

MA ISLAMIC STUDIES: USING AND REFERRING TO SOURCES

Referencing the *Qur'an*

When referencing the *Qur'an*, provide: the *Surah* name, number, and verse (*ayat*) number. State which translation you are using, and its page number. i.e. for the line:

"It is no crime in you if ye seek of the bounty of your Lord (during pilgrimage)."
[Surah Baqara, II:198. The Holy Qur'an. Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali. (Jeddah: Islamic Education Centre, 1946) p.79.]

The section in parenthesis could be placed into a footnote or endnote. The use of Roman numerals is optional. Some contemporary translations and editions prefer to avoid Roman numerals. The *Surah* title could be in italics, and also translated. Here's an alternative version:

Surah Baqara, ('The Cow'), 2:198. *The Holy Qur'an*. Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali. (Jeddah: Islamic Education Centre, 1946) p.79

This reference directs the reader to the specific ayah associated with the *Qur'an*. The numbering system of various editions or translations is more-or-less consistent. Ensure that you cite details of any translation quoted. Reference information can be placed in footnotes or endnotes. If you are using the same translation throughout your essay, for the second reference, you do not need to repeat edition/translator details.

When citing *hadith*, please ensure that your references are clearly provided. Details should include: **name of hadith collection; volume number, hadith number** (if appropriate), page number. Unless it is relevant to your discussion, it is unnecessary to reproduce the full chain of transmission in any quotation. If the quotation includes a portion of the *Qur'an*, then provide full details.

Islamic Terms and Transliteration Issues

There are often several different interpretations of one 'Islamic' word or phrase. You may find variations in spelling of key terms, as there is no universal standard for transcribing Arabic into Roman script [i.e. *Kur'ân* and *Qur'an*.] This also applies with other languages relating to this field, including Farsi and Urdu. This should be kept in mind when researching sources. You are advised to keep your own reference notebook of words and phrases encountered, and their source. Many source books also contain useful lexicons.

Try to remain consistent when spelling a transliterated word in essays, clarify what *you* understand the word to mean, and ensure that you state your source (and its page number). Underlining or italicising a transliterated word is helpful, both to the writer and reader. If Arabic script is used, a translation should be provided.

If in doubt about a term, look it up in an encyclopaedia. Alternatively, good collections of terms include:

Ian Richard Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam* (London: Curzon Press, 1991).
Gordon D. Newby, *A Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002).
Neal Robinson, *Islam, a Concise Introduction* (London: Curzon Press, 1999)

Using one of these books as a transliteration model would be useful in your writing for this MA.

An example of a transliteration table can be found at the American Library Association/Library of Congress: ALA-LC Romanization Tables,

<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsa/romanization/arabic.pdf>

A shorter system can be found at BrillOnline, *Transliteration of foreign-script characters in the Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*,

<http://www.brillonline.nl/public/help?id=transliteration>

You may have difficulties in inputting transliterated words onto your computer. Microsoft Word, when used in Windows, has capacity for diacritics through the application of Unicode; unfortunately, Microsoft Word X, when used on a Mac OS 10+, lacks this capacity for diacritics. With these issues in mind, while in an ideal world it would be preferable for students to use full transliteration systems in their work, there is not an 'even playing field' when it comes to technology and diacritic systems. Students can find it problematic, distracting and time-consuming as well. For this MA programme, an awareness of transliteration is required, but *you are not obliged to place diacritic points into your essays*. Be consistent in use of terminology, use italics, and provide explanations of any technical terms used.

With these caveats in mind, a number of students will still wish to use diacritic systems in their work. Gaining experience in this is particularly useful for those wishing to further their postgraduate studies at Ph.D. level, for those writing technical works in Islamic Studies, and/or for those whose work contains a high proportion of Arabic language derived content or terminology. It is particularly necessary if Arabic script is also being placed in an essay. Appropriate transliteration may be advantageous within assessment of submitted work, especially the dissertation. The following advice is provided for those seeking to place diacritics in their work.

A number of fonts with diacritics are available for use in Microsoft Windows versions of

Word, but are not usually 'pre-installed'. Examples include:

- CharisSIL
- Gentium
- JaghbubX
- LeedsUni07-09
- New Times Arabic

These and related tools have been useful when working in Microsoft Windows. All these resources can be located, in their latest versions, via a Google key term search. Note that you may require the related permissions on a computer in order to install the fonts, and that these are externally generated resources, subject to change and amendment. Refer to Windows Help for instructions on installation. The related tool, Uniqoder, integrates with Word to provide a keyboard style input of Unicode characters. For details, see: Hans-Jörg Bibiko – Uniqoder

<http://email.eva.mpg.de/~bibiko/downloads/uniqoder/uniqoder.html>

A quick and easy guide on transliteration, with further resources (including a Word diacritic template), can be found at McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Unicode fonts for Arabic transliteration,

http://www.mcgill.ca/islamicstudies/students/arabic_unicode_font/

Islamic Dates:

- The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar year, rather than the solar year: this means that the Islamic calendar is approximately eleven days shorter than the Gregorian calendar (12 months of 29 and 30 days alternately, totalling 354 days).
- In your essays, the letters 'A.H.' should be placed after any Islamic years. 'A.H.' stands for *anno hegirae* - calculated from the **hijra** year Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina (632 A.D./Common Era)

A useful online calendar converter can be found at

Islamic Finder, <http://www.islamicfinder.org/Hcal/index.php>