The Islamic World Studies Program grounds students in the study of Islam as a worldview, civilization, and living reality. Students will engage with Islam from a variety of perspectives. The program engages students in exploring primary texts, history, cultural traditions, global communities, and regional issues. Three assumptions undergird the philosophy of this program:

1. That Islamic civilization is both a historical and a living reality;
2. That Islam has interacted with all known cultures and is thus expressed in a wide range of ways;
3. That the religious core ties all of these cultural expressions together.

While studying the Islamic World historically and also learning about specific cultural manifestations, students develop a critical understanding of the unique worldview engendered by Islam in its global contexts.

Islam is the religion of approximately 1.7 billion people around the globe and is the fastest growing world religion. Some 3.3 million Muslims live in the United States with at least 300,000 living in Chicago alone. Despite these impressive numbers, Islam and Islamic civilization are poorly understood in the United States. The Islamic World Studies Program aims to remedy these misperceptions by providing our students with a holistic understanding of a religious tradition at the center of so many contemporary world discussions and position them to take advantage of the opportunities available in the contemporary Islamic World. In order to accomplish these goals, our courses are drawn from a broad variety of disciplines including History, History of Art and Architecture, International Studies, Modern Languages, Political Science, Religious Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies. The regional focus of these courses includes Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

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