Islam and Society

Degree conferred
Master of Arts in Islam and Society

Languages of study
Possibility to study in French, in German or in French and German.

Commencement of studies
Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies
Ph.D.

The master programme «Islam and Society» is unique in Europe. It teaches skills required for a nuanced approach to complex debates, addressing central questions of the religious self-understanding of Muslims and developing perspectives on current social challenges. The particularity of the programme is the systematic interweaving of the two fields of knowledge, Islam and society, whereby sociological, theological, historical and practical aspects are incorporated into an integrative approach. The programme is run by the Swiss Centre for Islam and Society (CSIS) at the University of Fribourg.

Profile of the study programme

Current debates on Islam show the importance of not only seeking social and political solutions, but also addressing the increasing need for Islamic interpretation models. In this respect, the programme focuses on the interactions between Islam and society in Europe and more specifically in the context of Switzerland. On the one hand, it considers philosophical and theological discourses and normative issues, and on the other hand social, legal and political circumstances, as well as the fields of social action. Which impact do trends such as secularisation, individualisation and pluralisation have on the current understanding of Islam and the social participation of Muslim actors? How are theological positions negotiated between tradition and innovation, literalism and hermeneutic openness, and between universalism and contextuality? What significance do «norms» have for the religious self-understanding of Muslims and their everyday lives? What role do Islamic approaches play in contemporary thought on, for example, gender hierarchies, economic and environmental issues, or questions of social ethics? How do Islamic motivations and beliefs adapt to the logics of education, social work or spiritual care? The objective with regard to these issues is, on the one hand, to analyse and empirically explore the numerous manifestations of Islam and how Muslims are perceived in Europe in a theoretical approach, and on the other hand, to focus on how Islamic thought is evolving in the European context on the basis of an introspective examination of its multiple traditions of knowledge.

Fribourg profile
The study programme consists of courses run by the Swiss Centre for Islam and Society (CSIS) and other Departments at the University of Fribourg. The CSIS is a national centre of excellence for current social issues related to Islam in Switzerland. It pursues a multi-perspective approach, which includes Islamic self-reflection as to how the multiple bases of Islamic knowledge and tradition can be transformed and integrated into the Swiss context. Interdisciplinary research projects on these issues using systematic and practical applications make this a research-based course taught in a great variety of ways. Moreover, the CSIS maintains close contacts with different actors in the fields of science, politics, religion and civil society at the national and international levels. Offering a wide-ranging advanced training programme and handling research mandates on current topics, the CSIS has significant practical relevance. As an inter-faculty centre of the Faculties of Theology, Law, and Humanities, it is a hub for different skills related to Islam and religion and as such, is able to offer a varied study programme. Regular conferences and lectures by international guest speakers complete the offer.

Learning outcomes and career openings
Students who successfully complete the study programme will have acquired the skills to
– Analyse complex phenomena related to Islam and Muslims in a European and Swiss context using different disciplinary approaches;
– Transpose existing knowledge to new contexts in a dynamic interaction between Islam and society;
– Formulate innovative research ideas in previously little explored domains;
– Develop independent scientific positions in a highly controversial and polarised area of research and debate;
– Formulate results based on scholarly standards, also taking into consideration the different expectations of political and social actors.

Many lines of work today require skills connected to cultural and religious diversity. Graduates of the Islam and Society master's degree programme may consider the following professional fields:

- Public administration and institutions;
- Social area;
- Diplomatic service, political parties and foundations;
- Adult education;
- Religious communities and organisations;
- Diversity management in the private sector;
- Communications and media;
- Migration and intercultural competence;
- Civil society organisations (NGOs);
- Academic research and scholarship.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

90 ECTS credits, 3 semesters

Curriculum

https://studies.unifr.ch/go/1d *(French)*
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/1e *(German)*

Admission

Master's degree programmes are built on the knowledge and abilities that were acquired when obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university are admitted to a master's degree programme without any preconditions if they have earned 60 or 90 ECTS credits – depending on the chosen master's degree programme – within the corresponding discipline. However, additional requirements can be required. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss or a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg, who do not fulfil this condition can be admitted to a master's degree programme with preconditions (which must be successfully completed before starting the master's degree programme) and/or additional requirements (which can be completed during the master's degree programme). The preconditions and/or additional requirements may not exceed 60 ECTS credits in total. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university of applied sciences, according to existing agreements.

The respective conditions of admission for each master's degree programme are reserved.

Alternatives

Also offered as a minor study programme (30 ECTS credits).

Contact

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