



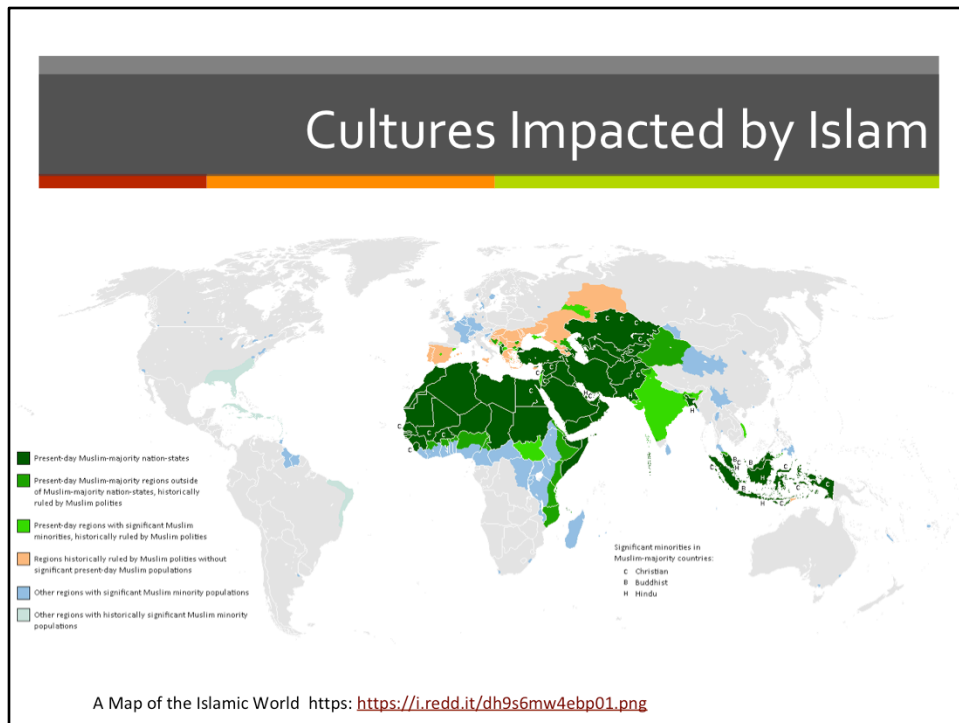
### **Slide 1: Introduction**

We regularly hear words like safety and inclusion in the context of education. Many groups have successfully marketed for the inclusion of their story into the mainstream educational narrative. As teachers we now seek out sources that present the stories of Women, Native Americans, Latinex, African American, and LGBTQ+. These are all groups that have been marginalized in American society and politics. However, in your quest to represent all voices, have you thought about Muslim voices? 24% of the world's population practices Islam (are Muslims), are you representing any of those voices as you practice your craft?

This begins my fifth year of working at Joel P Jensen Middle School, but last year was the first year I observed female students wearing hijabs in the hallways. However, it is statistically inaccurate to determine the number of Muslim students by the number of girls wearing hijabs. Many Muslim Americans believe that hijabs are not mandatory in the faith, and young men necessarily don't wear any identifying clothing.

However, determining the number of Muslims attending Joel P Jensen is not the purpose of this presentation. Instead, my goal is to encourage you to incorporate what I will call Muslim Studies into your teaching practice (along the same line as African American Studies).

# Cultures Impacted by Islam



## Slide 2: Cultures Impacted by Islam

Islam enters the World Narrative in the late 500s/early 600s BCE. Since then, it has ebbed and flowed through a great deal of the civilized world, leaving its mark on the culture of these areas in varying ways and degrees. As a result, there is a vast variety of literature, art, architecture, food, music, etc. to choose from all of them from different primary cultures as well. For example, I was told during my class that “You can’t learn about West Africa without learning about Islam,” by Ismail Abdul-Aleem. So it would be very simple to incorporate a Muslim individual into the study of West African geography.

I recognize that we don’t all teach in the social studies department. I don’t even teach social studies. But having a general awareness of where and how Muslims have participated in United States and Utah History won’t hurt any of us.

- Present-day Muslim-majority nation-states
- Present-day Muslim-majority regions outside of Muslim-majority nation-states, historically ruled by Muslim polities
- Present-day regions with significant Muslim minorities, historically ruled by Muslim polities
- Regions historically ruled by Muslim polities without significant present-day

# Muslims in US History

- Records of Muslim participation exist for every period of United States History.
- Two Informative Timelines:  
[http://www.iupui.edu/~womrel/HistTimeline\\_Islam.htm](http://www.iupui.edu/~womrel/HistTimeline_Islam.htm)  
<http://pluralism.org/timeline/islam-in-america/>

Exploration

Slavery

Civil War

Progressive Era

World Wars

Civil Rights

Cold War

Current Events

## **Slide 3: Muslims in US History**

In fact, records of Muslim participation exist for every period of United States History. On this slide I provide links to two informative timelines that you can check-out if you are interested.

# Muslims in US History



## **Slide 4: Muslims in US History**

I have selected 3 geographic areas that I would like to discuss more in depth. Muslim slaves in the southeast, Immigrant Muslims that settled in North Dakota , and Muslims who participated in the Civil Rights era in Detroit, Michigan.

# Muslim Slaves

➤ 30% of Slaves brought to North America were Muslims



Portrait of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, called Job ben Solomon (1701-1773) in African dress, with the Qu'ran around his neck



Abdul Rahman Ibrahim (1762-1829) wrote two autobiographies and is the topic of film *Prince Among Slaves*.



"Bilali Document" written in the 19th century by Bilali Muhammad, on Sapelo Island, GA  
Photo by Dr. Craig Considine

## Slide 5: Muslim Slaves

Scholars estimate that about 10% of all enslaved Africans who came to the United States were Muslim--this is about 30,000-40,000 people. Some of them were among the most educated Americans, slave or free. They spoke, read and wrote Arabic and several wrote autobiographies about their experiences. These primary source documents are available online and can easily be integrated into curriculum that involves slavery and captivity narratives.

During the colonization era portraits were only made of important people, but there are a surprising number of portraits of Muslim slaves. This indicates the impact these individuals had on their slave masters and the respect they garnered from them as well.

This portrait is of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, called Job ben Solomon (1701-1773) in African dress, with the Qu'ran around his neck. Ayuba's was found unsuitable for fieldwork so he was put in charge of the cattle. He would go into the woods to pray, but after a child started throwing things at him while praying he ran away. He was captured. While in imprisoned, he got to share his story through an African translator. As a result, his master set aside an area for Ayuba to pray. During imprisonment his ability to read and write Arabic was also discovered. Eventually Ayuba was returned to Africa in 1738. His memoirs are one of the earliest slave narratives.

## Muslim Immigration and the Progressive Era

- Turks, Albanians, Kurds and Arabs from the provinces of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and other areas of the Ottoman Empire began to settle in North America in significant numbers in the early 1900s.



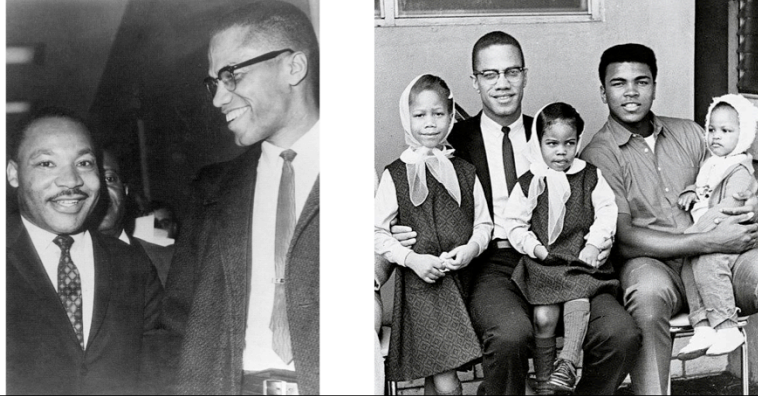
Ross, ND Mosque built in 1920. Syrian Muslims gathered in homes in Ross, ND for first documented communal prayers. First hand accounts can be found in Works Progress Administration (WPA) documents in National Archives

### **Slide 6: Muslim Immigration and the Progressive Era**

Muslim Immigration was also part of the Progressive Era with immigrants from Syria homesteading in North Dakota. These records are also found in the WPA Archives. While slaves had continued to practice daily prayers, the Ross, ND community provide the first records of communal prayer services in the United States. The WPA interviewed histories could be used as models when teaching students how to document an interview.

## Muslims and Civil Rights

- Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit, Michigan in 1930. Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali were both members whose stories are part of the Civil Rights Movement.

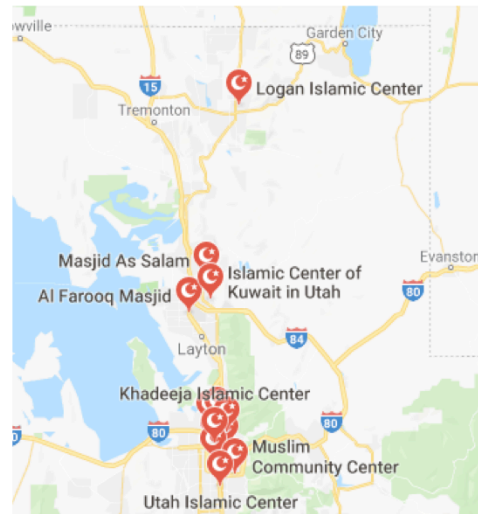


### **Slide 7: Muslims and Civil Rights**

The Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit, Michigan in 1930. Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali were both members whose stories are part of the Civil Rights Movement.

## History of Muslims in Utah

- 1958 - Tariq Kargi
- 1981 – Logan Islamic Center
- 0.2% of the people in Utah affiliate with Islam  
<https://www.bestplaces.net/religion/state/utah>
- Now more than 10 mosques in Utah from Logan in the North to Orem in the South.
- Largest is Khadeeja Islamic Center in West Valley City.



### **Slide 8: History of Muslims in Utah**

Initially, Muslims came to Utah to attend colleges and universities. Tariq Kargi came from Iraq to attend Utah State University in 1958. He is the longest continual Muslim resident in the state. Many Muslim students return home after completing studies but some stay. They give Utah's "conservative atmosphere, family friendly focus and landscape reminiscent of the Middle East as reasons to stay."

Muslim population growth in Utah has been mostly from refugees. In the early 1990s there was an influx of Bosnian and Somalian Muslim refugees. Several refugee organizations exist to assist in the resettlement process and Muslims are found all along the Wasatch Front.



## Asian Exclusion Act

- Court Cases about the Asian Exclusion Act involving involved can be added to discussions about the Topaz Internment Camp in Utah Studies.

### **George Dow vs. United States**

In 1915, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that residents originating from Syria were considered racially "white", and therefore eligible to become naturalized US citizens.

### **United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind**

in 1923, United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind ruled that Indians from India were not white in America. As a result, his United States citizenship by naturalization was cancelled.

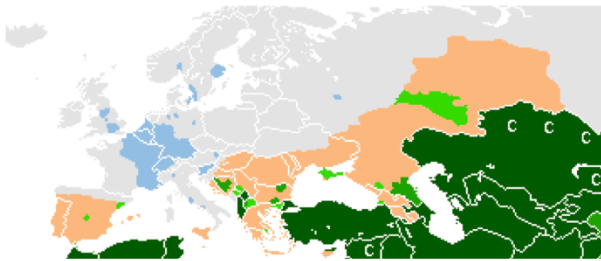


### **Slide 9: Asian Exclusion Act**

Last year I took a course about the Topaz Internment Camp located outside of Delta, UT. (There is a fantastic museum in Delta that I encourage all of you to visit sometime in your lives.) A big connection that I made with the course I attended on Muslim American History and Life and the Topaz Internment was that people from the Syria and India were identified as Asian at the time of the Asian Exclusion Act. Two Court cases that had bearing on the Asian Exclusion Act that did not involve Japanese or people of Japanese Descent are George Dow vs United States and United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind.

It is also interesting to note that today, a person from the Middle East is considered "white" by the government. Therefore, they do not receive minority assistance and do not add to the diversity of an organization from a bureaucratic perspective. However, at the airport, are they really considered "white"? (Just something to think about...)

## Muslim Influences in Spain



Abd al-Rahman I  
"Falcon of the Quraysh"

### Slide 10: Muslim Influences in Spain

Now that we have looked at Muslim history in the United States and Utah, I want to show some other places that Muslim Studies can be integrated into a classroom. The orange-ish parts of the map are regions historically ruled by Muslim polities without significant present-day Muslim populations. So, let's talk about Spain.

In everything that I read and heard over the course of the Summer, the person I want to see a movie made about is Abd al-Rahman I. He was born in 731 into the Umayyad Dynasty in Damascus. The Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasids. As is typically the case, when overthrowing a dynasty, it's best to wipe out (kill) anyone who can have any claim to the throne. (Think the extermination of Tsar Nicholas II and Anastasia...) So, the Abbasid's were killing Abd al-Rahman's family so he ran with his brother. His brother ends up getting captured and killed, but Abd al-Rahman makes it all the way to present day Spain with just himself and a servant. He then manages to take over the region and his family rules there until 1031.

## Mosque of Córdoba



### **Slide 11: Mosque of Córdoba**

Abd al-Rahman III built the Great Mosque of Córdoba, which is now known locally as Mezquita-Catedral. The structure can be used in a variety of classes to study architecture, art, symmetry, etc.

## Think Beyond the Middle East

➤ Did you know...



### **Sheikh Hasina Wazed**

Prime Minister of Bangladesh since 2009. Ranked 26<sup>th</sup> on Forbes' list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women in 2018.



### **Muslim Free Hospital in Myanmar**

This free hospital has been open since 1937. It is funded by donations from Muslims in Myanmar.

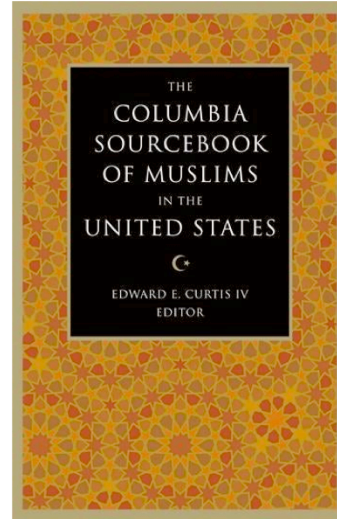
### **Slide 12: Think Beyond the Middle East**

When most people hear Muslim, they think of the Middle East and people like Malala Yousafzai author of "I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban", but that is a limited view. The largest Muslim population in a country is in Indonesia. Also, did you know that a Muslim woman is the Prime Minister of a Muslim majority country? Sheikh Hasina Wazed has been the Prime Minister of Bangladesh since 2009.

Humanitarian service and philanthropy is incredibly important in Islam. In Myanmar (previously Burma) the predominate religion is Theravada Buddhism. Muslims have a number of humanitarian and relief organizations in the United States and around the world.

## Conclusion

- Muslim experiences and culture can be integrated into all subject areas.
- I would be happy to help you find a resource to facilitate this in your classroom. Send me an email about what you're looking for.



### **Slide 13: Conclusion**

We've increased our sensitivity to Women's Studies, Native American Studies, African American Studies and LGBTQ Studies, making space for their voices in the conversations in our classrooms. It is now time to give the same space to Muslim Studies. I hope this presentation has gotten you thinking differently.

My challenge to you now is to intentionally incorporate one thing that represents the Muslim history, literature or culture into your classroom. It doesn't have to be a big thing... just a simple connection that can enhance and/or extend your current curriculum. Add a comparative text from a Muslim author, analyze a piece of art or music by a Muslim artist, incorporate a recipe to foods that is cooked in a predominately Muslim country. It doesn't have to be current or controversial. But by being positive and intentional you will give a voice to our Muslim students, providing them connections in a country that has traditionally shown little value for their traditions and beliefs.