



## Course description: Convivencia Debates

Title	Convivencia Debates: Issues and Methods in the Study of the History of interreligious contact in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia
Academic year	2018-2019
EC	1
Level	ResMA-PhD
Language	English
Conveners	Prof. Gerard Wiegers and Hicham Boutaleb, MA
Hosted by	Amsterdam School of Historical Studies, University of Amsterdam

### Admission requirements

Research master students and PhD candidates active in the field of Islamic studies may apply for admission and should contact Prof. Gerard Wiegers [g.a.wiegers@uva.nl](mailto:g.a.wiegers@uva.nl), 020-5252104. NISIS junior members qualify automatically and do not need to apply for participation. **Deadline 1 June 2018.**

### Description

The term Convivencia has been a contentious term in Iberian historiography used to describe the period in Muslim and Christian medieval rule when the three Abrahamic Faiths are said to have co-existed peacefully. This period is contrasted with the subsequent Reconquista, and the subsequent forced conversions of Jews and Muslims in the sixteenth century, and the expulsions of Jews in 1492 and the Muslims in 1609. The term has become commonplace for popularisers of the “Golden Age” view of Iberian medieval interfaith relations. However, this has drawn the ire of academics as it is considered an unjustified imaginary idealisation of a much more complex reality of competition and conflict. The post 9/11 political climate with the War on Terror, and European responses to Muslim citizens as well as anxieties over recent Muslim migrants, has heightened the stakes, as both Islamist groups and nativist European nationalists have polemically laid claim to the long Muslim presence in Iberian history. Questions that will be addressed are:

1. How are scholars to approach the term and concept of Convivencia as a framing device for medieval Iberia? By accepting it, qualifying it, or, in my view, explaining the reasons for controversy behind it?

2. What are the historical parallels to (a) the controversy over such a term in Christian-Muslim relations, and (b) avenues for comparisons in contemporaneous situations, such as Ottoman religious interrelations?

3. How do the concepts and debates surrounding the term Convivencia relate to other contested concepts in Iberian historiography, such as "Orientalism", "Tolerance" and Early Modern Iberian "Race" (Limpieza de sangre)? What will an investigation of these related terms yield as historians approach these terms and Convivencia in a comparative analysis?

### **Course objectives**

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To become familiar with the main arguments and historiographical presumptions in the debates regarding Islam, Judaism, and Christianity in Medieval and Early Iberia. 2. To find links between these historical debates and contemporary issues.

### **Timetable**

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All day workshop 13 June 2018.

### **Mode of instruction**

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Lecture presentations, Q & A, discussion.

### **Course load**

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Attendance at the workshop, readings, discussion, and short essay.

### **Assessment method**

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Submit a short summary or review of the talks and points that are most compelling. Among the six, speakers, choose at least two speakers whose presentations you either agree or disagree with, or substantiate a position or perspective you find interesting.

### **Some suggested readings**

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Ray, Jonathan, "Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval Convivencia," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 1–18.

Soifer, Maya (2009) "Beyond Convivencia: critical reflections on the historiography of interfaith relations in Christian Spain", *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 1, no 1, 19-35.

Szpiech, Ryan. (2013), "The Convivencia Wars: Decoding Historiography's Polemic with Philology". in: Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Karla Mallette (eds), *A Sea of Languages. Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 135-161.

### **Registration**

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Admission is free, but registration **before 1 June** is obligatory. Please, write to Nanda de Groot at the Department of Religious Studies, mail: [secr-religiewetenschappen-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:secr-religiewetenschappen-fgw@uva.nl), tel. 020-5252010.

Course description (course name). For programme details and updates, please visit (website)

## **Website**

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<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/events/2018/06/nisis-workshop-convivencia>