



GLOBAL ISLAMIC STUDIES CENTER

Deepening the understanding of Islam and the culture and history of the Muslim world

The University of Michigan Global Islamic Studies Center (GISC) serves the academic and broader communities by promoting a deeper understanding of global Islamic culture and Muslim societies worldwide. Students and faculty benefit from pioneering research, innovative instruction, and a commitment to building partnerships on campus and beyond. The University of Michigan—with its tremendous strength in humanities and social sciences, highly ranked professional schools, and vibrant arts and culture programming—is uniquely positioned to support the study of Islam across disciplines and build energy between U-M and Muslim institutions and communities across southeast Michigan. As home to both a minor and master's program, GISC supports a range of student opportunities, including summer fellowships, graduate student travel to conferences, internships with local Islamic organizations, and mentoring and support of campus events on Islam.

Gifts to GISC ensure the center will continue to advance the interdisciplinary study of Islam, and that U-M students will have opportunities to deepen their understanding of Islam and the culture and history of the Muslim world. Islam is one of the most common religions around the globe today, with nearly 2 billion Muslims on all seven continents and in all walks of life, yet it is often misunderstood. Your support gives our scholars and our community a global perspective while also helping to dispel common myths. Your generosity allows us to fund events, programming, and student research, as well as continue to recruit and retain the best academic talent.

"Today, Islam is the second largest religion in Europe and the fastest growing; as I continue to ask important questions about how this group interacts with the state in order to make political demands and address grievances, I will rely on the rich array of expertise available to me through the Global Islamic Studies Center!"

—YEHA MEKAWI is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science studying issues of religion, identity, and representation, with a focus on how the state interacts with minority populations in advanced democracies; Class of '25

GISC STRATEGIC FUND

The strategic fund is critical to the center's ability to pursue new opportunities and supplement gaps in the annual budget for programming. Contributions of all sizes to the GISC Strategic Fund will help to support crucial activities and new initiatives that support our academic mission.

NAMED ENDOWED CENTER

Endowing and naming the Center for Global Islamic Studies will assure future funding for the center's programs, create new possibilities for growth, and bring additional visibility and prestige to the center. Income from a \$5M endowment would cover the annual needs of the center, including operating and program costs; support for faculty- and student-led initiatives; visiting scholars; undergraduate and graduate fellowships; faculty research and travel; special events, lectures, initiatives, and outreach; and curriculum and program development. It would also provide the director with the flexibility to pursue exciting opportunities that promote the understanding of global Islamic cultures and history. As a robust hub for scholarship across disciplines, regions, and languages, an endowed center will increase U-M's visibility and leadership in the field.

NAMED PROGRAM DIRECTORSHIP

Outstanding leadership drives all GISC activities, including the development of curriculum and programming on Islamic societies throughout the world, unique opportunities to study, volunteer, intern, and work abroad, and conferences, pre-professional events, and seminars here at U-M. An endowed directorship will help recruit and retain a leading scholar as director of the program. The GISC director also serves an important external role as representative for the program and as an expert in global Islam, sharing that expertise with U-M faculty and students. A gift of \$3.5M to endow the directorship would position U-M as the foremost center for the academic study of global Muslim communities in the U.S.

FACULTY RESEARCH AND INITIATIVES

GISC funds a wide range of initiatives and opportunities to enhance the ways in which faculty engage in their scholarship and with others. By supporting faculty travel—both domestic and international—for research and conferences, the center fosters cutting-edge scholarship. Other initiatives bring guest lecturers, seminars and workshops, short-term faculty and artist residencies, and prominent visiting scholars to campus to enhance outreach and student engagement while also increasing collaboration and knowledge sharing. These initiatives help define the center's reputation. Endowed gifts of \$250,000 – \$1M will fund all or a portion of these opportunities. Annual gifts are also welcome; \$6000 would fund one year of GISC faculty research while \$1500 would support one faculty member.

NAMED SPECIAL PROGRAMS

ISLAM IN THE AMERICAS

The Global Islamic Studies Center seeks an endowment gift for a new named lecture and event series on Intersectional Islam in the Americas, with a focus on race, gender, and interfaith and comparative religious relations historically and in the present. We treat North America, Central America, Latin America, and the Caribbean as linked through a Muslim history of trade, colonization, militarization, and political and religious movements, in conversation with the racialized identities and faiths of non-Muslims. An endowed gift of \$500,000 is needed to support the full program, or \$250,000 for one element.

Black Islam Series features our contemporary *African Film Festival* (2023), and lectures by the creator of the pioneering Sapelo Island forum on Black Muslim American history and other scholars and filmmakers. Lectures have addressed the history and enslavement of African Muslims in the Americas, with special attention to the United States; the Sufi-based aesthetics of early Black Americas Islam; Black Muslim music and film; and the evolution of hemispheric Islam and politics in dialogue with Christianity, Hinduism, and African diaspora religions. This series will continue into the years to come and is open to a named special program gift.

Qahwah & Authors Series features book launches and author events that showcase Muslim, Islamic, and Middle Eastern communities in the U.S. and globally, with the added attraction of community venue locations. The series was launched in the Fall of 2023 with *Feeding Iran: Shi'i Families and the Making of the Islamic Republic* (2021) by Dr. Rose Wellman (U-M Dearborn) at Kitab Café and Bookstore in Hamtramck. In Winter 2024, the series brought together authors of new and popular Young Adult (YA) Muslim books for 'Stories of Young Muslims Across the World.' This event featured authors Laila Sabreen (*You Truly Assumed*), Leila Abdelrazaq (*Baddawi*), Meriam Metoui (*A Guide to the Dark*), and Sabina Khan (*What A Desi Girl Wants*). This series will continue through the next few years and is open to a named special program gift.



Global Islamic Studies programs promote knowledge and appreciation of Islamic cultures among students and faculty, and bring community members to campus. We need funding to continue attracting people to Islamic Studies, build interest and momentum across Michigan, and foster creative discourse. Recent sponsored or co-sponsored programs include:

- **Halaloween Film Festival**

Annual October film festival of horror films from the Muslim world, in-person at local theaters and online

- **Flash Talks & Tea**

U-M professor flash talks on new research and directions in Islamic Studies at community venues in Southeast Michigan

- **Politics & Cultures of the Muslim World**

Lectures on Muslim-majority communities and countries that are underrepresented in U.S. national and media discourses

- **Muslims in Comics**

Workshops and talks exploring Muslim lives, Islamic politics, and migration in comic books and graphic novels

- **Afghanistan Series**

Journalism, talks, and film screenings on gender and war in Afghanistan

- **Muslim Women in the Digital Age**

Podcasting, music, and art showcase by Muslim American young women

INTERNSHIPS AND STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

GISC programming provides students with fellowships and grants for research, conference travel, and internships. Whether through a graduate research grant or an undergraduate study abroad summer fellowship, GISC knows that funding the experiences individual students seek in their unique educational journeys means these lives can be transformed.

We are seeking gifts to support this important area of the center's mission—to cultivate students' broad perspectives and extend their learning beyond the traditional classroom. Internships and fellowships are particularly valuable since they provide opportunities to improve interpersonal, practical, and cultural skills while gaining work or research experience in a variety of settings. An endowed gift of \$250,000 – \$1M will fund all or a portion of these opportunities for our students. Annual gifts of \$20,000 will support 10 graduate student research fellowships (\$2000 per student). For undergraduate students, \$5000 will support 10 students, including funding for internships.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the college's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

“This fellowship opened new windows for my educational and future goals. I learned that I face many untouched sources related to my research that could change the current scholarship views regarding people and their social activities in the early modern era of Iran and India. The invaluable research I conducted through this fellowship will allow me to effectively support the arguments in my dissertation.”

—*Shahla Farghadani,*

Ph.D. candidate in

Middle East Studies focused on

the history and literary

historiography of the Persianate

world with a particular focus on the early modern period

for what's next ▶

Look to Michigan

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