

NUS Begin Universities Course

In March 2009 The Rt Hon Tony Blair gave a lecture to 600 students at the National University of Singapore (NUS) on Faith and Globalisation. At this lecture it was announced that NUS were going to be The Tony Blair Faith Foundation's second major partner in their Universities Programme- an initiative which aims to develop a deeper intellectual understanding of the dynamics of faith and globalisation.

On Thursday the 13th of August the first seminar of the Religions in the Contemporary World course took place. The class of 20, a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students, explored the fundamental issues of faith and globalisation. The 21st century is a world where understanding "the other" is no longer an option, it is a necessity.

" in an era of globalisation, of political interdependence, where the world is ever more swiftly opening up and the cliché about a global community becomes an economic, political and often social reality; in this new world, how religion develops will have a profound impact" said Mr Blair at the launch of the Foundation.

NUS will make vital contributions to the course. Singapore is a microcosm of globalisation. Within such a small compass and with under 5 million citizens, it contains such a rich ethnic diversity. Groups with origins in China, the Indian sub-continent, Malaysia and Europe. But now all citizens of Singapore.

Moreover there is such a diverse mix of faiths within the country: Buddhists, Muslims, Taoists, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jews, Zoroastrians, Jains and non religious people. Singapore is truly a multi faith society.

It is therefore a model which we can learn lessons from. NUS will guide the debate on how to deal with the opening up of this new world where ancient boundaries of culture and identity are becoming less rigid and more fluid.

"NUS is delighted to partner the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and Yale University in introducing a multidisciplinary module on religions in the contemporary world. Offered by the NUS University Scholars Programme, the module aims to equip our students with an appreciation of different cultures and societies of the global community," said Associate Professor John Richardson, Director of the University Scholars Programme, NUS.

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