-graduate studies. She coordinates the Khorog English Preparatory Programme in Tajikistan which offers language support and training for academic study in English. She also coordinates a similar programme in Damascus run jointly with the British Council.

The Administrator for the Department of Graduate Studies is responsible for all the financial dealings within the Department, and is the first point of contact for financial issues such as receiving stipends, taking out loans or reimbursement of expenses. The Administrator is also responsible for timetabling, room bookings and maintaining and updating our Virtual Learning Environment (MOODLE).

In addition, each student is assigned an Academic Advisor, who provides individual academic support.

Representatives from the student body sit on the GPISH Programme Board (PB) to ensure effective communication between the students and the Department. Students also have access to a confidential welfare and counselling service. A student affairs fund supports cultural and social activities.

Library Resources

Faculty and students have access to specialized library collections in Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Senate House as well as at the Institute's Library.

In its relatively short history, the IIS Library has grown into a leading centre and repository for rare and significant resources illustrative of the pluralism of Ismaili thought and tradition. The IIS Library's collection comprises nearly 30,000 items. Its general collection of printed materials consists of reference works, books, periodicals, journal articles and theses on various aspects of Islamic history, theology, philosophy, law and literature, with a focus on Shi'i works and esoteric traditions. Besides this core collection in Islamic studies, the Library has a specialised holding of Ismaili printed materials comprising nearly 1,000 volumes of texts and monographs, over 700 articles and offprint's, as well as a small collection of Ismaili journals. The manuscript collection of the Institute's Library consists of nearly 1,500 volumes. Besides a small nucleus of manuscripts that contain the text of the Holy Qur'an, the scope of the collection encompasses a variety of subjects including jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine, astronomy and alchemy, as well as poetical and biographical works.

Computing Facilities

Students enrolled in the Institute's programmes have access to computing and online facilities, within the Institute. In addition, an IT loan scheme enables students to purchase a laptop computer.

Conference Fund

Students are encouraged to attend and participate in conferences. The Department contributes a modest amount towards the costs. Preference is given to those students who are presenting a paper.





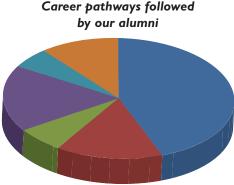
Career Pathways

The completion of the three-year course of study will prepare graduates of the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities to pursue higher education in Islamic Studies and related areas of the humanities and social sciences; to seek careers in specific fields; or to seek careers in areas which attempt to address pressing issues faced by contemporary Muslim societies. These may include careers: in religious education or the management of religious education programmes of the Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards; in Aga Khan Network agencies or other non-governmental organizations, focusing on education, strengthening of civil society, cultural preservation, poverty alleviation or sustainable development; in one of the departments at the Institute of Ismaili Studies; in the media which represent Muslims and Islam to a wider audience; or as Muslim artists or writers who, through their work, represent individual perspectives towards their received heritage.

Past graduates of the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities are now engaged in careers and research in fields as diverse as Islamic studies, Islamic Law, education, public health, ethnomusicology, art history, media studies, and as AKDN representatives.

While the Department of Graduate Studies does not place students in employment, it does provide opportunities to meet with recruitment officers of Jamati and AKDN institutions. Each year, The IIS holds a Career Pathways Seminar which provides students with an opportunity to learn more about the various career options available to them. The IIS also has an Alumni Office which offers internships for GPISH graduates. For those interested in pursuing careers in academia, the IIS offers competitive scholarships for doctoral programmes.





Application and Admissions Procedure

Applications to the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and the Humanities are reviewed by an Admissions Committee. Application forms can be obtained from Student Services at the Institute. They must be completed in full and all supporting documentation attached.

To be eligible for admission, applicants should have completed a first degree of good standing from an accredited university.

In view of the fact that the Graduate Programme is multi-disciplinary and issue-based, exposure to the academic study of Islam or the social sciences or the humanities is desirable, but not mandatory.

An acceptable level of English proficiency is required. Applicants who have not undertaken university education in English in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand must submit a TOEFL or IELTS score. The minimum scores required for entry to the Graduate Programme are: 92 (Internet-based TOEFL); 6.5 (IELTS). Applicants who have completed at least one year of university-level studies in one of the above countries may be exempt from submitting TOEFL/IELTS scores. Note that paper based TOEFL scores are not acceptable.

Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed and will be required to sit for a written examination. Interviews are meant to ascertain intellectual breadth, analytical skills and an interest in issues relating to the study of Muslim societies. Admission to the Graduate Programme does not guarantee admission to a degree-granting university for the third year of study. Applicants are fully responsible for gaining admission.

All successful applicants to GPISH are offered an IIS scholarship that covers tuition fees, a monthly stipend for living expenses, and single accommodation in student housing. Please note that due to changes in the UKBA student visa regulations, successful applicants will not be able to bring dependents to the UK whilst on an IIS student visa. For further information please contact the Department of Graduate Studies Office.



Contact Details

For all queries and an application pack to the **Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities**, please contact:

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Department of Graduate Studies
The Institute of Ismaili Studies
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London NWI 2DA
UNITED KINGDOM

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