Islam: Beyond the Myths, Breaking Down the Barriers

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March 20, 2014
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Islam: The Basics

- 5 pillars of faith
  - Faith and Declaration in the Oneness of Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) as his prophet
  - Daily Prayer
  - Fasting During the Holy Month of Ramadan
  - Alms/Charity (Zak’at)
  - Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)
- Abrahamic Faith: Jesus, Moses, Noah, Isaac, Ishmael are Prophets in the Islamic tradition.
- Works Matter: “Day of Judgement”
Myth vs. Reality

- Women’s Rights
- Violent (Terrorism)
- Jihad
- Anti-Semitism
- Muslim = Arab
- Anti-American
Islam in America
Islam and Culture

- Difference between ‘Culture’ and Islam
- Similarities across cultures
- Variations across cultures
- Muslim Identity across the “Ummah”
- Interpretation of Islamic teachings
Islam and Christianity

- Similarities (Abrahamic faith)
- Abyssinian King
- Differences
- Missionaries
History: Islam vs. the West

- Orientalism
- Crusades
- Reconquista (Spain)
- Colonialism
- Post-Colonialism
- Israel
- U.S. inheritance of Colonial History
- Neo-colonialism
Missionaries

Israel/Palestine

- Myth: Jews and Muslims have always hated each other
- 20% of Palestinians and 50% of Lebanese are Christian
- Acknowledging Apartheid
- Distinguishing between Zionists and Jews
- Criticism of Israel (a nation-state) is not Anti-Semitic
- Suggested Films:
  - “Salt of the Sea”
  - “Slingshot Hip Hop”
History: Islam in America

- W. African Muslim Explorers in the Americas
- Black Muslim Slaves (Estevan, 1527 A.D.)
- Morocco, first to acknowledge U.S. sovereignty
- Georgian and Sapelo Islands
- Edward Blyden to Garvey: The link
- Noble Drew Ali, Farad Muhammad
- Nation of Islam
- Immigrants (Arabs and others)
- 1960’s change in U.S. immigration laws
Muslim in America: A Diverse Community

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4P5Mvt0fmc
Is America Islamophobic?
What the anti-mosque uproar tells us about how the U.S. regards Muslims
By Bobby Ghosh
Growing up Muslim pre-9/11

- “What’s a Muslim?”
- Vandalism @ Mosques
- Constant Proselytizing
- Viewed by most Whites as foreign or strange
- No support for religious obligations
- Black vs. Immigrant Muslim community connections and divides
The Constant Foreigner

- “Where are you from? No, where are you REALLY from.”
- “You hardly have an accent.”
- Noticing the Stares
- Differences between encounters with non-Muslim White vs. Black Americans.
- Who is American?
U.S. Muslims’ perceptions & reality pre-9/11

- Israel
- Iraq (First time around)
- Immigrants: Living the American Dream (Republicans)
- Black Muslims: A Constant Negotiation
- Immigrant Children: Searching for their place
- Gradual Increase in White conversions
September 11, 2001

- A sudden focus on U.S. Muslims
- Hate crimes/Threats/Harassment
- Surveillance/Investigations
- Gov’t perpetuates the hatred
- Muslims seen as un-American and expected to apologize
- Muslim unprepared for response
- From unknown people to pre-judgment and suspicion
- Sudden socio-political, religious and geographic expertise
Post 9/11: Racial Profiling

- Patriot Act
- Disappearances
- “Random” security checks
- Widespread support of profiling
- Discrimination
- Customs used as a checkpoint for Homeland Security
- “Terror Babies”
Post 9/11 Anecdotes

- Experiences at U.S. Customs
- My 6-Year Old Nephew
- Shimaa’s Story
“Ground Zero Mosque” Controversy

- Not a Mosque or @ ‘Ground Zero’
- Widespread Opposition incl. ADL and +50% Democrats
- Muslims compared to Nazis
- Exposed opposition to Islamic Centers around U.S.
- Tennessee Mosque arson
- Qur’an Burnings

http://www.time.com/time/video/player/0,32068,590040797001_2011959,00.html
All-American Muslim
Imam Luqman
King Hearings

• “The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community’s Response”

• Salman Hamdani
Robert Spencer
NYPD Muslim Surveillance
Wisconsin Shootings of Sikhs
Miss America: Nina Davuluri

@Cademinnick413
Are you serious??!!! The Arab wins??!!!
This is miss AMERICA!!! Not miss Arabia!!! Miss Kansas is in the army and is a country girl!!! C'mon!

@Buckiller14
This is miss America not miss terrorist #getoffthescreen #USA

This is Miss America, not Miss Muslim. #sorrynotsorry

Nice slap in the face to the people of 9-11 how pathetic #missamerica
They came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for me and by that time no one was left to speak up.

- Martin Niemöller
U.S. Muslims Organizations

- CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations)
  www.cair.com
- ISNA (Islamic Society of North America)
  www.isna.net
- IMAN (Inner-City Muslim Action Network)
  www.imancentral.org
- Islam on Demand
  www.islamondemand.com
Thank You!

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