

Dr Nor ISMAH

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Education

- PhD, Islamic and Southeast Asian Studies, Leiden University (2023)
 - M.A., Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa (2012)
 - B.A., Arabic Language and Literature, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (2002)
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Professional Experience

DECEMBER 2024 - PRESENT

Postdoctoral Fellow, Asia Research Institute, NUS

- Leading an independent research agenda on female Islamic authority, religious networks, and digital media infrastructures in Southeast Asia
- Publications (2025): Articles on feminist ethics and social media (*Indonesia*) and fatwas in social movements (*African Journal of Gender and Religion*); book review in *Islamic Studies Review*.
- Presenting research at international conferences, invited seminars, and ARI roundtables
- Convening and chairing academic events that foster interdisciplinary exchange across humanities and social sciences

OCTOBER 2023 – AUGUST 2024

Association for Asian Studies – Gosling-Lim Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

- I presented and advanced my book manuscript titled "Women Issuing Fatwas: Female Islamic Scholars and Community-Based Authority in Java, Indonesia," which is slated for publication by Edinburgh University Press.

MAY 2023 – JULY 2024

Co²libri Early Career Researcher Fellow, the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

- I presented and successfully published my research on "Platform Writers and the Production of Digital Literatures: The Professionalism of Muslim Women Novelists in Indonesia" in the *International Quarterly for Asian Studies*.
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Research Area/Topic/Discipline

Female Islamic authority, Muslim women movement, Women's knowledge production, Media, Anthropology, Gender, and Islamic Studies

Short Biography

Nor Ismah is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Religion and Globalisation Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. She also serves as Director of the Center for Islamic Law and Ethics of Mubadalah (CILEM), Siber Syekh Nurjati State Islamic University, Cirebon, Indonesia. Her research explores the intersection of gender studies, women's knowledge production, media, and Islam in the Indonesian context. Her forthcoming Edinburgh University Press book *Women Issuing Fatwas: Female Islamic Scholars and Community-Based Authority in Java, Indonesia*, is anticipated to make a significant contribution to the field. At ARI, she is developing a research project titled Religious Networks and Gender Dynamics: A Study of Female Islamic Authority in Southeast Asia, which builds on her doctoral work.

Publications

Books

- *Women Issuing Fatwas: Female Islamic Scholars and Community Based Authority in Java, Indonesia*. Forthcoming, Edinburgh University Press, 2026.
- *Economic Empowerment for Women-Led MSMEs in Rural Indonesia: Lessons from Indonesian CSOs*, co-authored with Herni Ramdlaningrum, Dia Mawesti, Cut Nurul Aidha, Fiona Armintasari, Dwi Rahayu Ningrum. Jakarta: Perkumpulan Prakarsa, 2023.
- *Salam from Pesantren: Pengalaman Santri Mengelola Media untuk Perdamaian*. Jakarta: Search for Common Ground Indonesia, 2014.
- *Ja'a Jutek, a Novel*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Matapena, 2007.
- *Jerawat Santri, a Novel*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Matapena, 2006

Refereed Article

- Review of *The Cambridge Companion to Women and Islam*, edited by Masooda Bano. *Islamic Studies Review* 4(2) (2025).
- "The Increasing Role of Women's Fatwa-Making in Indonesia." *Melbourne Asia Review*, Issue 18, (2024).
- "Pesantren: Its Founding and Role in the Colonial Period". *Tebuireng: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society*, Vol 3, Issue 1, (2022), 1-16.
- "Reading Indonesian and Malaysian Young Adult Novels: Capturing the Image of Young Muslim Women in Indonesia and Malaysia". *Humanisma*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (2020), 108-121.
- "Competing Identity and Culture, the Formation of Forum Lingkar Pena and Komunitas Matapena in Indonesia". *Dinika*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, (2019), 353-376.

Edited Journal Special Issue

- "Narrating the Pain: Exploring Humor and Polygamy in Indonesian Muslim Women-Authoring Novels", forthcoming in *Journal of Asian Studies* (2027)
- "Beyond the Hashtag: The Intersection of Feminist Ethics and Social Media in Fostering Safe Spaces for Women", *Indonesia*, vol. 119, (2025) 123-145.
- "Issuing Justice: Women Ulama, Fatwas, and the Ratification of Indonesia's Sexual Violence Crime Bill", *African Journal on Gender and Religion*, Vol. 31, No. 1, (2025).
- "Women's Fatwa-Making in Indonesia: Gender, Authority, and Everyday Legal Practice". *International Journal of Islam in Asia*, 4 (2024) 75–97.
- "Platform Writers and the Production of Digital Literatures: The Professionalism of Muslim Women Novelists in Indonesia". *IQAS/ International Quarterly for Asian Studies*, Vol. 54 / (2023) iv, 409–429.

- “Siting Islamic Feminism: The Indonesian Congress of Women Islamic Scholars and the Challenge of Challenging Patriarchal Authority”, co-authored with David Kloos. *History and Anthropology Journal*, Volume 34, Issue 5, (2023), 818-843.
- “Destabilising Male Domination: Building Community Based Authority among Indonesian Female Ulama”. *Asian Studies Review*, 40:4, (2016), 527-544.

Edited Book

- *Munjidah Wahab: Otoritas, Profesionalisme, dan Kebijakan Publik di Kabupaten Jombang*, Jombang: Boengaketjil, 2023.

Book Chapter

- “Fatwas and their Roles in Women’s Access to Law in Southeast Asia”, *Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Culture*, forthcoming, 2027.
- “AHA Moment Ibu untuk Sekolah Lagi”, in *Sekolahlah Tinggi-Tinggi: Perjalanan Perempuan Mengejar Cita ke Empat Benua*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2025.
- “Menjalani Laku Sunyi Feminis”, in *Feminis Cari Ribut, Sebuah Perjalanan Mencari dan Menjadi*. Yogyakarta: Amongkarta, 2021.
- “Ketika Perempuan Meneliti Perempuan”, in Wijayanto et.all (ed.), *Melakukan Penelitian Ethnografi di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Marjin Kiri, 2019.

Awards/Grants and Distinctions

- Event Grant: Convened a roundtable on the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama and gender justice in Southeast Asia and beyond, ARI–NUS, 23 November 2025.
- The Emerging Scholars in Asian Studies provided by the Asian Studies Program of University of Delaware, April 2024.
- Gosling-lim – Association for Asian Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, October 2023 – August 2024.
- Co2libri Early Career Researcher Fellowship at the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, May-July 2023
- Short-term awards to participate in the International Visitor of Leadership Program on “Empowering Muslim Women as Peacemakers and Agents of Changes”, supported by the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2021.
- Scholarship to participate in ‘Gender in Muslim Contexts’ 2021 Online Summer Program provided by the Aga Khan University’s Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations (AKU-ISMC), UK, 2021.
- Short-term awards to participate in the Leadership program for Senior Multifaith Women Leaders supported by Australia Awards Indonesia, 2020.
- Scholarship for PhD study at Leiden University provided by the Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education of Ministry of Finance of Republic Indonesia, 2016 – 2020.
- Alumni Awards provided by the International Fellowship Program of Ford Foundation, 2015.
- Short term awards to participate in the Australia-Indonesia Muslim Exchange Program organized by Australia Awards Indonesia, 2014.
- Scholarship to join Graduate Student Affiliate program provided by East West Center, Hawaii, USA, 2010 – 2012
- Scholarship for Master study provided by the International Fellowship Program of Ford Foundation, 2010 – 2012.