The Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK
The Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK was opened in September 2005 by Yusuf Islam, formerly musician Cat Stevens in front of 400 guests. Islam is the second largest religion in Britain and, indeed, the world. There are 46,000 Muslims in Wales, about half of whom live in Cardiff itself (Census 2011).

Cardiff University is now a leading institution for scholarly teaching about Islam and Muslims in contemporary Britain. The Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK (Islam-UK Centre) is based within the School of History, Archaeology and Religion, which has a wealth of teaching expertise and a lively programme of research activity. Within the school’s degree programmes there are a range of possibilities for studying Islam and classical Arabic.

The Centre has a strong and positive relationship with the local Muslim communities. Local Muslims form part of the Centre’s advisory committee, and we are proud of this partnership. We envisage the Centre as an accessible, vibrant, and inclusive hub of learning about Islam in Cardiff, South Wales and the UK for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Public Seminar Series 2021

Wednesday 10th February 5pm
Professor Masooda Bano

‘Making Islam Relevant: The Role of New Islamic Scholarly Networks in the West’
Chair: Dr. Haroon Sidat


Email address: masooda.bano@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvdeihqjkvHNyYVHdM7TGkFNP0mBLoZTh6

Wednesday 24th February 5pm
Dr Khadijah Elshayyal

‘In Search of Vibrancy: Women’s Activism in Scottish Mosques’
Chair: Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed

Khadijah Elshayyal is a visiting professor at the Hamad bin Khalifa University, Doha, and an associate fellow at the University of Edinburgh’s Alwaleed Centre; specializing in contemporary British Muslim history. Her research interests lie in political and cultural activism, advocacy and representation of Muslims and other minorities in the UK. She is author of Muslim Identity Politics: Islam, Activism and Equality in Britain (IB Tauris, 2013) and Scottish Muslims in Numbers: Understanding Scotland’s Muslims Through the 2011 Census (University of Edinburgh, 2016).

Email address: khad21@gmail.com

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvdumvqz8tHdwZVa9I_CwIgWwC7929Cf

Wednesday 10th March 5pm
Professor Peter Mandaville

‘To Talk about Africa You also Have to Talk about Iran’: British Muslim Transnationalism, the Global Islamic Movement, and Decoloniality
Chair: Prof. Sophie Gilliat-Ray

Peter Mandaville is Director of the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies and Professor of International Affairs at George Mason University in the Washington DC area. His books include Islam and Politics (Routledge, 3rd edition 2020), Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma (Routledge, 2001), and the edited volume Wahhabism and the World: Understanding Saudi Arabia’s Global Impact on Islam (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2021). His current research explores Muslim transnationalism in the context of debates on decoloniality.

Email address: pmandav@gmu.edu

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvd-OezME1r49hHMOEyf-MGNZ_P-2xl

Wednesday 24th March 5pm
Dr Ashraf Hoque

‘Being Young, Male, and Muslim in Luton’
Chair: Laiqah Osman

Ashraf Hoque is an Assistant Professor of Social Anthropology based at the UCL Social Research Institute. He is interested in migration and diaspora, the anthropology of Islam, and political economy.

To date, he has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in England (Luton and Tower Hamlets) and Bangladesh (Sylhet). In Luton, he worked with British-born Muslim men of South Asian origin, exploring their everyday lives in relation to family and community dynamics, approaches to work and leisure, and being Muslim in post-7/7 Britain.

His most recent research in Tower Hamlets and Sylhet focuses on transnational political formations, exploring political modalities situated in different cultural contexts that borrow from each other to create distinct forms of localised democratic engagement.

Email address: a.hoque@ucl.ac.uk

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvdeihqjkvHNyYVHdM7TGkFNP0mBLoZTh6

Register here for the full list of seminars this year including professor Peter Mandaville’s session and Dr Ashraf Hoque’s session.

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvdeihqjkvHNyYVHdM7TGkFNP0mBLoZTh6

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvdumvqz8tHdwZVa9I_CwIgWwC7929Cf

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvd-OezME1r49hHMOEyf-MGNZ_P-2xl

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvd-OezME1r49hHMOEyf-MGNZ_P-2xl
media, politicians and the commercial sector. Despite this, academic literature on Ramadan in the UK is sparse, thus the reason for my study.

My findings explore the significance of Ramadan for Muslims in Britain today as well as highlighting the ways in which rituals and activities were adapted given the COVID-19 pandemic. I look at how individualised and communal religion are both important parts of the holy month and how COVID-19 shifted existing Muslim communities online and into the private space of the home. These findings shed light on the private-public dichotomy often applied to religion. Methodologically, I demonstrate how photo diaries can be an important research tool for studies of lived religion and can give researchers access to spaces and experiences that would otherwise be difficult to observe.

Email address: JonesLA24@cardiff.ac.uk

Laiqah Osman
PhD topic: Muslim Women in Britain and the Authority of Online Islamic Content.
Generously funded by the Jameel Scholarship Programme.

Project summary: Muslim women in Britain use, interact and engage with different sources of Islamic authority. Since the advent of Islam on the internet, media sources have become increasingly popular in facilitating this interaction. These can include fatwa websites, Islamic scholars’ profiles on social media, Islamic Q&A TV shows and the automation of Islamic legal literature. My research suggests that this development has significantly transformed women’s role and, subsequently, the function of authority in this engagement.

By studying women’s use of the internet for religious knowledge, we will have a greater understanding of the impact that these sources have on their lived religious experiences. It will also help us to explore the role of individual agency in their religious exploration, shifting the narrative beyond the traditional male guardians of knowledge.

This study will use a combination of traditional social science methods (semi-structured interviews) and internet research (online ethnography) to understand how and in what context Muslim women use these sources to guide and direct their religious practice.

At present, I am preparing to commence fieldwork in the year 2021.

Email address: OsmanL2@cardiff.ac.uk

Fatou Sambe
PhD topic: Converts and the Next Generation of British Muslims.
Generously funded by the Jameel Scholarship Programme.

Project summary: My research project explores the long-term post-conversion experiences of converts in Britain and the particular intersection of converts having children, as well as the experiences of (adult) children of converts. I further investigate the unexplored area of convert support groups and their role in the lives of converts and convert children.

I aim to explore what it means to become a Muslim and raise (Muslim) children. How do converts navigate their new lives, community spaces and raising children, and how do children of converts navigate their mixed background and extended Muslim and non-Muslim families? I also consider how historical, socio-political factors and contexts in Britain shape their experiences.

My interest in this topic was developed during previous research with Scottish and German convert women for my undergraduate dissertation as well as my own background as the daughter of a convert mother. Through my research, I am hoping to contribute to a better understanding of the varying identities and unique experiences of the current generation of Muslims in Britain and ultimately the heterogeneity of Muslim communities.

I am currently in the third year of my PhD and in the middle of the fieldwork stage of my project.

Email address: SambeFB@cardiff.ac.uk
Twitter: https://twitter.com/FatouSambe1

Staff and students walk through central Cardiff. September 2020. Meeting outdoors to build a social group when indoor gatherings were restricted.

Orientation and induction for new MA students at Dar Ul Isra Mosque, Cathays, September 2020.
Jameel Scholars 2020-21
Masters Students

Munadiah Aftab
I have spent the last decade trying to contribute towards and support my local community. The purpose of this is centred around the notion of a ‘faith-inspired activism’, which situates why I am dedicated to understanding social injustice and inequality. I am grateful for the opportunity that this master’s programme is providing, as I believe it will aid me in understanding several communities and provide me with the insight needed to improve the quality of my community service. I am interested in the intersection of race, religion and class, specifically within the context of post-colonial Britain, and how these intersections have facilitated the growth of an ever-changing diaspora. I have recently graduated with a degree in Economics and Politics from Queen Mary University of London, and I have worked across several platforms to engage with local and national institutions and the media to advocate on issues of climate change and women’s liberation.

Huzafah Ali
Born in the UK, I later travelled to India to complete my BA ‘Aalimiyah Degree and MA Hadith Studies at the prestigious Darul Uloom Nadwatul ‘Ulama in Lucknow. I focused my dissertation on the efforts of the noted scholar Muhammad Abid al-Sindi (1776-1840) in the proliferation of the sciences of Hadith. Upon returning to the UK, I completed a Diploma in Contextual Islamic Studies and Leadership at Cambridge Muslim College followed by an MA in Islamic Studies at SOAS where I looked at the structure and coherence in the hermeneutics of the Qur’an. My primary interests are Islamic theology, history and Quranic studies, and I currently serve as an Arabic and Islamic Studies teacher. At Cardiff, I intend to research the impact of contemporary study models and the evolution of Islamic authority in modern Britain.

Umayyah Faatimah Zaman
I studied BA English Literature at the University of Huddersfield, which is where I began to explore the study of Islam through an academic lens. I completed a work placement programme wherein I had experience working with Muslims in my local community while simultaneously researching my dissertation on different translations of the Qur’an. It was at this point that I discovered the Islam-UK Centre, and it seemed like the perfect fit for my academic trajectory. Following the effects of the coronavirus and worldwide lockdown, I was particularly interested in how it affected people’s mental health and how this is still a taboo subject of conversation in Muslim communities. Thanks to the invaluable support of the Jameel Scholarship, I have the opportunity to research this topic.

Centre Contacts

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Deputy Director and Research Associate

Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed
AhmedMA1@Cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 5634

Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed is currently involved in researching British mosques and Muslim congregations, and the role of religion in civil society. His recent publications include works on the conceptualisation of mosques, and the denominational diversity amongst Muslims in the UK. He completed his doctoral thesis – an ethnographic study of a British mosque – in 2016 with the support of the Jameel Scholarship Programme. In addition to his academic work, Abdul-Azim serves as Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales.

Contact Details

Email: sharepg@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)29 2987 0903

Ulfat Yousaf

The purpose of this is centred around the notion of a ‘faith-inspired activism’, which situates why I am dedicated to understanding social injustice and inequality. I am grateful for the opportunity that this master’s programme is providing, as I believe it will aid me in understanding several communities and provide me with the insight needed to improve the quality of my community service. I am interested in the intersection of race, religion and class, specifically within the context of post-colonial Britain, and the dynamics that shape contemporary Muslim communities.

We look at how Muslims have engaged with local and national government in relation to matters such as education, social policy, and chaplaincy, as well as the growth of Muslim community infrastructures such as mosques and charities. During the course of the MA, students receive a thorough grounding in social science research methods and theories and acquire a set of transferrable skills that will equip them for a range of careers. Students can undertake volunteering projects during their studies.

Full scholarships through our Jameel programme are available. Follow our communications channels, such as our website, for application information in the new year.

For more information, please contact:
Postgraduate Administrator:
Email: SHAREPG@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)29 2987 0903

Professor Gilliat-Ray is the founding Director of the Centre. She is currently the Chair of the BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group and is a member of the 2021 REF assessment panel for Theology and Religious Studies. She has authored numerous books and peer-review journal articles about Islam and Muslims in Britain, and she was Chair of the Muslims in Britain Research Network between 2014-2017. Over the course of her career, she has been associated with successful research grants worth over £4.8m. In 2019, she was elected as a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales. Prof. Gilliat-Ray was appointed an OBE in the New Year Honours list in 2020.

Ulfat Yousaf

Born in the UK, I later travelled to India to complete my BA ‘Aalimiyah Degree and MA Hadith Studies at the prestigious Darul Uloom Nadwatul ‘Ulama in Lucknow. I focused my dissertation on the efforts of the noted scholar Muhammad Abid al-Sindi (1776-1840) in the proliferation of the sciences of Hadith. Upon returning to the UK, I completed a Diploma in Contextual Islamic Studies and Leadership at Cambridge Muslim College followed by an MA in Islamic Studies at SOAS where I looked at the structure and coherence in the hermeneutics of the Qur’an. My primary interests are Islamic theology, history and Quranic studies, and I currently serve as an Arabic and Islamic Studies teacher. At Cardiff, I intend to research the impact of contemporary study models and the evolution of Islamic authority in modern Britain.
Centre Contacts
Lecturer in Islamic Studies
Maulana Dr Mansur Ali
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Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 6297
Dr. Mansur Ali is a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic studies at Cardiff University. He is a Darul Uloom graduate as well as holding a degree from the prestigious Al-Azhar University, Egypt, and postgraduate degrees from the University of Manchester. He is interested in Hadith studies, Islamic legal theory, fiqh al-fatawa, Muslim chaplaincy, and Islam and bioethics. Currently he is researching various aspects of organ transplantation and Islam. In addition to his post at the University, he is also a khatib at Darul Itra Mosque, Cardiff, UK. In 2015, he was the recipient of the British Imams and Scholars Award.

Research Associate
Maulana Dr Haroon Sidat
Sidatethe@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 5650
Dr Haroon Sidat completed his traditional Islamic Studies at a Dar al Uloom, or seminary, in Blackburn. He has a background in economics, accounting and finance, and a PGCE in education. He completed his PhD in 2019 looking at the formation and training of imams and British Muslim religious leadership (ulama). He is interested in Islamic law and theology. He is also interested in the sociology of religious professionals, tradition, authority and religious embodiment. Currently, he is working on a unique and ground-breaking project called ‘Understanding British Imams’ which is a three-year study that provides detailed research on the roles imams play in modern Britain. He also serves as an imam and khatib himself.

Research Associate
Dr Riyaz Timol
timolcardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 4884
Dr Riyaz Timol’s PhD on the British branch of the transnational Islamic movement Tablighi Jama’at was shortlisted for the 2018 BRAIS - De Gruyter Prize in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World. He is the Principal Investigator of a major three-year project called ‘Understanding British Imams’ and teaches the MA module ‘History and Development of Muslim Communities in Britain’. His disciplinary approach is within the sociology of religion and his research interests include ethnographic methodology, intergenerational transmission of Islam in Britain and the relationship of Islam with modernity.

Research Associate
Dr Matthew Vince
vincem@Cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 29 2068 8788
Dr Matthew Vince was awarded his PhD at the Islam-UK Centre in November 2018. His doctoral thesis explored the experiences and identities of Muslims working as Religious Education (RE) teachers in secondary state schools across the UK, uncovering ways that Muslim professionals are engaging their faith within ‘secular’ working environments. His research interests surround aspects of Muslims and education, particularly RE, and the study of Islam and Muslims from sociological perspectives, notably that of ‘lived religion’. He is currently leading a research and curriculum development project, titled ‘Discovering Muslims in Britain’, that aims to support RE practitioners to teach about Muslims in Britain from the perspective of their everyday lives. In 2019, Matt joined TRS-UK as a Schools Liaison Officer, working to build relationships between Religion and Religious Studies departments and their local schools.

Research Assistant
Seherish Abrar
abraras@cardiff.ac.uk
After completing a BA in Religion and Education from the University of Huddersfield (2018), Seherish Abrar came to Cardiff University as a Jameel Scholarship recipient. Through the MA Islam in Contemporary Britain, she engaged with many different topics concerning the lived experiences of Muslims in Britain. Seherish is now a Research Assistant within the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK. Most recently, she has been involved with the ‘Discovering Muslims in Britain: for Key Stage 3’ project.

Honorary Visiting Professor
Professor Ron Geaves
Professor Ron Geaves has held a Chair in Religious Studies at the University of Chester (2001-2007) and a Chair in the Comparative Study of Religion at Liverpool Hope University (2007-2013). He joined the Community Religions Project at the University of Leeds in 1988 where he began to work on the transmigration of South Asian religions to Britain, especially Islam. He completed his PhD thesis Sectarian Influences within Islam in Britain which was published as a Community Religions Monograph. He has researched Islam in Britain since that time, publishing several books that explore British manifestations of Sufism. He is an early member of the Muslims in Britain Research Network and chaired the body from 2006 to 2009, and he remains a lifetime member of the committee. He is an early friend of the Islam-UK Centre, acting as its first external examiner for the MA programme (2005-8). His work remains focused on the application of religious knowledge to real life affairs and he is a passionate believer in advocacy. Consequently, he has been involved in a number of projects bridging academia to government, law, architects, education and media. His work on the theory and method in the study of religion, The Study of Religion, went to second edition in 2014, and he remains committed to advancing the subject discipline through promoting the study of lived religions. However, in 2010 he turned his attention to history, publishing the ground-breaking Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam followed by Islam and Britain: Muslim Mission in an Age of Empire and Victorian Muslims: Abdullah Quilliam and Islam in the West with Jamie Gilham, both published in 2017.

Dr Asma Khan is Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre. She completed her PhD in 2018, a mixed methods study that examined high levels of economic inactivity among British Muslim women. Asma is a post-doctoral researcher at The University of Sheffield, working on the Everyday Bordering in the UK Project. She is also a member of the executive committee for the Muslims in Britain Research Network. Asma’s research interests include qualitative and quantitative research on socio-economic disadvantage, ethnoreligious inequalities, and migration studies.
Discovering Muslims in Britain

Built on the Islam-UK Centre’s hugely successful Muslims in Britain Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), through this project the Centre has worked to develop training and teaching resources that support Religious Education (RE) teachers in their knowledge and understanding of Islam and Muslims in Britain; The Discovering Muslims in Britain programme does so by embedding sociological perspectives of religion in the RE classroom, using cutting-edge sociological research and academic scholarship in the resources to equip teachers and pupils with the skills of looking at religion sociologically. Interviews, videos and material created for the course also encourage pupils to put their skills to use, listening to and analysing from the perspective of different Muslims themselves.

If you would like to get in touch with the project team please contact: discoveringmuslims@cardiff.ac.uk

For members of the project team, please go to:
https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/professional-development/available-training/short-courses/view/discovering-muslims-in-britain-online-course

Access to the free resources, please go to:
https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/2430314-Free-teaching-resources-for-Key-Stage-3

To register interest for the CPD training, please go to:
https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/professional-development/available-training/short-courses/view/discovering-muslims-in-britain-online-course

Understanding British Imams

Imams are the largest group of Muslim religious professionals in Britain, who work principally within mosques leading prayers, delivering sermons and providing guidance to their congregations. However, there is growing evidence to suggest that this role is being expanded to encompass pastoral care, chaplaincy, charity work or wider community projects such as inter-faith activity or civic events. Further, the pressures of a post-9/11 and 7/7 socio-political climate, in which counter-terrorism measures become increasingly conflated with integration issues, have foregrounded the imam as a figure that may guide his flock in either constructive or destructive ways. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, the British imam has only rarely been the subject of in-depth ethnographic research. This exciting 3-year project aims to fill this gap by conducting the most detailed and rigorous study ever undertaken of British imams thus making a substantial contribution to debates about Muslim religious leadership in the West.

Books of Interest

Above: More than 50 participants joined the Understanding British Imams research project team’s first Advisory Panel meeting held virtually in conjunction with the British Board of Scholars & Imams and the Muslim Council of Wales.

Top: Pupils of St Tello’s Church in Wales High School being interviewed for the Discovering Muslims in Britain project.

Book Discussion

I Refuse to Condemn

Wednesday 28th April 2021, 4pm

When people commit acts defined as criminal, terrorist or extremist and associate their actions with Islam, condemnation is part of society’s response. Politicians, journalists, neighbours and colleagues expect Muslims to condemn these acts. Yet to condemn is to give in to a narrative that creates “good” and “bad” Muslims and places the burden on Muslims to demonstrate their humanity. The contributors to the new volume, I Refuse to Condemn: Resisting Racism in Times of National Security, published by Manchester University Press, explore these tensions in a series of essays. In a joint seminar between the Islam-UK Centre and the School of Journalism, Media and Culture, we invite some of the contributors to share their work and ideas. Discussants Dr Michael Munnik (IUKC) and Dr Kerry Moore (JOMEC) will offer their analysis of the book, and we will then open the digital floor for questions.

Register here:
https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkcOqoqT4tEtC5eBNHGv9zKqculj_S-7R4

Members of the Islam-UK Centre Management Board

Professor James Hegarty Chair of the Management Board and Head of the School of History, Archaeology and Religion
Ali Abdi Partnerships and Facilities Manager, Community Gateway, Cardiff University.
Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed Research Associate
Dr Mansur Ali Lecturer in Islamic Studies
Mark Bryant Development Officer
Laura Davies Head of Communications, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Cardiff University
Jennifer Dunne / Ruth Coombs Project, Stakeholder and Intelligence Manager, Equality and Human Rights Commission for Wales
Dr Richard Gale Lecturer in Human Geography School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University
Professor Gilliat-Ray Director
Professor Gilliat-Ray Director
Dr Meraj Hasan Association of Muslim Professionals, Cardiff
Eleanor Hewett Senior Development Manager, Development and Alumni Relations, Cardiff University
Gillian James Head of Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service, Cardiff Council

Samina Khan Community Liaison and Development Manager, Cardiff and Vale College
Saleem Kidwai OBE Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales
Dr Michael Munnik Lecturer in Social Science Research Methods and Theories
Nathan Roberts Head of Education Support, Student Experience and Education Support, Cardiff University
Dr Riyaz Timol Research Associate
Dr David Wyatt Community Engagement, School of History, Archaeology and Religion
To respect public safety and social distancing requirements, all our public seminars and other events will take place remotely and online this year. You will find a Zoom registration link for each speaker: follow that link to register your interest in the event, and we will send you an e-mail with a link and login details. Talks will be recorded, and you can indicate your consent through Zoom. We still intend for vibrant discussion as part of our seminars: we will manage your questions through the chat function, which will be monitored by Centre staff.

### Diary of Public Seminars 2021

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Prof. Peter Mandaville

“To Talk about Africa You also Have to Talk about Iran”: British Muslim Transnationalism, the Global Islamic Movement, and Decoloniality

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Chair: Laiqah Osman

https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIvdeihqkv-HnyYVHdM7TGkPN0m8LxzTtl

**Wednesday 28nd April 4pm**

Book Discussion: I Refuse to Condemn

In partnership with Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Culture

Discussants: Dr Michael Munnik and Dr Kerry Moore

https://cardiff.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkcOqqT4tEtC5eBNHGv9zKqculj_S-7R4

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