Conference of the Project

“Interdisciplinary Center for Research and Knowledge Transfer on Islam” (IFTI)

All a Matter of Neighborhood?
Islam in Interdisciplinary Research and Societal Contexts

November 6, 2026, 9.30 – 17.30

PA-Lobby, Campus Westend

Theodor-W.-Adorno-Platz 1

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

With the support of the Hesse Ministry for Science and Research, Art and Culture (HMWK) and the LOEWE Centre ‘Dynamics of Religion’ (DynaRel), funded by the Hesse Ministry for Science and Research, Art and Culture (HMWK) as part of the Hesse research funding programme LOEWE.

All a Matter of Neighborhood?

Islam in Interdisciplinary Research and Societal Contexts

The objective of this conference as part of the project to establish an "Interdisciplinary Center for Research and Knowledge Transfer on Islam" (IFTI) is twofold. First, it aims to explore how "Islam" and "Islamicity" are historically and contemporarily co-constructed as relational categories by institutional and academic actors and structures. Second, through dialogue with representatives from various disciplines and institutions, it seeks to examine the framework conditions, potential, and challenges of establishing a "Research and Transfer Center on Islam".

Both Muslim and non-Muslim institutions, as well as academic disciplines, develop their own concepts and definitions of Islam – concepts that in turn influence one another. Religious practice, institutional orders, and academic discourses are closely interrelated, particularly within pluralistic societies shaped by migration. Different understandings of Islam – expressed through Muslim self-positionings, societal perceptions, or institutional and academic attributions and definitions – can also be shaped by tensions.

With a view toward the establishment of the "Interdisciplinary Center for Research and Knowledge Transfer on Islam" (IFTI), the conference aims to facilitate an exchange regarding concepts of Islam and Islamicity, while identifying opportunities for collaboration and future interdisciplinary research perspectives on Islam.

The keynote address by Christoph Bochinger will provide a theoretical framework from a broad religious studies perspective, focusing on the epistemic organization of religion.

The response by Paula Schrode will offer a practical perspective, focusing on the Muslim presence in Germany and Europe, its institutionalization, and the interplay between religious practice and institutions especially within the context of societies shaped by migration.

Following this, two panel sessions will delve further into specific aspects of the topic.

Note on participation

Participation is free of charge. Please register by sending an email to ifti@uni-frankfurt.de no later than October 31, 2026. In case of questions please contact ifti@uni-frankfurt.de.

Panels

Panel 1: Islam in Practice at the Systemic and Institutional Level

This panel explores the co-construction of Islam, focusing on the systemic and institutional level between the state, Muslim self-organizations, and broader societal negotiations. It examines how Islam is co-constructed in neighborhoods alongside other religious communities; how religions, specifically Islam, are defined legally; how the institutionalization of Muslim life in Germany shapes internal Muslim organizational structures and understandings of Islam; and the role that societal power dynamics play in these processes.

Mathias Rohe (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)
The Institutional Development of Islam in Germany and Forms of Cooperation with the State

Raida Chbib (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)
From Neighbor to Roommate: Islam in Institutional Contexts

Iva Hradská (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)
"...and they always reject the headscarf." The Professionalization of Islam-Related Fields of Activity between Operational Logics, Personal Biographies, and Institutional Frameworks

Panel 2: The Organization of Islam at Universities

This panel addresses the academic co-construction of Islam as an object of study across various scholarly disciplines and discourses. The focus lies on how different academic traditions such as religious studies, social sciences, Islamic studies, or anthropology conceptualize "Islam", both historically and in the present day. It investigates the extent to which these diverse approaches and disciplines allow for a shared perspective on Islam and "Islamicity", as well as interdisciplinary collaboration based on a common understanding. Furthermore, it explores which university organizational structures are conducive to research on "Islam".

Jesper Petersen (Københavns Universitet)
Expanding the object of study to non-Muslim Islams

Schirin Amir-Moazami (Freie Universität Berlin)
Politics and Boundaries of Academic Knowledge Production on Islam in Germany

Welmoet Boender (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
The Organization of Islam at Universities: Five Approaches to the Legitimacy of Islamic University Theology

Programm

09.30 – 10.00	Arrival, Coffee
10.00 – 10.25	**Welcome remarks: IFTI & Objective of the Conference** *Bekim Agai; Representative of the President's Office (NN) (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)*
10.25 – 11.20	**Keynote: Concepts of Religion Between Insider-Discourses, Societal Expectations and Scholarship** *Christoph Bochinger (Universität Bayreuth)*
11.20 – 12.00	**Response: Who Talks about Islam – und Who is Listened to? Reflections on the Future of Scholarly and Religious Authority** *Paula Schrode (Universität Bayreuth)*
12.00 – 12.20	**Coffee Break**
12.20 – 13.00	**Discussion** *Moderator: Madlen Krüger (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)*
13.00 – 14.15	**Lunch Break**
14.15 – 15.15	**Panel 1: Islam in Practice at the Systemic and Institutional Level**
	The Institutional Development of Islam in Germany and Forms of Cooperation with the State *Mathias Rohe (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)*
	From Neighbor to Roommate: Islam in Institutional Contexts *Raida Chbib (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)*
	"…and they always reject the headscarf." The Professionalization of Islam-Related Fields of Activity between Operational Logics, Personal Biographies, and Institutional Frameworks *Iva Hradská (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)*
15.15 – 15.35	**Discussion**
15.35 – 16.00	**Coffee Break**

16.00 – 17.00 **Panel 2: The Organization of Islam at Universities**

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17.00 – 17.10 **Coffee Break**

17.10 – 17.30 **Discussion and Wrap-up**

Participants

Bekim Agai (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Schirin Amir-Moazami (Freie Universität Berlin)

Welmoet Boender (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Christoph Bochinger (Universität Bayreuth)

Raida Chbib (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Iva Hradská (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

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