



Course description: NISIS Spring School 2016

Theme	“Reviving previous times and expanding horizons: Islam and modernity in global historical perspective”
Academic year	2015-2016
Location	Istanbul
EC	5
Level	600
Language	English
Keynote speakers	Dr. Murat Dağlı Dr. Pierre Hecker Dr. Elena Paskaleva Dr. Umar Ryad Prof. Mercedes Volait Prof. Levent Yilmaz
Hosted by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centre for Near and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Marburg - College of Social Sciences and Humanities; Suna-İnan Kıraç Research Center for Mediterranean Civilizations, Koç University - l’Institut français d’études anatoliennes d’Istanbul - L’Institut d’études de l’Islam et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman / École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales - Netherlands Institute in Turkey - Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies - Orient Institut Istanbul - Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Koç University

Admission requirements

PhD candidates and research master students active in the field of Islamic Studies may apply for admission and should contact NISIS at nisis@hum.leidenuniv.nl.

No rights can be derived from this course description. Information may be subject to change.

[NISIS junior members](#) qualify automatically and do not need to apply for participation. However, they are required to **register** for the NISIS Spring School via nisis@hum.leidenuniv.nl.

Description

The NISIS Spring School is usually organised in cooperation with several foreign research institutions and preferably takes place where these sister institutions are based. The programme consists of lectures by keynote speakers in the morning and parallel workshops in the afternoon. In the workshops, a selection of international PhD candidates and research master students present their research in relation to the general theme of the Spring School and/or act as discussants.

Participants (PhD candidates and research master students) are required to:

- give a presentation (15 minutes) in one of the afternoon workshops and/or as **discussant*** for one of the presentations of others;
- write a paper in which you relate your own research to the theme of the Spring School.

*As a **discussant** during the NISIS Spring School, you are required to pose questions for discussion and to actively participate in and contribute to the discussion. NISIS aims at assigning the participants to the different (thematic/geographical) sessions in accordance with their respective field of study within Islamic Studies.

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Whether modernity is equated with Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, or Industrial Revolution in the West, or with Islamic reformism, *Tanzimat*, or *Nahda* in the East, it can be safely assumed - considering the vast, often polemical, literature the notion has nurtured - that a basic dimension lays in new engagements with time and space.

Modern representations of time have been characterized both by a break with the immediate past, and a curiosity about earlier ages. The surge of interest in classical times is a well-known feature of European Renaissance that gave birth to myriad new intellectual activities, from collecting manuscripts and antiquities to circulating widely printed texts and engravings; new cleric figures, legitimized by their erudition, emerged in the process and paved somehow the way to the formation of the modern state. Shifting representations of ancient times in the Muslim world have generated less scholarship but are no less revealing. The Sublime Porte’s awakening to the political value of antiquities since the mid-eighteenth century is a good example of increased and novel uses of the material past. The modern reception of classical texts such as Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah* offers another perspective. The new forms of historical writing that resulted in turn gave birth to a new class of *litterati* that transformed in the long run established social stratifications and professional identities.

Contested memories of things past may represent another crucial dimension of modernity, and this is nowhere more visible than in the enduring grief caused by the recurrent eruptions of violence that have characterized our modern times and the fragmented narratives they have legated. Outbursts followed in some instances dynamics of religious redefinition, that eventually fueled sectarianism and ascribed ethnicity to persuasion – a process that can be viewed indeed as inherent to modernity, whenever and wherever it takes place.

The incorporation of the world into the systems of knowledge is an equally salient feature of modernity that took varied forms and meanings depending from where it is viewed. Europe turned to distant civilizations to debate domestic issues as early as the seventeenth-century, at a time when an already exhausted Ottoman imperial system was being conscious of the limits of its model and forced to come to terms with European military and economic supremacy. By the nineteenth century, emulating European governance and culture had become standard currency throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, producing along the way many an idiosyncrasy.

Pleas have been made to think the integration of nations into the international state system in global terms, rather than in a Eurocentric way. French culture did dominate the social life and cosmopolitanism of many port cities around the Mediterranean in the imperial age, but Western Europe was soon to cease being the only location of authority at world scale. Japan emerged after its 1905 military victory over Russia as a privileged counterpoint to modernization without the imperialism and race ideology associated to the West. The interest in non-Western modernity is well reflected in the increasing number of Middle Eastern writings on the East that followed. These flows and counter-flows invite to challenge diffusionist notions of modernization (i.e. its gradual dissemination from Europe to the rest of the world), and to acknowledge the social dynamics that existed in many societies before, and beyond, their encounter with the West. They suggest not neglecting the long history of entanglements and transnational conditions that went into the co-production of modernity anywhere.

The Spring school invites to rethink the temporality and spatiality of modernity over a long time span and within enlarged geographies. It aims at pluralizing the notion of modernization, by trespassing usual national and civilizational boundaries.

Course objectives

- Enlarging and deepening the already existing knowledge of Islam and Muslim societies
- Providing insight and participation in the current academic debate
- Introducing the candidates to an international network of scholars in the field
- Creating an academic community in which research in the field of Islam and Muslim societies can be optimally pursued
- Mediating between a new generation of researchers and innovative disciplinary and interdisciplinary developments, theoretical and methodological initiatives and explorations in the field
- Training presentation, writing and reflection skills.

Timetable

The Spring School will take place from Monday 14 until Friday 18 March 2016. Please make sure to be informed about programme details and updates via our website: www.nisis.nl

Mode of instruction

- Lecture
- Workshop
- Research

Course load

Total course load for the course is 140 hours.

Lectures during the school: 36 hours

Preparation presentation: 40 hours

Preparation discussant: 4 hours

Paper: 60 hours

Assessment method

PhD candidates and research master students will be judged on the basis of:

- attendance at the keynote lectures and workshops
- presentation in a workshop **and/or** discussant for one of the presentations of others
- a paper afterwards in the form of a reflexive essay (see next section for requirements)

Paper requirements

The objective of the reflexive essay to conclude the Spring School, is to relate the theme of the Spring School as presented in the keynote lectures to your own research. To this purpose, you choose at least one keynote lecture and follow these instructions:

A. As a first step, you write a short introductory section. In the first subsection of the introduction you present the objectives, research question, and subject matter of your own research in max. 200 words. In the next subsection (max. 300 words) you explain to what purpose you have selected this/these key note lecture(s) from the Spring school to apply to your own research.

B. The next section of 1000 to 1500 words consists of a few paragraphs in which you answer for each of the key note lecture(s) the following questions:

- Which key theories, concepts and ideas are addressed?
- What are the main questions and problems that are addressed?
- What is the nature and content of the empirical data/sources that are analysed and how is (the analysis)of the data organised?

C. The next section of 1000 to 1500 words is dedicated to a two-step ‘what if’ exercise in creativity:

1. for each of the selected key note lecture(s) you ask yourself: If you were to apply the approach/ line of argument, etc. to your own research, what new questions would you ask of your data, what kind of data would you have to collect alternatively or additionally? If you were to adopt the approach, focus etc. of the lecture to develop an argument along similar lines on the basis your own material, what might that argument look like?
2. For each of the possibilities that you can come up with, you reflect on the pro’s and con’s and take stock of and explain which options are interesting and feasible to follow up on.

D. In the concluding section you take stock of how the theme of the Spring School, most concretely how the key note lecture(s) selected shed new light on and/or have been helpful for your own research.

In total, the length your essay should be **between 2500 to 4000 words.**

Application

You can apply for participation in the NISIS Spring School 2016 as soon as a call for application has been opened. This will be announced on the NISIS website (www.nisis.nl). Please note that the number of available places is restricted.

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Website

www.nisis.nl