

**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 policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

## **Essential Readings:**

1. Abdo, Geneive. *Mecca and Main Street: Muslim life in America after 9/11*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006
2. Cainkar, Louise A. *Homeland insecurity: the Arab American and Muslim American experience after 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009
3. CAIR reports, "American Public Opinion" and "Western Muslim Minorities"

4. Esposito John L, Dalia Mogahed, "Who Speaks for Islam?. What a Billion Muslims Really Think?," Gallup Press, NY, 2007
5. Haddad, Yazbeck Yvonne, Smith, I Jane and Moore, M Kathleen. *Muslim Women in America: Challenges if Islamic Identity Today*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006
6. Haddad, Yazbeck Yvonne, Esposito, John L, *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* New York : Oxford University Press, 2000
7. Kathleen M. Moore, "Muslims in the United States: Pluralism under Exceptional Circumstances," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2007, 612, 116.
8. Malik, Iftikhar Haider, *Islam and Modernity. Muslims in Europe and United States*. London: Pluto Press, 2004
9. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1993.
10. Smith, Jane I, *Islam in America*. Columbia University Press, New York 1999

### **Optional Readings:**

1. Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam*, New York, 1995
2. Curtis, E Edward, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought*. New York Press, 2002
3. DeWind, Josh, *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
4. Geaves, Ron and Theodore Gabriel, et al, Editors, *Islam and the West Post 9/11*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2004
5. Haddad, Yazbeck Yvonne, Jane I. Smith. *Muslim Minorities in the West. Visible and Invisible*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002.
6. Khan, Shahnaz, *Muslim Women: Crafting a North American Identity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.
7. Poston, A Larry. *The Changing Face of Islam in America: Understanding and Reaching your Muslim Neighbor*. Horizon Books, 2000
8. Winter, Bronwyn, *Hijab and the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008.

### **Internet Resources**

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR): <http://sun.cair.com/Default.aspx>

Islamicity: [www.islamicity.com/default.shtml](http://www.islamicity.com/default.shtml)

Islam Online : [www.islamonline.net/English/index.shtml](http://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](http://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](http://www.jannah.org/sisters/index.html)

## **Course Content:**

### **Week 1. Introduction to the Subject**

### **Week 2. Islam in United States. Muslim Slaves in the Americas. The Nation of Islam and Malcolm X**

**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*

### **Week 3. Muslims and US Political History. Integration and Assimilation.**

#### **Resources:**

Kathleen M. Moore, “Muslims in the United States: Pluralism under Exceptional Circumstances,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 612, 116

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

Nimer, Mohamed, *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada*. New York : Routledge, 2002.

Smith, Jane I, *Islam in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

“Oh ye Americans”: The Autobiography of Omar ibn Said an enslaved Muslim in the United States - <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text3/religionomaribnsaid.pdf>

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

#### **Resources:**

Haddad, Yazbeck Yvonne, Smith, I Jane and Moore, M Kathleen, *Muslim Women in America: Challenges if Islamic Identity Today*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2006

Rouse, Carolyn M., *Engaged Surrender: African American Women and Islam*. University of California Press, 2004

Winter, Bronwyn, *Hijab & the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate*.

### **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*.

Lo, Mbaye, *Muslims in America: Race, Politics, and Community Building*. Beltsville: Amana Publications, 2004.

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

#### **Resources:**

Curtis, E Edward, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought*.

Esposito John L, Dalia Mogahed, “Who Speaks for Islam?. What a Billion Muslims Really Think? Gallup Press.”

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

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

#### **Resources:**

On Common Ground: "Encountering Religious Diversity" Today's Challenges.

Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant*; Michael Walzer, *What it Means to be an American*;

Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*; Steven

Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief*; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America*; Nathan

Glazer, *We are All Multiculturalists Now*.

**Week 9. The Aftermath of the attacks of 9/11. American Views on Muslims after 9/11. Muslim Views of America.**

**Resources:**

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

“What a Billion Muslims Really Think?” Gallup Press, NY, 2007.

Cainkar, Louise A, *Homeland Insecurity: the Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009.

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

**Resources:**

Cainkar, Louise A, *Homeland Insecurity: the Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11*.

Geaves, Ron and Theodore Gabriel, et al, Editors, *Islam and the West Post 9/11*.

**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?*

Khan, Shahnaz, “Muslim Women: Crafting a North American Identity,” Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

DeWind, Josh, *Immigration and Religion in America: comparative and Historical Perspectives*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

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

**Week 14. Final Examination.**