The Woolf Institute is a research centre based in Cambridge that works to improve relations between religion and society through education. We combine teaching, scholarship and outreach, focusing on Jews, Christians and Muslims, to encourage tolerance and foster understanding between people of all beliefs.

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LIVING IN HARMONY
TEACHERS' SEMINAR
THURSDAY
17 NOV 2022
THE PROJECT

One of our major research projects at the Woolf Institute, the Living in Harmony project, explored medieval and modern interactions between Muslim, Jewish and Christian neighbours in the Middle East through music. The investigation centred on two cities: Aleppo in Syria and Baghdad in Iraq. Chosen because of their historic cosmopolitanism, these two cities boast centuries of cultural integration and interaction among their Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities, fostering a shared local culture. The project discovered that the relationships between these communities were positive as seen through shared melodies, concerts and prayer chants, showing that religious and secular music can provide a common ground for people from various faiths and traditions.

We have created a dynamic outreach programme based on research from the project to teach students across England about faith communities and coexistence through music. Currently, we offer fun and engaging workshops that provide students a unique experience of Middle Eastern music, religion and history. Another element of our outreach is to provide training for teachers who are interested in expanding their knowledge of interfaith relations and acquiring new tools and lesson plans for the classroom.

THE TRAINING

We offer professional development opportunities for educators of all backgrounds. Spanning the course of a day, educators will have the opportunity to learn about cultural and historical Muslim-Jewish relations through academic lectures, breakout sessions, and group discussion. Participants will obtain unique Woolf Institute lesson plans along with cultural and educational knowledge on interfaith studies, have a safe space for questions and dialogue with experts in the field and discover useful resources to use in the classroom.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

- opportunity for professional development
- gain expert knowledge on interfaith relations both historical and contemporary
- discover creative tools and resources for religious studies
- become connected to a network of religious studies teachers and lecturers

THE PROGRAMME

EARLY MUSLIM-JEWISH RELATIONS

Special session with Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner, Executive Director of the Woolf Institute and Geniza scholar. She will introduce the Cairo Geniza and explore historical Muslim-Jewish relations during the medieval period.

WOOLF DIVERSITY STUDY

Learn about the Woolf Diversity Study with Dr Julian Hargreaves, our Director of Research. This session will provide ideas for exciting and contemporary lesson plans related to minorities in the UK.

WHAT RESOURCES CAN WE CREATE FOR YOU?

The final session will be led by Dr Elizabeth Phillips, our Public Engagement Fellow. Participants will have an opportunity to voice their needs and concerns related to religious studies education more broadly. After this reflection, participants will be introduced to our new Teacher’s Hub page where lesson plans, worksheets, exercises, online courses and more can be accessed.