

Beyond Islam: Understanding the Muslim World

Introduction

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In the winter of 2005, the World Affairs Council Global Classroom began a series of programs to help teachers prepare to go “beyond Islam” as we hear about it in the news (mostly equated with terrorism) to understand Muslim peoples and cultures around the world. The series, offered in conjunction with the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington, explored Muslims in Central Asia, China, Malaysia, and Pakistan. From these programs a group of educators signed on to create new curriculum materials on several areas of the world that would continue this focus on understanding Muslim cultures beyond the main conflict spots in the world. This new series of curriculum from the World Affairs Council Global Classroom is the result of their work.

The goal of *Beyond Islam: Understanding the Muslim World* is to promote high school and community college education on the Muslim world that informs youth about the cultures, educational systems, economic systems, governments, and other aspects of life that allow for a richer, more textured understanding of people living in these regions and countries. It challenges stereotypes that link Muslim with Arab or terrorist by exploring other world regions with large Muslim populations. It extends existing resources for understanding Islam and provides teachers and students with authentic experiences and resources.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	page i
Acknowledgements	i
A Note on Permissions	i

Unit 1: Pakistan Activities and Resources

By Jamie Fletcher, Kamiakin Middle School, Kirkland, WA

*(For Middle School students, * items require access to a computer)*

Introduction, Unit Overview	1-1
Unit Objectives, Essential Questions, Lessons in this Unit.....	1-2
Lesson 1: Student Graffiti Brainstorm Carousel & Personal Quest Activity	1-3
Pakistan Resources	
Pakistan Slide Show	
Handout A: Activity Sheet	
Lesson 2: The Impact of Geography: Interpreting Pakistan Maps	1-4
Handout B: Student Questionnaire: The Impact of Geography	
Lesson 3: Indus Valley Civilization Slide Show Web Tour*	1-6
Handout C: Web Tour Student Question Sheet	
Lesson 4: Founding of Pakistan Summit Meeting*	1-7
Handout D: Research Sheet	
Handout E: Presentation Plan Sheet	
Lesson 5: Contemporary Pakistani Voices Jigsaw	1-9
Handout F: Reading and Discussion Guide	
Handout G: Interviewee Sultana Ahmed (Female, Age 43)	
Handout H: Interviewee Fatima Khan (Female, Age 18)	
Handout I: Interviewee Khalil Rana (Male, Age 40)	
Handout J: Interviewee Syed Masood (Male, Age 62)	
Handout K: Interviewee Hasan Hafeez (Male, Age 32)	
Lesson 6: Pakistan Contemporary Issues/Media Watch PowerPoint Project*	1-10
Handout L: Project Timeline	
Handout M: Research Form	
Handout N: Skeleton Plan	
Handout O: Storyboard	
Handout P: Grading Criteria	
Handout Q: Self-Evaluation	
Handout R: Teacher Evaluation	
Handout S: Audience Evaluation	
Handout T: Team Member Evaluations	
Lesson 7: Individual Exploration Assignment Options	1-14
Lesson 8: Student Journal Responses to Pakistan Unit	1-15
Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)	1-16

Unit 2: The Muslim Experience in Modern-Day Europe

By William Linser, Robinswood High School, Bellevue, WA and Yolanda Cieters, Belgium

*(For High School students, * items require access to a computer)*

Introduction	2-1
Unit Overview	2-2
Unit Objectives	2-3
Essential Questions	2-4
Lesson 1: Muslim Communities in Modern-Day Europe:	
An Introductory Look at their Background	2-5
Handout A: Unit Preview KWL Chart	
Handout B: Quiz Worksheet	
Handout C: Quiz Answers for Teachers	
Handout D: Fact Finding Worksheet	
Handout E: Fact Answer Sheet	
Handout F: Maps of Europe (PowerPoint™)*	
Handout G: Group Work Evaluation	
Lesson 2: Integration Issues	2-10
Handout D: Fact Finding Worksheet	
Handout H: Discussion Questions Great Britain	
Handout I: Kreuzberg Slide Show (PowerPoint™)*	
Handout I: Kreuzberg Slide Show Notes	
Handout J: Bubble Map	
Lesson 3: Current Debates: The Headscarf in France	2-15
Handout K: Background on the Headscarf Ban	
Handout L: Student Worksheet	
Handout M: Points of View on the Hijab	
Lesson 4: Islam and Muslims in Europe: Which Paths for the Future?	2-21
Handout N: Assessment Worksheet	
Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)	2-27

Unit 3: Seeds of Change: Muslims in China’s Reform Era

By Mary Cingcade, East Asia Resource Center, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

*(For Community College students, * items require access to a computer)*

Introduction, Unit Overview	3-1
Unit Objectives, Essential Questions	3-3
Syllabus	3-4
Lesson 1: An Introductory Look at Muslims in China	3-5
Day One: Introduction	
Handout A: Unit Preview	
Handout B: Answer Key for Unit Preview	
Day Two: Slide Presentation of China’s Muslim Communities	
Handout C: China’s Muslim Communities Slide Show (PowerPoint™)*	
Handout C: China’s Muslim Communities Slide Show Notes	
Lesson 2: Competing for History	3-8
Day One: Analyzing Historical Narratives	
Handout D: Green, Sandra. “Tracing Muslim Roots: A Brief History of the Hui”	
Handout E: Lunde, Paul. “Muslims in China: The History”	
Lesson 3: Constructing Ethnicity and Identity in 21st Century China	3-11
Day One: China’s Official Ethnicities	
Day Two: Hui from Coast to Interior	
Day Three: Being Uyghur in Xinjiang	
Day Four: China’s Muslims in the Media: A Media Literacy Workshop	
Day Five: Tourism on the Silk Road: In-Class Work on Presentations	
Day Six: Voices from Within: The Case of Zhang Chengzhi	
Handout F: Blum, Susan D. “China’s Many Faces: Ethnic, Cultural, and Religious Pluralism”	
Handout G: Gladney, Dru. “Representations: Making, Marking, and Marketing Identity”	
Handout H: Gladney, Dru. “Dialogic Identities”	
Handout I: Fuller, Graham E. and Jonathan N. Lipman. “Islam in Xinjiang”	
Lesson 4: Modernity and Tradition in China’s Muslim Communities (Selected Topics)	3-21
Days One-Two: Reconciling Modernization and Tradition	
Handout J: Gillette, Maris Boyd. “Factory Food, Modernization, and Race”	
Handout K: Gillette, Maris Boyd. “Consumption and Modernization”	
Handout L: Gillette, Maris Boyd. “Mosques, Qur’anic Education, and Arabization”	
Handout M: Hoh, Erling. “A Brush with Islam”	
Handout N: Gillette, Maris Boyd. “Wedding Gowns and Modernization”	
Day Three: Roundtable Quiz Competition	
Handout O: The U.S. Commission on China Roundtable Quiz Competition	
Days Four-Six: Small Group Presentations	