The last two decades have seen a revolutionary transformation in the use and ownership of media. This transformation has offered the opportunity for small and large nations, poor and rich, to own and operate media conglomerates. Groupings or individuals now have direct access to the Internet and can broadcast their news, and opinions, and promote their causes and ideas to the world at large through a variety of ways.

The purpose of this conference is to invite scholars and media professionals to examine how this development has impacted on the portrayal of the religions of the Middle East. Of particular interest is, of course, the impact on Islam, and the understanding and perception of Islam by Moslems and those of other faiths.

Conference papers will examine how the Internet, social media, the establishment of powerful Middle East-based, or Middle East-funded television networks have affected the perception of religion, a particular religion, and religious communities in the Middle East, and in the diaspora.

All abstracts, in either English or Arabic, relevant to the main subject of the conference, will be considered. These are some of the suggested themes:

- Media Theory and Religion in the Middle East
- Media and the Rise or Fall of Religion
- Media and the Promotion of Religious Tolerance/Prejudice
- Media and the Rise/ Fall of Fundamentalism
- Portrayal of Religious Minorities in the Middle East
- Portrayal of Islam in Western Media
- Portrayal of Middle Eastern Religious Minorities in the West
- Portrayal of Middle Eastern Religious Minorities in the Middle East
- Portrayal of Islam in Arab Countries
- Third World Media Perceptions of Islam
Social Media and the Perception of Islam
Social Media and Religious Communities
Social Media and Religious Minorities
The Use of the Internet by Political Islam
Inter-religious Dialogue in the Media
Portrayal of Religion and Political Correctness
Anti-Islamic Promotion
Reality and Perception
Jihadist Media
Proselytizing Media

Deadlines
December 15, 2014: Abstracts of about 400 words in Arabic or English
January 10, 2015: Abstract decisions announced
April 30, 2015: Full papers for those interested in submitting their papers for publication

Abstracts in either English or Arabic of about 400 words, outlining the question or argument to be explored, should be sent to Dr. Ramez Maluf at media.religion@balamand.edu.lb. Full panels will also be considered.

Registration Fee: $180 - paid during Registration on May 5 or 6, 2015
$80 graduate students
Limited funds are available to assist with accommodation or registration.

Participants will be the guests of the University during lunch and coffee breaks, and visitors from abroad will have the opportunity to visit the ancient city of Byblos, as well as the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

Participants at the conference will have a variety of choices for accommodation near the Balamand campus. As the conference date approaches, specific locations and rates will be posted.

The University of Balamand is a private university founded by the Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch in 1988 that adopts a non-denominational approach to education and admission policy. Its beautiful main campus, set on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean in the northern Koura region, is the largest contiguous campus in Lebanon. The University has other campus in Lebanon, including one in Sin el Feel, which houses the majority of the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts, another neighboring Saint George Hospital in Ashrafieh, which houses the faculty for medicine and medical sciences, and a third in Souk el Gharb.