

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

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Humanities Discipline: Philosophy (Ethics)

Date: May/12/2015

World Religion: Islam

Teaching Module Title: The Ethics of Islamophobia

Teaching Module Goals:

1. To explore the following proposition: "Even as Muslims have been peaceably living in the Americas for over 400 years, the onset of the War on Terror treats them as they are often newly arrived and threatening to the American way of life."
2. To reveal how American Muslims are being attacked and otherwise poorly treated in the United States by other Americans.
3. To ask students to consider the ethics of social equality in a religiously pluralistic society

Assigned Readings and Websites:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/u-s-muslims-describe-dealing-with-islamophobia>/U.S. Muslims describe dealing with Islamophobia MARCH 25, 2016, 6:40 PM

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/18/us/muslims-in-america-irpt/> 'I am you:' American Muslims on faith -- and fear' By Jareen Imam, CNN Updated 5:57 PM ET, Tue February 23, 2016

<http://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article49729580.html> 'Living with fear as a Muslim in America' December 14, 2015

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/omar-alnatour/10-reasons-why-you-should-not-fear-muslims_b_9035746.html '10 Reasons You Should Not Fear Muslims' by Omar Alnatour Palestinian-American Muslim. Student. Humanitarian.01/26/2016 02:47 pm ET | Updated Jan 26, 2016

<http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2015/american-muslims/> by Ali Younes

<http://www.icna.org/americas-perception-of-muslims-needs-to-change/> By Dr. Zahid Bukhari, President, Islamic Circle of North America

<https://contexts.org/articles/muslims-in-america/> by Jen'nan Ghazal Read | October 28, 2008 | Fall 2008

<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/09/05/why-muslims-are-still-mad-at-america/comment-page-1/> By Steven Kull, Special to CNN

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/12/20121230135815198642.html> 31 DECEMBER 2012 Anti-Muslim violence spiraling out of control in America

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865646902/Obamas-take-on-3-key-debates-about-Muslims-in-America.html?pg=all> Published: Thursday, Feb. 4 2016 11:35 a.m. MST

Curtis, Edward E. IV [Muslims in America: A Short History](#), Oxford University Press 2009.

Questions and prompts for discussion:

1. How does the negative treatment of American Muslims after such events as 9/11, the Boston Marathon and the San Bernardino attacks compare to how Japanese Americans were wrongfully treated after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?
2. During a town hall meeting in Salem, New Hampshire, on February 8, 2016, Donald Trump asserted that as president he could face Syrian refugee children and tell them they cannot come to the United States. What are your reactions? (We will discuss possible and actual ramifications of Trump's rhetoric.)
3. Prior to WW II, Jews were trying to find refuge from religious and ethnic persecution. Many did not, and 6 million of them were murdered by the Nazi regime. Although many Jews were already in America and more were allowed in at the end of the war, Jews were often denied quarter in the United States during this period. Is this similar to the situation of millions of Syrian refugees? Do you agree with the following statement of Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." (We will discuss the horrendous situation of Syrian Muslims)
4. The definition of terrorist may depend upon whom you ask. Many non-Muslims in America think that Islam is a religion that is violent and those that follow it are ALL potential terrorists. On the other hand, many civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as Muslims and non-Muslims that reside elsewhere believe that Americans are the real terrorists. Can you see both perspectives? Which one is more correct, in your view? (We will philosophically discuss the two views.)
5. How has the United States and other nations' "counter-terrorism" campaign against the Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL) contributed to the demonization of Muslims? (We will explore possible answers in class or in a Discussion Board.)
6. Have students read the following poem, and ask them whether the sentiments expressed therein apply to Muslim immigrants:

The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Instructor's Lecture Notes:

Snapshot: Muslims in the U.S. (<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/18/us/muslims-in-america-irpt/>)

- There are **3.3 million Muslims** in the U.S., which is about 1% of the country's population.
- 65% of **Muslims in the U.S. identify** with Sunni Islam. 11% identify as Shia. 15%, or about 1 in 7 Muslims, have no specific affiliation, describing themselves, for example, as "just a Muslim."
- Among African-American Muslims who were born in the U.S., 63% **are converts to the faith**.

About 7 in 10 U.S. Muslims (69%) say **religion is "very important"** in their lives. Similar to U.S. Christians, among whom 70% say religion is very important in their lives.

Written Assignments:

1. I will ask the following question on a Discussion Board:

"What do you think non-Muslim Americans owe American citizens who happen to be Muslim?"

Students will be expected to post an original response of at least 75 words and then a reply to at least three other student's posts.

2. In a course Wiki we will address the following:

In the matter of the Syrian refugees, what do you think is the most ethical action to take on their behalf, while still protecting the American people in as much as possible?

Students will NOT be allowed to delete another's entry, but anyone can edit it in terms of grammar/spelling, punctuation, capitalization and they can also add more details to someone else's work. Students can also upload images and other media to support their perspective.