



Contemporary Islamic Thought Explored 2017

13 – 14 July 2017

Muis Academy

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Contemporary Islamic Thought Explored (CITE) is a programme that explains the Islamic intellectual and political trends through a socio-historical lens. The aim is to provide resources for public officers to use when faced with challenges in understanding the role of Islam today. The programme explores the diverse movements and groups within Islam drawing upon the idea of a shared “Islamic tradition” today. It will begin with a brief historical overview of the political and intellectual history of Islam from the advent of revelation through 1800 AD. This foundation will be used to explore how the pre-modern tradition is being reinvented in the modern era, by looking at different intellectual, political, and social trends in the global community of Muslims. Finally, it will address the roles of different Muslim groups and ideas on the global stage, and discuss various current social, intellectual and security issues.

Muis Academy, as a leading resource on Islam and the Muslim community in Singapore, designed the Contemporary Islamic Thought Explored (CITE) Programme especially for Public Officers who face challenges in managing religious identities in an increasingly diverse society. It is a platform where religious thought leaders, academics, intellectuals and public officers network and critically discuss the complex challenges of managing citizen’s religiosity within a multi-cultural society and secular state.

PROGRAMME DURATION

2 days (13-14 July 2017)

TRAINERS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

Muis Senior Directors and Academics

LEARNING METHODOLOGY

The programme will consist of lectures, break-out group activity, discussion of readings, and question-and-answer sessions. Participants who have engaged the reading material will be well prepared to engage the topics of the seminar.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants who attend this programme will be able to:

1. Describe major events in the development of the Islamic political tradition.
2. Identify and describe some of the major problems facing Muslims in the modern era, beginning around 1800 AD.
3. Analyze the different intellectual and political responses to the major issues facing Muslims in the 19th and 20th centuries.
4. Use this foundation to analyse Islam, international security, and global developments in the 21st century.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Contemporary Islamic Thought Explored

Islamic Traditions:
Past, Present and
Future

Islam, Global Developments
and Local Realities

Development
of the Islamic
Intellectual
Tradition

Trends in
Modern
Islamic
Thought

Islam, Security,
and Global
Developments

Islamic Ethics
and the
Common Good

Local Context:
Singapore
Muslim
Identity

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Day One: Thursday 13 July	ISLAMIC TRADITIONS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
	Venue: Muis Academy
8.15am – 8.55am	Registration and Light Breakfast
9.00am – 9.10am	Opening Remarks
9.15am-10.30am	<p>Module One - Development of the Islamic Intellectual Tradition</p> <p>This section provides an overview of the history of Islam, its main textual sources, its classical tools and methodologies, plural interpretations, characteristics and attributes, and the diverse traditions that emerged following the long and diverse histories, with emphasis on the key ideas which have shaped Muslim societies and contributed to the rapid growth of Islam. The themes and topics covered should assist government officers in understanding contemporary debates on the relevance of Islam today.</p> <p><i>Topic 1 – Origins and Expansion of Islam: Revelation – 1800AD</i></p>
10.30am – 10.45am	Tea Break
10.45am – 12.30am	<i>Topic 2 – God, Norms and Beliefs: Revelation – 1800AD</i>
12.30pm – 1.30pm	Lunch Break
1.30pm – 3.15pm	<p>Module Two – Trends in Modern Islamic Thought</p> <p>This section focuses primarily on the Islamic thought in the modern world and its negotiations with the new realities and contexts. The module will probe into the notion of modernity and the nation-state. Consequently, it examines the manner Islamic thought and traditions deal with modernity and the emergence of various interpretations and trends of thought informed by the varying intellectual and socio-political contexts. It thus offers insights into contemporary Islamic world.</p> <p><i>Topic 3 – Values and Faith in the Modern Age: Challenges of Governance</i></p>
3.15pm – 3.15pm	Tea Break
3.30pm – 5.00pm	<i>Topic 3 – Continued</i>
Day Two: Friday 14 July	ISLAM, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND LOCAL REALITIES
	Venue: Muis Academy
9.00am – 10.30am	Module Three – Islam, Security and Global Developments

	<p>This module focuses primarily on the current global developments in security matters. It examines the notion of terrorism and explores the process of radicalization motivated and perpetuated by multiple factors. Subsequently, it discusses the impacts of radicalization, i.e., sectarianism, Islamophobia, reactive co-radicalization and social unrest, civil war, migration crisis, insularity and nationalism; and finally, it assesses the efficacy of the counter-radicalization strategies. The section sheds light on the position of Islam and Muslims within the global context of the terrorism-industrial complex.</p> <p><i>Topic 4 – Religious Co-existence in the Digital Age: Muslims and Globalizations</i></p>
10.30am – 10.45am	Tea Break
10.45am – 12.30am	<p>Module Four – Islamic Ethics and the Common Good</p> <p>This section explores the application of traditional wisdom, which offers a full range of knowledge derived from cumulative human experience, in the search for relevant and effective solutions to current challenges. Today’s challenges are complex, and there are multiple factors responsible for their exacerbation and due to such complexity, solutions have become more elusive and complex in nature too. The search is in all the places they could be. As one of humanity’s most accomplished intellectual traditions, this section will highlight the ways in which Islamic Ethics can contribute to the common space and good of the pluralistic global society, as it had once done in the past.</p> <p><i>Topic 5 – Islamic Ethics, the Common Good and the Flourishing of Human Communities</i></p>
12.45pm – 2.00pm	Lunch Break
2.00pm – 4.00pm	<p>Module Five – Local Context: The Singapore Muslim Identity</p> <p>This section examines Singapore Muslims’ effort in contextualizing Islamic thoughts and ethics. It explores how they desire to remain rooted in Islamic traditions, but yet adaptive to modern challenges, and contributive to solving modern problems. It analyzes the various strategies to adapt to the unique context of their socio-religious life in addressing their challenges. Singapore Muslim Identity project exemplifies such an effort to develop values of Religious Resilience, Inclusiveness, Contributiveness, Adaptiveness and Progressiveness (RICAP), drawing inspirations from Islamic ethical principles in a diverse and ever-changing landscape in the modern world.</p> <p><i>Topic 6 – Building a Singapore Community of Excellence</i></p>
4.00pm – 4.15pm	Tea Break
4.15pm – 5.00pm	<p>Fireside Chat – “Islam and the Challenges of Governance In Uncertain Times”</p> <p>Geo-political developments have placed Muslim communities worldwide under a harsh spotlight, due to violent extremist groups, like ISIS, who claim to act in the name of Islam and global political decisions that marginalize Muslim communities. The question on the place and role of religion in society, particularly Islam, is one that has been widely discussed in public discourse and yet it is also one that is the most misunderstood.</p> <p>What are the implications of these issues and currents on governance and the lives of ordinary Muslims in Singapore? With militant Islamism on the rise in the last decade, is Islam inherently in conflict with the modern state as some argue, and therefore incompatible with secular modernity? How can a post-Islamist, post-secular approach</p>

	<p>facilitate a shift in the way governance can address issues such as radicalization, religious reforms and strengthening social harmony and understanding; as well as other more global concerns such as injustice, inequality, and human rights? Does the concept of a global <i>ummah</i> (community of believers) pose challenges for local governments? How can we better understand Islam and Muslims with their multiple rituals and observances such as the hijab, halal food and fasting within the concept of social cohesion? Can inclusive citizenship offer a better model for pluralism and religious freedom in light of the resurgence of religion?</p> <p>This session will discuss how public officers can better understand the aspirations and concerns of the Muslim community and help create conditions that foster a sense of community and inclusive citizenship as part of the larger nation-building efforts.</p>
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ABOUT MUIS ACADEMY

Muis Academy (MA) is the research and education arm of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore. The Academy aims at building the leadership capabilities of the socio-religious community so as to shape a progressive religious life of the Muslim community, and promoting a deeper understanding and progressive discourse on Islam and Muslim society in the modern world.

This is realized through multi-disciplinary courses, workshops, roundtable discussions, seminars and conferences. In addition, the Academy conducts research and publishes commentaries and analytical pieces on contemporary issues on religion and is a key platform that supports the vision of establishing a Muslim Community of Excellence for Singapore.

OUR CORE AREAS

Muis Academy is dedicated to the development of Islamic religious leadership in Singapore and as such offers a variety of courses and programmes for the asatizah, mosque officers and leaders, madrasah staff and teachers and Muslim youth and community leaders in the socio-religious sector.

In addition, the Academy now actively engages different sectors of the Singapore society, such as the religious leaders, community leaders and public officers across all faiths. This is mostly achieved through our partnerships with reputable institutes of higher learning locally and internationally where intellectual discourses on Islam and Muslims in the modern world are held in our programmes and publications.

RESOURCE CENTRE ON ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN SINGAPORE

Muis Academy also functions as the repository of the Singapore Muslim community's collective knowledge and experiences. It serves as a conduit for Muis to share Singapore's model of Islamic religious administration, services and expertise to Muslim communities in the region and beyond. Likewise, the Academy aspires to learn from the rich experiences of Muslim communities abroad through its sharing programmes.