



## Invitation

**Thursday, 9 December 2010, 6 pm**

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### **Primacy of the Master or Primacy of the Evidence? Competing Approaches to Islamic Knowledge in Africa**

#### **Lecture by Prof. Rüdiger Seesemann**

#### **Venue**

Zentrum Moderner Orient  
Kirchweg 33  
Conference Hall

14129 Berlin

Much recent research on contemporary Islam has emphasized the ideological divide between Muslims, be it between Shiites and Sunnis or between Muslims of different orientation within the Sunni spectrum. Occasionally, studies go beyond the surface of discourses and seek to explain the current divisions within Sunni Islam by pointing to their theological or historical roots. This paper proposes a novel approach by exploring the epistemological foundations of such divisions. The question pursued here is, simply speaking, "What does it mean to know?" in some of the major branches of contemporary Sunni Islam. Drawing on research conducted in West and East Africa, the paper highlights two different responses to this question, which can tentatively be described as the traditionalist and the reformist approach. The respective approaches to knowledge reveal the interfaces and nuances of these categories and challenge the received wisdom about divisions within Sunni Islam.

**Rüdiger Seesemann** specializes in Islamic Studies and teaches at Northwestern University Evanston. His research interests include Sufism, modern Islamic movements, Islamic education, and Islamic knowledge with a regional focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

GEFÖRDERT VOM



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