Yerevan State University
Department of Arabic Studies

“The Shaping of Muslim Identity in the United States”

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Office hours:  Mon 11:00-12:00 a.m.; Wed 3:00-4:00 p.m. and Fri 2:00-3:00 p.m.
or by appointment.

Course Description:

This course provides a complex examination of the Muslim Community in the United States, including a thorough and comprehensive study of Islamic identity, participation and civic engagement of the American Islamic community. An immediate outcome of the attacks of 9/11 and the emergence of the al Qaeda threat was the newfound attention focused on Islamic groups and communities. The presence of a threat so far beyond the traditional parameters of U.S. national security policy spurred the startled recognition little understood and seriously underestimated “enemy” peoples. This course will study what it means to be Muslim in America. We will look carefully at the challenges facing Muslims in the United States, where many are enveloped in a uniquely ‘American’ religious experience.

Course Goals:

- To understand the history of Islam and Muslims in the United States and be able to express that understanding clearly in written and verbal communication
- To demonstrate your grasp of important concepts about race and religion in the United States as they apply to the situation of Muslims in the United States
- To gain an understanding of the nuances of shaping the Muslim Identity and it’s developments in America
- To understand the modes of assimilation or acculturation that has occurred in this faith community.
Structure and Requirements

1. Classes will comprise of discussions as well as lectures. You are encouraged to bring particular questions you have to the attention of the entire class. I, in turn, will ask you questions about the readings and the lecture material.

2. Readings will be assigned from the four main textbooks used in the course (see below) on a weekly basis. Each of you will be asked to give a 15-20 minute presentation on an issue of your own choosing. All of you must prepare the material thoroughly in advance for class discussions. Each correct answer you give will count towards the final grade.

3. There will be additional reading assignments and, on occasion, visual presentations.

4. Over the course of the semester you will be asked to turn in three 8-10 page (typed, double-spaced) research essays written outside class.

Grading:

Your grade is based on how well you synthesize readings and lectures. Your success depends on your engagement with the materials. It is essential that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings!

Essays: 50% overall.
In-class presentation: 15%.
Final examination: 25%.
Attendance & participation: 10%.

Plagiarism:
Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. University politics on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

Essential Readings:


3. CAIR reports, “American Public Opinion” and “Western Muslim Minorities”

Optional Readings:


Internet Resources

Islamicity: www.islamicity.com/default.shtml

Islam Online: www.islamonline.net/English/index.shtml

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA): http://www.isna.net/home.aspx

Islamic Studies, Islam, Arabic and Religion: www.uga.edu/islam

Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC): http://www.mpac.org

The Muslim Women’s Home Page: www.jannah.org/sisters/index.html

Course Content:

Week 1. Introduction to the Subject


Resources: “On Common Ground: America's Many Religions” Section on the Islamic Tradition; "Encountering Religious Diversity» Historical Perspectives Section on African Religion in America”

Malik, Iftikhar Haider, Islam and Modernity. Muslims in Europe and United States

Aminah Beverly McCloud, African American Islam


Resources:


Abdo, Geneive, Mecca and Main Street: Muslim life in America after 9/11

Cainkar, Louise A. Homeland insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American experience after 9/11.

Week 4. Overview of Muslim history in America. Genealogy of the Muslim Arrivals. The Formation of the Muslim Community.

Resources:

Gomez, Michael Angelo, Black Crescent: the Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005


**Week 5. Women in Immigrant Muslim Communities.**

**Resources:**


**Week 6. Islamic periodical literature in the United States. Radio and Television. Internet Sites. Islamic Societies.**

**Resources:**

Haddad, Yazbeck Yvonne, Jane I. Smith, *Muslim Minorities in the West. Visible and Invisible.*


**Week 7. American-Muslim Identity. Importance of Religious and Cultural Identity.**

**Resources:**


Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* Summer 1993

**Week 8. Islam in America: The Problematic of Pluralism. Multiculturalism and Pluralism.**

**Resources:**


Glazer, *We are All Multiculturalists Now*.


**Muslim Views of America.**

**Resources:**
- Esposito John L, Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?*

**Week 10. Homeland Insecurity. Muslims leaving in the State of Fear**

**Resources:**

**Week 11. The Dynamics of Islamic Identity in North America. Muslim Identity in the American Context**

**Resources:**
- Haddad, Yazbeck Yvonne, Esposito, John L, *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*

**Week 12-13. Essay Presentations.**

**Week 14. Final Examination.**