**LUCSoR Research Internship**

**MA Religious Studies Programme**

**2020-2021**

In the Spring semester of the MA Religious Studies programme, students have the option of doing an internal research internship under the supervision of a LUCSoR staff member. While the research internship is supervised, this is a project that is largely conducted independently. All projects must be the equivalent of 10 EC’s (280 hours) and must result in a research report and an internship report, both of which are to be examined by the research internship supervisor. Students interested in doing one of these internships must submit an application. The application form is available in Appendix A.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, LUCSoR is offering 3 research internship opportunities:

* *The Islamic Utopia*, Supervisor: Prof. dr. Maurits Berger
* *Incurably Religious? Atheism and Humanism in Contemporary Africa*, Supervisor: Dr. Corey Williams
* *Doopsgezinden als cultuurdragers in Haarlem, ca 1600-1800*, Supervisor: Prof. dr. Eric Jorink

Brief descriptions of each research internship are available below.

**Title: *The Islamic Utopia***

**Supervisor: Prof. dr. Maurits Berger**

**Internship spots available: 5**

Islam has no tradition of thought about ‘utopia’, but the notion of an ‘Islamic state’ comes close. Still, whereas Islamic scripture and subsequent scholarly works of theologians contain a vast array of instructions how to create an ideal Islamic society, they provide almost no descriptions of how that should look like. In the 11-13th centuries, several Muslim philosophers formulated concepts of this ideal society. But it was only in the 20th century that the term ‘Islamic state’ was coined and elaborated by several thinkers.

In this research project, five research places are open for students:

1. Farabi (d.950), Ibn Tufayl (d.1185 AD) and Ibn Nafis (d.1288 AD)
2. Abu Ala Mawdudi (Pakistan, d. 1979))
3. Ruhollah Khomeini (Iran, d. 1989)
4. Sayyed Qutb (Egypt, d. 1966)
5. Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (Palestine, d. 1977 - Hizb-ut-Tahrir)

The students are to study primary texts (in translation) written by these thinkers, and to present the thoughts of these thinkers about the ideal (‘Islamic’) society in a research report. These research reports will be incorporated into Prof. Berger’s research project ‘the Islamic utopia’.

**Title: *Incurably Religious? Atheism and Humanism in Contemporary Africa***

**Supervisor: Dr. Corey Williams**

**Internship spots available: 2**

It is often claimed (even by myself) that contemporary Africa is one of the most religious places on the planet. For instance, in countries like Nigeria, a recent Pew Research survey reveals that 87% of Nigerians claim to attend religious services at least once per week, 92% claim to pray daily, and 94% say they are absolutely certain of their belief in God. Some scholars and theologians have even gone so far as describing Africans as *incurably religious*. But what about the minority of Africans who say they do not attend services weekly, pray daily, or profess with absolute certainty that God or some higher power(s) exists? What about those who claim to be atheist and/or humanist and defy majority beliefs and practices?

This research internship builds upon ethnographic fieldwork already completed by Dr. Williams in 2019, which focused on how members of Nigerian atheist and humanist organisations negotiate their (non-)religious commitments. For this next stage of the project, the scope is enlarging to include all of sub-Saharan Africa. Two students will be selected to assist Dr. Williams with identifying atheist and humanist organisations and social (media) networks, surveying and reviewing the current academic literature on the topic, and collecting primary data from newspapers, Twitter, blogs, etc., related to the public discourse surrounding the topic. Much of the research will be performed using digital tools, but the African Studies Library in Leiden will also be utilized. Students will be required to produce a research portfolio and report, which will be incorporated into Dr. Williams’ research project on religious minorities in contemporary Africa.

**Title: *Doopsgezinden als cultuurdragers in Haarlem, ca 1600-1800***

**Supervisor: Prof. dr. Eric Jorink**

**Internship spots available: 2**

Binnen de cultuur van de Republiek namen de Doopsgezinden een bijzonder plaats in. Uitgesloten van overheidsfuncties, waren velen actief in de handel, kunsten en wetenschappen. In een stad als Haarlem, droeg de aanwezigheid van een even religieus betrokken als gefortuneerde doopsgezinde gemeenschap in belangrijke mate bij aan de culturele bloei van de stad in de 17e een 18e eeuw. Schilders, schrijvers, drukkers, natuuronderzoekers en verzamelaars waren opvallend vaak van doopsgezinde huize. Onderling werkten ze veel samen, en het resultaat van hun inspanningen was vaak grensverleggend en (inter)nationaal bekend. Een bekend voorbeeld is de oprichting van Teyler’s Stichting in 1778, die mogelijk werd gemaakt door de ergernis van de miljonair Pieter Teyler van der Hulst. Een ander voorbeeld is Antonie van Dale, bestrijder van het geloof in toverij.

Echter, de achterliggende idealen en de onderlinge netwerken van de Doopsgezind gemeenschap in Haarlem zijn nog nauwelijks integraal onderzocht. In het kader van een *pilot*-project zijn twee stageplaatsen beschikbaar:

- Doopsgezoinde cultuurpoducenten in Haarlem, ca 1600-1800

- Doopsgezinden en Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap, 1778-1800.

Voor beide deelprojecten wordt gezocht naar nieuwsgierige studenten, die hun weg weten te vinden in bibliotheken, secundaire literatuur en primaire bronnen. De werkzaamheden zullen, in overleg met de begeleider, prof. Dr. Eric Jorink, bestaan uit een algemene inventarisatie; het uitdiepen van een of meerdere specifieke gevallen; en het schrijven van een eindverslag.

**APPENDIX A**

**LUCSoR Research Internship Application**

**MA Religious Studies Programme**

**2020-2021**

In order to be eligible for a LUCSoR research internship, students must be enrolled in the MA Religious Studies programme and must submit an application to the Chair of the Religious Studies programmes, Dr. Corey Williams ([c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:c.l.williams@hum.leidenuniv.nl)). Please use this application form and respond to the points below.

The deadline for applications is **11 December 2020**. Students will be notified about the outcome of their applications by **18 December 2020**. If you have any questions about the specifics of the internship projects, feel free to contact the internship supervisors directly. If you have general questions about the research internships, please contact Dr. Williams.

1. Your Name:
2. Which research internship(s) are you interested in applying for? Provide the title(s) and if you are applying for more than one research internship, please indicate if you have a preference in terms of priority.
3. For each research internship you are applying for, provide a statement of interest (max. 400 words), including the following points:

* What motivates and excites you about this research internship?
* How does your past experience and academic training provide you with a good foundation to conduct research on this particular project?
* How might the internship assist with your personal, academic and/or career plans?