



Anthropological Perspectives on Islam and Sustainability: From Islamic Finance to Muslim Environmentalism

Educational subject description sheet

Basic information

<p>Field of study Joint Bachelor in Sustainability</p> <p>Speciality Social Sciences & Humanities</p> <p>Organizational unit Faculty of Law and Administration</p> <p>Study level first cycle (joint degree programme)</p> <p>Study form full-time degree programme</p> <p>Education profile General academic</p> <p>Mandatory elective</p>	<p>Education cycle 2025/26</p> <p>Realization year 2027/28</p> <p>Subject code UJ.WPAJBSSSHS.810.16606.25</p> <p>Lecture languages english</p> <p>Subject related to scientific research Yes</p> <p>Disciplines Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Culture and Religion Studies</p> <p>ISCED classification 0314 Sociology and cultural studies</p> <p>USOS code</p>	
Subject coordinator	Piotr Szwedo	
Lecturer	Dominik Müller	
<p>Period Semester 5</p>	<p>Examination graded credit</p> <p>Activities and hours Discussion class: 27</p>	<p>Number of ECTS points 3.0</p>

Goals

C1	The aim is to familiarize students interactively with current ideas of sustainability in Islamic knowledge discourses as well as the ways in which these ideas and concepts are realized in Muslim organizations and activism.
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Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
Knowledge - Student knows and understands:			
W1	the origins and significance of important sustainability ideas and practices in Islam.	JBS_K1_W01, JBS_K1_W04	credit with grade, essay
W2	the specific Islamic discourses, ideas, organizations and/or practices related to sustainability.	JBS_K1_W05, JBS_K1_W06, JBS_K1_W07	credit with grade, essay
Skills - Student can:			
U1	demonstrate familiarity with basic qualitative methods of anthropological research and can apply them in their own research.	JBS_K1_U01, JBS_K1_U02, JBS_K1_U03	credit with grade, essay
U2	draw conclusions about the meaning and implications of sustainability in Islam based on existing literature and their own field research.	JBS_K1_U01, JBS_K1_U04	credit with grade, essay
Social competences - Student is ready for:			
K1	to conduct ethical and methodologically reflective research.	JBS_K1_K03, JBS_K1_K04	credit with grade, essay
K2	to present their own research and participate in social science discussions in a qualified and critical manner.	JBS_K1_K05	credit with grade, essay

Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*
Discussion class	27
preparation for classes	19
exercises performance	14
essay preparation	30
Student workload	Hours 90
	ECTS 3.0

* hour means 45 minutes

Study content

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
1.	Introduction: Students will gain a conceptual overview of concepts of sustainability found in Islamic knowledge discourses and the role these concepts play in Islamic practice and belief. Emphasis will be placed on the concepts of almsgiving (zakat and sadaqa), Islamic finance (Shariah-compliant finance), and environmentalism.	W1, W2
2.	Research ethics: Students reflect on research ethics in relation to the knowledge production about Muslims and Islam. The aim is to raise awareness of the embeddedness of research in different social and political contexts and to understand the political implications of research.	U1, U2, K1
3.	Research methods I: As the students are expected to conduct their own small field research as part of the seminar, they will be introduced to various methods of qualitative research. The focus is on conducting interviews and participant observation as well as analyzing qualitative data.	U1, U2, K1
4.	Research methods II: As the students are expected to conduct their own small field research as part of the seminar, they will be introduced to various methods of qualitative research. The focus is on conducting interviews and participant observation as well as analyzing qualitative data.	U1, U2, K1
5.	Islamic almsgiving: Students learn about the normative background of almsgiving in Islam and familiarize themselves with current debates and research on this topic.	W1, W2, U2
6.	Islamic almsgiving in Switzerland: A guest speaker who is working in the field of Islamic almsgiving in Switzerland will talk about current social projects in Switzerland. Students will have the opportunity to deepen the knowledge they have acquired in an exchange with an expert from the practical field.	W1, W2, U2
7.	Islamic finance: Students learn about the normative background of sharia-compliant finance and familiarize themselves with current debates and research on this topic.	W1, W2, U2
8.	Field trip: The students visit the Islamic Finance department of a Swiss bank. The students have the opportunity to gain an insight into the day-to-day business of the bank and talk to an expert in this field.	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
9.	Muslim Environmentalism: Students learn about the normative background of environmental protection in Islam and familiarize themselves with current debates and research on this topic.	W1, W2, U2
10.	Muslim Environmentalism in Switzerland: A guest speaker who is working in a Muslim organization for environmental protection in Switzerland will talk about current projects in Switzerland. Students will have the opportunity to deepen the knowledge they have acquired in an exchange with an expert from the practical field.	W1, W2, U2
11.	Field Research I: The students will independently conduct a field research of 14 hours within two weeks. Therefore, there will be no classes in week 11 and 12.	U1, U2, K1
12.	Field Research II: The students will independently conduct a field research of 14 hours within two weeks. Therefore, there will be no classes in week 11 and 12. Students' field research will relate to one of the three main themes of the seminar: Islamic Economics, Islamic Welfare or Muslim Environmentalism. Students are free to pursue their own interests in the field research. They will be supported by the lecturer in all phases of the field research (preparation, planning, implementation, analysis and writing up).	U1, U2, K1
13.	Presentation of research insights: The students will present the insights of their research.	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2

Course advanced

Teaching methods :

text analysis, discussion, practicals

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Discussion class	credit with grade, essay	Research essay (graded), which is based on individual field research. Key insights of the field research are presented in class (not graded); active participation in class discussions (not graded)

Entry requirements

None

Literature

Obligatory

1. Bergeaud-Blackler, Florence, John Lever, and Johan Fischer, eds. 2016. Halal Matters: Islam, Politics and Markets in Global Perspective. London ; New York: Routledge.
2. Candland, Christopher. 2024. The Islamic Welfare State: Muslim Charity, Human Security, and Government Legitimacy in Pakistan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Gade, Anna M. 2019. Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations. New York: Columbia University Press.
4. Hancock, Rosemary. 2019. Islamic Environmentalism: Activism in the United States and Great Britain. London: Routledge.
5. Rudnykyj, Daromir. 2010. Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalization, and the Afterlife of Development. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Effects

Code	Content
JBS_K1_K03	The graduate can consider different visions of the future and develop own evidence-based opinions in reference to the balance of values linked to economic development, social welfare, and environmental protection.
JBS_K1_K04	The graduate can critically assess and verbalize own competencies and skills related to different aspects of sustainability as well as their need for development.
JBS_K1_K05	The graduate can defend the importance of scientific data and methods as a basis for decision-making.
JBS_K1_U01	The graduate can critically analyse academic literature, formulate research questions and conduct research under supervision.
JBS_K1_U02	The graduate can present and report knowledge, methodologies, ideas, problems and solutions, clearly and comprehensively, in different forms destined for different audiences - including discussions and debates which require defending a substantiated opinion, as well as conversations in a foreign language at the CEFR B2 level.
JBS_K1_U03	The graduate can apply adequate methods and tools, including selected IT tools, to solve problems related to data collection, analysis, and management in the context of sustainability.
JBS_K1_U04	The graduate can plan and effectuate simple sustainability-related projects under supervision and in the context of personal lifelong learning, both individually and in a team, using appropriate transversal skills and taking shared responsibility for the outcome.
JBS_K1_W01	The graduate can describe the concept of sustainability and recognize the differences in relevant definitions, models and approaches.
JBS_K1_W04	The graduate can identify sustainability-related problems specific to selected cultural, geographical, and political contexts.
JBS_K1_W05	The graduate can identify essential international instruments and institutions related to sustainability and explain their potential role in resolution of a given problem.
JBS_K1_W06	The graduate can describe interconnections between various aspects of sustainability and identify their significance in the context of natural and social sciences, with a special focus on disciplines included in the selected specialisation track (law and politics; chemistry and physics; chemistry and biology; economics and geography; economics, management and engineering; humanities).
JBS_K1_W07	The graduate can apply the theory and methodology of disciplines included in the selected specialisation track to sustainability-related problems, taking into consideration practical limitations such as protection of intellectual property.