Islamic Teachings on Contemporary Issues for Young Muslims
Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................ vi
Unit outline ........................................................................................................................ viii

THEME 1  IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Lesson 1:  Multiple identities .................................................................................... 3
  Handout 1.1:  Guess who? .................................................................................. 6
  Handout 1.2:  Reflection—identity ....................................................................... 7
  Handout 1.3:  Interview questions ........................................................................ 8

Lesson 2:  Muslims’ identities ..................................................................................... 9
  Handout 2.1:  Interview excerpts ........................................................................ 11
  Handout 2.2:  Material from Islamic tradition on multiple identities and
              sources of belonging .................................................................................. 13
  Handout 2.3:  Reflection on identity ..................................................................... 15

Lesson 3:  Islam in Australia and the world ............................................................... 17
  Handout 3.1:  Muslim communities in Australia .................................................. 20

THEME 2  RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lesson 4:  Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and
          Islamic tradition .............................................................................................. 23
  Handout 4.1:  Journey through space .................................................................. 25
  Handout 4.2:  Human rights in Islamic tradition .................................................. 26
  Handout 4.3:  The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic
              human rights—similarities and differences ............................................. 29

Lesson 5:  Australian citizenship and being a Muslim ................................................ 30
  Handout 5.1:  On the responsibilities of the social contract and citizenship ....... 32
  Handout 5.2:  Compatibilities and challenges of citizenship .............................. 35

Lesson 6:  Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition ...................................................... 36
  Handout 6.1:  The concept of dar al-islam in Islamic history and today .......... 38
  Handout 6.2:  The issue of migration to a Muslim country .................................. 41
  Handout 6.3:  Religious minorities—group work .................................................. 44
Handout 6.4: Letter to a friend—living as a minority ................................. 45

THEME 3  THE DIVERSITY OF ISLAM

Lesson 7: The diversity of Islam ................................................................. 49
  Handout 7.1: What is a Muslim? Brainstorm ........................................ 51
  Handout 7.2: Pew Research Center—the world’s Muslims: unity and diversity ................................................................. 52
  Handout 7.3: Small group activity—differences and similarities ............. 57
  Handout 7.4: Reflective essay—diversity among Muslims ..................... 58

Lesson 8: Diversity of opinion in Islam ...................................................... 59
  Handout 8.1: Disagreement and unity in Islam ....................................... 61
  Handout 8.2: Who is a Muslim? .............................................................. 63
  Handout 8.3: Reflective essay—the nature of the community .................. 66

THEME 4  MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS

Lesson 9: Religious freedom ..................................................................... 69
  Handout 9.1: Short research essay—religious freedom .......................... 71

Lesson 10: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (1) .............................. 73
  Handout 10.1: Role play—people of other faiths .................................... 75

Lesson 11: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2) ............................. 76
  Handout 11.1: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims—collected questions for discussion ......................................................... 78

THEME 5  ISLAM AND GOVERNMENT

Lesson 12: Democracy in Australia ......................................................... 81
  Teacher resource 12.1: Tower activity teacher instructions .................... 84
  Handout 12.1: All about Australia’s democracy ...................................... 85

Lesson 13: Islamic ideas about government .............................................. 86
  Handout 13.1: The Qur’anic vision of government ................................. 89
  Handout 13.2: Muslim caliphates in history ......................................... 91
  Handout 13.3: Historical exploration ..................................................... 94
  Handout 13.4: Extension activity—modern Muslim states ..................... 95
Lesson 14: Islam and democracy ................................................................. 96
    Handout 14.1: Class debate assessment sheet ........................................ 98

THEME 6 WHAT IS JIHAD? ........................................................................... 99
Lesson 15: My everyday jihad ................................................................. 101
    Handout 15.1: My everyday jihad .......................................................... 103
    Handout 15.2: The different types of jihad ............................................. 104
Lesson 16: The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam ............................... 106
    Handout 16.1: The origins of jihad—fighting in self-defence .................. 108
    Handout 16.2: The rules of war in Islam ................................................. 112
    Handout 16.3: Jihad—war to convert the disbelievers? ......................... 114
    Handout 16.4: Comparison—Islamic rules of war and international  
    humanitarian law .................................................................................. 117
Lesson 17: Is terrorism jihad? ................................................................. 118
    Handout 17.1: Legal definitions of terrorism .......................................... 120
    Handout 17.2: Jihad versus terrorism .................................................... 122
    Handout 17.3: On suicide attacks ......................................................... 123

THEME 7 HUMAN DIGNITY AND SLAVERY .................................................. 125
Lesson 18: Islam and slavery ................................................................. 127
    Handout 18.1: Slavery and Islam .......................................................... 129
    Handout 18.2: Research—slavery in the pre-modern world .................... 134

THEME 8 ISLAMOPHOBIA .......................................................................... 135
Lesson 19: Responding to Islamophobia .................................................. 137
Introduction

The first decade and a half of the twenty-first century has seen a number of world events that have brought increased attention to Islam as a religion and as a broad tradition encompassing different streams of law, theology and political thought. At the same time, such events have focused world attention on the actions and opinions of a relatively small set of actors who use violence, divisive rhetoric and a selective presentation of Islamic tradition to support and call attention to their views.

These phenomena have acted together to obscure the true teachings of Islam for many, including Muslims themselves, particularly in areas concerning Islam’s acceptance of diversity, its tolerance of different understandings of religion and of different choices in governance, its teachings concerning the legitimate use of force in international relations and the strict rules limiting any such use of force, and the like.

The need for an accessible educational resource which guides young people of Muslim faith through some of the most complex and challenging issues that they will be exposed to has never been clearer. To this end, the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne has drawn on its expertise and that of other scholars in the areas of Islamic tradition, history, theology and law to develop this resource for teachers to use in clarifying and discussing some of these issues with their students.

The resource is divided into eight themes covering core issues related to religion, identity and diversity, as well as more advanced topics such as the meaning of jihad, Islamic teachings concerning governance, the historical phenomenon of slavery, and the challenge of Islamophobia. Students will learn about mainstream Islamic teachings on these topics and be challenged to research and present information, debate contentious issues and write persuasive essays covering this material.

The resource will equip students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills to question many of the divisive and isolationist narratives that have emerged in recent times concerning Islam and the relationship of Muslims with those of other faiths, with a special emphasis on topics relevant to young Muslims living in Australia today. In addition, it is hoped that it will form a starting point for students interested in deepening their knowledge of Islamic tradition to pursue such education at a higher level.
Unit outline

THEME 1  IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Overview: This topic will focus on students' identity and belonging, with particular reference to their identity as young Muslims in Australia. Students will reflect on the multiple facets of their identity and explore similarities and differences with other young people, before reflecting on how they fit into the bigger picture of Australia's diversity.

Lesson 1: Multiple identities
Lesson 2: Muslims' identities
Lesson 3: Islam in Australia and the world

THEME 2  RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Overview: Students will explore the concept of human rights, as articulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in classical and modern Islamic tradition. Students will consider the meaning of Australian citizenship and the rights and responsibilities that go with it. They will learn about the history of Muslims as minorities and think about the questions and issues that arise in these contexts. They will also be able to contextualise the development of such legal terminology as dar al-islam, dar al-harb and the concept of migration (hijra), and be aware of the current views of leading Muslim scholars on these topics.

Lesson 4: Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition
Lesson 5: Australian citizenship and being a Muslim
Lesson 6: Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

THEME 3  THE DIVERSITY OF ISLAM

Overview: This topic will focus on the issue of diversity in the Muslim community. Students will become aware of the extent of diversity among Muslims, consider the approach of Muslim scholars to diversity and learn about the Islamic ethic of respectful disagreement. They will explore the theological question of membership in the Muslim community, why scholars have been extremely reluctant to anathematise Muslims and why ordinary Muslims should avoid this question entirely.

Lesson 7: The diversity of Islam
Lesson 8: Diversity of opinion in Islam
UNIT OUTLINE

THEME 4  MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS

Overview: Students will reflect on the meaning of religious freedom and the treatment of religious minorities. Students will also learn about commonalities between Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and reflect on ways to engage positively and in a spirit of friendship and goodwill with people of other faiths. Students will also learn about mainstream Islamic approaches to the issue of interaction and friendship with people of other faiths and historical examples of tolerance and respect.

Lesson 9: Religious freedom
Lesson 10: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (1)
Lesson 11: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2)

THEME 5  ISLAM AND GOVERNMENT

Overview: This theme will look at the broad topic of government in Islamic history and the modern context. Students will learn about the meaning of democracy and study its application in Australia; consider whether Islam prescribes a particular form of governance; and study historical models, such as the different types of governments in Islamic history and in the Muslim world today. In particular students will learn that a single united caliphate only existed for a very short period in Islamic history. Finally, they will engage in a debate on whether a hypothetical Islamic state would be democratic in nature or otherwise.

Lesson 12: Democracy in Australia
Lesson 13: Islamic ideas about government
Lesson 14: Islam and democracy
UNIT OUTLINE

THEME 6  WHAT IS JIHAD?

Overview: This topic focuses on the concept of jihad. Students will learn about examples of the peaceful manifestations of jihad in everyday life, as well as understanding how it can also mean the legitimate use of force within certain limits. It will consider historical examples of jihad, the development of scholarly understandings of the concept, and examine the difference between jihad and terrorism.

Lesson 15: My everyday jihad
Lesson 16: The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam
Lesson 17: Is terrorism jihad?

THEME 7  HUMAN DIGNITY AND SLAVERY

Overview: In this lesson students will think about slavery in its broader historical context; how the Qur’an and the Prophet responded to the problem of slavery; and what the duty of Muslims today is in view of the fact that slavery has been abolished by consensus across the Muslim world.

Lesson 18: Islam and slavery

THEME 8  ISLAMOPHOBIA

Overview: In this final topic, students will consider Islamophobia as a form of prejudice that affects some Muslims in Australia. Students will share their personal experiences and role play responses to potential incidents, as well as learn how to report an incident and who they can turn to for help if necessary.

Lesson 19: Responding to Islamophobia
Overview: This topic will focus on students’ identity and belonging, with particular reference to their identity as young Muslims in Australia. Students will reflect on the multiple facets of their identity and explore similarities and differences with other young people, before reflecting on how they fit into the bigger picture of Australia’s diversity.

Lesson 1: Multiple identities
Lesson 2: Muslims’ identities
Lesson 3: Islam in Australia and the world
LESSON 1

Multiple identities

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

• a better understanding of what identity means
• reflected on the multiple elements of their own identity
• identified commonalities with other students in the class
• begun to understand the nature of diversity and the similarities and differences that make up people’s identities.

Resources

| HANDOUT 1.1 | Guess who? |
| HANDOUT 1.2 | Reflection—identity |
| HANDOUT 1.3 | Interview questions |

Computers with internet access (ensure relevant plugin is enabled for Activity 5)
LESSON 1

Multiple identities

Activities

1 **Guess who?** Ask students to complete the *Guess who?* handout, without revealing to the other students what they have written. Once they have completed the handout, ask them to fold it and return it to the teacher. The teacher will distribute the handouts randomly among the students. Students will then attempt to guess whose handout they have been given. They may leave their seats and ask questions of the other students to find and identify their person.

2 **Discuss.** What does identity mean? Ask students what the word identity means. What elements make up a person’s identity? What elements of their own identity are chosen and which are innate (i.e. acquired at birth)? Write student ideas on the board.

3 **Reflect.** Give students the *Reflection—identity* handout. Ask students to complete the following list as it applies to them:
   - gender
   - position within the family
   - ethnicity/ethnicities
   - religion
   - membership of any clubs or societies
   - nationality/nationalities
   - other (e.g. a special skill, talent or hobby they may have).

Next to each element of their identity, ask students to write down how much they like that aspect of their identity. They can give it a number from 1 to 10. If they are comfortable, they may share their results with the person next to them. Discuss as a class. Did students find anything surprising?

4 **Interview.** Ask students to pair up with a student that they don’t usually sit next to or don’t know well. Using the *Interview questions* handout, ask students to interview each other. After each person has interviewed the other, ask students to discuss what elements of their identity they share in common.

5 **Wordle.** Using the elements of their identity that they have listed in Activity 3, students can go to [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) to create a ‘Wordle’ of their identity. These can be displayed around the classroom to give a picture of the diverse identities in the classroom.
LESSON 1

Multiple identities

Extension activity

Based on Activities 3 and 4, ask students to complete at home a collage that reflects their identity. This could be done using old magazines or brochures, photographs, a photo-editing program that can create a digital collage, or another media form.

Assessment

Students may submit either their Wordle or collage.
LESSON 1

Multiple identities

HANDOUT 1.1

Guess who?

Complete this handout with your own details. Then fold it and return it to your teacher, who will distribute it randomly to another student. Read the new handout you are given and guess who it belongs to. You may ask questions of other students to find your person.

Gender:

Favourite hobby:

Favourite television show:

Favourite food:

Favourite animal:

First letter of your name:

LESSON 1

Multiple identities

HANDOUT 1.2

Reflection—identity

Read the following elements of identity and complete the list as it applies to you. Next to each item, write down how much you like that aspect of your identity. Give it a number from 1 to 10, with 1 something you like least and 10 something you like most. If you like, you can share it with the person next to you.

- Gender:
- Position within the family:
- Ethnicity/ethnicities:
- Religion:
- Membership of any clubs or societies:
- Nationality/nationalities:
- Other (e.g. a special skill, talent or hobby you may have):
Pair up with a student you don’t know very well. Use the questions below to find out about each other. You can write on this sheet or on a separate piece of paper. After you finish, circle the answers you have in common. Did you know about these similarities before?

1. Who are your role models?
2. What are your three favourite pieces of music?
3. What are your three favourite movies?
4. Which country would you like to live in if you couldn’t live here?
5. What is the best thing about you?
6. What makes you angry/upset?
7. What are your hobbies/interests?
8. What are the most important things in your life now?
9. Where do you see yourself in 10 and 20 years from now?
10. If you could meet the prime minister, what would you ask him or her to do?
LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:
• described elements of their identity as a Muslim
• reflected on the fact that Muslims are diverse, as well as sharing elements of a common identity
• reflected on Qur’anic teachings about diversity
• reflected on the advantages of diversity.

Resources

HANDOUT 2.1 Interview excerpts
HANDOUT 2.2 Material from Islamic tradition on multiple identities and sources of belonging
HANDOUT 2.3 Reflection on identity
LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities

Activities

1 **Read.** Divide students into groups and give them the *Interview excerpts* handout. Ask each group to choose two interview excerpts from young Muslims on the handout.

2 **Brainstorm.** Ask students to write down a list of words that describe the identities of the Muslims who were interviewed. For example, the words could describe innate qualities like their gender or ethnicity or non-innate qualities such as characteristics they demonstrate or their personal strengths or weaknesses.

3 **Discuss.** Ask students to select the interviewee with whom they most identify. Ask the class to share their choice and discuss why students have chosen that particular person. What commonalities are there between these young Muslims and students in the class? What differences are there?

4 **Read.** Give students a copy of the handout *Material from Islamic tradition on multiple identities and sources of belonging*. Ask them to reflect on what the Qur’an and Islamic tradition teaches about human identity and belonging.

5 **Reflect.** What does it mean for you to be a Muslim? Give students the *Reflection on identity* handout. This asks them to write a paragraph describing their own identity: the most important elements of this identity; its strengths and weaknesses; the qualities they demonstrate in their daily lives; or other aspects of this identity.

Extension activity

Ask students to go home and interview a Muslim friend or family member and find out the important elements for them of their identity as a Muslim.

Assessment

Students may submit the paragraph they have written describing their own identity as a Muslim or the interview with a friend or family member.
LESSON 2
Muslims’ identities

HANDOUT 2.1
Interview excerpts

Proud
‘I am proud to be a British Muslim. I didn’t used to wear a scarf. But now I follow my custom to show how proud I am of my religion. We have free will to understand our own religion; it’s not as though we are forced to wear the scarf. Women have a lot of freedom within Islam.’

Hina, 16

Portray the true Islam
‘It is upsetting when you see that all Muslims are tarred with the same brush. We are all Osama bin Ladens or something and we all want to kill everyone. And it’s not true. Sometimes you get people looking at you funny. They assume that you are Muslim so you must be a terrorist …. For things to change, people need to go out and portray the true Islam. Muslims always go into a corner and never come out to express their views. We need to come out and teach people about Islam. That’s the only way people will recognise us and who we are. My parents’ generation didn’t have that opportunity, but we do.’

Farid, 15

Way of life
‘Islam teaches you to be self-disciplined in the conduct of your everyday life. For example, praying five times every day: you do this at a set time, it’s a way of life. This all makes you very disciplined; you don’t really have time to waste when you live your life according to Islamic beliefs. In addition, Islam really places a high value on the pursuit of knowledge, which I wholeheartedly believe in and that’s why I work hard at my studies.’

Shahzaman, 16

So angry and helpless
‘Sometimes I feel ashamed to be British when I go abroad …. I have been called names. I was with a friend in East Ham once and we were both wearing scarves. An old man came up to us and shouted that we were ‘bloody Muslims’. You just feel so angry and helpless.’

Fazeela, 15
LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities

Normal people

‘The media only shows a negative view of Islam. On television, sometimes they show Muslims, but it’s always them doing some sort of Islamic ritual or being extremists. They don’t show us as normal people .... If a reporter wants a nice big headline, an attractive front-page story, they aren’t going to go to someone nice and peaceful .... I think it is quite hard for them because they don’t know about Islam, but sometimes it feels like a conscious decision.’

_Othman, 16_

Stereotyped

‘People have a stereotyped view of Islam. They think Muslims are old fashioned and live in tents with camels. They see us as people who haven’t moved with the times or technology. They compare people to the West—the way they dress, the way they live their lives, the way they work. And they see it as all old style.’

_Yasir, 16_

Angry

‘I don’t agree with suicide bombings. But if you are a little boy and you see your parents killed in front of you, if you are a teenager and you see your little brother getting shot, you are going to grow up feeling angry. But people don’t want to listen.’

_Nael, 16_

LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities

HANDBOUT 2.2

Material from Islamic tradition on multiple identities and sources of belonging

The Qur’an clearly recognises and endorses people’s multiple identities and sources of belonging. It states:

O people, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you might know one another. In God’s eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him: God is all knowing, all aware. (Q. 49:13)

We have assigned a law and a path to each of you. If God had so willed, He would have made you one community, but He wanted to test you through that which He has given you, so race to do good: you will all return to God and He will make clear to you the matters you differed about. (Q. 5:48)

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. There truly are signs in this for those who know. (Q. 30:22)
LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities

The Prophet Muhammad (s) also said in his Farewell Sermon:

There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a fair-skinned person over a person with dark skin, nor for a dark-skinned person over a person with fair skin, except in piety.¹


Comprehension questions

1. The Qur’an states that the most honoured are the most mindful of God. (True/False)
2. The Qur’an states that God’s creation of different nations and tribes fulfils a divine purpose. (True/False)
3. How does the Qur’an command us to respond to diversity in Q. 5:48?
4. When did the Prophet Muhammad (s) make his most famous statement concerning the equality of humanity?

Discussion questions

1. Is it permitted in Islam to have multiple sources of identity?

¹ Narrated by Ahmad, no. 23489.
LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities

HANDOUT 2.3

Reflection on identity

Write a paragraph in the space provided below on your identity. What does it mean for you to be a Muslim? What are the most important parts of this identity? What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? What does it mean for you in daily life? What other aspects of this identity are there?
LESSON 2

Muslims’ identities
LESSON 3

Islam in Australia and the world

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

- presented a profile of Australian Muslim communities
- gained an understanding of some of the diversity that exists among Australian Muslims, as well as key demographic, social and economic trends
- worked effectively in pairs and produced a joint piece of work
- presented information to the class clearly and succinctly.

Resources

HANDOUT 3.1 Muslim communities in Australia

Computers with Microsoft PowerPoint and internet access; alternatively, poster paper or blank white paper for each pair

University of South Australia. Australian Muslims: A Demographic, Social and Economic Profile of Muslims in Australia 2015 (Adelaide: International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding, 2015). Available at: www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/MnM/Publications/Australian_Muslims_Report_2015.pdf (students could either work from the electronic version of the report or relevant pages could be printed and distributed to each pair)
LESSON 3

Islam in Australia and the world

Activities

1 Prepare. Distribute the handout *Muslim communities in Australia* and explain to students that they will be preparing a class PowerPoint presentation on Muslim communities in Australia. This will help them gain an understanding of some key trends among Australian Muslims and the diversity that exists within Australia’s Muslim communities. Ask students to pair up with another student (to work with during this session). Allocate each pair a topic from the University of South Australia’s *Australian Muslims 2015* report. Sections could be allocated as follows:

- number of Muslims in Australia (now and potentially in the future) (pp. 14, 18)
- ethnicity/ethnic background (pp. 20–1)
- where they live (pp. 21–2)
- age range (pp. 22–3, 39)
- how they see their identity in Australia (pp. 30–1)
- languages spoken (pp. 32–3)
- profile of typical households (p. 38)
- inequalities (pp. 44–6)
- how they feel as members of the community (p. 47)
- educational achievements (pp. 50–1)
- employment rate and types of work (pp. 52–3).

If there are more than 11 pairs of students in the class, the remaining pairs could look at trends in religious growth (p. 11) or complete one of the extension activities.

2 Design. Ask each pair to design two to three PowerPoint slides to present the information on their topic to the class. Each pair’s slides should contain the following:

- a brief summary of what the report says about the topic, written in the students’ own words
- the most important fact that the students believe the class should be aware of
- a question or an issue that the students think is interesting or that they would like to find out more about.

The information on each pair’s slides should be presented clearly and formatted appropriately. Pictures could also be used to enhance the information or to make the slides more appealing. (If PowerPoint is unavailable, students could design a one-page fact sheet or a poster instead.)
LESSON 3

Islam in Australia and the world

**3 Present.** Once all the pairs have finished, their slides can be combined into a single PowerPoint presentation to be presented to the class. Each pair may present their section to the class and answer any questions or respond to any comments.

Extension activities

Ask students to research one famous Muslim Australian and prepare a brief presentation on that person (as PowerPoint slides, a poster or a fact sheet). Students may wish to refer to the following website or find their own resources: [www.businessinsider.com.au/15-famous-australians-you-may-not-have-known-were-muslim-2014-11#Ahmed%20Fahour](http://www.businessinsider.com.au/15-famous-australians-you-may-not-have-known-were-muslim-2014-11#Ahmed%20Fahour)

Ask students to choose an issue that they wanted to find out more about from Activity 1, and submit a short (500 words) research piece on that issue.

Lebanese-born Australian Muslim Ahmed Fahour is currently CEO of Australia Post, having formerly headed National Australia Bank.

Assessment

Teachers may gauge student understanding from their presentations and their research pieces from the extension activity.
Handout 3.1

Muslim communities in Australia

As a class, prepare a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation on Muslim communities in Australia. This will help you gain an understanding of some key trends among Australian Muslims and the diversity that exists within Australia’s Muslim communities.

1. Pair up with another student.
2. Your teacher will allocate each pair a topic from a recent research report on Australian Muslims.
3. Read the information on your assigned topic.
4. With your partner, design two to three PowerPoint slides to present the information to the class. Each presentation should contain:
   a. a brief summary of what the report says about the topic, written in your own words
   b. the most important fact that you believe the class should be aware of
   c. a question or an issue that you think is interesting or that you would like to find out more about.
5. The information on your slides should be presented clearly and formatted appropriately. Pictures can be used to make the slides more interesting.
Overview: Students will explore the concept of human rights, as articulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in classical and modern Islamic tradition. Students will consider the meaning of Australian citizenship and the rights and responsibilities that go with it. They will learn about the history of Muslims as minorities and think about the questions and issues that arise in these contexts. They will also be able to contextualise the development of such legal terminology as dar al-islam, dar al-harb and the concept of migration (hijra), and be aware of the current views of leading Muslim scholars on these topics.

Lesson 4: Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition
Lesson 5: Australian citizenship and being a Muslim
Lesson 6: Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition
Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

- understood the concept of rights and how they are different from responsibilities
- understood how human rights developed and the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as an international statement of rights
- understood the concept of human rights and duties in Islam
- reflected on similarities and differences between the UDHR and human rights in Islam.

Resources

- HANDOUT 4.1 Journey through space
- HANDOUT 4.2 Human rights in Islamic tradition
- HANDOUT 4.3 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic human rights—similarities and differences
- Human rights explained in a beautiful two minute animation: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRGhrYmUjU4
- Islamic awakening—conversation with Tariq Ramadan: Compatibility of Islam and human rights: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xWOuRMPHqA (1:00 to 11:10)
- Butcher paper and markers for group work
LESSON 4

Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition

Activities

1 Brainstorm. As a class, discuss the following questions: What are rights? What does it mean to have a right? What are responsibilities? What does it mean to have a responsibility?

2 Journey through space. Break students into groups of four and provide them with the Journey through space handout. Once students have read the extract, provide them with a piece of butcher paper and ask each group to draft a constitution for their new society. Ask each group to share their constitution with the class once they have finished.

3 Watch. Ask students to watch the video Human rights explained in a beautiful two minute animation, which explains how human rights evolved as legally protected rights.

4 Explain. Explain to students what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is and print out the PDF document from the Simplified Universal Declaration of Human Rights link. Ask students to reflect on which rights they identified as important in their Journey through Space constitutions (Activity 2).

5 Introduce. Provide students with the handout Human rights in Islamic tradition and ask them to watch the video Islamic awakening—conversation with Tariq Ramadan: Compatibility of Islam and human rights (01:00 to 11:00; if there is time, students may watch the entire video). Discuss the following questions: Can there be ‘Islamic’ human rights? What does Tariq Ramadan mean when he says he thinks rights can be ‘shared’? Do you agree the problem is not the rights themselves but who gets those rights?

Extension activity

Give students the handout The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic human rights—similarities and differences. Using the Venn diagram given, the simplified version of the UDHR and any of the lesson resources on human rights in Islam, ask students to identify similarities and differences between the Universal Declaration and human rights in Islam.

Assessment

Students may submit their ‘constitutions’ or the Venn diagram extension activity. Teachers may also assess student understanding through contributions to class discussions.
It is the year 3136. A starship is on its way from earth to colonise a distant planet. Despite advances in astrophysics and space technology, the journey will take several generations of Earth time.

To prevent ageing, the passengers are put into a kind of hibernation. They can think, but all have totally forgotten—for the duration of the journey—their name, gender, ethnicity, class, status, income, age, level of intelligence, health and fitness, personality traits, religion, political attitudes and physical attractiveness. No-one knows, for example, whether they will be in a minority group in certain respects, or the majority. Nor does anyone know whether most of the other people will be cleverer or stronger than themselves, or whether on the contrary they will be among the brightest, healthiest, most energetic and most capable. The condition of space hibernation means that everyone is in a cocoon and cannot even debate with others, let alone form coalitions and majorities. They can, however, all think.

You are a passenger on the starship and you spend your time wondering what kind of society you want to help establish when the starship eventually arrives at its destination.

In your view, what should be the guiding principles for the new society? What rights will all members of the society have? What responsibilities? Think about: care of children and older people; education; law and order; treatment of minorities; personal freedoms; and decision-making.

Now work with your group to write a constitution for your new society. Think about all the above issues when writing your constitution. When you are finished, share the constitution with your class. What similarities did you have with others? What differences?
LESSON 4

Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition

HANDOUT 4.2

Human rights in Islamic tradition

Classical Islamic tradition contains many elements that are compatible with modern human rights discourse. Indeed, many Muslims believe Islam from the beginning set out to safeguard the fundamental rights of all human beings.

The Qur’an says:

We have honoured the children of Adam and carried them by land and sea; We have provided good sustenance for them and favoured them specially above many of those We have created. (Q. 17:70).

So honoured are human beings that they are described by the Qur’an as God’s ‘vicegerent’ (khalīfa) on the earth (Q. 2:30). In this way, the Qur’an stresses the inherent dignity of human beings, an important element of human rights.

The Qur’an also stresses that human beings are all equal.

People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another. In God’s eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him: God is all knowing, all aware. (Q. 49:13)
LESSON 4

Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition

The Prophet (s) also said in his Farewell Sermon:

There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a fair-skinned person over a person with dark skin, nor for a dark-skinned person over a person with fair skin, except in piety.¹

Like modern human rights, classical Muslim scholars saw Islamic law as affecting everyone equally, whether rich or poor, ruler or ruled. Islamic law cannot be changed by the state or rulers.

Muslim legal scholars understood human welfare to be divided into necessities, needs and luxuries. Necessities were divided into five basic values: religion; life; intellect; lineage; and property. Many of these correspond to modern human rights. For example, regarding the right to life:

Do not take life, which God has made sacred, except by right. (Q. 17:33)

And the Qur’an reiterates the commandment of the Torah:

We decreed to the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a person—unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land—it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life, it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind. (Q. 5:32)


¹. Narrated by Ahmad, no. 23489.
LESSON 4

Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition

Comprehension questions

1  Classical Islamic tradition contains many elements that are compatible with human rights discourse. (True/False)

2  The Prophet (s) said that Arabs are superior to non-Arabs. (True/False)

3  The right to life is protected in Islam. (True/False)

4  On what basis did Muslim jurists prohibit the killing of non-combatants in war?

5  Name three similarities between Islamic tradition and modern human rights discourse.

Discussion question

1  Are the human rights in Islamic tradition specifically Islamic, or are they universal? Why?
LESSON 4

Human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic tradition

HANDOUT 4.3

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Islamic human rights—similarities and differences

Using the Venn diagram below, the simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and any of the other resources on human rights in Islam, identify similarities and differences between the Universal Declaration and human rights in Islam. You may wish to transfer the diagram onto a larger sheet of paper.
Australian citizenship and being a Muslim

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• been able to articulate some of the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship
• reflected on the question of whether it is possible to be a faithful Muslim and Australian citizen at the same time
• identified support from Islamic law and tradition for a notion of Australian citizenship
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

HANDOUT 5.1 On the responsibilities of the social contract and citizenship
HANDOUT 5.2 Compatibilities and challenges of citizenship

Our common bond clip 3—Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-hdOsYBwao&list=PL-CVFihSB_sX2hxQutgqvPhxFNiR0nAd&index=3

Our common bond clip 4—Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzVuXALh9J4&index=4&list=PL-CVFihSB_sX2hxQutgqvPhxFNiR0nAd
LESSON 5

Australian citizenship and being a Muslim

Activities

1 **Introduction.** How many of the students are Australian citizens? What does it mean to be a citizen?

2 **Watch.** Watch the video *Our common bond, clip 3 — Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties.* What does the video say are Australian democratic beliefs? What freedoms and equalities are enjoyed by Australian citizens? How do these beliefs and freedoms differ from other countries students may have visited?

3 **Watch.** Watch the video *Our common bond, clip 4 — Australia’s democratic beliefs, rights and liberties.* What does the video say about the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship? Are these different from responsibilities in other countries?

4 **Discuss.** Are these values, rights and responsibilities compatible with Islam? Do they pose any challenges for Muslims who are Australian citizens?

5 **Reflect.** Give students the handout *On the responsibilities of the social contract and citizenship.* Ask students to answer the comprehension and discussion questions. Teachers might also ask: Is the idea of a covenant of security compatible with the modern notion of citizenship? Why/why not? How have political realities changed since the medieval period?

Extension activities

Give the students the handout *Compatibilities and challenges of citizenship.* Ask students to follow the instructions on the handout to write aspects of either Muslim identity or Australian citizenship that is compatible or, in their view, incompatible with the other.

When they have completed their own table, they may compare with classmates and discuss. What did they identify as challenges, and why? Discuss any differences of opinion.

Assessment

Students may submit their extension activity table.
HANDOUT 5.1

On the responsibilities of the social contract and citizenship

Islam sees the honouring of agreements as very important. The Qur’an states:

O you who believe, fulfil your obligations. (Q. 5:1)

and

Honour your pledges: you will be asked about your pledges [on the day of reckoning]. (Q. 17:34)

and

God commands you [people] to return things entrusted to you to their rightful owners (Q. 4:58)

and

Fulfil any pledge you make in God’s name and do not break oaths after you have sworn them, for you have made God your guarantor: God knows everything you do. (Q. 16:91)

and

Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who … keep pledges whenever they make them. (Q. 2:177)

The Prophet (s) said:

The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks he lies, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is given a trust he breaches it.1

and

When God gathers all earlier and later generations of mankind on the Day of Judgment He will raise a flag for every person who betrays a trust (ghadir) so it might be said that this is the perfidy of so-and-so, son of so-and-so.2

---

1. Narrated by al-Bukhārī.
2. Narrated by Muslim.
Muslim jurists held that pledges are binding, no matter whether they are made to Muslims or non-Muslims. For example, the Qur’an explicitly says that when there is a peace treaty with non-Muslims, it must be honoured (Q. 9:4). The Prophet (s) made treaties with non-Muslims, and non-Muslims were party to the Constitution of Medina alongside the Medinan tribes and the Muslim emigrants from Mecca. Finally, Muslim rulers throughout history have made treaties with non-Muslims.

Before modern ideas of citizenship were developed, religion was a key organising principle in international relations. Classical Muslim jurists understood Muslims travelling to majority non-Muslim areas as engaging in a kind of contract. As long as their security was protected by law, there was a covenant between them and the state, which meant that Muslims had to obey the local laws as long as they did not require committing an act prohibited by Islam. Muslims were also not permitted to engage in hostile acts against the state or its inhabitants.

This covenant was described as *aman* or ‘safe passage’ and was reciprocal, meaning that non-Muslims resident or travelling in Muslim areas were likewise protected. The local laws in each area were held to apply to anyone resident or travelling there.

The concept of *aman* was described by the great imams, Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767) and al-Shafi’i (d. 204/820), and it was widely accepted. For example, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 974/1567), an important Shafi’i jurist, considered it obligatory for Muslims who live in a non-Muslim-majority land to defend it should it come under attack (1971: 3:346).

Today, many Muslim scholars hold a similar view. Sheikh Abdullah b. Bayyah, for instance, states that Muslim citizens of European states have an obligation to honour the social contract of the lands they reside in, including abiding by state laws (2007: 292).

LESSON 5

Australian citizenship and being a Muslim

Comprehension questions

1. The Qur’an does not have a strong view either way about the importance of honouring pledges. (True/False)

2. Muslim scholars believed that pledges made to non-Muslims did not need to be honoured. (True/False)

3. What is the Arabic term for the ‘covenant of safe passage’ which guaranteed protection for non-Muslims in Muslim territory and vice versa?

4. From the information you have here, what were the key elements of this covenant?

5. Modern Muslim scholars hold the view that Muslims must honour the laws of the countries in which they reside. (True/False)

Discussion question

1. What kind of responsibilities and obligations do you think citizenship has on a person?
LESSON 5

Australian citizenship and being a Muslim

HANDOUT 5.2

Compatibilities and challenges of citizenship

Use the table below to brainstorm some of the compatibilities and challenges between Australian citizenship and being a Muslim.

- In the ‘Compatibilities’ column, write down issues, beliefs or practices about either Australian citizenship or being a Muslim that are compatible with the other. For example, you might write ‘Five daily prayers’.

- In the ‘Challenges’ column, write issues, beliefs or practices that you believe may not be compatible. For example, if you believe that voting in elections is not compatible with being a Muslim, you may write that. If you are not sure, you can write it in brackets or give it a question mark (?).

When you are finished, compare your table with those of your classmates. Are they similar? Did you identify different challenges? Do you agree with your classmates’ choices? Discuss as a class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is Australian citizenship compatible with being a Muslim?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Compatibilities</strong></td>
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</table>

Is Australian citizenship compatible with being a Muslim?
Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

The St Petersburg Mosque, built in 1913, is the largest mosque in Europe outside Turkey.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

- explored the question of Muslims living as religious minorities
- reflected on their own experience as a minority
- researched a religious minority in the world today
- presented their research to the class
- become familiar with mainstream Muslim positions on the issues of Muslims living as religious minorities in the West and whether migration to a Muslim country is compulsory.

Resources

- HANDOUT 6.1 Religious minorities—group work
- HANDOUT 6.2 The concept of dar al-islam in Islamic history and today
- HANDOUT 6.3 The issue of migration to a Muslim country
- HANDOUT 6.4 Letter to a friend—living as a minority

Journeys into Islamic China—Huda documentary: www.youtube.com/watch?v=d79u3HKFwmQ (3:45 to 12:50)

Computers with Microsoft PowerPoint and internet access
LESSON 6

Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

Activities

1 Brainstorm. As a class discuss the following questions: What is a minority? Why might minorities face difficulties? Why would religious leaders seek to avoid being in a minority?

2 Discuss. Why are Muslims living in minorities across the world today? Ask students to reflect on their own experiences.

3 Minorities in the world today. Give students the handout Religious minorities — group work. Follow the instructions on the handout. Half the students will research a Muslim minority in the world today and the other half will research a non-Muslim minority living in a Muslim country. Ask students to prepare two to three Microsoft PowerPoint slides on their findings to present to the class in two groups: 1. Muslim minorities and 2. non-Muslim minorities. Discuss the findings as a class.

4 Watch. Ask students to watch the video Journeys into Islamic China—Huda documentary (3:45 to 12:50 on Muslims in Beijing; if there is time, students may watch the remainder of the video). Discuss as a class.

5 Migration. Give students the handouts The concept of dar al-islam in Islamic history and today and The issue of migration to a Muslim country. Ask students to read the handouts and answer the comprehension and discussion questions. Teachers may also ask: How did the concept of dar al-islam emerge in Islamic history? How do leading Muslim scholars view its relevance today? How do they view the issue of migration to a Muslim country?

Extension activity

Give students the handout Letter to a friend—living as a minority. Follow the instructions: ask them to write a letter to a friend who lives in a Muslim-majority country, explaining their circumstances living as a Muslim minority in Australia. They should discuss the challenges faced as well as the opportunities.

Assessment

Students may submit their letter from the extension activity. Teachers may also gauge student understanding through contributions to class discussion.
HANDOUT 6.1

Religious minorities—group work

As a class, we will be preparing a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation on religious minorities in the world today. This will help us gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that such minorities face, as well as comparing it with the situation of Muslims in Australia.

1. Pair up with another student.
2. Your teacher will divide the class into two groups: 1. Muslim minorities in non-Muslim-majority countries and 2. non-Muslim minorities in Muslim-majority countries.
3. Select a country and a minority that matches your group.
4. Before you start, make sure you are not doing the same minority as another pair. If you are, one pair should choose a different minority.
5. Use online resources to research as much information as you can on your assigned topic. You may find the following helpful: www.wikipedia.org, www.encyclopedia.com and https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/, as well as any other resources you know about or that your school can access.
6. With your partner, design two to three PowerPoint slides to present the information to the class. Each presentation should contain:
   a. a brief summary of the main facts about this minority, including its size and the percentage of the population it comprises
   b. information about freedom of worship for that minority
   c. information about human rights challenges that minority faces
   d. the most important facts about that minority which you believe the class should be aware of
   e. a question or an issue that you think is interesting or that you would like to find out more about.
7. The information on your slides should be presented clearly and formatted appropriately. Pictures can be used to make the slides more interesting.
8. When you have finished, you can present the slides to the rest of the class.
Before the advent of modern nation-states, religion was the key organising principle for Muslim jurists discussing international law. Muslims perceived the lands ruled by Muslims to be safe, meaning that Muslims could freely practise their religion there. They called these lands *dar al-islam* (the land of Islam) or *dar al-salam* (the land of peace). These technical terms are not used in the Qur’an or Prophetic hadiths; they are convenient names the jurists used to describe the reality of medieval international relations. Conversely, they thought that the lands ruled by non-Muslims were unsafe, since Muslims could not always practise their religion there. They called these lands *dar al-harb* (the land of war, since most of these states were technically at war with the Muslims at this time) or *dar al-kufr* (the land of unbelief).

Muslim jurists became increasingly aware, however, that some Muslims living under non-Muslim rulers could in fact practise their religion. Since the thirteenth century, when the Mongols took Baghdad, more and more Muslims have lived in areas under non-Muslim rule, while continuing to practise their religion. To resolve this issue, Muslim jurists decided to call any land where Muslims could practise their religion freely *dar al-islam*, even if it was ruled by non-Muslims.

One of the most prominent Muslim jurists of the Shafi’i school, Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676/1277), wrote: ‘If a Muslim is able to declare his Islam openly while living therein (in a land dominated by non-Muslims), it is better for him to do so … because by this it becomes *dar al-islam*’ (2002: 1819). Later, Imam Ibn Abidin (d. 1258/1842) of the Hanafi school wrote: ‘The *dar al-harb* becomes a *dar al-islam* when the precepts of Islam are implemented within it, such as the Friday congregational prayer and the Eid prayers’ (1966: 4:130).
LESSON 6

Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

Many of these concepts, however, have been superseded by the advent of modern nation-states. In the modern period, the eminent Syrian professor of law, Sheikh Wahba al-Zuhayli, has pointed out that the concepts *dar al-islam* and *dar al-kufr* are not based in the Qur’an or Sunna and as such are not eternal. In fact, most Muslim legal scholars today accept the reality of nation-states. For example, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the President of the European Council of Fatwa and Research, argues that because the United Nations is constituted by a treaty, this renders the world an ‘abode of peace’. This means that the basic norm for international relations is peace and not war. He follows the famous al-Azhar jurist, Muhammad Abu Zahra (d. 1974), who was one of the first modern scholars to discuss this issue. Professor Abu Zahra argued that according to the perspective of Islamic law, peace must be the norm between all signatories to the United Nations convention.

Lessons 6 Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

Comprehension questions

1. Before nation-states, religion was the key organising principle for Muslim discussions of international relations. (True/False)

2. The concept of *dar al-islam* is found in the Qur’an and hadiths. (True/False)

3. Only lands ruled by a Muslim caliph or sultan can be called *dar al-islam*. (True/False)

4. What were the key Islamic practices that Imam Ibn Abidin believed were among the indicators of the *dar al-islam*?

5. If a Muslim could practise their religion freely in a non-Muslim territory, what did Imam al-Nawawi believe they should do?

Discussion question

1. Why do modern scholars believe the existence of the United Nations renders the entire world an ‘abode of peace’? Do you agree?
LESSON 6

Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

HANDOUT 6.3

The issue of migration to a Muslim country

The issue of where Muslims can live is sometimes connected with particular verses of the Qur’an, including the following:

Anyone who migrates for God’s cause will find many a refuge and great plenty in the earth, and if anyone leaves home as a migrant towards God and His Messenger and is then overtaken by death, his reward from God is sure. God is most forgiving and most merciful. (Q. 4:99–100)

What is often left out is the fact that this passage refers to those who are ‘oppressed on the earth’ (Q. 4:97). This is not a permanent command for all Muslims to migrate, but rather advice to those who are experiencing persecution to leave and find a safe haven, promising God’s reward even if they do not arrive at their destination. Indeed, some Muslims today are fleeing from oppression under Muslim rulers to safety under non-Muslim rulers.

Some hadiths also appear to forbid Muslims from living in non-Muslim-majority areas. However, many others state that the duty of migration or *hijra* ended with the conquest of Mecca.

In another hadith, a man came to the Prophet (s) and said: ‘I want to give my allegiance to you by performing *hijra*’. The Prophet (s) responded: ‘The *hijra* has ended with those who performed it [before the conquest of Mecca] but you can give allegiance through submitting to God, jihad and good deeds’.¹

¹ Narrated by al-Bukhārī.
LESSON 6

Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

The Prophet’s (s) wife A’isha (r) said: ‘There is no *hijra* today. Before, a believer had to flee with his religion to the Messenger of God, fearing seduction and persecution away from his religion. But from today God has made Islam manifest and a believer can worship his Lord wherever he may be’.\(^1\)

Finally, the Caliph Umar b. al-Khattab (r) said: ‘There is no *hijra* after the death of the Prophet’.\(^2\)

In the pre-modern period, most Muslim jurists saw freedom to practise their religion and physical safety to be sufficient conditions to permit Muslims to remain in non-Muslim lands. Shafi’i jurists even said that Muslims were prohibited from migrating, because if they migrated then Islam would die out in these areas. The exception to this rule was the pre-modern Malikis, particularly in the period after the Christians recaptured Spain. Many prominent modern Malikis, however, such as Sheikh Abdullah b. Bayyah, now agree with the majority position. Indeed, most European Muslim migrants from North Africa are Malikis. This is also the view expressed by major scholars from the North American Fiqh Council and the European Council of Fatwa and Research.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, President of the European Council of Fatwa and Research, states that forbidding Muslims from living in non-Muslim areas would be to:

> … close the door to the call to Islam and its spread throughout the world. [Had this been done] then Islam of old would have been restricted to the Arabian Peninsula and not left it .... The spread of Islam … occurred through the influence of individual Muslims, merchants, Sufis and others like them, who migrated from their countries to those lands in Asia and Africa and mixed with the local people, worked together with them and in turn were liked by them for their good morals and sincerity, as was their religion .... Thus people entered our religion en masse and individually. (2001: 33–4)

The prominent Swiss Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan argues that a new category, *dar al-shahada* (the land of bearing witness), should be created to describe places where ‘Muslims must bear witness, they must be witnesses to what they are and to their own values’ (1999: 148).

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1. Narrated by al-Nasā‘ī.
2. Narrated by Muslim.
Finally, some Muslim scholars have called for a new understanding of *hijra* that emphasises its spiritual dimension, in line with the following hadiths:

A bedouin came to the Messenger of God (s) and asked him: ‘O Messenger of God, inform us about the *hijra*. Is it to you, wherever you might be, or to a specific land? And when you die does it lapse?’ [The Prophet (s)] said: ‘*Hijra* is migration from all abominations, whether manifest or hidden, and that you maintain the prayer and render the *zakat*; then you are an emigrant’.¹

The Prophet (s) was also asked: ‘Which *hijra* is superior?’ He said: ‘That you migrate from [i.e. avoid] that which your Lord has abominated’.²

The Prophet (s) also said: ‘The emigrant is one who flees from [shuns, avoids (*hajara*)] that which God has prohibited’.³

Finally, he said: ‘Be devoted to God wherever you are’.⁴


**Comprehension questions**

1. What does the Arabic word *hijra* mean?
2. The Qur’anic command to ‘migrate in the way of God’ is a permanent command for all Muslims in all times and places. (True/False)
3. Most Muslim jurists were comfortable with Muslims residing in non-Muslim territory and some saw it as a good thing. However, one Sunni school of law in the pre-modern period did not approve of it. Which one?
4. What does Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi believe to have been a consequence of the presence of Muslims living among people of other faiths?

**Discussion question**

1. What is the inner meaning of the concept of *hijra* according to a number of hadiths of the Prophet (s)?

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1. Narrated by Ahmad.
2. Narrated by Ahmad.
3. Narrated by Ahmad.
4. Narrated by al-Tirmidhī and Ahmad.
LESSON 6

Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition

HANDOUT 6.4

Letter to a friend—living as a minority

In the space below or using your computer, write a letter to a friend who lives in a Muslim-majority country. She or he would like to know what it is like to live in Australia as a member of a Muslim minority. You guess that she or he might like to visit in the future. Discuss the challenges you face in Australia, as well as the opportunities.
LESSON 6

Muslim minorities in Islamic tradition
Overview: This topic will focus on the issue of diversity in the Muslim community. Students will become aware of the extent of diversity among Muslims, consider the approach of Muslim scholars to diversity and learn about the Islamic ethic of respectful disagreement. They will explore the theological question of membership in the Muslim community, why scholars have been extremely reluctant to anathematise Muslims and why ordinary Muslims should avoid this question entirely.

Lesson 7: The diversity of Islam
Lesson 8: Diversity of opinion in Islam
LESSON 7

The diversity of Islam

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

• become familiar with the theological discussions around membership of the Muslim community
• become aware of the diversity that exists among Muslims, both in terms of religious communities and individuals
• applied critical thinking skills
• engaged in discussion on the issue of diversity in Islam
• have reflected on the issue of similarities outweighing differences, and on the relative importance of similarities versus differences.

Resources

| HANDOUT 7.1 | What is a Muslim? Brainstorm |
| HANDOUT 7.2 | Pew Research Center—the world’s Muslims: Unity and diversity |
| HANDOUT 7.3 | Small group activity—differences and similarities |
| HANDOUT 7.4 | Reflective essay—diversity among Muslims |

Diversity in Islam: www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2i8Mbi3VeI
Malcom X Hajj scene: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvEu4wsqKA0
LESSON 7

The diversity of Islam

Activities

1 **Introduction.** What does it mean to be a Muslim? Provide students with a copy of the *What is a Muslim? Brainstorm* handout. Ask them to write the question in the centre bubble and to answer it using the surrounding bubbles. Encourage students to share their answers when they have finished.

2 **Watch.** Watch the videos *Diversity in Islam* and *Malcolm X Hajj scene*. Ask students to discuss what diversity in Islam means.

3 **Read.** Give students the *Pew Research Center—the world’s Muslims: Unity and diversity* report extracts. Ask them to review the graphs (if the website version is used, ask students to skip the text to save time) and to circle anything they find interesting or surprising or that they didn’t know. Discuss the findings as a class.

4 **Reflect.** Do students come from communities that practise Islam in a way that is different from each other? Give students the handout *Small group activity—differences and similarities*. Follow the instructions on the handout. Ask students to pair up with a person they don’t know well and take two minutes to come up with as many differences as they can in their religious practice, followed by two minutes to come up with as many similarities as they can. Ask them to count them and mark the ones they consider ‘important’. Discuss the results as a class.

Extension activity

Give students the handout *Reflective essay—diversity among Muslims*. Ask students to write a short reflective essay (up to 500 words) on how we should relate to other Muslims who practise Islam in a way that is different to their own practice. They should bring in examples from their own experience.

Assessment

Students may submit their short reflective essay.

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1. If handout is unavailable, the relevant images are available at: [www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/](http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/). Teachers may wish to print the page or ask students to access it using their computers.
LESSON 7

The diversity of Islam

HANDOUT 7.1

What is a Muslim? Brainstorm

Using the diagram below, brainstorm the question ‘What is a Muslim?’ Write the question in the centre bubble and answer it in the surrounding bubbles.
The world’s 1.6 billion Muslims are united in their belief in God and the Prophet Muhammad (s) and are bound together by such religious practices as fasting during the holy month of Ramadan and almsgiving to assist people in need. But they have differing views about many other aspects of their faith, including how important religion is to their lives, who counts as a Muslim and what practices are acceptable in Islam, according to a worldwide survey by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life. Extracts of the survey data are reproduced below.

### Qur’an is God’s Word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% Saying Qur’an Should Be Read Literally, Word for Word</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
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<td>Mozambique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for all countries from ‘Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa.’

*Interviews conducted with Muslims in five southern provinces only.

### Belief in God and Muhammad Nearly Universal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median % Who Believe in One God and the Prophet Muhammad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N represents the number of Muslims interviewed in each region.

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---

### LESSON 7

**The diversity of Islam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Multiple interpretation</th>
<th>Single interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herz.</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestinian terr.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<td>Mali</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
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<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."

Interpreting Islam’s teachings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Multiple interpretation</th>
<th>Single interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>25%</td>
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<td>Bosnia-Herz.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>50%</td>
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</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."

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## Concept of fate widely embraced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median % who believe in predestination or fate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
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<td>South Asia</td>
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<td>Southeast Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Question was not asked in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q43f**

## Fasting during Ramadan commonplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median % who fast during Ramadan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q46f**

## Most believe in reward or punishment in afterlife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Heaven</th>
<th>Hell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<tr>
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<td>85</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q43a & Q43b**

## Majorities give alms annually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median % who perform zakat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q64E**
## Lesson 7

### The diversity of Islam

#### Older generation more religiously committed in Middle East–North Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ages 18-34</th>
<th>Ages 35+</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>+29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### % who say religion is very important in their lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ages 18-34</th>
<th>Ages 35+</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>+23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### % who attend mosque once a week or more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ages 18-34</th>
<th>Ages 35+</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>+20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### % who read or listen to Qur’an daily

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ages 18-34</th>
<th>Ages 35+</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Women and men equally committed; but differences in mosque attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Median % in region who say religion is very important in their lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>+4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Median % in region who pray several times a day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Median % in region who read or listen to Qur’an daily

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>+76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>+54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>+27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from ‘Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa.’

**Not asked in Sub-Saharan African countries.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q61, Q34, Q36 & Q65
### Regional medians for those saying they are ‘just a Muslim’

Median % in region who self-identify as ‘just a Muslim’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern–Eastern Europe</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa*</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East–North Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for all countries except Niger from ‘Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa.’

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q31**

### Muslims in Central Asia, Southern–Eastern Europe; less personally engaged, but many observe key rituals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Pray several times a day</th>
<th>Attend mosque once a week or more</th>
<th>Give alms annually (zakat)</th>
<th>Fast during Ramadan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern–Eastern Europe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia–Herz.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median % for regions; total % for individual countries.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q61, Q34 & Q64e-f**

### Sunnis more accepting of Shias in Iraq and Lebanon

% of Sunnis who say...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Shias are Muslim</th>
<th>Shias are not Muslim</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q41b**

### Sunnis in Iraq, Lebanon more accepting of visiting shrines

% who say visiting shrines of saints is acceptable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Shias</th>
<th>Sunnis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q42a**

### Are Sufis Muslim?

Median % in region who say yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>South Asia</th>
<th>Middle East–North Africa</th>
<th>Southern–Eastern Europe</th>
<th>Southeast Asia</th>
<th>Central Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question was not asked in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q41a**
LESSON 7

The diversity of Islam

HANDOUT 7.3

Small group activity—differences and similarities

Pair up with a student whom you do not know well. Talk to each other about your practice of Islam and take two minutes to come up with as many differences in your religious practice as you can. Then take two minutes to try to come up with as many similarities as you can. Count them. How many of each are there?

Now take a look at the similarities and differences. Put a star next to those which are important. How many of the similarities are ‘important’? Why? How many of the differences?

Discuss your findings as a class.
Handout 7.4
Reflective essay—diversity among Muslims

Write a short reflective essay (500 words) on the following question: How should we relate to Muslims who practise Islam in a way that is different to us? Bring in examples from your own experience.
Diversity of opinion in Islam

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

- become aware of the diversity of scholarly opinion in Islam and the Islamic ethic of respectful disagreement
- become aware of the context of early debates about membership of the Muslim community
- become aware of the reasons why religious scholars are so reluctant to accuse a non-Muslim of being a non-Muslim
- applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HANDOUT 8.1</th>
<th>Disagreement and unity in Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HANDOUT 8.2</td>
<td>Who is a Muslim?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDOUT 8.3</td>
<td>Reflective essay—the nature of the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences & scholarship (Hamza Yusuf translating Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lCFr3hky0w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lCFr3hky0w)

Sectarianism and anathematization (Sheikh Hamza Yusuf): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmiRbiGjJ74](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmiRbiGjJ74)
LESSON 8

Diversity of opinion in Islam

Activities

1 Introduction. Explain that the purpose of this class is to discuss differences and similarities. Ask students to brainstorm some examples of differences (perhaps recalling Lesson 7).

2 Discuss. Read the handout Disagreement and unity in Islam and watch the video Differences & scholarship. Discuss the question of unity and differences. What does it mean for the Qur’an to command Muslims to ‘hold fast to the rope of God’ (Q. 3:103)? Discuss the question as a class.

3 Brainstorm. Ask students to pair up and brainstorm a list of all the issues on which they are aware of a difference of opinion in Islam. Discuss the potential consequences for the community if there were to be conflict over all of these differences. How did scholars manage to overcome them?

4 Watch. Watch the video Sectarianism and anathematization. Give students the handout Who is a Muslim? Ask students to answer the comprehension and discussion questions.

Extension activity

Give students the handout Reflective essay—the nature of the community. Students are asked to write a 500-word reflective piece on the nature of the community (umma) in Islam. It might touch on the following questions: What is unity? What is disagreement? How can a community respect differences?

Assessment

Students’ understanding can be gauged from participation in the classroom discussion. Students may submit their reflective essay.
Disagreement is a difficult topic to discuss, because difference has the potential to create conflict. Yet if all disagreements created conflict, the Muslim community would not have survived until today, since it is human nature to disagree.

The Qur’an commands Muslims not to split into factions, but remain united:

> Hold fast to the rope of God all together; do not split into factions. Remember God’s favour to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace; you were about to fall into a pit of Fire and He saved you from it—in this way God makes His revelations clear to you so that you may be rightly guided. (Q. 3:103)

Yet God also knows that human beings differ from one another. Such difference is divinely intended. The Qur’an also states:

> Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. There truly are signs in this for those who know. (Q. 30:22)

How should we understand unity? Does it mean everybody thinks and acts the same way? Or does it mean that Muslims consider themselves all part of the same community, while respecting the many differences that exist between us?

Disagreement is a part of human life, and only becomes a problem when we cannot accept each other’s differences. This is what leads to conflict, not the disagreement itself. When we read history, we learn that Muslims have experienced diversity from the beginning. When we look at a book of Qur’an commentary, we find that for every verse, there is a wide range of opinions about its meaning. The same is true for the great books of law and theology. We find a remarkable range of issues on which the scholars disagreed—usually politely, sometimes heatedly, but without calling one another heretics or apostates. The greatest scholars maintained a noble level of professional respect for one another.

It was suggested to the great scholar Imam Malik b. Anas (d. 179/796) by the Caliph Abu Ja’far al-Mansur (d. 158/775) that his law book *al-Muwatta* be made an obligatory reference throughout the Muslim lands. Imam Malik’s reply was:
LESSON 8

Diversity of opinion in Islam

O Commander of the Faithful, do not do that. People have arrived at different opinions, have heard different hadiths, and have related different narrations, and they have acted upon these things, taking their religion from the Companions of Muhammad (s). It would be quite severe to turn them from what they believe. So leave the people and what they are acting upon and leave the people of each land to what they have chosen.

Muslim scholars were careful to distinguish between fundamental matters (usul) and subsidiary matters (furu’). Different opinions about the latter were tolerated. In theory, there could be no disagreement about the fundamentals; yet even then, there was never complete agreement about how exactly to define these fundamental matters.

Despite this diversity and sometimes heated arguments, the Muslim world remained remarkably united. A Muslim from Khorasan could travel, pray, eat and be accepted in al-Andalus and vice versa. Islam is not split into many different churches, each with a differing theological interpretation which is incompatible with the others. Muslims have had only one major schism, between Sunni and Shi’i, which is more political than theological. By and large, most Muslims agree on the fundamentals of what Islam is.

In fact, even though there was much scholarly debate and disagreement, the Muslim world was a beacon of learning and intellectual, cultural and technological advancement. The differences that existed were not permitted to get in the way of building a vibrant and dynamic society. This would be a fitting model for many societies today.


Comprehension questions

1. Disagreement always results in conflict. (True/False)
2. The Qur’an commands all Muslims to think and act in the same way. (True/False)
3. Whose law book did the Caliph al-Mansur want to make obligatory on all Muslims?
4. What was the scholar’s response?
5. Which verse of the Qur’an says that the purpose of diversity is for human beings to know one another?

Discussion question

1. Despite cultural diversity and political divisions, how did the Muslim world remain more or less religiously united?
Diversity of opinion in Islam

HANDBOOK 8.2

Who is a Muslim?

After the death of the Prophet (s), the Muslim community fell into disagreement about how to define itself: Who is a Muslim? This was a political question as well as a theological one. Some rulers were not pious, even though they were descended from the Prophet’s family, and people asked whether they were even Muslims. The community grappled with this issue for centuries, and fought several civil wars over it.

Most Muslims felt the leader of the community should come from the Quraysh tribe. Shi‘is believed the leader should come only from the close family of the Prophet (s), so it had to be one of the descendants of his daughter Fatima (r) and his son-in-law Ali b. Abi Talib (r). Both mainstream Sunnis and Shi‘is believe the ruler’s piousness, though desirable, should not be the only concern.

However, a radical group known as the Kharijis thought that anyone could be the ruler, as long as he was pious. This sounds attractive, until we realise the Kharijis also thought people who were not pious were not even Muslims. They also thought any less-than-pious people—including rulers—could be attacked and killed. For this reason, most Muslims found their radical views unacceptable. Unsurprisingly, after many civil wars and shedding of blood, this view almost completely died out.

The issue of establishing who was actually a Muslim or not—in practice, as opposed to in theory—was fraught with difficulty and most scholars stayed well away from it. The majority thought it was unwise and theologically dangerous to accuse someone of not being a Muslim. The thirteenth-century jurist Ahmad b. Umar al-Qurtubi (d. 656/1259) wrote:

The issue of takfir (accusing someone of not being a Muslim) is a dangerous one; many people have undertaken it and have fallen, whereas the outstanding scholars have refrained from it and remained blameless. (1996: 3:111)

The Qur’an itself commands:

Do not say to someone who offers you a greeting of peace, ‘You are not a believer’.  
(Q. 4:94)

The Prophet (s) warned that the consequences of a hasty declaration of disbelief would be disastrous.

If a man says to his brother, ‘O infidel’, it redounds upon one of them.¹

¹ Narrated by Muslim.
LESSON 8

Diversity of opinion in Islam

Cursing a believer is like killing him, and whoever accuses a believer of disbelief, it [i.e. his sin] is as if he had killed him.¹

No man accuses another man of sinfulness or unbelief except it redounds upon him if his companion is not like that.²

For this reason, most early Muslim jurists adopted a broad understanding of what it means to be a Muslim. It can be summarised in the maxim: ‘Islam is the kalima (profession of faith)’. The President of the European Council of Fatwa and Research, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, stated in a fatwa included in the Amman Message in 2005:

Whoever bears witness that ‘There is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God’ with sincerity from his heart has become a Muslim, and what is due to him is what is due to the Muslims, and what he is obliged to do is what the Muslims are obliged to do, and he has attained salvation thereby. (2005: 1)

What about those who have professed Islam, but have not yet perfected its pillars? It is well established that neglecting duties or committing sins cannot take a person out of Islam. God is always accepting of repentance, and believers should not inquire into each other’s innermost secrets. Sheikh al-Qaradawi writes:

It is enough to say one is within Islam when one admits the obligatory nature of the pillars of Islam and its other obligatory acts, to submit to them, even if one has not yet carried them out, on the evidence that the Prophet (s) would accept the Islam of those who uttered the two professions of faith, and would consider them Muslims—though their carrying out of the obligations of Islam would come after that, when the time of prayer came, when the time to pay the zakat came, and when the month of Ramadan came. (2005: 3)

In medieval times, the Hanbali school of law was the most concerned with this issue. Even then, Hanbali scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 750/1351) were careful to distinguish between, on the one hand, discussing actions and words they believed were not compatible with Islam (takfir mutlaq), and on the other, actually accusing someone of being a disbeliever (takfir al-mu’ayyan). Like other scholars, they warned against doing so because of the harm it could cause.

¹. Narrated by al-Bukhārī.
². Narrated by al-Bukhārī.
LESSON 8

Diversity of opinion in Islam

In summary, the issue of who is and who is not a Muslim should almost never arise, except in the rarest of cases; in these cases, any decision should be left to those with the years of study, experience and wisdom required to properly consider the issue. As classical Muslim scholars well knew, to allow anyone to open up this question would be to risk a return to the unrest (*fitna*) and bloodshed of the times of the early civil wars.


**Comprehension questions**

1. What is the name of the early Islamic group which believed that Muslims who were not pious were not Muslims at all?

2. What happened to this group?

3. According to the Prophet (s), what is the consequence of hastily accusing someone of disbelief?

4. What does it mean to say ‘Islam is the *kalima* (statement of faith)?’

5. According to the fatwa of Sheikh al-Qaradawi, what is one of the reasons for this principle?

**Discussion questions**

1. Why have Muslim scholars always been strongly reluctant to open up the question of whether or not an individual is a Muslim?

2. Why is it best that this question be left to those who have the right qualifications?
LESSON 8

Diversity of opinion in Islam

HANDOUT 8.3
Reflective essay—the nature of the community

Write a short reflective essay (500 words) on the following question: What is the nature of the community (*umma*) in Islam? You might touch on the following issues: What is unity? What is disagreement? How can a community respect differences?
Theme 4

Muslims and non-Muslims

Overview: Students will reflect on the meaning of religious freedom and the treatment of religious minorities. Students will also learn about commonalities between Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and reflect on ways to engage positively and in a spirit of friendship and goodwill with people of other faiths. Students will also learn about mainstream Islamic approaches to the issue of interaction and friendship with people of other faiths and historical examples of tolerance and respect.

Lesson 9: Religious freedom
Lesson 10: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (1)
Lesson 11: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2)
LESSON 9

Religious freedom

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

• reflected on the importance of religious freedom
• become aware of key evidence from the Qur’an, hadith literature and Islamic tradition in support of religious freedom
• considered the challenges of protecting religious freedom for all religions
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

HANDOUT 9.1 Short research essay—religious freedom

How Islam treated other religions
(Sheikh Hamza Yusuf): www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiY8RVVi-Bo
LESSON 9

Religious freedom

Activities

1 Reflect. Ask students to write down three elements of their religious practice that are really important to them (e.g. fasting during Ramadan, going to the mosque to attend Friday prayers, and so on). Once students have written down their answers, ask them to explain how they would feel if they weren’t permitted to do those three things; for instance, if their community or their country banned those practices and wouldn’t allow them.

2 Discuss. What is religious freedom? What does it mean? What implications does it have for public expressions of faith? For private expressions of faith? Discuss whether religious freedom is an Islamic idea.

3 Watch. Watch the video *How Islam treated other religions*. What has been Islam’s position on religious freedom for non-Muslims? What evidence does the video use to support this position?

4 Discuss. Ask students to discuss the following in pairs: Should religious freedom be different in a hypothetical Islamic state to the way it is in a secular state such as Australia? Why? Why not? Share the results with the whole class.

Extension activity

Give students the handout *Short research essay—religious freedom*. Students are asked to research another religion and write a short essay (maximum 500 words) covering the following points: What do followers of this religion believe? How do they practise their religious beliefs? What challenges might followers of this religion face in an Islamic society in practising their beliefs? How might an Islamic government alleviate these challenges?

Assessment

Students may submit their short essay.
LESSON 9

Religious freedom

HANDOUT 9.1

Short research essay
—religious freedom

Choose a religion other than Islam and write a short (maximum 500 words) essay covering the following points.

• What do followers of this religion believe?
• How do they practise their religious beliefs?
• What challenges might followers of this religion face in an Islamic society in practising their beliefs?
• How might an Islamic government alleviate these challenges?
LESSON 9

Religious freedom
Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (1)

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

• become familiar with Islamic teachings on how Muslims should relate to people of other faiths
• become familiar with the document *A Common Word* and the events that led to its creation
• identified commonalities between Muslims and Christians
• identified commonalities between Muslims and Jews
• participated in group work to design a role play on interfaith interaction
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

**HANDOUT 10.1** Role play—people of other faiths

Computers with internet access
Wordle generator: [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)

‘Muslim scholars reach out to Pope’: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7038992.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7038992.stm)


LESSON 10

Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (1)

Activities

1  **Examine.** Ask students to read the *A Common Word* letter and the news article ‘Muslim scholars reach out to Pope’. As they read, ask them to reflect on these two questions: What commonalities are there between Christians and Muslims? According to the *A Common Word* document, what attitude should Muslims have towards Christians? Discuss as a class.

2  **Examine.** Ask students to read the web page ‘Similarities between Judaism and Islam’ and reflect in pairs on the following questions: What commonalities are there between Jews and Muslims? Are there any that surprised you? Do you think Muslims have more in common with Jews or Christians? Discuss as a class.

3  **Role play.** Break the class into small groups. Ask each group to design a role play that demonstrates the attitude that Muslims should have towards the religious other. For example, relations as neighbours in the context of daily life, respecting their religious needs (such as observing the Sabbath for Jews), attending religious and non-religious occasions, and so on.

Extension activity

Ask students to design a poster or a Wordle on the following theme: What attitude should Muslims have towards those of other religions? They may wish to choose a verse from the Qur’an, design their own slogan or create a graphic to present their ideas.

Assessment

Students may be assessed on their understanding based on their contributions to the class discussion.
LESSON 10

Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (1)

HANDOUT 10.1

Role play—people of other faiths

Your teacher will put you into small groups. Each group is to design a role play that demonstrates the attitude that Muslims should have towards the religious other. You might want to choose a theme from the following suggestions:

- relations as neighbours in the context of daily life
- respecting religious needs in the area of food and drink
- respecting religious observances and festivals.

![Image of people of other faiths]
Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2)

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• reflected on the attitude that Muslims should have towards those from other religions
• become aware of mainstream Islamic views regarding relations with non-Muslims
• understood how context affects interpretation of the Qur’an
• brainstormed ways they personally can build relationships with non-Muslims and engage with them towards the common good.

Resources

HANDOUT 11.1 Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims—collected questions for discussion

Islamophobia 1—Ep13: Does Islam forbid Muslims from friendship with non-Muslims? www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZmbsooTgCw (until 10:25)

Did medieval Muslims hate Christians? (Sheikh Yasir Qadhi): www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LWhDgf207c

Computers with internet access

Afroz Ali, ‘Friendship with non-Muslims according to the Qur’an’: http://alghazzali.org/resources/articles/friendship.pdf (pp. 7–11) (printed)

LESSON 11

Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2)

Activities

1 **Introduce.** Introduce the topic and explain that the purpose of the class is to discuss how Islamic tradition views friendships with non-Muslims.

2 **Reflect.** Ask students to read pages 7 to 11 of the article ‘Friendship with non-Muslims according to the Qur’an’. Ask students to answer the following questions.

   a What evidence is there in the Qur’an which supports the view that Muslims can have friendships with non-Muslims?

   b How does the Qur’an use the word *awliya*? Does it mean ‘friend’ in the usual sense?

3 **Discuss.** Watch the video Islamophobia 1—Ep13: Does Islam forbid Muslims from friendship with non-Muslims? Discuss the following questions.

   a How does context affect our understanding of verses from the Qur’an?

   b How should we understand verses that seem to suggest Muslims should not be ‘friends’ with non-Muslims?

   c What kinds of people does the Qur’an warn against taking as *awliya*?

4 **Discuss.** Ask students to read the short article ‘Is Islam by nature hostile to non-Muslims?’ and watch the video Did medieval Muslims hate Christians? (Sheikh Yasir Qadhi). Ask students to think about the following questions.

   a What does the continued existence of large communities of ancient Christian minorities in places like Iraq and Egypt tell us?

   b How does the context of the pre-modern world differ from the modern context of nation-states?

(Note: All the questions are given as a single handout: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims—collected questions for discussion.)

Extension activity

Since Islam requires Muslims to interact with people of other faiths with kindness and fairness, to work with them for the common good, and to maintain good social and neighbourly relations with them, ask students to identify three things they could do in their local community to put this into practice.

Assessment

Students may put one of the things they listed for the extension activity into practice and write a short reflection on what they did and how it went.
LESSON 11

Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2)

HANDOUT 11.1

Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims—collected questions for discussion

This handout collects all the comprehension and discussion questions for Lesson 11: Islamic attitudes towards non-Muslims (2).

Activity 2

Article ‘Friendship with non-Muslims according to the Qur’an’, pp. 7-11.

a What evidence is there in the Qur’an which supports the view that Muslims can have friendships with non-Muslims?

b How does the Qur’an use the word awliya? Does it mean ‘friend’ in the usual sense?

Activity 3

Video Islamophobia 1—Ep13: Does Islam forbid Muslims from friendship with non-Muslims?

a How does context affect our understanding of verses from the Qur’an?

b How should we understand verses that seem to suggest Muslims should not be ‘friends’ with non-Muslims?

c What kinds of people does the Qur’an warn against taking as awliya?

Activity 4

Article ‘Is Islam by nature hostile to non-Muslims?’ and video Did Medieval Muslims Hate Christians?

a What does the continued existence of large communities of ancient Christian minorities in places like Iraq and Egypt tell us?

b How does the context of the pre-modern world differ from the modern context of nation-states?
Overview: This theme will look at the broad topic of government in Islamic history and the modern context. Students will learn about the meaning of democracy and study its application in Australia; consider whether Islam prescribes a particular form of governance; and study historical models, such as the different types of governments in Islamic history and in the Muslim world today. In particular students will learn that a single united caliphate only existed for a very short period in Islamic history. Finally, they will engage in a debate on whether a hypothetical Islamic state would be democratic in nature or otherwise.

Lesson 12: Democracy in Australia
Lesson 13: Islamic ideas about government
Lesson 14: Islam and democracy
LESSON 12

Democracy in Australia

The House of Representatives in Parliament House, Canberra, one of the two chambers of Australia’s national legislature. The second is the Senate.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

- compared and contrasted different forms of government
- reflected on some of the benefits and shortcomings of different forms of government
- reflected on their own experiences and knowledge of different systems of government
- understood the meaning of democracy and how it functions in Australia
- become familiar with the main features of Australia’s government and parliament and how they function
- applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

TEACHER RESOURCE 12.1 Tower activity teacher instructions

HANDOUT 12.1 All about Australia’s democracy

Democracy the Australian way: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftCMpVkPtWk

Democracy—a short introduction: www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6jgWxkbR7A

Computers with internet access
Materials for tower construction (including newspaper, scissors, sticky tape, boxes or any other relevant materials)
Activities

1 **Introduction.** Types of government. Divide the class into three equal groups. Explain to students that each group will be responsible for building a tower to celebrate the nation. They have 10 minutes to plan and create their design. Each group, however, will be given a different set of instructions to guide the process. Using the *Tower activity teacher instructions*, brief each group on how they are to go about building their tower. Each group should be given the same materials to construct their tower.

2 **Debrief.** Once students have completed the task, use the following questions to debrief and discuss the activity.

   - Did you get the task finished? Why/why not?
   - Who is happy with the design?
   - What were the pluses/minuses/interesting points about the way your group worked?

3 **Explain.** Tell students that each group represented a type of government. Explain the features of each of the three types of government represented in the activity. Which group worked the most effectively?

4 **Watch.** Watch the videos *Democracy—a short introduction* and *Democracy the Australian way*.

5 **Research.** Give students the handout *All about Australia’s democracy*. Ask students to use the internet, and any other resources they have available, to find answers to the questions found there.

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1. Activities 1, 2 and 5 are adapted from: www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/downloads/downloads.htm#rtf

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LESSON 12

Democracy in Australia

Extension activity

Ask students to imagine they are responsible for putting in place the government for a newly formed country. To persuade their citizens to adopt a particular form of government, they need to develop an advertising campaign. Their campaign should argue the strengths of that form of government and why it is better than other forms of government.

- Group 1 (absolute monarchy): campaign for rule by one
- Group 2 (direct democracy): campaign for rule by all
- Group 3 (representative democracy): campaign for rule by elected representatives

Assessment

Students may submit their answers to the research task in Activity 5.

Turkey’s Grand National Assembly in Ankara, the capital. Unlike Australia, Turkey’s parliament is unicameral (it has a single chamber).
Divide the class into three even groups to produce a design for a new tower to celebrate the nation. The groups have 10 minutes to plan and create their design.

**Group 1**  
One person is nominated (by the teacher) as the boss. This person will design and draw the tower. The boss can discuss what the tower might look like, but does not have to listen. The boss is the only person responsible for the design. The others can watch and follow directions (‘colour that in …’, ‘draw me a …’) but cannot comment. The boss can exclude any person from the task.

**Group 2**  
The whole group is responsible for the tower. Every person must be involved and all decisions must be made by discussion and vote (size, shape, colour). All decisions must be made first. Any changes or new ideas must be voted on. (Work must stop and all group members must vote.)

**Group 3**  
The group discusses the design and what it should look like. The group must then select the best two or three people to work on the design. These two or three are responsible for producing a tower that the group likes. They can consult with the group and/or receive advice at any time.

The groups are representative of the following forms of government, which should be revealed to students during the debriefing process.

- Group 1: absolute monarchy
- Group 2: direct democracy
- Group 3: representative democracy
LESSON 12
Democracy in Australia

HANDOUT 12.1
All about Australia’s democracy

Using the internet, and any other resources you have available, try to find answers to as many of the following questions as you can.

1. How do voters have a say in Australia?
2. How do the people of Australia choose people to represent them in Parliament?
3. Who are Australia’s voters?
4. What are the names of the Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament?
5. For how many years are Members of the House of Representatives elected?
6. For how many years are Senators elected?
7. How does the House of Representatives have a say in making Australia’s laws?
8. How does the Senate have a say in making laws?
9. Does the Governor-General have a say in making laws?
10. Who is the current Prime Minister of Australia?
11. Who is the Member of the House of Representatives for your area?
12. What are the names of Senators from your state?
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• identified forms of government used in Muslim-majority states around the world
• reflected on the issue of whether one particular form of governance is prescribed for Muslims by the Qur’an and Islamic tradition
• become familiar with the diversity of forms of government in Muslim history
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handle Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HANDOUT 13.1</td>
<td>The Qur’anic vision of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDOUT 13.2</td>
<td>Muslim caliphs in history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDOUT 13.3</td>
<td>Historical exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDOUT 13.4</td>
<td>Extension activity—modern Muslim states</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exposing the roots of extremism: Al-Hakimiyya (up to 9:30): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcvPSQLwIOY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcvPSQLwIOY)

Computers with internet access
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

Activities

1 **Introduction.** Explain that the topic for discussion will be the debate over which form(s) of government are best for Muslims.

2 **Read.** Read the handout *The Qur’anic vision of government.* Ask students to answer the comprehension and discussion questions.

3 **Evaluate.** Read the handout *Muslim caliphates in history.* Ask students to answer the comprehension and discussion questions.

4 **Historical exploration.** Give students the map *Abbasid caliphate and fragmentation.* Divide students into 11 groups and ask them to pick one of the following groups from the map. Each group will research as much as they can about that group and share their knowledge about it with the class. In particular, students should try to find out what that group’s relationship with the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad was. The groups are:

   - Ghaznavids
   - Samanids
   - Seljuks
   - Qarakhanids
   - Saffarids
   - Buyids
   - Hamdanids
   - Tulunids
   - Fatimids
   - Zaidis of Yemen
   - Umayyad caliphate of Spain

5 **Discuss.** Based on what students have learnt in the previous exercise, discuss the following questions as a class.

   a Have Muslims always had a single caliph?

   b How would you describe the state of affairs in the ‘caliphate’ in around 1000 CE?

   c In what ways was the caliphate at the end of the Abbasid period similar to today’s British monarchy?
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

Extension activity

Think about the six Muslim-majority states with the largest gross domestic product (GDP) in the world today: Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Pakistan. Divide students into six groups and assign one country to each group. Ask them to use internet resources such as Wikipedia, Encyclopedia.com and the CIA World Factbook to research as much as they can about each country’s form of government. Based on their experience in the last lesson, and their own knowledge, discuss which forms of government appear most effective. What problems do these countries have? What successes have they had? What questions does this exercise raise for students about how to govern a Muslim-majority country?

Assessment

Student understanding may be gauged from contributions to the class discussion.
HANDOUT 13.1

The Qur’anic vision of government

How does the Qur’an talk about government in Islam? First, the Qur’an is almost silent on the outward form government should take. It uses the word *khalifa* (successor, vicegerent or ‘caliph’) only twice: the first refers to human beings’ stewardship of the earth (Q. 2:30), and the second refers to David (s), the Prophet and king, who was commanded to ‘judge between people with the truth’ (Q. 38:26).

The most famous verse relating to government in the Qur’an is Q. 4:59:

You who believe, obey God and the Messenger, and those in authority among you. If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you truly believe in God and the Last Day: that is better and fairer in the end.

This is the only mention of the words ‘those in authority’ (*uli l-amr*) in the Qur’an. Muslim scholars have not interpreted this verse to mean that it refers to a particular form of government. During the period of history when there was a caliph (even if he did not exercise real power), it was assumed that this meant the caliph or his representatives. Today, there are a variety of opinions about whether this requires a caliphate, an Islamic state or simply Muslim political participation.

This verse also commands Muslims to refer disputed matters to God and the Messenger (s)—not the *uli l-amr*. So those in authority are not absolute rulers, and should not claim God’s authority to implement their own will. Furthermore, the Prophet (s) said there is no obedience in sins—only in good.¹ Thus, the power of the ruler is not absolute in Islam.

The Qur’an also instructed the Prophet (s) to consult his Companions (Q. 3:159) and praises those who practise ‘consultation in their affairs’ (Q. 42:38).

¹. Narrated by al-Bukhārī.
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

The Prophet’s (s) Sunna leaves us no doubt that human beings are to be treated equally under the law. He (s) said:

There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a fair-skinned person over a person with dark skin, nor for a dark-skinned person over a person with fair skin, except in piety.¹

Finally, the Qur’an instructs Muslims to rule, or judge—the word hakama has both connotations—with justice (Q. 5:42), truth (Q. 38:26) and fairness (Q. 4:58).

In conclusion, the Qur’an’s vision of Islamic government does not have any particular label attached, but rather is one of justice, fairness, truth, equality and consultation.


**Comprehension questions**

1. How much does the Qur’an say about government?

2. Can you identify five principles of the Qur’anic vision of ideal government?

3. Is the power of the ruler absolute according to the Qur’an?

**Discussion question**

1. Is there only one form of Islamic government? Why or why not?

¹. Narrated by Ahmad, no. 23489.
Some Muslim scholars argue that Muslims should work towards a single caliphate that unites all Muslims, and that Muslims should not be ruled by many different leaders. Others point out that Muslims have been ruled by different leaders since a very early period, and that to impose a single leader on all Muslims would be impractical and could not meet the needs of all the different groups and nations in the world today.

What does history tell us about this question? It is true that Muslims were only united under a single caliph for a very short period of history—less than a century and a half. This includes the ten years of the Prophet’s (s) enlightened rule in Medina. When the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 132/750, the ruling Caliph Marwan II was killed along with his family. But a survivor, Abd al-Rahman (d. 172/788), fled to Spain, where he set up a rival caliphate based in Cordoba. The caliphate was highly successful, and the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) were completely independent of the Abbasid caliphate throughout the seven centuries of Muslim rule there.

The Abbasids claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad’s (s) family. At the same time, in North Africa, several other movements were emerging which also claimed descent from the Prophet (s). In what is now Morocco, the Idrisiyya emerged in around 172/789 and ruled for two centuries, followed by the Almoravids (al-murabitun) and the Almohads (al-muwahhidun). None of these pledged any loyalty to the Abbasid caliph. In what is now Tunisia another caliphate, that of the Fatimids, began in 296/909 and also claimed descent from the Prophet (s). Now considered the first Shi’i empire, it lasted for 250 years alongside the Sunni caliphate in Baghdad, being its main rival. Among their achievements was the establishment of al-Azhar in Cairo.

The famous Al-Azhar mosque of Cairo. Completed in 972 CE, it was built by the Fatimids, the main rival of the Abbasid caliphate.
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

The Abbasid caliphate had its strongest period from around 750 to 900 CE, also around a century and a half. The last great Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid, died in 193/809. After he died, the third century AH/ninth century CE saw the emergence of various independent emirates, including the Samanids in Khorasan, the Shi'a Hamdanids in Syria, the Tulunids in Egypt, the Buyids and the Ghaznavids in Persia, and the Seljuk Turks. Most of these were entirely independent from the caliph in Baghdad, though they claimed to owe him allegiance. Some, such as the Buyids and the Seljuks, even captured that city, where they allowed the caliph to continue ruling in name only. When the Mamluk sultans took power in Egypt, they brought the caliph to Cairo and again ruled in his name for several centuries. During this time the caliph was a ceremonial position with very little power.

This situation—where a king is maintained as a symbol of authority, but real power is exercised by others—is not unusual in history. Even today, the Queen of England (represented by the Governor-General) holds symbolic power in Australia, but true power is wielded by the Australian Government.

Moreover, a prosperous state does not necessarily depend on having a strong caliph. In fact, great progress and prosperity can take place even when there are many different leaders. The age of the Abbasid emirates and the Mamluk sultans, from 900–1500 CE, saw great intellectual and technological advances, military expansion and flourishing visual and architectural arts. Many significant religious and educational institutions, including the Nizamiyya madrasa in Baghdad, were established. Most of the important texts used in Islamic law, theology, Qur’anic exegesis and hadith commentary were written during this time.

Muslim scholars viewed the question of multiple rulers pragmatically. They knew that real power was not concentrated in one place but spread out. The Maliki scholar Abu Abdullah al-Qurtubi (d. 671/1272), who lived in Spain at the end of Muslim rule there and then Egypt at the beginning of the Ayyubid sultanate, acknowledged the plurality of caliphs. He wrote that ‘if the lands are distant and far from each other, such as Khorasan and Andalusia, then it is permissible [to have more than one leader]’ (1999: 1:23). Another Maliki scholar from Granada, al-Qalasadi (d. 891/1486), commented that a hadith about obeying a single ruler implies only that it was wrong to have more than one leader in any one region, not that one ruler should rule all the Muslims in the world (2010: 308). The great Damascene jurist Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676/1277) noted that the matter of single or multiple rulers is a matter of difference of opinion, not a conclusive matter (qati’i) (2001: 6:444).
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

Any discussion of a caliphate today needs to take place with one eye on the historical reality. Most mainstream scholars, such as Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Sheikh Abdullah b. Bayyah and others, accept that the present nation-states are here to stay for the time being. Sheikh al-Qaradawi has argued that any modern ‘caliphate’ may be quite different in character to historical models, and must come about through free association between Muslim countries, not by force. Sheikh Bin Bayyah, a member of the International Fiqh Council, has argued recently that what is important for Muslims is the content, not the form, of government.

The caliphate is not a matter of theology … it is one possible means among others that could be replaced today by other means in order to achieve unity between nations …. Actually, for many centuries, some Muslim lands were independent of the caliphate and were still able to uphold the religion, safeguard the law and sacred sites, and ensure peace and security. This is still the case. Our religion teaches us that our understandings stem from meanings, not words and forms. Consequently, there is no religious duty to pursue the establishment of a caliphate by force—even if we assume it is possible to do so. (2014: 11)


Comprehension questions

1. For how long were Muslims successfully ruled by a single ruler?
2. How did most rulers in pre-modern Islam justify their claim to legitimacy?
3. For all of Islamic history, whenever there has been a caliph, he has exercised supreme power and no-one has challenged him. (True/False)
4. How did many pre-modern Muslim scholars see the question of multiple rulers?
5. How does Sheikh Abdullah b. Bayyah see the question of re-establishing a caliphate?

Discussion questions

1. Why did it become very difficult to unite all Muslims under one ruler?
2. What does this suggest about the possibility of re-establishing a caliphate today?
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

HANDOUT 13.3

Historical exploration

The teacher will divide your class into eleven groups. Choose one of the following eleven Islamic dynasties from the map that is handed out.

1. Ghaznavids
2. Samanids
3. Seljuks
4. Qarakhanids
5. Saffarids
6. Buyids
7. Hamdanids
8. Tulunids
9. Fatimids
10. Zaidis of Yemen
11. Umayyad caliphate of Spain

Using the internet and whatever other resources you have, find out as much as you can about that political dynasty. Try to answer the following questions.

1. How did they come to power?
2. Why are they called by that name?
3. For how long did they rule?
4. Important: What was their relationship with the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad?
5. What sect of Islam did they follow?
6. What ethnic group were they?
7. How else can you describe them (e.g. nomadic, settled, urban, expansionist)?
8. What are they well-known for?
9. What is interesting about them?
10. How many rulers did they have?

Choose one person to be the spokesperson to share your findings with the class.
LESSON 13

Islamic ideas about government

HANDOUT 13.4

Extension activity—modern Muslim states

The teacher will divide your class into six groups.

The six Muslim-majority states with the largest gross domestic product (GDP) in the world today are:

1. Indonesia
2. Saudi Arabia
3. Turkey
4. Iran
5. Egypt
6. Pakistan.

Choose one country for your group. Using the internet and whatever other resources you have, find out as much as you can about the form of government in that country. Try to answer the following questions.

Choose one person to be the spokesperson to share your findings with the class.

1. Who is the head of state?
2. What is the form of government?
3. Are there elections? How often?
4. Is there a parliament? Describe it.
5. How are laws made?
6. Is there a constitution?
7. What is the proportion of Muslims in the population?
8. What is the role of Islam in lawmaking?
9. Is the government effective?
10. What recent problems has this country had?
11. What might be solutions to these problems?
12. What recent successes has this country had?
13. What accounts for these successes?

Discussion question

What questions does this activity raise for you about how to govern a Muslim-majority country?
LESSON 14

Islam and democracy

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• reflected on the question, ‘Would a hypothetical Islamic state be a democracy?’

• critically considered arguments for and against the question of whether a hypothetical Islamic state would be a democracy

• worked together in a group setting with other students to research an argument for a class debate

• argued persuasively for their point of view in a class debate or provided feedback to their peers

• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

HANDOUT 14.1  Class debate assessment

‘Democracy according to traditional Islamic sources’: http://www.islamic supremecouncil.org/publications/articles/51-democracy-according-to-traditional-islamic-sources.html


‘Debates’: https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/debates

LESSON 14

Islam and democracy

Activities

1 **Introduction.** Explain to students that the class will be examining the issue of Islam and democracy.

2 **Allocate groups.** Break the class into two groups—affirmative and negative. Assign the question: ‘Would a hypothetical Islamic state be a democracy?’ Within each group, three students should be chosen as the group’s speakers. The rest of the group will be involved in researching arguments to support their side’s position. If the groups are too large, several students from each group may be selected to be the ‘audience’ and to be responsible for assessing the debaters. One student may be selected to chair the debate.

3 **Research.** Allow groups a certain amount of time to research their position and to develop arguments to support it. Attention should also be given to how the arguments are structured for each speaker (see debate resources). Give students the handout *Democracy according to traditional sources* as a starting point, and they may wish to revisit the handouts *The Qur’anic vision of government* and *Muslim caliphates in history* from Lesson 13.

4 **Debate.** Restructure the room for the debate and then let the debate commence. Students in the audience may assess the speakers using the *Class debate assessment sheet* handout.

5 **Debrief.** Discuss which side won the debate. Which side had the most convincing arguments? The most persuasive facts? The strongest speakers? Did students change their mind about the compatibility of Islam and democracy after researching or hearing any of the arguments?

Extension activity

Students may write a short persuasive essay (maximum 500 words) on the following question: Is Islam compatible with democracy?

Assessment

Students may be assessed based on their participation in the group work and/or the class debate. Student assessment sheets may also be collected and used to form part of the assessment process for the debate. Students may also hand in their persuasive essay.
## LESSON 14

Islam and democracy

### HANDOUT 14.1

**Class debate assessment sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation and clarity:</strong> viewpoints and responses are outlined both clearly and orderly</td>
<td>Unclear in most parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arguments:</strong> reasons are given to support viewpoint</td>
<td>No relevant reasons given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples and facts:</strong> examples and facts are given to support reasons</td>
<td>No relevant supporting examples/facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rebuttal:</strong> arguments made by the other teams are responded to and dealt with effectively</td>
<td>No effective counter-arguments made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation style:</strong> tone of voice, use of gestures and level of enthusiasm are convincing to audience</td>
<td>No style features used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview: This topic focuses on the concept of jihad. Students will learn about examples of the peaceful manifestations of jihad in everyday life, as well as understanding how it can also mean the legitimate use of force within certain limits. It will consider historical examples of jihad, the development of scholarly understandings of the concept, and examine the difference between jihad and terrorism.

Lesson 15: My everyday jihad
Lesson 16: The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam
Lesson 17: Is terrorism jihad?
LESSON 15

My everyday jihad

A community iftar in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. Providing food for the needy is a form of non-violent jihad.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• understood the wider meanings of the word ‘jihad’
• identified contexts in which the concept of jihad can apply, with particular reference to their own everyday lives
• sought examples of the type of jihad that consists of overcoming challenges to serve the community
• participated in group work
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

HANDOUT 15.1 My everyday jihad
HANDOUT 15.2 The different types of jihad

My jihad: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rgwvx-L5Wl0 (18:23)

Islamophobia 1—Ep17: Jihad & terrorism. Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzTeS7zGoU8 (until 7:15)

Computers with internet access

My Jihad website: http://myjihad.org
LESSON 15

My everyday jihad

Activities

1 **Introduction.** Ask students to make a list of some everyday things they find difficult to do. This may be in the context of school, religious practice, their family or community life (including relationships). Ask them to entitle the list ‘My Everyday Jihad’. Discuss what they found with the person sitting next to them. In what way might these activities be considered a form of jihad?

2 **Watch.** Watch the video *My jihad*. What kinds of issues are the characters struggling with?

3 **Reflect.** Ask students to form pairs and to explore the website myjihad.org. How is the concept of jihad used in different contexts on the website? What meanings does it have?

4 **Watch.** As a class, watch the video *Islamophobia 1—Ep17: Jihad & terrorism. Part 1* (until 7:15). Read the handout *The different types of jihad*. Ask students to answer the comprehension and discussion questions. Discuss the answers, and particularly the last question, as a class: Why do you think God uses the same word (jihad) to refer to both non-physical effort in a good cause as well as physical fighting?

Extension activity

On the http://myjihad.org website, under the ‘About us’ tab, there are a list of organisations helping others to overcome their challenges and leading, serving and inspiring others towards positive change in various social areas.

Ask students to choose one of these organisations (or a similar Australian organisation) and prepare a brief Microsoft PowerPoint presentation (approximately five slides) on the organisation to present to the class. The presentation should explain how the organisation helps others to overcome their challenges or how it provides positive change in the community.

Assessment

Students may be assessed based on their contribution to class discussion. Students may also present their PowerPoint presentation to the class in the following lesson.
LESSON 15

My everyday jihad

HANDOUT 15.1

My everyday jihad

Use this worksheet to make a list of some everyday things that you find difficult to do. You might choose things from school, religious practice, family or community life, including relationships.

My everyday jihad

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 
My everyday jihad

HANDOUT 15.2

The different types of jihad

What is the meaning of ‘jihad’? Linguistically, jihad literally means ‘to struggle’ or ‘to strive’. Jihad is mentioned 36 times in the Qur’an. Most of these relate to the broader sense of striving and struggle, not war. An example is:

Strive hard for God as is His due: He has chosen you and placed no hardship in your religion. (Q. 22:78)

Muslims are instructed to struggle with the Qur’an.

So do not give in to the disbelievers: strive hard against them with this Qur’an. (Q. 25:52)

Jihad is also used to describe the efforts of pagan parents to convert their children back to paganism (Q. 29:8, 31:15).

Only ten out of the thirty-six references to jihad in the Qur’an relate to warfare. When the Qur’an specifically talks about war it is, not surprisingly, far more likely to use the word ‘fighting’ (qital).

There are many hadiths in which the Prophet Muhammad (s) describes jihad as applying to a much wider category than simply fighting. For example, a man asked the Prophet (s), ‘Which jihad is best?’ The Prophet (s) said, ‘The most excellent jihad is to say the word of truth in front of a tyrant’. ¹

Later scholars also saw jihad as an inclusive term relating to struggle in any way to please God and obey His commandments. The Maliki jurist Ibn Rushd al-Jadd (d. 520/1126) divided jihad into four levels: jihad of the heart, jihad of the tongue, jihad of the hand (commanding good and preventing evil), and finally jihad of the sword, meaning warfare. He wrote:

Jihad of the heart is jihad against the shaytan, and the struggling (mujahada) of the self against forbidden desires. God, Mighty and Glorious, says: ‘For anyone who fears the meeting with his Lord and restrains himself from base desires, surely the Garden will be his home’. (Q. 79:40–41) (1988: 1:341)

¹. Narrated in different versions by al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwud, al-Nasā‘ī and Ibn Mājah.
LESSON 15

My everyday jihad

The Hanbali scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) divided jihad into fourteen subsections. These include jihad against the self, against the *shaytan*, against non-believers (by the heart, tongue, wealth and self) and, finally, against hypocrites (also by these four means) (2005: 415). Only two of these fourteen sections refer to actual fighting, which is limited by Islam’s strict rules of warfare.


Comprehension questions

1. How many times is jihad mentioned in the Qur’an?

2. When jihad is mentioned in the Qur’an, it always refers to physical fighting. (True/False)

3. How many types of jihad are there according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya?

4. How many of these types refer to physical fighting? Can you identify which ones?

5. What did the Prophet (s) say is the most excellent kind of jihad?

Discussion question

1. Why do you think God uses the same word (jihad) to refer to both non-physical effort in a good cause as well as physical fighting?
The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• understood the meaning of legitimate combative jihad in Islam and the limits placed on it by the Qur’an and the Sunna
• understood the difference between jihad and terrorism
• become aware of the early history of Islam’s expansion, including the question of whether anyone was forced to convert to Islam
• understood the rules of legitimate warfare in Islam and reflected on instances where such rules are not respected today
• reflected on similarities and differences with the rules of war in international humanitarian law
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

HANDOUT 16.1 The origins of jihad—fighting in self-defence
HANDOUT 16.2 The rules of war in Islam
HANDOUT 16.3 Jihad—war to convert the unbelievers?
HANDOUT 16.4 Comparison—Islamic rules of war and international humanitarian law

Islamophobia 1—Ep17: Jihad & Terrorism. Part 1: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzTeS7zGoU8 (from 7:15 to end)

Computers with internet access

LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

Activities

1 **Introduction.** Explain to students that the focus of this lesson will be on understanding jihad as warfare.

2 **Understand.** Ask students to read the handout *The origins of jihad—fighting in self-defence.* Ask them to answer the comprehension and discussion questions. Discuss as a class.

3 **Watch.** Ask students to watch the video *Islamophobia 1—Ep17: Jihad & terrorism. Part 1* (from 7:15 to the end), review the handout *The rules of war in Islam* and answer the comprehension and discussion questions. Discuss the following question: Can students identify conflicts around the world where the Islamic rules of war are not respected today?

4 **Discuss.** Ask students to form pairs. Give students the handout *Jihad—war to convert the unbelievers?* and ask them to read it and discuss it with their partner. Ask them to answer the comprehension and discussion questions.

Extension activity

Give students the handout *Comparison—Islamic rules of war and international humanitarian law.* Watch the video *The rules of war (in a nutshell)* (International Red Cross). Review the previous video (*Jihad & terrorism. Part 1*), the previous handouts, and other sources students may find on international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. Work in small groups or pairs to complete the table in the handout, comparing Islamic rules of war with international humanitarian law.

Assessment

Student understanding may be gauged from their participation in class discussion.Students may also submit their table.
LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

HANDOUT 16.1

The origins of jihad
—fighting in self-defence

The context of the Qur’anic verses permitting warfare is important. When Islam began in Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad (s) and his followers were severely persecuted by the leaders of the Quraysh tribe. Two groups of Muslims fled to Abyssinia, and eventually most sought refuge in the town of Yathrib (now Medina), leaving their homes and possessions behind. The Prophet (s) was among the last to leave, narrowly escaping assassination.

In Mecca and early in Medina, the Muslims were instructed to restrain themselves from retaliating against the persecution they experienced. However, the Meccans continued to attack them in Medina. Finally, in the second year after their migration, the verses permitting the Muslims to fight were revealed.

Those who are attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged—God has the power to help them—those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, ‘Our Lord is God’. If God did not repel some people by means of others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where God’s name is much invoked, would have been destroyed. God is sure to help those who help His cause—God is strong and mighty—those who, when We establish them in the land, keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, command what is right, and forbid what is wrong: God controls the outcome of all events. (Q. 22:39–41)
LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

These verses permitted warfare under certain circumstances: to protect those who have been driven out of their homes, as well as those who worship God and are not by their nature combatants. Not long afterwards, another revelation was sent, with guidance on how warfare should be conducted.

Fight in God’s way against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits. Kill them wherever you encounter them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, for persecution is more serious than killing [in self-defence]. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. If they do fight you, kill them—this is what such disbelievers deserve—but if they stop, then God is most forgiving and merciful. (Q. 2:190–2)

These verses were revealed in response to a question about where fighting could legitimately take place—the Muslims were afraid that if they fought the Meccans in the sanctuary of the Ka’ba, they would violate its sacredness.

The revelation continued:

Fight them in order to put an end to the persecution, and so that [your] worship can be devoted to God [without fear]. If they cease hostilities, there can be no [further] hostility, except towards aggressors. A sacred month for a sacred month: violation of sanctity [calls for] fair retribution. So if anyone attacks you [in a sacred month], attack him as he attacked you, but be mindful of God, and know that He is with those who are mindful of Him. Spend in God’s cause; do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands, but do good, for God loves those who do good. (Q. 2:193–5)

Here, the verse responds to a question about whether fighting was permissible during a sacred month. These verses place strict limits on the use of violence: Muslims are not to fight if they are not attacked, and they cannot overstep the prescribed boundaries of warfare. The sacred boundaries of the Ka’ba and the sacred months are to be respected, but if the Muslims are the target of aggression they may retaliate.
LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

Other verses giving permission to fight in self-defence are Q. 8:56 and 9:8, and the Qur’an also allows Muslims to fight to defend ‘helpless men, women, children and old people who are oppressed’ (Q. 4:75), unless this would involve fighting people with whom the Muslims have a treaty (Q. 8:72). This is similar to the modern ‘responsibility to protect’ in international humanitarian law.

The most famous verse in relation to war in the Qur’an is probably Q. 9:5, sometimes called the ‘Verse of the Sword’. It reads:

When the [four] forbidden months are over, wherever you encounter the idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post.

This verse has also often been taken out of context. Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem writes:

[Some scholars] allege that this verse abrogated other verses on war. This is pure fantasy, isolating and decontextualising a small part of a sentence. The full picture is given in 9:1–15, which gives many reasons for the order to fight such polytheists. They continuously broke their agreements and aided others against the Muslims, they started hostilities against the Muslims, barred others from becoming Muslims, expelled Muslims from the Holy Mosque and even from their own homes. … Consistent with restrictions on war elsewhere in the Qur’an, the immediate context of this ‘Sword Verse’ exempts such polytheists as do not break their agreements and who keep the peace with the Muslims (9:7). It orders that those enemies seeking safe conduct should be protected and delivered to the place of safety they seek (9:6). (2001: 65–6)

In short, the Qur’an does not condone wanton killing of non-Muslims, but rather strictly limits the use of violence.

LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

Comprehension questions

1. When did Muslims become permitted to fight?

2. What is another circumstance that might allow Muslims to fight?

3. In what way did Q. 2:190–5 answer concerns that the early Muslims had about permissible fighting?

4. In what way is the Qur’anic view of permissible fighting similar to modern international humanitarian law?

5. What is missing from interpretations of Q. 9:5 often found in the media and other sources?

Discussion question

1. The Qur’anic verses on jihad can be read without reference to context. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
HANDOUT 16.2

The rules of war in Islam

Islamic law strictly regulates the use of force in legitimate warfare. The Qur’an states:

Fight in God’s cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God
does not love those who overstep the limits. (Q. 2:190)

The Prophet Muhammad (s) said:

Wage war but do not be severe, do not be treacherous, do not mutilate or kill children.¹

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, he (s) said:

Those retreating are not to be killed, nor are the injured to be harmed, and whoever
shuts his door is safe.²

In a well-known hadith, related by both al-Bukhari and Muslim, a woman was found killed
after a battle. Shocked, the Prophet (s) reiterated that Islam forbids the killing of women
and children.³

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1. Narrated by Muslim and al-Tirmidhī.
2. Narrated by Ibn Abī Shayba.
3. Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.
LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

The first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (r), gave the following instructions to his army.

I enjoin you to fear God: do not disobey orders; do not commit treachery; do not be cowards; do not drown palm trees; do not burn crops; do not steal livestock; do not cut down fruit-trees; do not attack the old or the young; and when you find people who have devoted themselves to monasteries, leave them to their devotions.1

Muslim jurists through history have agreed that non-combatants are not to be harmed in battle. This is because of the inherent sanctity of human life in Islam, given in the Qur’an:

Do not take life, which God has made sacred, except by right. (Q. 17:33)

The permission given to attack and possibly kill combatants is therefore an exception to this basic rule.


Comprehension questions

1 The Qur’an permits ‘total war’, without limits. (True/False)
2 The Qur’an states that life is sacred and cannot be taken except by right. (True/False)
3 The Prophet (s) and his Companions laid down strict guidelines for the use of force. (True/False)
4 Women and children are considered combatants in Islamic law. (True/False)
5 Can you name two rules set down by Abu Bakr (r) that do not relate directly to protecting humans? Can you see how these rules are actually also aimed at protecting life?

Discussion question

1 The opponents faced by the Prophet (s) and his Companions were sometimes unscrupulous and would break the rules of war. Did having strict rules of war disadvantage the early Muslims? Why or why not?

1. Narrated by al-Marwazi and al-Bayhaqī.
There is a common misconception that one of the goals of jihad is to convert everyone to Islam. This is false.

We have seen in previous handouts that the Qur’an permits fighting in self-defence or to defend those who are oppressed. After the death of the Prophet (s), however, early Muslim rulers, with the support of some scholars, appealed to the concept of jihad to justify wars of imperial expansion—in the same way that all empires at the time sought to expand militarily and economically.

Many early jurists thought that military jihad should be used to expand the borders of Islam. In particular, they interpreted the word ‘persecution’ (fitna) in Q. 2:190 to mean ‘disbelief in Islam’. (The verse reads: ‘Fight them in order to put an end to the persecution, and so that [your] worship can be devoted to God [without fear].’.) Also, many argued that one verse, the ‘Verse of the Sword’, had superseded the many verses that command Muslims to show restraint and fight only in self-defence.

Political factors encouraged early Muslim rulers. At that time, a political vacuum existed due to the weakness of both the Sassanian and the Byzantine empires. Many of the local populations felt more kinship with the Arabs than with the distant rulers of Byzantium or Persia, and the early Muslims were able to expand into the regions these empires had left behind with relative ease.

History shows, however, that the expansion of borders resulted only in a change of ruler, not the forced imposition of Islam on the people. Indeed, non-Muslims remained a large majority in Syria, Egypt and Iraq for many centuries after Islam arrived. Christians were especially numerous, and there are still churches in these areas from the very earliest centuries of Islam. Many government officials and bureaucrats in the new Islamic caliphate were in fact Christians and Jews.
LESSON 16

The conduct of legitimate warfare in Islam

Thus, with rare exceptions, forced conversion did not take place under Muslim rule. For most jurists, this was because of the Qur’anic principle of freedom of religious belief:

There is no compulsion in religion. (Q. 2:256)

and:

Let those who wish to believe in [the truth] do so, and let those who wish to reject it do so. (Q. 18:29)

After the initial expansion, some jurists (particularly in the Shafi‘i school) held on to a doctrine of ‘offensive’ jihad. Some said that the ruler must lead an annual expedition into enemy territory. However, this was understood as a defensive raid, not a concerted effort to take and hold enemy territory. In the medieval period, borders were fluid, not fixed by treaty, and such a show of force served to deter enemies from attacking.

There are also many statements from jurists indicating the defensive nature of true jihad. Al-Kamal b. al-Humam (d. 861/1457), a prominent fifteenth-century Hanafi jurist, is one example. He wrote:

God states, ‘Fight the polytheists as a whole because they fight you as a whole’ (Q. 9:36). We can understand that fighting is commanded of us only as a response to, and caused by, the fact that we are attacked. Similarly, God, May He be Exalted, says: ‘Fight them until there is no more persecution’ (Q. 8:39), meaning no more persecution of the Muslims for their religion and being forced to leave it by being beaten or killed.

(2003: 421)

Today, the majority of mainstream Muslim scholars understand the basic principle in international relations to be peace. According to the eminent al-Azhar scholar Muhammad Abu Zahra (d. 1974), military jihad is now only permitted to defend justice and to remove aggression and religious persecution against Muslims. Thus, the early rulings on ‘offensive’ jihad derive from the context that the scholars of that time found themselves in, and are not binding on us today.

Likewise, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, President of the European Council of Fatwa and Research, sees all countries who are signatories to the United Nations convention to have entered into a treaty of mutual non-aggression which Islamic law upholds. Sheikh al-Qaradawi understands the concept of ‘offensive’ jihad in classical doctrine to be one of deterrence and not attack, and thus is satisfied by the maintenance of a powerful army to keep one’s own land safe.
Finally, the prominent Syrian scholar Wahba al-Zuhayli also sees the basic norm in international relations to be peace. In his view, jihad is now permitted only to repel aggression and in self-defence.


Comprehension questions

1. Has war to convert people to Islam ever been permissible in Islam? Why or why not?

2. Why did some scholars in early Islam believe the concept of jihad could justify imperial expansion?

3. Which two neighbouring empires had been weakened by continual war?

4. Why do most jurists today believe war for imperial expansion is not permissible?

5. Why did the defence of borders in the medieval period sometimes take the form of pre-emptive raids?

Discussion questions

1. How did the political realities of the pre-modern period differ from today? How did this affect the jurists’ view of war?

2. Imagine someone comes to you with the argument that Islam was ‘spread by the sword’. Do you agree? Why or why not?
Your teacher will show you the video *The rules of war (in a nutshell)* from the International Red Cross. Review the previous handouts and videos for this lesson, as well as other sources you may have access to on international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. Work in small groups or pairs to complete the table below. Discuss the findings with your class.

### Comparing Islamic rules of war with international humanitarian law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
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Is terrorism jihad?

Parishioners place flowers at the site of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in the centre of the city.

Objectives

By the end of the lesson students will have:

• become aware of some differences between legitimate jihad and terrorism
• become able to explain the difference between jihad and terrorism
• become able to define terrorism according to Australian law
• reflected on the reasons why Islamic law limits the use of force within certain boundaries
• become aware of the reasons why mainstream Islamic tradition condemns suicide bombing
• written a persuasive text against suicide bombing
• applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

HANDOUT 17.1  Legal definitions of terrorism
HANDOUT 17.2  Jihad versus terrorism
HANDOUT 17.3  On suicide attacks
Islamophobia 1—Ep18: Jihad & terrorism. Part 2: www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RXvGis7Xhl (until 8:50)
BBC—Captured Islamic state suicide bomber: ‘I’m so sorry’: www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYZ-Xd0-cjY
LESSON 17

Is terrorism jihad?

Activities

1 **Introduction.** Explain to students that the focus of this lesson will be on understanding the difference between jihad and terrorism. Ask students to reflect on why this difference is important.

2 **Define.** Ask students to watch the video *Islamophobia 1—Ep18: Jihad & terrorism. Part 2* (until 5:10). Ask students to reflect on the definition of terrorism. If they had to define terrorism, how would they define it? Ask students to come up with a written definition. Then compare it with the definitions found in Australian law and other legal systems (see handout *Legal definitions of terrorism*). How similar or different are their definitions?

3 **Watch.** Watch the video *Islamophobia 1—Ep18: Jihad & terrorism. Part 2* from 5:10 to 8:49. Give students the handout *Jihad versus terrorism*. Ask students to fill in the table of differences between legitimate jihad and terrorism. Discuss as a class the issue of how combative jihad is different to terrorism. Why do Islam’s principles forbid Muslims from doing certain acts?

4 **Watch.** Watch the video *BBC—Captured Islamic state suicide bomber: ‘I’m so sorry’*. Read the handout *On suicide attacks* and answer the comprehension and discussion questions. Discuss why Islamic tradition prohibits suicide bombing, as well as why some people have tried to find reasons to justify it.

Extension activity

Ask students to imagine they were friends with Zakariya (the 17-year old boy in the video *Captured Islamic state suicide bomber*) and that they had learnt of his plan to carry out a suicide bombing. Ask students to draft an email or letter that they would send to him to try to persuade him not to carry out the act. Ask several students to share their letter with the class (if they are willing).

Assessment

Students may submit their table of differences between jihad and terrorism and their letter to Zakariya.
Is terrorism jihad?

**HANDOUT 17.1**

**Legal definitions of terrorism**

Section 100(1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cwlth)* states:

A ‘terrorist act’ is an act, or a threat to commit an act, that is done with the intention to coerce or influence the public or any government by intimidation to advance a political, religious or ideological cause, and the act causes:

- death, serious harm or endangers a person;
- serious damage to property;
- a serious risk to the health or safety of the public; or
- seriously interferes with, disrupts or destroys critical infrastructure such as a telecommunications or electricity network.

A terrorist act does not cover engaging in advocacy, protest, dissent or industrial action where a person does not have the intention to urge force or violence or cause harm to others.

Section 83.01 of the Canadian Criminal Code defines terrorism as an act committed:

in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause … with the intention of intimidating the public … with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act.

Activities recognised as criminal within this context include:

- intentionally causing death or serious bodily harm with the use of violence
- intentionally endangering a person’s life
- causing a serious risk to the health and safety of the public
- causing substantial property damage, if it is likely to result in one of the previous three items, and
- serious interference or disruption of an essential service, facility or system (except where this is the result of advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work that is not intended to result in the harm mentioned in the first three items).
LESSON 17

Is terrorism jihad?

The United Kingdom’s Terrorism Act (2006) defines terrorism as: ‘the use and threat of action … designed to influence the government or … to intimidate the public or a section of the public’ and ‘made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause’.

Actions which fall within the Act include:

- serious violence against a person
- serious damage to property
- endangerment of a person’s life
- creating a serious risk to the health or safety of the public, or
- serious interference with or disruption of an electronic system.

In the United States, 18 US Code § 2331 defines terrorism as:

activities that involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State … [and] appear to be intended

- to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
- to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or
- to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

Is terrorism jihad?

**HANDOUT 17.2**

**Jihad versus terrorism**

Your teacher will show you part of the video *Islamophobia 1—Ep18: Jihad & Terrorism. Part 2.* Based on the video and other sources you may have access to, work with your partner or in a group to complete the table below. Discuss the findings with your class.

### Comparing jihad and terrorism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic in terrorism</th>
<th>Permitted in jihad?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of weapons</td>
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<td>Attacking civilians</td>
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<td>Use of suicide attacks</td>
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<td>Use of weapons of mass destruction</td>
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<td>Use of weapons which contravene international law (e.g. phosphorous bombs, barrel bombs, cluster munitions)</td>
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<td>Killing captives</td>
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<td>Murdering people for being members of a particular religion or ethnic group</td>
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<td>Mutilating bodies</td>
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<td>Rape</td>
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<td>Collective punishment</td>
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<td>Torture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Killing or torturing people to ‘set an example’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LESSON 17

Is terrorism jihad?

HANDOUT 17.3

On suicide attacks

One of the issues discussed by pre-modern Muslim jurists writing on the rules of warfare was the issue of reckless attacks on the enemy, with the potential of losing one’s own life in the attempt. Islam clearly forbids suicide in the strongest possible terms. The Qur’an states:

Do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction. (Q. 2:195)

and:

Do not kill yourselves. (Q. 4:29)

The Prophet Muhammad (s) said:

Whoever commits suicide with something will be punished with the same thing in the Fire.1

However, war by its nature is dangerous, and often involves taking risks. Muslim scholars developed a doctrine that permitted taking some risks, as long as someone did not intentionally kill themselves. If they did, they were considered to have committed suicide, which is forbidden. Likewise, if a Muslim soldier did not defend himself when capable of doing so, the soldier is considered the cause of his own death.

The modern phenomenon of suicide bombings has brought fresh attention to this obscure area of jurisprudence. The first recorded use of this tactic was by a left-wing terrorist in Russia in 1881, but it was made famous by the Tamil Tigers and adopted by jihadist groups from the 1980s onwards. The tactic involves sending a person into a crowd of civilians and detonating a bomb which takes the life of the attacker, while causing large numbers of casualties. The aim of spreading fear among the civilian population and thereby putting political pressure on the government is one common to terrorist groups everywhere, from the Tamil Tigers to the Irish Republican Army.

Relatives mourn the victim of a suicide bombing in Pakistan. In the last decade, the vast majority of victims of suicide attacks have been Muslims.

1. Narrated by al-Bukhārī.
Is terrorism jihad?

Muslim scholars all over the world have condemned this reprehensible act. Professor Muhammad Munir has observed that suicide bombing involves the breach of up to five Islamic rules of war, including committing suicide, killing civilians, mutilating their bodies, destroying civilian property, and violating the trust of enemy soldiers and civilians (2008: 89). The modern Shafi’i scholar Sheikh Muhammad al-Akiti has also issued a well-known fatwa which clearly explains the difference between heroic attacks in the heat of battle and cowardly attacks against civilians that are certain to cause the death of the attacker (2005: 24).

It is all the more saddening to note that such attacks are usually carried out by young, frontline foot soldiers, even children, while their commanders stay safe and protected away from any risk of harm.


Comprehension questions

1. Is it ever permitted to commit suicide in Islam?

2. A Muslim soldier is exempt from the rulings on suicide in Islamic law. (True/False)

3. What is the first recorded modern incident of suicide bombing?

Discussion question

1. Why have extremist movements found it tempting to use the tactic of suicide bombing, even though it is not permitted in Islamic law?
Overview: In this lesson students will think about slavery in its broader historical context; how the Qur’an and the Prophet responded to the problem of slavery; and what the duty of Muslims today is in view of the fact that slavery has been abolished by consensus across the Muslim world.

Lesson 18: Islam and slavery
Islam and slavery

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

- understood slavery as a historical phenomenon that existed in many places around the world
- reflected on Islam’s true teachings about slavery and the treatment of slaves
- understood the historical phenomenon of slavery in Islam
- discussed the modern manifestations of slavery and how action can be taken at the personal level to end all forms of slavery
- applied critical thinking skills.

Resources

- HANDOUT 18.1 Slavery and Islam
- HANDOUT 18.2 Research—slavery in the pre-modern world
- Slavery: A past and present tragedy (Sheikh Omar Suleiman): www.youtube.com/watch?v=pR50Lw_16zo (from 1:10:28 to 1:18:00)
- ‘End slavery now’: www.endslaverynow.org/
- ‘Slavery today’: http://slaverytoday.org/
- ‘Slavery in Islam’: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/history/slavery_1.shtml
LESSON 18

Islam and slavery

Activities

1. **Introduction.** Explain to students that the focus of the lesson today will be on slavery. Discuss why slavery happened in history. How did people become slaves?

2. **Research.** Divide students into seven groups. Choose one of the following ancient civilisations: Chinese, Indian, Greek, Roman, Persian, Egyptian and Hebrew. Spend 10 minutes researching slavery under each of these civilisations. What are the key features of slavery in each civilisation? Why did it exist?

3. **Discussion.** Watch the video *Slavery: A past and present tragedy*. Give students the handout *Slavery and Islam*. They can also view the resource ‘Slavery in Islam’ (BBC). Divide students into groups and ask them to answer the comprehension and discussion questions.

4. **Compare and contrast.** Based on what students have learnt from the previous exercise, what are the differences between how slavery occurred in the Islamic world and its existence in other civilisations?

5. **Discuss as a class.** Ask students to spend a few minutes looking at the website www.endslaverynow.org/. Discuss the following questions as a class: How does slavery continue today? What is the reason for its continued existence? What is our duty as Muslims in the face of this phenomenon?

**Extension activity**

Ask students to research and identify a modern manifestation of slavery and identify a way that they can personally contribute to ending it. Students may share this with the class.

**Assessment**

Students’ understanding may be gauged from class discussion. Students may share their research from the extension activity.
LESSON 18

Islam and slavery

HANDOUT 18.1

Slavery and Islam

A great deal of media attention has recently focused on the enslavement of captives by extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Boko Haram in West Africa, and the subsequent abuse of these slaves, particularly women. This has led many Muslims to question what the Islamic position on slavery is and on how slaves should be treated.

Although Muslims (like Christians and people of other faiths) continued to accept slavery until quite recently, as far as Islamic law is concerned, slavery is now considered abolished. This condition has existed by consensus for at least half a century. Even by then, it only existed in a small number of Muslim states and was almost universally condemned.

It has always been one of the goals of Islam to abolish slavery. Slavery existed in the world prior to Islam and in many forms. Some historians estimate that, on average, one quarter of human society in the ancient world were slaves. The Qur’an was the first religious text in history that did not assume that slaves should remain slaves. Rather, it enjoined Muslims to free slaves whenever possible.

The Qur’an and Sunna

The Qur’an states:

Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in God and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travellers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage. (Q. 2:177)

The Qur’an sets in place a moral trajectory towards the eventual freeing of all slaves—or anyone who is in any form of bondage—just as it envisages a time when there will no longer be anyone who is hungry or poor.

What will explain to you what the steep path is? It is to free a slave, or to feed, at a time of hunger, an orphaned relative or a poor person in distress. (Q. 90:12–15)
In fact, the Qur’an names the freeing of slaves as one of the permanent categories of *zakat*, to which every Muslim must contribute (Q. 9:60).

Finally, in a *hadith qudsi*, the Prophet (s) said:

> God, the Exalted, says: ‘I will be the adversary on the Day of Judgment of three [kinds of] people: One who makes a covenant in My name and breaks it; one who sells a free man as a slave and devours his price; and one who hires a workman and having taken full work from him, does not pay him his wages’.1

The Prophet Muhammad (s) made it obligatory for any Muslim who had a slave to treat them as well as they would their own family, if they did not free them altogether. In a widely reported hadith, he said:

> Your servants and your slaves are your brothers. Anyone who has slaves should give them from what he eats and wears. He should not charge them with work beyond their capabilities. If you must set them to hard work, then you must help them.2

and:

> Your slaves are your brothers, so treat them well. Ask for their help in what is too much for you and help them in what is too much for them.3

The Prophet’s (s) concern for the plight of slaves was well documented. The circumstances of the time and the nature of the economic and political interests which he faced meant he could not declare unilaterally that slavery was abolished. Yet he attempted to reform its practice, and strongly urged all Muslims to free slaves. He (s) and his Companions between them freed many tens of thousands of slaves through their personal efforts. Indeed, many of the first Muslims were slaves, including the first *muadhdhin* (prayer-caller) of Islam, Bilal b. Rabah (r) (d. ca. 17/638). Finally, it is well attested that the Prophet’s (s) last words were: ‘Guard the prayer, and fear God concerning your slaves!’4

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1. Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Ibn Mājah and Ahmad.
2. Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwud, and al-Tirmidhī.
3. Narrated by al-Bukhārī (*al-Adab al-mufrad*).
LESSON 18

Islam and slavery

The world after the Prophet

After the time of the Prophet (s) and the Companions and during the age of Muslim empires, it is a sad historical fact that many emirs and sultans engaged in and encouraged the widespread capture of slaves from non-Muslim lands. This is not because Islam encouraged slavery; on the contrary, it discourages it. And while slaves in Muslim lands were often better treated than elsewhere, it remains true that many Muslim rulers did not live up to the Prophetic ideal of eliminating, rather than expanding slavery.

Slaves occupied a position in Islamic society that was different to other slave-owning societies. In most cultures, slaves occupied the lowest rung of society and could never rise above their ‘station’, even when freed. In contrast, in Islam slavery was not by itself a barrier to social mobility. Many scholars, imams, military commanders and rulers came from the ranks of slaves or former slaves. The first imam of the Sacred Mosque of Mecca was a freed slave, Ata’ b. Abi Rabah (d. 114/732). One of the teachers of Imam Malik (d. 179/796) was Nafi’ (d. 117/735), the former slave of Abdullah b. Umar b. al-Khattab (r) (d. 73/693). Finally, one of the most successful Muslim states, the Mamluk empire, was composed of slaves and former slaves. These ‘slave-soldiers’ formed a powerful ruling elite which ruled in Egypt and Syria for 300 years. Many of the grandest madrasas in Cairo were built by endowments donated by these slaves and former slaves.

The mosque-madrasa of Sultan Hassan, completed in 1359 CE, is one of the grandest examples of architecture from the era of the Mamluks, a dynasty ruled by slaves and former slaves.
LESSON 18

Islam and slavery

Concubinage

Concubinage is a technical term which refers to the taking of slaves as sexual partners. Like slavery, the practice was once very common. For example, the Hebrew Bible records that King Solomon had 300 concubines in addition to 700 wives (1 Kings 11:3).

Some scholars argue that an unbiased reading of the Qur’an shows it only allows sexual relations in marriage. However, most pre-modern scholars allowed sexual relations between a female slave and her master, as was the custom of most of the world at that time. A female slave was considered one of the women of the household. She was treated like a wife, though subject to more lenient provisions under Islamic law. (The same was—in theory—not true of male slaves, because of the concern that a child’s father and mother both be known.) Yet, just as with a spouse, mistreatment—which includes physical harm and rape—has never been acceptable in Islamic law. The Prophet (s) said:

There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others.

As we have seen above, the Prophet (s) forbade the mistreatment of slaves. Not only that, but he (s) considered an act as minor as slapping a slave, male or female, to be immediate grounds for setting them free. This contrasts with the brutal mistreatment of women by modern militant groups who call themselves Islamic. In particular, there are many misleading opinions circulating about the treatment of female captives in Islam, especially the view that such captives can be raped. Such an act is forbidden and attracts the heaviest of penalties in Islamic law.

3. Narrated by Muslim and Abū Dāwūd.
LESSON 18

Islam and slavery

Conclusion

It is utterly wrong to say that slavery should continue to exist today. Even if we take the view that slaves were comparatively well treated in Islamic history, they were still not free, and most were separated from their families in tragic circumstances. The Qur’an commands us to end slavery, not increase it. Slavery has now been ended in Islam by consensus, in accordance with the will of God and His Prophet (s). The historical conditions that produced and sustained it should not be reproduced today. To do so is not to follow the example of the Prophet (s) but to disobey it. What Muslims should instead work towards is the ending of modern forms of slavery, including forced labour and human trafficking, in the Muslim world and more broadly.


Comprehension questions

1. Islam was the only pre-modern civilisation to permit slavery. (True/False)

2. According to a hadith, who will be the adversary on the Day of Judgement of one who enslaves a free person?

3. Freeing slaves is mentioned only once in the Qur’an. (True/False)

4. The Prophet (s) considered slapping a slave to be grounds for their immediate freedom. (True/False)

5. Which Muslim dynasty was ruled by an elite class of slaves and former slaves?

6. What is the technical term for the common pre-modern practice of taking slaves as sexual partners?

Discussion questions

1. What was Islam’s response to slavery?

2. Why did the Prophet (s) not abolish slavery immediately?

3. Now that slavery has formally been ended, why is it wrong to ‘turn back the clock’ and seek to revive this practice?
LESSON 18

Islam and slavery

HANDOUT 18.2

Research—slavery in the pre-modern world

The teacher will divide your class into seven groups. Choose one of the following ancient civilisations.

1. Chinese  
2. Indian  
3. Greek  
4. Roman  
5. Hebrew  
6. Persian  
7. Egyptian

Using the internet and whatever other resources you have, find out as much as you can about that civilisation. Try to answer the following questions.

1. How did people become slaves?

2. What proportion of the population were slaves?

3. Could slaves ever become free?

4. How were slaves in general treated?

5. How were female slaves treated?

6. Were the children of slaves also slaves? What if one of their parents was free?

7. Could slaves own property?

8. Did slaves or former slaves ever become rich?

9. How did slavery end in that civilisation?

Choose one person to be the spokesperson to share your findings with the class.
Overview: In this final topic, students will consider Islamophobia as a form of prejudice that affects some Muslims in Australia. Students will share their personal experiences and role play responses to potential incidents, as well as learn how to report an incident and who they can turn to for help if necessary.

Lesson 19: Responding to Islamophobia
LESSON 19

Responding to Islamophobia

Objectives
By the end of the lesson students will have:

- understood how stereotyping occurs in society
- understood the difference between stereotyping and generalisation
- become familiar with some common stereotypes
- demonstrated an understanding of Islamophobia and how it affects the lives of some Muslims
- role played appropriate responses to potential incidents of Islamophobia
- developed a proposal for an activity that will help reduce Islamophobia and the prevalence of harmful stereotypes in society
- applied creative and critical thinking skills.

Resources

Note: No handouts required for this lesson.

Islamophobia: Melissa Boigon at TEDxGallatin 2013: www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8htxQmVybM


Computers with internet access

Islamophobia Register Australia: www.islamophobia.com.au
LESSON 19

Responding to Islamophobia

Activities

1 Introduction. Ask students: Have you ever felt judged because of your identity: maybe because of the way you look, speak, dress or wear your hair? Because of your ethnicity or family background? Or because of where you live, who your friends are or any other characteristic that may have caused others to make snap judgements about you? What happened? How did it make you feel? Why? Ask students to share their experiences (if they are willing).

2 Discuss. As a class discuss the following questions: What is a stereotype? Where do stereotypes come from? What is the difference between a stereotype and a generalisation?

3 Brainstorm. What are some stereotypes that are common in our society? Ask students to come up with a few. Where did these prejudices come from? How can stereotypes be dangerous?

4 Watch. Watch the video Islamophobia: Melissa Boigon at TEDxGallatin 2013. Discuss the following questions: What is Islamophobia? What does it mean to say Islamophobia is ‘racialised’? What is the problem with arguing that Islam is a religion and not a race, and therefore people should have an unlimited right to criticise it?

5 Report. Ask students if they know what to do if they are a victim of Islamophobia. Who do they tell? How do they report it? Give students some time to explore the Islamophobia Register Australia website (www.islamophobia.com.au) and to become familiar with the process of registering an incident. Who else can help?

6 Consider. In light of all the themes discussed so far in the course, how should a Muslim respond if they experience Islamophobia? Watch the video accompanying the article ‘Waleed Aly hits out at ISIS over Paris attacks, calls them weak’. Do students agree with Aly’s recommendation? Why or why not?
LESSON 19

Responding to Islamophobia

Extension activities

In small groups, ask students to come up with a realistic scenario of Islamophobia in a particular context (e.g. in school, a workplace, the neighbourhood, or during leisure activities). Create a role play that shows the incident and an appropriate response to be performed for the class.

In small groups, discuss how Islamophobia can be addressed by organising either a community event or participating in an existing event that celebrates Australia’s diversity (such as Harmony Day). Ask students to develop a proposal for the event or activity, its goals or what it hopes to achieve, and how it could be carried out.

Assessment

Teachers may assess student understanding through the class discussions. Students may perform their role play for the class or submit their plan for an anti-Islamophobia event.
Abdullah Saeed is Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies and Director of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Rowan Gould is a researcher at the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Adis Duderija is a lecturer in Islamic Studies at Griffith University, Australia.