



Breaking Apart the Monolith: The Many Ways of Being Muslim

A Conference Exploring the Dynamics of Muslim Identity in Today's World

March 10-11, 2007

The Friend Center Convocation Room (Rm. 113), Princeton University

One of the most poignant contemporary contexts in which intra-religious variance occurs is when religious communities and/or individuals are confronted with the need to balance the truth claims of their religion with those of the society in which they live. As a result, issues of multiculturalism, democracy, interfaith relations and free speech have become the topics of much focused debate. Without an understanding of the complexity and variegated nature of the discourse within religious communities, other faiths remain comprehensible only through their most superficial, most accessible surface. In today's global environment, as the political voice of religion becomes stronger and more public, depth of understanding is essential to mediating the needs and objectives of different communities of faith.

In an effort to discuss these challenges as they pertain to Muslim communities in a variety of settings, this conference brings together scholars and practitioners for an interdisciplinary colloquium. We will explore elements of the Muslim experience - from political participation to cultural participation to inter-religious dialogue. Some of the issues to be raised include: What does it mean to be Muslim in the United States or Western Europe? How do Muslim communities face the transition of going from a majority to minority faith? Do individual and/or communal practices change as a result of this shift, and in what ways? What is the nature of Muslim-Christian dialogue and how important is this dialogue to our collective political future? How do reactions to these challenges reflect back upon home countries, what types of cross dialogues exist, do these dialogues play a role in influencing conceptual change taking place in the West and in the Muslim world and how do these issues play on crucial elements of Muslim social life, such as marriage, ethics and gender?



This Conference is sponsored by the [American Moroccan Institute](#) and the following [Princeton University](#) departments and programs – the [Center for African American Studies](#), the [Department of Anthropology](#), the [Bobst Center for Peace and Justice](#), the [Center for Human Values](#), the [Center for the Study of Religion](#), the [Program in the Study of Women and Gender](#), the [Council of the Humanities](#), the [James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions](#), the [Program in Law and Public Affairs](#), the [Department and Program in Near Eastern Studies](#), the [Office of Religious Life](#), the [Institute for International and Regional Studies \(PIRS\)](#), the [Department of Religion & the Transregional Institute](#).

