

DEFINING ISLAMIC COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

International Conference



DEFINING ISLAMIC COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

Over the last decades, Comparative Theology has established itself in varying methodological ways of searching for Truth while considering the reality and plurality of religions. Although Comparative Theology can be a confessional or non-confessional endeavor, most protagonists and theorists of Comparative Theology have been Western Christians. This could lead to the conclusion that Comparative Theology is in fact a Christian undertaking and implicitly or explicitly bound to conceptions like Christology. Furthermore, it could be argued that in the West there is a certain asymmetry of power in the discourse between religions when the parameters of Comparative Theology are defined mainly by Christian theologians. Speaking about Islamic Comparative Theology could be misunderstood as an apologetic questioning of the status quo in Comparative Theology. It could also be understood as a postcolonial label to 'deconstruct' Comparative Theology. But two developments in Germany over the last decade have created a need to speak about Islamic Comparative Theology. First, the establishment of Institutes of Islamic Theology at German universities, part of a greater political and academic project to configure Muslim participation in German society, means that a new generation of young Muslim theologians have been socialized within the German academic framework and formulate their beliefs as an intrinsic articulation of their German Muslim identity. Second, Christian-Muslim engagement on certain theological questions within Comparative Theology has paved the way to problematize and ask about the possibilities and limits of a genuinely Islamic Comparative Theology. This conference aims to be the first step to programmatically and conceptionally explore the possibility of a genuinely Islamic Comparative Theology.

02/12
FRIDAY

Schedule

4.00 - 4.30 pm

Check-in and Warm-up
Inquiries / technical explanations
Reception for participants and speakers

4.30 - 5.00 pm

Greetings
Prof. Dr. Volker Peckhaus, Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Introduction and opening remarks
Zishan Ghaffar and Idris Nassery

5.00 - 5.45 pm

The History of Comparative Theology on Christian-Muslim relations
Keynote: Klaus von Stosch (Bonn, Germany)

5.45 - 6.30 pm

Plenary Discussion

6.30 pm

Dinner

03/12
SATURDAY

8 am

Breakfast

Conceptualizing and systematizing Islamic Comparative Theology

9.00 - 10.00 am

Speaker: Muna Tatari (Paderborn, Germany)
Response: Abdul Rahman Mustafa (Paderborn, Germany)

10.00 - 11.00 am

Speaker: Ufuk Topkara (Berlin, Germany)
Response: Aaron Langenfeld (Paderborn, Germany)

11.00 am

Coffee Break



03/12
SATURDAY

Schedule

Islamic Comparative Theology from the perspective of Qur'ānic exegesis

11.30 - 12.30 pm

Speaker: Zishan Ghaffar (Paderborn, Germany)
Response: Pim Valkenberg (Washington, USA)

12.30 - 1.30 pm

Speaker: Vahid Mahdavi Mehr (Qom, Iran)
Response: Marianne Moyaert (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

1.30 pm

Lunch

Islamic Comparative Theology from the perspective of Islamic law

2.30 - 3.30 pm

Speaker: Idris Nassery (Paderborn, Germany)
Response: Joshua Ralston (Edinburgh, UK)

3.30 - 4.30 pm

Speaker: Hakki Arslan (Muenster, Germany)
Response: Ahmad Atif Ahmad (Santa Barbara, USA)

4.30 pm

Coffee Break

Islamic Comparative Theology from the perspective of religious education

5.00 - 6.00 pm

Speaker: Fahimah Ulfat (Tubingen, Germany)
Response: Jan Woppowa (Paderborn, Germany)

6.00 - 7.00 pm

Speaker: Naciye Kamcili-Yildiz (Paderborn, Germany)
Response: Monika Tautz (Cologne, Germany)

7.00 pm

Dinner



04/12
SUNDAY

Schedule

8 am

Breakfast

Islamic Comparative Theology and Gender

9.30 - 10.30 am

Speaker: Dina El Omari (Muenster, Germany)
Response: Saida Mirsadri (Zurich, Switzerland)

10.30 - 11.30 am

Speaker: Jerusha Tanner Rhodes (New York, USA)
Response: Anja Middelbeck-Varwick (Frankfurt, Germany)

11.30 - 12.00 am

Final remarks

12.00 am

Lunch/End of conference



Notes



Speaker

KLAUS VON STOSCH

Klaus von Stosch has been Schlegel-Professor for Systematic Theology and head of the International Center for Comparative Theology and Social Issues at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Bonn since 2021. In his doctorate at the University of Bonn in 2001, he dealt with the relationship between faith and reason in Wittgenstein's late philosophy, and in his habilitation at the University of Münster in 2005 with God's actions in the world. Since 2005 his main research focus has been on comparative theology and Muslim-Christian relations. He has published extensively on this topic and carried out numerous research projects of his own.



Speaker

MUNA TATARI



Muna Tatari is a scholar of Islam and a professor of Islamic theology at the University of Paderborn. She studied at the University of Hamburg with a minor in Religious Education. She completed her doctorate at the University of Paderborn with a dissertation on justice and benevolence in the divine-human relationship. Since 2020 she has been a member of the German Ethics Council, the first Muslim appointed to this body.

Response

ABDUL RAHMAN MUSTAFA

Abdul Rahman Mustafa is a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Comparative Theology and Cultural Studies. He obtained a bachelor of laws from the London School of Economics, a masters in Modern History from the University of Oxford and a Ph.D. in Arabic & Islamic Studies from Georgetown University. He is currently working on a project on the relationship between Islamic law and theology.



Speaker

UFUK TOPKARA



Ufuk Topkara has, since 2021, held the only chair of comparative theology from an Islamic perspective at the Berlin Institute of Islamic Theology. He studied history at the Humboldt University in Berlin. After obtaining a doctorate in Islamic theology from the University of Paderborn, he did his postdoctoral research at the University of Connecticut and the University of Virginia. He is currently researching, amongst other things, the relationship between Jewish and Christian theology.

Response

AARON LANGENFELD

Aaron Langenfeld is a Roman Catholic theologian and holds the chair for fundamental theology and comparative religious studies at the Paderborn Faculty of Theology. From 2005 to 2010 he studied Catholic theology, German and philosophy at the University of Cologne. He received his doctorate from the Theological Faculty of Paderborn, authoring a dissertation on soteriology, the doctrine of Christian salvation. He has been chairman of the advisory board of the Center for Comparative Theology and Cultural Studies at Paderborn since 2022.





Speaker

ZISHAN GHAFFAR

Zishan Ghaffar is a scholar of Islam and a professor of Quranic Exegesis at the University of Paderborn since 2020. He studied philosophy, Islamic studies and Protestant theology at the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel. From 2012 to 2016, he did his doctorate in Islamic theology at the Center for Islamic Theology at the Wilhelms University in Münster, where he also worked there as a research assistant. He is currently the spokesman for the Paderborn Institute for Islamic Theology.

Response

PIM VALKENBERG

Pim Valkenberg is Professor of Religion and Culture at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. After studying theology at Utrecht University, he worked as a research associate at the Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion. While in the Netherlands, he completed his doctorate, writing a dissertation on Thomas Aquinas. He is currently researching, among other things, interreligious dialogue.



Speaker

VAHID MAHDAVI MEHR



Vahid Mahdavi Mehr received his doctorate in comparative theology from the University of Paderborn. In 2021 he successfully completed his dissertation entitled "Is the Quran Supersessionist? Identifying the Quran's Theological Framework of Engagement with Earlier Abrahamic Traditions." His work contributes to the dialogue between Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

Response

MARIANNE MOYAERT

Marianne Moyaert is Professor of Beliefs and Practices at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a visiting professor at the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven. At the American Academy of Religion, she is part of the Steering Committee on Comparative Theology. Among other topics, she researches how to deal with Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim couples and anti-Semitic or Islamophobic prejudices relating to them.



Speaker

IDRIS NASSERY



Idris Nassery is a scholar of law as well as a qualified lawyer, having studied law at the University of Bielefeld. He completed his master's in Islamic Law on a scholarship at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. From 2012, he carried out research at the Graduate College of Islamic Theology at the University of Paderborn, where he worked as a research assistant until successfully completing his doctorate in 2017 with his dissertation on al-Ghazali. Since 2021, he has held the junior professorship for the Chair of Islamic Norms at the Paderborn Institute for Islamic Theology.

Response

JOSHUA RALSTON

Joshua Ralston is a Lecturer in Christian-Muslim Relations at the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity, and Director and Co-Founder of the Christian-Muslim Studies Network. He studied philosophy at Wake Forest University before pursuing a master's degree in theology and a doctorate in Christian theology and Islamic thought from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. His research interests include the relationship between Christian and Islamic theology and political theology.



Speaker

HAKKI ARSLAN

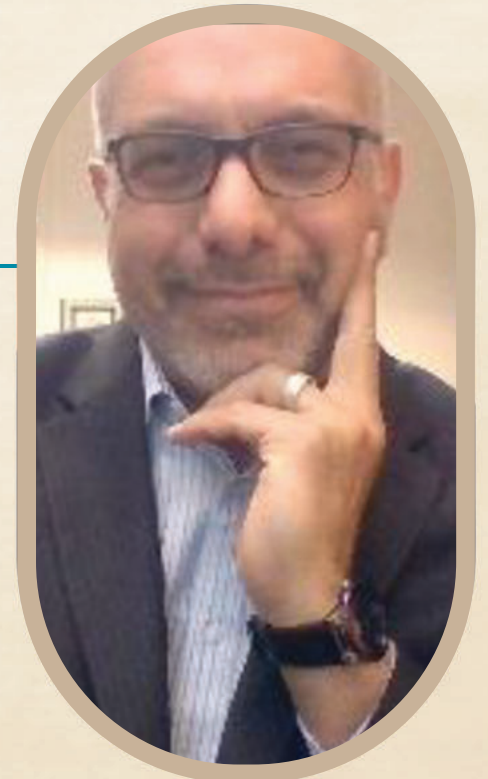


Hakki Arslan has been a research associate in the Collaborative Research Center in Law and Literature at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster since 2019. From 2005 to 2010 he studied Islamic religious studies, Jewish-Christian religious studies and medieval and modern history at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. He followed this with a doctorate at the Institute for Islamic Theology at the University of Osnabrück, where he was also a research assistant from 2014 to 2019.

Response

AHMAD ATIF AHMAD

*Ahmad Atif Ahmad is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He received his Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Harvard University. He also served as Chair of Middle East Studies at the College of William and Mary and Associate Academic Director of the University of California, Washington Center. Among many other books he is the author of *The Fatigue of the Shari'a* and *Structural Interrelations of Theory and Practice in Islamic Law*.*



Speaker

FAHIMAH ULFAT



Fahimah Ulfat is a professor of Islamic religious education at the University of Tübingen, where she heads the Institute for Islamic religious education research. From 1995 to 1999 she studied teaching at the University of Duisburg-Essen and subsequently worked there as a teacher. She then studied Islamic religious education as an additional subject at the University of Osnabrück, where she was also a research assistant. She did her doctorate at the Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg, which dealt with the self-relationship of Muslim children to God.

Response

JAN WOPPOWA

Jan Woppowa has held the professorship for religious didactics at the Institute for Catholic Theology at the University of Paderborn since 2013. He is an advisor to the German Bishops' Conference. From 1994 to 2000 he studied to become a teacher, majoring in Catholic theology, mathematics and educational science. He worked as a research assistant in the Collaborative Research Center in Judaism – Christianity at the University of Bonn. He completed his doctorate in 2005 and received a teaching position in religious education at the University of Siegen.



Speaker

NACIYE KAMCILI-YILDIZ



Naciye Kamcili-Yildiz is an Islamic religious educator and teacher. In 2001, she completed the second state examination of the teacher training course in German and geography at the University of Dortmund. In addition to her work as a teacher, she was part of the research project "Framework Competence Model for Islamic Religion Teachers." She is currently working as a teacher at the University of Paderborn, where she is also involved in interreligious dialogue.

Response

MONIKA TAUTZ

*Monika Tautz works as a religious education teacher at the Institute for Catholic Theology at the University of Cologne. Until October 2021 she was a teacher in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Cologne. Her research areas include interreligious learning and university didactics. In 2007 she published her work *Interreligious Learning in Religious Education - People and Ethos in Islam and Christianity*.*



Speaker

DINA EL OMARI

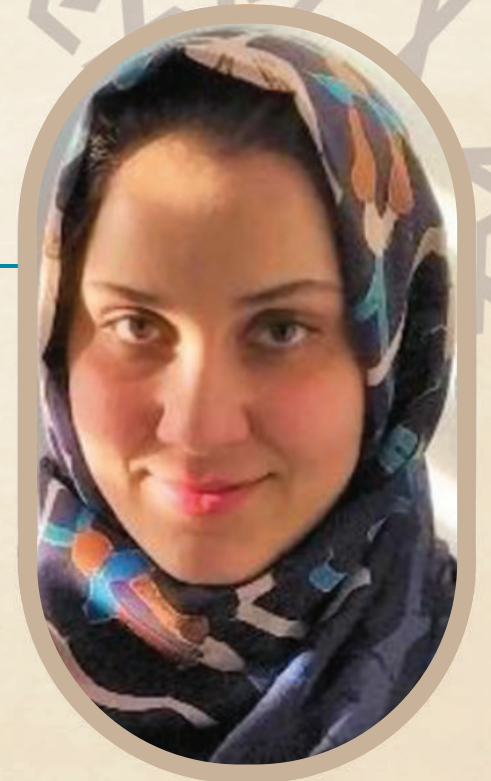


Dina El Omari has been Professor of Intercultural Religious Education at the Center for Islamic Theology at the University of Münster since 2021. She studied in Münster until 2008, where she was a student assistant at the Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies. She then did her doctorate, with a major in Islamic studies and a minor in Spanish philology, on Arabic elements in Spanish poetry from the 15th to the 17th centuries.

Response

SAIDA MIRSADRI

Saida Mirsadri is a philosopher of religion. She studied English literature at Azad University in Qom, Iran and received her master's degree in philosophy of religion in 2015. She successfully completed her doctorate in 2019 at the University of Tehran. Her dissertation deals with the metaphysics of Mohammad Iqbal. Since 2021, she has been working as a research assistant at the University of Paderborn.



Speaker

JERUSA TANNER RHODES



Jerusha Tanner Rhodes is Professor of Islam and Interfaith Engagement at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She received her Ph.D. from Georgetown University, with a focus on religious pluralism. Her research interests also include Islamic feminism. In 2018 her work "Divine Word, Female Voices" was published by Oxford University Press. She is currently Director of the Islam, Social Justice and Interreligious Engagement Program.

Response

ANJA MIDDELBECK-VARWICK

Anja Middelbeck-Varwick has been a professor of religious theology and religious studies in the Department of Catholic Theology at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main from 1993 to 2000. She studied Roman Catholic theology at the Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität, Münster. She was a research associate at the Freie Universität Berlin until 2009 and received her doctorate there in 2006 in Catholic theology. She undertook her habilitation in 2017 at the University of Salzburg.



Notes





