Advancing Scientific and Theological Literacy through Madrasa Discourses

Launched in 2017, the Madrasa Discourses project is at the forefront of efforts to equip Islamic religious leaders (*ulama*) with the tools necessary to confidently engage pluralism, modern science, technological advances, and new philosophies. Led by Ebrahim Moosa, Primary Investigator and Professor of Islamic Studies, the initiative works to revitalize Islamic education from within through a transformative three-year educational experience.

400 applicants / 90 interviewed
60+ enrolled from 15+ institutions in India and Pakistan

Participants are young religious leaders in communities in India and Pakistan.

“MD has done an incredible job for me. I once thought that the world is as simple as we see through the literal interpretation of Scripture, but now I see it as a complex place.”

– Madrasa Discourses student

ONLINE CLASSES are held throughout the academic year using the latest streaming technology.

ONSITE INTENSIVES are held twice per year. Past locations have included Nepal and Qatar.

CONTENT EXPERTS include international scholars from the US, Canada, Europe, Middle East, South Asia, and South Africa.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE integrates Notre Dame students both online and in international intensive programs.
"Madrasa Discourses allowed me not only to travel oversees for the first time, but also to engage with Muslim scholars on a level that I had never reached before. This cultural and religious immersion and taught me the importance of allowing differing viewpoints and traditions to enter into my ‘cosmology’ so that I can better myself as a citizen of the world.”

- University of Notre Dame undergraduate student after participating in a summer intensive program

Outcomes

- 2-YEAR CURRICULUM developed for madrasa scholars
- 6 SEMESTERS of tri-lingual instruction online
- 6 INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVES in India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Qatar
- 17 RESEARCH PAPERS in progress

Outreach

- 4 INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS with educators in Bosnia, Philippines, Singapore, and South Africa
- 100+ BLOGS AND ARTICLES published in Urdu in the Tajdid online journal
- 20+ BLOGS published on the Contending Modernities project website
- 1 PUBLIC WEBSITE featuring a self-guided madrasa discourses curriculum (in development)

Future Plans

- Ongoing Education in South Asia
- Expanding the program to include young Islamic scholars in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Training a select number of participants in a customized M.A. in Religious Studies degree program

95% of participants would recommend the course to others

Madrasa Discourses is part of the Contending Modernities research initiative at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, part of the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame. Madrasa Discourses is funded by the John Templeton Foundation.