

A Summer Institute at the University of Florida

## ***Lived Islam in Contemporary Africa***

co-hosted by

the Center for African Studies, Center for Global Islamic Studies, & Department of Religion

*May 7–25, 2019*

This Summer Institute will explore ways of being Muslim and lived Islam in contemporary Africa from a comparative perspective. Our main objective will be to develop tools for analyzing how people in Africa and the diaspora live Islam across space and time. We will focus on the question of what it means to be Muslim – a question many Muslims on the continent themselves face – and build our discussions from rich empirical studies of lived Islam. Given the diversity of contexts and ways in which people live their religion, Islam is not monolithic, fixed, or static but rather diverse, changing, and contested. An integral part of many people's lives, Islam is neither self-contained nor a separate sphere. Islam informs many people's lives and vice versa, and the entanglements of people's lives with Islam are complex and multiple. Such diversity and entanglements inform people's ongoing religious debates and contestations. Since established analytic terms (Sufi, reformist, Salafi, etc.) and ostensibly discrete spheres (religion, politics, modernity, etc.) often fail to capture the complex and changing ways of being Muslim, it is particularly important and useful to develop more nuanced tools for apprehending and making sense of the complex ways of being Muslim in Africa and elsewhere at the current historical juncture.

Participants will include recent PhD recipients, advanced graduate students, and a number of invited lecturers from the University of Florida and elsewhere.

### **Format of the Institute:**

- A series of thematic lectures and discussions about Islam in Africa and elsewhere in the world, as well as theoretical orientations, featuring University of Florida faculty and invited guests;
- The workshopping of papers and development of analytical skills through writing of a symposium paper, blog entry and/or other online format, and oral presentations;
- Allocated time for use of UF's library resources;
- The Summer Institute will culminate in a symposium where the participants will present their papers and receive feedback.

### **Eligibility, application procedure, and deadline:**

Recent PhD recipients and advanced graduate students with a focus on empirical studies of Islam and Muslim societies in Africa are invited to apply to participate in the institute. Full costs will be covered for a limited number of participants. Partial funding for others might be available.

Send a CV, contact information for two referees, and an abstract of a paper based on original empirical research to be developed during the summer institute and presented at the final symposium to [islaminafrica@clas.ufl.edu](mailto:islaminafrica@clas.ufl.edu) by February 11, 2019.

This Summer Institute has been made possible by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation Initiative on Religion and International Affairs.

Conveners: Benjamin Soares and Benedikt Pontzen.

Questions and queries can be directed to Benedikt Pontzen: [bpontzen@ufl.edu](mailto:bpontzen@ufl.edu).