The public discourse in today’s United States, crafted so clearly within a “post-9/11” framework, might lead one to believe that fear of Islam and Muslims is a reaction to the 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, DC. This historical amnesia ignores America’s long history of discomfort with religious traditions that feel “foreign” to the majority culture during particular periods in the country’s development. Despite the intentions of the country’s founders to establish a nation that afforded every individual the right to practice their religion free from fear of persecution by the state, reality all too often has shown us a very different picture. One needs only to scratch the surface of the historical record to reveal evidence of Islamophobia long before 9/11, or evidence of prejudice against adherents of “other” faiths (including Catholicism; see p. 8) seen as not being native to the United States. This perceived “foreign-ness” links negative associations with immigration, often with disastrous social results for immigrants, whether recent or of previous generations. As a nation ostensibly created and built by immigrants, this history is very troubling indeed.

Now more than ever, as America remains engaged in wars in the Muslim world and as we have recently witnessed a renewed controversy over the building of the so-called “Ground-Zero Mosque,” it is imperative that we address the stereotypes and phobias of Islam and Muslims that permeate our culture and reach into American homes and classrooms. The essays that follow address many of these myths and stereotypes that continue to plague the media, national and local politics. They also provide tools and resources for discussing some of these very tough issues with your students.

Five Myths About Mosques in America
By Edward E. Curtis IV
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

In addition to spawning passionate debates in the public, the news media and the political class, the proposal to build a Muslim community center near Ground Zero in New York has revealed widespread misconceptions about the practice of Islam in this country -- and the role of mosques in particular.

1. MOSQUES ARE NEW TO THIS COUNTRY.

Mosques have been here since the colonial era. A mosque, or masjid, is literally any place where Muslims make salat, the prayer performed in the direction of Mecca; it needn’t be a building. One of the first mosques in North American history was on Kent Island, Md.: Between 1731 and 1733, African American Muslim slave and Islamic scholar Job Ben Solomon, a cattle...
Dear MEOC Members and Perspectives Readers,

Thank you for allowing me to serve proudly as MEOC President for two terms. It is extremely satisfying to pass the reins to Barbara Petzen, one of the top Middle East outreach specialists in the country. She will continue to dazzle us with her energy and to seek new and creative ways for MEOC members to reach even more educators and students.

I am particularly pleased with the MEOC travel awards that have been implemented during my presidency. A 2009 recipient summarized the impact of the award: “…the Middle East Outreach Council is an incredible resource for teachers. I am excited to pursue further activities with the organization, and feel fortunate for the travel grant I received. The weekend in Boston enriched my teaching and my life”.

This edition of Perspectives tackles a difficult challenge in Middle East outreach—that of reducing persistent stereotypes. We have found countless ways to educate about the ethnic and religious diversity in the Middle East. Yet, hateful attitudes and negative events blur student perceptions and threaten to erase any progress we may feel. As educators, we best fight fear and divisiveness by arming students with knowledge and understanding.

Thanks to our courageous editor and contributors for presenting these complicated issues and providing resources for classroom use. We hope that readers will share additional resources and teaching strategies on these subjects through the MEOC listserv. MEOC and you do make a difference.

Jean Campbell
Outgoing MEOC President

I take on the helm of MEOC with a great deal of excitement and no little trepidation—Jean Campbell has left very large (and eminently sensible!) shoes to fill. We have a number of exciting challenges ahead, which we can meet largely because her good stewardship and foresight leave us in such excellent shape.

The first challenge before us is continuing to adapt to the increasingly online and tech-savvy world around us and in the classroom. Our new website at www.meoc.us offers a more interactive interface to users, along with great content—and hopefully, soon, a lot more of it! The new gallery is stocked with open-copyright images teachers can use in the classroom, a blog replete with new resources and teaching ideas, and pages for our institutional members to showcase all their curricular resources, study tours and outreach events. We will continue to develop the site as we move forward, and welcome all suggestions for making it more comprehensive and useful.

As we augment the supply side of our outreach endeavor, we will also address the demand side—the educators who need and use our resources. We will be working very hard to let more teachers know about what MEOC and its members can offer them, and bring them into closer community with us and with one another. At a time when knowledge of the Middle East and Muslims is so critical for all Americans, MEOC will continue to provide teachers with the best possible methods and tools to develop it.

Barbara Petzen
Incoming MEOC President
**Mosques Continued from p. 1**

driver, would regularly steal away to the woods there for his prayers -- in spite of a white boy who threw dirt on him as he made his prostrations.

The Midwest was home to the greatest number of permanent U.S. mosques in the first half of the 20th century. In 1921, Sunni, Shiite and Ahmadi Muslims in Detroit celebrated the opening of perhaps the first purpose-built mosque in the nation. Funded by real estate developer Muhammad Karoub, it was just blocks away from Henry Ford’s Highland Park automobile factory, which employed hundreds of Arab American men.

Most Midwestern mosques blended into their surroundings. The temples or mosques of the Nation of Islam -- an indigenous form of Islam led by Elijah Muhammad from 1934 to 1975 -- were often converted storefronts and churches. In total, mosques numbered perhaps slightly more than 100 nationwide in 1970. In the last three decades of the 20th century, however, more than 1 million new Muslim immigrants came to the United States and, in tandem with their African American co-religionists, opened hundreds more mosques. Today there are more than 2,000 places of Muslim prayer, most of them mosques, in the United States.

According to recent Pew and Gallup polls, about 40 percent of Muslim Americans say they pray in a mosque at least once a week, nearly the same percentage of American Christians who attend church weekly. About a third of all U.S. Muslims say they seldom or never go to mosques. And contrary to stereotypes of mosques as male-only spaces, Gallup finds that women are as likely as men to attend.

2. **MOSQUES TRY TO SPREAD SHARIA LAW IN THE UNITED STATES.**

In Islam, sharia (“the Way” to God) theoretically governs every human act. But Muslims do not agree on what sharia says; there is no one sharia book of laws. Sometimes referred to as Islamic law and ethics, the sharia includes not only the Koran and the Sunna (the traditions of the prophet Muhammad) but also great bodies of arcane legal rulings and pedantic scholarly interpretations. If mosques insisted that their congregants study all of the sharia, most Muslims would probably leave -- just as most Christians might walk out of the pews if preachers gave sermons exclusively on Saint Augustine, canon law and Greek grammar.

Most mosques in the United States teach only those parts of the sharia having to do with religious rituals and obligations—how to pray, how to fast, how much to give to charity, etc. They do not teach the part of the sharia having to do with criminal law, like the interpretations of sharia that result in cruel punishments of adulterers and thieves. Few Muslim Americans advocate a sharia-based theocracy. Instead, most Muslim Americans insist that democracy is the most Islamic system of governance available in the world today.

3. **MOSQUES ARE FUNDED BY GROUPS AND GOVERNMENTS UNFRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES.**

There certainly have been instances in which foreign funds, especially from Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf region, have been used to build mosques in the United States. The Saudi royal family, for example, reportedly gave $8 million for the building of the King Fahd Mosque, which was inaugurated in 1998 in Culver City, a Los Angeles suburb.

But the vast majority of mosques are supported by Muslim Americans themselves. Domestic funding reflects the desire of many U.S. Muslims to be independent of overseas influences. Long before Sept. 11, 2001, in the midst of a growing clash of interests between some Muslim-majority nations and the U.S. government -- during the Persian Gulf War, for instance -- Muslim American leaders decided that they must draw primarily from U.S. sources of funding for their projects.

5. **MOSQUES LEAD TO HOMEGROWN TERRORISM.**

To the contrary, mosques have become typical American religious institutions. In addition to worship services, most U.S. mosques hold weekend classes for children, offer charity to the poor, provide counseling services and conduct interfaith programs.

No doubt, some mosques have encouraged radical extremism. Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian sheik who inspired the World Trade Center’s first attackers in 1993, operated out of the Al-Salam mosque in Jersey City, N.J. But after the 2001 attacks, such radicalism was largely pushed out of mosques and onto the Internet, mainly because of a renewed commitment among mosque leaders to confront extremism.

There is a danger that as anti-Muslim prejudice increases -- as it has recently in reaction to the proposed community center near Ground Zero -- alienated young Muslims will turn away from the peaceful path advocated by their elders in America’s mosques. So far, that has not happened on a large scale.

Through their mosques, U.S. Muslims are embracing the community involvement that is a hallmark of the American experience. In this light, mosques should be welcomed as premier sites of American assimilation, not feared as incubators of terrorist indoctrination.

Edward E. Curtis IV is millennium chair of liberal arts and Professor of Religious Studies and American Studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. He is the author of “Muslims in America: A Short History” and the editor of the “Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History.”
The Middle East as Seen Through Foreign Eyes

By Alex Barna
The University of Chicago

Teaching about the Middle East, Arabs, Muslims, or Islam in a contemporary high school or college classroom presents certain pedagogical challenges. Rather than accepting and internalizing new information imparted to them about the culture and history of this region of southwestern Asia, it is apparent that negative perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes can condition students to reject or deny the validity of truth-claims incongruent with their own. As Walter Lippmann keenly observed in Public Opinion (1922), "The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event." Thus, in the context of education it is imperative of teachers to determine what their students think they know in order to understand their beliefs and build a basis for mutual understanding.

To understand the term "stereotype" in its current usage, it is instructive to turn again to Lippmann. He defined "stereotype" as a "distorted picture or image in a person's mind, not based on personal experience, but derived culturally." Lippmann reasoned that the formation of stereotypes is driven by social, political, and economic motivations, and as they are passed from one generation to the next, they can become quite pervasive and resistant to change. Historically, state actors have mobilized stereotypes in service of the social process that Lippmann calls "the manufacture of consent." For instance, in times of war or economic hardship, governments and political parties have used stereotypes to reconfigure ethical landscapes and delineate new boundaries separating protagonists (the "in-group") from antagonists (the "out-group" or "enemy").

Taked to a logical extreme, this sort of us-versus-them polarization ultimately enables members of the in-group to tolerate or even rationalize harming members of the perceived out-group.

Two other uses of stereotypes are worth noting, one psychological and the other epistemological. The psychological construction of a polar-opposite foil provides a scapegoat onto which members of an in-group project or transfer the qualities within their society they find unacceptable or intolerable. This mental endeavor has an epistemological payoff. By creating a foil and ascribing to it a set of determinable characteristics, a member of the in-group acquires "knowledge" of the out-group, which aids him or her in reducing a menacing, unpredictable, and unknown entity down to a more simple, predictable, and knowable adversary. Lippmann provides a helpful description of all three uses of stereotypes in the following passage:

"The system of stereotypes may be the core of our personal tradition, the defenses of our position in society. They may not be a complete picture of the world, but they are a picture of a possible world to which are adapted. In that world people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things. We feel at home there. No wonder, then, that any disturbance of the stereotypes seems like an attack upon the foundations of the universe. [The pattern of stereotypes] is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position, and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defense we can continue to feel ourselves safe in positions we occupy."

Rooted in ignorance, misconceptions, and negative images and attitudes, the stereotype provides a distorted mental picture or set of images that develop through reductionism into prejudice, bias, and eventually racism. Two powerful, related rhetorical tropes, synecdoche and metonymy, are involved in
In the beginning we create the enemy. Before the weapon of the psychology of homo hostilis, Sam Keen observes, discovered a number of enemy “Others” within. In his exploration, it appears that alongside those threatening us from abroad, we have crimes against minority ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. It is conditioned to view Muslims as uncivilized and violent brutes which range from the enemy as an unchristian and violent brute force to the enemy as insects or vermin. The application of Keen’s categories to materials pertaining to the Middle East and wider Islamic world reveals that American popular imagination has, to a certain degree, been conditioned to view Muslims as “the enemy” and Islam as the political and moral equivalent of communism and European fascism. It is further apparent that this material and the perceptions it engenders are encountered in every segment of American culture: the press, journals of opinion, literature, electronic news and entertainment media, religious institutions, government, and education.

Through recent developments in telecommunications—the internet, 24-hour news channels—and through the fear and insecurity instilled by the terrorist attacks of September 11, new venues and new motivations have emerged for propagating negative stereotypes of Islam and the Middle East. However, material now accessible on the World Wide Web or beamed in by satellite has remained consistent with the words and images disseminated prior to the appearance of these new technologies. On the Internet and in the 24-hour news cycle, Keen’s typology remains valid.
Beyond Stereotypes of Muslims in America
From Humor and Hollywood to Piety and Fashion
By Greta Scharnweber, New York University

The following are a few fascinating online, print, and film resources that would help support extension activities in the classroom.

30 Mosques in 30 States
www.30mosques.com
Beginning August 11 in New York City, Aman Ali and Bassam Tariq spent each night of Ramadan at a different mosque in 30 states around the United States. The two’s 12,000 mile route took them on an outline of the entire country and concluded in Dearborn, Michigan – home to one of the largest concentrations of Muslims in the country. Aman and Bassam blogged about their experience each night, sharing photographs of significant moments and landmarks, highlighting stories about the people they met, and the mosques they prayed in and of course the tasty cuisines each place had to offer.

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
www.cair.com
CAIR’s mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. They have a free download that may be of interest: An Educator’s Guide to Islamic Religious Practices, which is an excellent introduction to Islamic religious practices for educators and school administrators. This guide is a tool to promote diversity and accommodate Muslims students in educational institutions. http://www.cair.com/AboutIslam/PublicationDownloads.aspx

Teach Mideast: An Educational Initiative of the Middle East Policy Council
www.teachmideast.org
TeachMideast is a website designed for K-12 educators featuring a plethora of innovative new resources on the Middle East and Islam. The site includes essays, classroom activities, downloadable multimedia content and interactive Google Earth tours. Includes thematic content on stereotyping.

A Land Called Paradise
Directed by Lena Khan
http://www.linktv.org/video/2944
In December 2007, over 2,000 American Muslims were asked what they would wish to say to the rest of the world. Their responses form the backdrop for a music video for Muslim American country singer Kareem Salama’s “A Land Called Paradise.” The video won the LinkTV grand prize for the One Nation, Many Voices: Muslims in America/Stories not Stereotypes amateur film contest.

Pictures of Muslims Wearing Things
Muslims Dressed in Their Garb
http://muslimswearingthings.tumblr.com/
In response to mass media suggestions that one can identify Muslims based on what they wear or look like, here a blogger posts pictures of Muslims wearing all sorts of things in an attempt to refute that there is such a thing as “Muslim garb” or a Muslim look.

Council on Islamic Education (CIE)
www.cie.org
CIE’s mission is to support and strengthen American public education as the best foundation for a vibrant democracy, a healthy civil society, and a globally literate citizenry. They have a number of excellent downloadable lesson plans for teachers about Islam, Muslims, and related issues.

Above: Ross, North Dakota is home to one of the first mosques that was ever built in the United States. A Syrian farmer by the name of Hassan Juma immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Ross in the late 1800s. More Syrians came into town shortly after and the community built a mosque in 1929 after spending years praying in each other’s basements. It was later demolished in the 1970s but there’s a Muslim cemetery nearby where many of the original community members are buried. In 2005, a new mosque was built on the same land as the original mosque. Photo courtesy of 30mosques.com.

Below: Lena Khan’s whimsical and poignant video “A Land Called Paradise” shows the diversity, sincerity, and humor of Muslims in the U.S. Photo courtesy of LinkTV.
Allah Made Me Funny
www.allahmademefunny.com
This landmark concert film follows three acclaimed comedians on stage and off as they lift the veil to reveal the humorous truth of what it's really like to be Muslim in America. Mo Amer, Azhar Usman, and Preacher Moss poke fun at themselves, their communities, government, human nature and the tricky predicament of living in post-9/11 America. Featuring music of rising indie scene artists, Allah Made Me Funny: Live in Concert is rollicking good fun and gives people of all cultural backgrounds an opportunity to laugh hard, drop their guard and open their minds.

Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Villifies a People
www.reelbadarabs.com
This documentary film dissects a slanderous aspect of cinematic history that has run virtually unchallenged from the earliest days of silent film to today's biggest Hollywood blockbusters. Featuring acclaimed author Dr. Jack Shaheen, the film explores a long line of degrading images of Arabs and Muslims—from Bedouin bandits and submissive maidens to sinister sheikhs and gun-wielding “terrorists”—along the way offering devastating insights into the origin of these stereotypic images, their development at key points in US history, and why they matter so much today.

Park 51
http://blog.park51.org/
Ubiquitously referred to as “The Ground Zero Mosque,” Park51 states its mission to be “a nonsectarian community, cultural and interfaith spiritual center along with a Muslim prayer area and a monument to the those lost on 9/11.” Their stated goals are pluralism, service, arts and culture, health and healing. Have your students read through Park 51’s blog to assess for themselves the perspectives and desires of the developers of the building.

Middle Eastern American Resources Online
www.mearo.org
MEARO provides educators, students, and professionals access to a variety of materials about Americans who trace their ancestry to the Middle East. Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish-speaking immigrants and other smaller numeric groups from the Middle East and North Africa have settled in the United States since the late 19th century. Together with their descendants, they comprise a diverse and important multiethnic community deserving attention and study, especially in America’s precollegiate schools and institutions of higher learning.

How Does it Feel to Be a Problem?
Being Young and Arab in America
http://moustafabayoumi.com/
Just over a century ago, W.E.B. Du Bois posed a probing question in his classic The Souls of Black Folk: “How does it feel to be a problem?” he asked. Today, Arab and Muslim Americans, the newest minorities in the American imagination, are the latest “problem” of American society, and their answers to Du Bois’s question increasingly define what being American means today. In a wholly revealing portrait of a community that lives next door and yet a world away, Moustafa Bayoumi introduces us to the individual lives of seven twenty-something men and women living in Brooklyn, home to the largest number of Arab Americans in the United States. Through telling real stories about young people in Brooklyn, Bayoumi jettisons the stereotypes and clichés that constantly surround Arabs and Muslims and allows us instead to enter their worlds and experience their lives.

Above: Yemeni-Americans youths at a family owned business in Delano, California. Their immigrant experience and life and times are part of a high school curriculum unit available on MEARO in January 2011. Photo Courtesy of Jonathan Friedlander.

Above: Characters from children’s cartoons often play an important role in stereotypes (Alladin still from Reel Bad Arabs Press Kit).
Teaching about Religious Phobia in the United States

By Joan Brodsky Schur, Village Community School

The vilification of the “religious other” is nothing new in America and in fact has a long history. This lesson is designed to shed perspective on the sources and nature of today’s anti-Islam rhetoric by looking back to a period of virulent anti-Catholicism in United States history. It rose to prominence in the 1850s as a response to the influx of huge numbers of Irish immigrants and was spearheaded by the No Nothing Party. The party’s anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant stance can be compared to other anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic movements in that they all share the belief that — through religion — foreign powers are trying by stealth to take over America. All aspects of the “other” religion are seen as categorically inimical to American democracy, by the very nature of the religion itself.

To start the lesson, distribute the document below without giving students or eliciting from them any historical background. Simply tell students that the document was written about some religion at some point in time in America. Explain that in this version of the document the name of the religion is replaced by an “X.” (To avoid confusion the words Republic and Republican have been changed in various places to read nation, democracy and form of government.)

BOUND TO SERVE THEIR RELIGION BEFORE THE COUNTRY

We must not let this fact go by — members of Religion X are bound to serve their Religion before their Country. What is the practical and inevitable result of such a system in this country? Why that every member of Religion X stands committed as an enemy to the Nation. In such a character, base as it is — reeking all over, soaked all through with a religion that countenances crime; with principles that are shocked at no extremity of corruption — their whole effect is to pull down democracy and bolster up Religion X. This it does. It is seen. The thing is plain. It can’t be otherwise. A man who is an adherent of Religion X is not a believer in democracy. He can’t be. Calling fish, flesh, don’t make it so. Hence whatever is told you of Religion X as favorable to all that is American, put no faith in it. [A leader] of Religion X says America must be crushed—and all political commentators of any note or weight, agree that if it is ever crushed, it will be by Religion X.

Let us remember these matters. Let us regard every member of Religion X as an enemy to the country—and so treat him. He is nothing else.…

Things Which [Religious Leaders] and all True Followers of Religion X Hate:
They HATE our form of government, and are trying to overthrow it.
They HATE the American Flag, and it offends them beyond endurance.
They HATE liberty of conscience.
They HATE the liberty of the press.
They HATE the liberty of speech.
They HATE our Public School system.
They HATE the Bible, and would blot it out of existence if they could!

The full document in its original form can be found at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=446. It was published by the Know Nothing Party and American Crusader on July 29, 1854.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

• Name the religion that you think is being so avidly attacked in this newspaper?
• What makes you think so? Point to specific words and phrases to defend your answer.
• Does the newspaper attack some, most or all of the followers of Religion X?
• In the article, what do we learn about Religion X, its practices and beliefs?
• What is the reasoning behind the attack on this particular religion?
• What factual evidence is presented to convince the reader that all members of Religion X are anti-American?
• Do you find this piece of writing convincing? Why or why not?

DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

After you disclose the actual name of Religion X (Catholicism) and the date of the primary source document (1854) pose the following questions:

• What made some students think Religion X was Islam?
• How would you feel if similar things were said about you on the basis of your faith?
• Is it surprising today to discover that some Americans felt Catholics threatened America’s founding principles? If so, why is it surprising? (Note: Today there are more Catholic members of Congress than there are members belonging to any other faith.)
• What other organizations espoused anti-Catholic, as well as anti-Semitic views? (KKK, John Birch Society, etc)
• What was happening in U.S. history during the 1850s that made Protestant Americans fear the influx of Catholic immigrants? What was happening in the 1920s that made Americans fear the wave of Jewish immigration? Direct students to their textbooks or other sources for answers.
• According to R. Scott Appleby and John T. McGreevy (New York Review of Books, September 30, 2010) the imam of the proposed Islamic center in downtown Manhattan, Feisal Abdul Rauf, “claims, correctly, that the vast majority of the nation’s Muslims abhor al-Qaeda.” Why then are there Americans who fear Muslim Americans in general? What role does...
anti-Islamic rhetoric play?
• How much do you think Americans know about the religion Muslims practice, the second largest world religion?
• How would you feel if you were a Muslim in America today (or how do you feel if you are one)?

For a very good short comparison of religious intolerance in America towards Catholics and Muslims, see “Catholics, Muslims, and the Mosque” by R. Scott Appleby and John T. McGreevy (New York Review of Books, September 30, 2010 p.48). In their article the authors discuss the ways in which Catholicism as practiced in America has evolved over time as a result of Catholics’ experience in the United States: “the American acceptance and encouragement of Catholic parishes and schools, once seen as threatening, reshaped an international religious institution” they write.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Some students will grasp the power of imagery more readily than words. Therefore distribute the anti-Catholic cartoon from 1875 entitled “The American River Ganges.” Here Thomas Nast depicts the Roman Catholic clergy as crocodiles invading the shores of America to devour America’s students. Catholicism is seen as a threat to the separation of church and state as the public school sends out a signal of distress.

To help students deconstruct the meaning of this cartoon for themselves, distribute the Cartoon Analysis Worksheet from the National Archives http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/cartoon.html. For more information about the cartoon go to HarpWeek http://www.harpweek.com/09cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=May&Date=8.

How can we learn to identify Islamophobia? In Great Britain the Runnymede Trust, an independent think tank, generated this definition in 1997 which has been widely accepted in Europe. It can be accessed at Islamophobia Watch http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/

1) Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change. 2) Islam is seen as separate and ‘other’. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them. 3) Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist. 4) Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a ‘clash of civilizations’. 5) Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage. 6) Criticisms made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand. 7) Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society. 8) Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.

Distribute this document to students. Ask students which of these definitions could be applied to the anti-Catholic primary sources used in this lesson if you substituted the word Catholicism for Islam.

Now ask students to apply the Runnymede definition to various anti-Islamic comments made by commentators, much of it in response to the proposed Islamic center in lower Manhattan. Some of the biased and untruthful statements prevalent in the media can be found online at Media Watch http://www.medialwatch.com/, the Southern Poverty Law Center http://www.splcenter.org/, and Islamophobia Watch http://www.islamophobia-watch.com/.

For information about Islam and how citizens are reacting to the rhetoric of hate go to http://www.groundzerodialogue.org/
Julia Banzi writes that the 2010 Independent Music Awards Program are officially over. Tarik Banzi, Moroccan Oud play, composer and founder of the Al-Andalus Ensemble (www.Andalus.com) with MEOC member Julia Banzi and Grammy violinist Charlie Basharat took home the Vox Pop Award for “Best Contemporary Classical Album of 2010.” The winning album “21 Strings” features oud, violin and guitar. The Ensemble won the Peoples Grammy Award for “Best World Music Song of 2009.” It was selected from over 560,000 songs entered from 163 countries around the world in what is the world’s largest Independent Music Awards. The Al-Andalus Ensemble offers a highly educational and interactive program of music and dance for students that is uniquely relevant in today’s world. This performance masterpiece by world renowned professional artists offers a different view of Middle Eastern cultures, employing approaches that counter negative and distorted stereotypes of Arabs. The program was awarded the California ArtsBridge award for “Best in Creative and Complete Planning for Teaching Arts in the Public Schools.” Please contact Julia Banzi (banzi@andalus.com) to bring Al-Andalus to your school.

Trish Becker-Hafnor tells us that SAGE (Studies Abroad for Global Education) is offering an Educator Study Tour to the Middle East June 15 – 25, 2011. The program is for educators with first-hand exposure to and interaction with the people, culture, history and educational systems of the Middle East—Muslim, Christian and Jewish—in order to break down stereotypes and misconceptions about the region. The program will include visits to both public and private local primary and secondary schools in Jordan and Israel, as well as major historic sites in the region (Petra, Jerusalem, Dead Sea, et al.). Participants will stay at King’s Academy, an independent residential boarding school in Jordan, for part of the tour, and engage with students over breakfast and lunch, sit-in on classes, meet and exchange ideas with other teachers (both local and expatriate) and attend lectures. Visits to historic sites—including mosques, churches and synagogues—will focus on the shared monotheistic traditions of the peoples of the Middle East, and place the Arab-Israeli conflict into historical perspective. For more information, contact us at info@sageprogram.org.

Paul Beran informs us that The Outreach Center at CMES-Harvard University provides assistance to K-12 teachers, their students and the general public on topics related to the Middle East region and Muslim communities. They also help to develop similar content on campus and take it off campus. They have organized workshops on Human Rights and Global Education, Hip Hop in the Middle East and Africa as well as co-led a Fulbright Hayes program to Egypt and Tanzania. They continued with their Egypt Forum program of teacher workshops which drew teachers from all around New England. New programs this year focus on Islamophobia, through a campus wide teach-in that was filmed (http://cmes.hmdc.harvard.edu/outreach/graphic_novel_book_group). With other NRCS on campus we will host events for International Education Week in November.

Amber Blomquist of the University of Michigan writes that During 2009-10 much of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS) programming was focused on a grant we received from the SSRC. The purpose of this grant was to engage the public on the subject of Islam and Muslims in world contexts. The proposed grant theme was “Muslims and Islam in Michigan and Beyond.” CMENAS worked in conjunction with NPR’s Michigan Radio to produce a series of radio pieces, a community forum, and website about local Muslims from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Two of the radio stories received more than 4000 hits in April comprising two of the top five Michigan Radio downloads that month. All of these features are available at the website: muslimmichigan.org. A short documentary about the partnership and project was produced for the Big Ten Student Network and is available on YouTube Out of the Blue (www.oob.tv). Another video piece is being produced based on the community forum and has already been requested by schools as far away as Australia, as well as from local businesses such as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Jean Campbell informs us that the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University is honored to have received federal funding and designation as a National Resource Center. They will expand outreach activities throughout their large state, offer annual summer institutes, and more. Highlights of activities are: A teacher workshop, Persian Empire to Contemporary Iran, held in conjunction with the annual Iranian Festival. Speakers included keynote Jonathan Friedlander, UCLA, Iranian and Other Middle Eastern Americans, and Khodi Kaviani, Central Washington University, on Iranian school curriculum and teaching about the nuclear issue. MESC co-sponsored a first Arab Cultural and Music Festival at Portland’s Lincoln High School which has introduced Arabic language classes. At the Oregon Council for the Social Studies conference, MESC had an exhibits table and Terrie Chrones, Cresswell High School, and Jean Campbell presented on Making Connections through Time and Place with Middle East Art. Jean participated in the Middle East Outreach exhibits booth at the National Council for the Social Studies conference and MESC co-sponsored the MEOC teacher workshop at the MESA conference.

Cynthia Douglass of the University of Utah Middle East Center Outreach Program tells us that this year’s International Seminar will focus on the country of Morocco - a country of great historical significance, rich in ancient and modern culture. They will look at its rich music and art traditions and practices, world religions in the curriculum, recent scholarship on cultural interactions through trade, arts and sciences, as well as global Muslim population and contemporary issues. Teachers receive a resource CD and attendance certificate. Lunch is provided free for full-day workshops! The presenter is ACMCU’s Education Consultant, Susan Douglass, who has published numerous books, articles, print and online teaching resources. For details and workshop request forms visit http://acmcu.georgetown.edu/workshops or e-mail SusanD@cmcuworkshops.net.

Jonathan Friedlander tells us that MEARO (Middle Eastern American Resources Online) received a grant from the American Institute for Yemeni Studies to develop a curriculum module on Yemeni American youth geared for English Language Arts for middle school and high school. The lessons focus on the study of Yemeni American teenagers living in the agricultural heartland of California’s San Joaquin Valley. The teens talk about upbringing in Yemen and America, education, employment, and careers, family and religion, and social life. The module is designed to provide students with the skills and know-how to conduct interviews and oral histories and concurrently to demystify Islam and frame it in the context of American society and culture. This forthcoming unit is part of a larger curricula on Middle Eastern Americans found on the MEARO website. Two other modules are also available: on the immigration and assimilation of Middle Easterners from 1875-1925, geared for middle schools, and on the immigration of Middle Easterners in the post-1965 era and discrimination in the aftermath of 9/11, geared for high schools. To access the curriculum go to www.mearo.org.

Lora LeMosy writes that The Programs in International Educational Resources at the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University underwent reorganization in July 2010. PIER Outreach is now led by Minjin Hashbat, on behalf of the Councils on
African Studies, European Studies, Latin American and Iberian Studies, Middle East Studies, and in collaboration with East Asian Studies. Our programs will continue under Ms. Hashbat, and in cooperation with the staff and faculty of the Councils. In 2010-11, Yale PIER Outreach is collaborating with the greater New Haven area public schools to bring Arabic language and culture to students. We are also organizing a summer institute and educational trip to Turkey, joint with University of Michigan, to provide public school teachers information about Turkey’s history, culture, and contemporary events. PIER-CMES is also participating in a Middle East National Resource Center. Information will be circulated in the early spring. For information about PIER-CMES, contact Minjin Hashbat at minjin.hashbat@yale.edu or 203-432-3412.

At Friends Seminary, Anna Swank Bothwell and Bram Hubbell are continuing to find new ways to expose high school students and teachers to the Middle East. In the summer, we both taught in Columbia’s Understanding the Arab World summer program for high school students, which included a series of visits to offices and classes in Jordan. Next summer, we will extend the students’ stay in Jordan to include more diverse experiences. A Middle East studies elective is being offered to Seniors for the sixth year in a row. There are now three separate levels of Arabic instruction for high school students, as well as an Arab culture class for middle school students. We also have added a new Arab culture club for high school students to learn more about the region. This spring, we will collaborate with Greta Scharnweber of NYU and Friends of the Earth Middle East to take a group of teachers across disciplines at Friends Seminary to the Jordan River Valley to explore water issues.

Joan Litman (Music faculty, United Nations International School) is spending the academic year in Damascus, Syria where she continues to collect folk and traditional songs and learn (and enjoy) amateur practice performance.

John Parcels informs us that The Southeast Regional Middle East Seminars (SERMEISS) will hold a conference March 18-20, 2011, at Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia. For program and registration materials, contact John Parcels at sermeiss@georgiasouthern.edu.

The Middle East Policy Council’s education program, TeachMideast, has been presenting a full schedule of tailor-made professional development workshops across the country, including a series of workshops for Advanced Placement teachers in Texas this summer, a week with Denver Area Global Studies Symposium schools, several workshops on food and geography and many more. TeachMideast has partnered with the Abd el-Kader Education Project to resurrect the memory of the Algerian emir who fought against French colonial control of his country, and then, in exile, worked to promote intercultural peace and saved thousands of Christians in Damascus in 1860. TeachMideast has created a Cookies in Earth biography and a set of document-based questions on Abd el-Kader on our website at http://www.teachmideast.org/projects.

Education Director Barbara Petzen also attended a global conference on education reform in Bahrain, and took advantage of the opportunity to begin work on a curriculum project on the culture and society of Bahrain, which will be promulgated on the TeachMideast website in the near future.

James Ryan writes that The Middle East Center at the University of Pennsylvania is happy to begin a new year of outreach activities in the Philadelphia area. We have co-sponsored a number of events at local schools, including a special event that brought CUNY Professor of English and author of How Does It Feel to Be a Problem: Being Young and Arab in America Moustafa Bayoumi to Germantown Friends School and Northeast High School. We are opening a pilot Arabic class at Agnes Irwin School starting in October. The 6-month program will feature weekend classes in beginner Arabic and arts education open to all students and organized in partnership with Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture. We are also excited to announce our Fulbright Group Project Abroad for the Summer of 2011 entitled “American Issues in a Global Context: Turkey in the World,” a 6-week seminar for K-12 teachers and administrators taking place in Istanbul, Ankara and Eastern Turkey focusing on new methods of globalizing American Civics education. For more information on these programs contact James Ryan at jramyrey@upenn.edu.

Alex Safos tells us that Global Learning Across Borders (Global LAB) customizes 2-4 week cultural tours of Morocco for students or educators with a group minimum of 10 participants. Interested institutions are encouraged to contact us. Global LAB is also accepting applications for its spring 2011 tours. The 2011 Morocco tour will be for students aged 16-22—especially appealing to “gap/interim/bridge” year students taking time off between high school and college. This cultural immersion program will take place from mid-February to mid-May and include: Moroccan Arabic (“darja”) language instruction; home-stays; service-learning; cultural lectures and roundtables; trekking; and independent study projects. Fes, Marrakech, The High Atlas Mountains, The Tinerhir Oasis and Todra Gorge, The Sahara, Chefchaouen, Es saouira, Rabat, Asilah, Tangier, and Casablanca are among the diverse locales students will experience. Participants enjoy comprehensive multi-week survey before a week-long conclusion in Andalucia, Spain. For program details, visit www.global-lab.org. Candidates interested in Moroccan semester leader positions, send a resume and cover letter to info@global-lab.org. Moroccan Arabic or French language proficiency, country knowledge, and prior experiential education with young adults are required.”

Joan Brodsky Schur is the instructor for the Bank Street College course Cultural Explorations in Morocco: Implications for Educators in Multicultural Settings held in Rabat and once a week in April 16-24. Through visits to elementary and secondary schools in both rural and urban settings, and discussions with prominent authorities in education and culture from Moroccan universities, participants will gain a greater understanding of Arab culture as experienced in Morocco. If you are interested contact studyabroad@bankstreet.edu or 212/875-4707 to be added to the 2011 mailing list. At the NCSS conference in Denver Joan will present a workshop with Karima Alavi entitled Baghdad’s Grand Medieval Bazaar: How They Influenced Renaissance Art. For more information about Joan and her work: www.joanbrodskyschur.com

Zeina Azzam Seikaly writes that the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University has a busy fall line-up of workshops on “Exploring Arabic Music: The Maqam Tradition,” with Riad Abdel-Gawad (9/28/2010); “Islamic Law and the Muslim Community,” with Felicita Opwis, Sera Scalenghe, Jonathan Brown, and Imam Yahya Hendi (10/29/2010); and “New Approaches to Teaching Ancient Civilizations,” with author-illustrator David Weitzman (11/6/2010). MA in Arab Studies students are giving presentations at a local school about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and we are consulting with Arabic teachers in the area about infusing Arab world cultural content into their curricula. Plans for the spring semester include a workshop on migration in the Middle East (date TBA) and work on Arabic choral music for elementary and middle schools. For additional information or get on the e-mail list, please contact Audrey Shabbas at audreyshabbas@gmail.com.

AWAIR, the organization Audrey Shabbas and colleagues founded 21 years ago, is closing its doors. Items on its website: www.awaironline.org are 25% off at this time. But Audreay is still busy. She and longtime colleague Carol El-Shaieb are taking a study tour up to Mali and the Republic of Mauritania to do an intensive 2-week survey of Garifuna communities. The focus of the survey will be the Timbuktu manuscripts and its manuscripts, but the whole of Mali is included in this 20 day trip. Email Audrey for details: audreyshabbas@gmail.com. February 24-March 15th...Looking for seven to accompany them...cost $4300 including air from JFK, all meals, and details. Audrey is also finishing a curriculum on the Timbuktu manuscripts and doing teacher workshop on this topic.

Perspectives editor Greta Scharnweber writes that the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University has a very busy Fall with teacher’s workshops on Arab Cinema, Labor and Migration in the Middle East, and Afghanistan. Over the summer, Kevorkian hosted two summer institutes, one with the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) on Running Dry: Water and the Middle East, and the other entitled The Multilayered Lives of Muslim Women. About 80 teachers participated in these workshops. Also new this year was a cultural tour to Spain. For program details, visit www.global-lab.org. Candidates interested in Moroccan semester leader positions, send a resume and cover letter to info@global-lab.org. Moroccan Arabic or French language proficiency, country knowledge, and prior experiential education with young adults are required.”

John Stanik, MEOC secretary, is the 12th-grade social studies instructor at New Era Academy, a public 6-12 school in Baltimore, where he teaches AP European History and an elective course on the history of the Middle East. His students also participate in the National High School Model Arab League Program, where they simulate the actions of diplomats in the Arab world. He also teaches the history of the Middle East at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland. He traveled independently to Egypt last summer and will again travel to the Middle East in 2011.
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