

# PIER Summer Institutes 2014 Lesson Plan for Classroom Teachers

Based on the SEED Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Teaching

**Title of Lesson:** Breaking Down Misperceptions Concerning Political Islam

*Bill Topich, Pulaski Academy, International Studies, Four Blocks (75 minutes each)*

## **Introduction:**

The purpose of this lesson is to breakdown numerous stereotypes and biases concerning Political Islam. In the post-911 political environment media coverage has distorted Islam, creating misunderstandings and at times breeding intolerance. This unit will analyze the stereotypes and provide clarity regarding the religion as well as political motivations of Islamic movements globally.

## **Geographic Connections:**

The contemporary Islamic world is the most diverse of any of the major global religions. During this unit, students will comprehend the diversity of Islam in the different regional environments. Using the comparative method and analyzing case studies as diverse as Indonesia, Pakistan, Yemen, Egypt, and Nigeria, students will understand the impact that culture and history play in the development of the numerous Muslim communities and political movements.

## **Vocabulary:**

Five Pillars of Islam, Hadiths, Jihad, Salafism, Illiberal democracy, Madras, Sectarianism

## **Content Standards:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Included in this section will be the evaluation of multiple sources as well as explanation of textual evidence using various sources.

C3 Social Studies: **D2.Geo.3.9-12.** Use geographic data to analyze variations in the spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics at multiple scales.

## **Essential Question:**

The seminal question throughout the unit is to analyze the misperceptions of Political Islam (and subsequent dangers associated with these misperceptions) in the context of the post-911 political environment in the West.

**Literacy through the Content Area:** close reading, supporting claims with evidence

**Placement of Lesson within Broader Curriculum/Context:**

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This lesson is placed within the unit on Political Islam in the post-colonial world. This unit covers developments from WWI through the Arab Spring. One of the essential elements within this unit is an understanding of the political developments from Kemal Ataturk through the recent uprisings in the Arab World. How is religion used and manipulated by all of the parties involved?

#### **Learner Background:**

Students taking this course would have completed a year of World History as well as Human Geography. All students will be either juniors or seniors.

#### **Objectives for Lesson:**

- Students will be able to explain the key trends shaping the development of Political Islam in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Students will also be able to explain and comprehend the misperceptions in western media and articulate (through oral presentations and use of technology) the dangers associated with bias.

#### **Integration of 21st century skills:**

Students will collaborate in small groups to work on technologically driven presentations over main themes in the unit. Examples of such presentations include: Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, Secularism in the Middle East, Arab Nationalism, Impact of Sayyid Qutb, Impact of Poverty in the Arab World, Impact of Colonial Policies on the Middle East / South Asia.

#### **Assessment:**

Students will write a reaction paper (2-3 pages) that is an essay response to significant quotes from the authors and commentators covered during the unit. The key will be to provide clarity in the essay as well as the articulation of the meaning of the quote / statement. Finally, understanding how the view of the author / commentator was formed is essential.

#### **Materials/Resources:**

Mustafa Akyol, "Islam Without Extremes" (Part III – Chapters 9-11)

Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, "The Great Theft."

"American At A Crossroads": (Documentary Series)

1. "Jihad: The Men and Ideas Behind Al Qaeda"
2. "Faith Without Fear"

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3. “Security Versus Liberty”

4. “Muslim in America”

### Lesson Development/Instructional Strategies

*Note for the teacher:* One of the challenges with dispelling stereotypes is that many of the students may have these stereotypes enforced at home or elsewhere. The sources utilized are met to challenge some of the preconceived notions about Islam. By hearing from multiple mediums and also being able to discuss the topics with an actual scholar on Islamic Law, students should be able to comprehend apparent bias in the works.

#### *Block #1:*

1. The unit begins with a brainstorming session. The exercise includes word association using terrorist, Muslim, Islam, Madras. This exercise can be done in either a small or large group setting.
2. Four short video clips will be shown – several from extremists from different faiths – followed by clips from prominent experts from the different faith backgrounds.
3. Reflective Essay. This should be completed in class in order for the students to express their views early in the process.
4. The homework reading assignment includes excerpts from both “Islam Without Extremes” and “The Great Theft.”

#### *Block #2:*

1. The first 25-30 minutes will be preparation for the policy simulation over Political Islam. The class will be broken into three groups including: Sunni Muslims, Salafi Muslims, and American Policymakers. The groups are to explain the rationale behind current US policy in the Muslim World. Part of the process should include separating the rhetoric from the on the ground reality in our current policy. How does overgeneralizations and stereotyping play into the situation?
2. During the simulation, each group will have 5-6 minutes to state their position followed by a 2 minute follow up period.
3. Following the simulation, the group will engage in a debriefing exercise in order to summarize the simulation and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the competing arguments.
4. The assignment for the final block includes the last section of “Islam Without Extremes” and the documentary “Security Versus Liberty”

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### *Block #3*

1. The first segment of class will be a guest lecture from Murad Elasdi (Professor of Islam Law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock) – for those unable to have an actual guest lecturer, several excellent lectures are available from online sources. The lecture will last 20 minutes with an additional 10-15 for questions.
2. The class will then view a brief segment of the documentary “Faith Without Fear.”
3. The students will be assigned technology presentations of 5-8 minutes each. The topics will pertain to the major issues confronting Political Islam in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

### *Block #4*

1. Group technology presentations over topics pertaining to Political Islam.
2. Documentary (followed by discussion) “Muslim in America”
3. The final assessment includes a take-home essay exam that will give the students the opportunity to analyze several of the seminal topics covered in the past three classes. The essays (two 2-3 pages each) will be due at the beginning of the next class period.

### **Students Needing Differentiated Instruction:**

How will you differentiate instruction in this lesson for students you may anticipate struggling with the content/learning objectives?

In an International Studies course, students will be exposed to numerous perspectives on subject matter that is open to multiple interpretations. One additional way to help students who may be struggling is to use peer sessions (especially on reflective essays)

How will you provide opportunities for enrichment/higher level of challenge for students?

Two additional exercises are encouraged for students who want to explore the topic in greater depth.

1. Have students visit the local mosque in order to observe as well as ask questions to the attendees. A reflective paper about the visit could enhance the process.
2. Skype with Muslim students in a different country. Such an activity could be planned for a later time and could be held during our extended time class period. Students could attend this session from the International Studies classes as well as other members of the student body. Consider online communities such as iEARN.org and ePals.org for participating global schools.