Teaching Resources on Islam in World History/ Cultures and Geography courses for Elementary, Middle and High School

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The Council on Islamic Education (CIE), Fountain Valley, California, founded in 1990, is a national, non-profit research and resource organization comprised of Muslim academic scholars of religion, history, political science, cultural studies, communications, and education, with a professional staff whose expertise relates to education, politics, media, and civic as well as faith communities in American society. CIE’s mission is to support and strengthen American public education as the foundation for a vibrant democracy, a healthy civil society, and a nationally and globally literate citizenry. CIE has worked with mainstream publishers and educational organizations, and engaged in teacher training across the nation, as well as publishing teaching resources. CIE maintains a web site at www.cie.org, with sections for the general public, publishers, journalists, and educators. The site features resources on teaching about Islam and Muslim history and culture, such as essays on world history, public education and teaching about religion, and full text versions of various articles, reports, commentaries and news clips. Teaching and public services include basic information on Islamic beliefs and practices including holidays, dictionaries of terminology, and a wide range of teaching resources and lesson plans, both for purchase and download.

The Council on Islamic Education provides its services to public school educators and publishers of school textbooks. During the past decade, CIE staff and Affiliated Scholars have reviewed and aided in the development of over a dozen textbooks in world history, world geography, US history and civics for elementary, middle and high school, as well as numerous supplementary resource publications. The organization has conducted and published research on curriculum and standards in social studies and related fields, including the study Teaching about Religion in National and State Social Studies Standards, co-published in 2000 by CIE and the First Amendment Center (www.fac.org). Related articles on this work have appeared in Educational Leadership, the journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Religion & Education, and Comparative Issues in Contemporary Education. A study of national and state world history standards is forthcoming.

CIE’s work is also relevant to Muslim schools. Muslim schools often utilize curriculum based on national standards which have heavily influenced state and local public school curriculum, and they purchase textbooks used in public schools. Over a decade of work developing supplementary resources reflects knowledge of curriculum across the US, as well as awareness of the gaps in coverage, and ways in which the study of Islam in history might be integrated into world history and geography courses.

The Council on Islamic Education has produced teaching resources which are available for purchase and in many cases as free downloads. They are developed using the First Amendment Center Guidelines for Teaching about Religion, and strive for high levels of scholarship for the classroom. These resources are appropriate for use in public, private, and Muslim schools, as well as schools of other faith groups and in interfaith work.
Teaching About World Religions in Standards and Curriculum

According to a CIE/FAC study conducted in 2000, and still relevant today, teaching about all of the major world religions is not just permitted, but required in all state standards in world cultures, world history and world geography courses. Most of these are concentrated at the middle and high school levels (grades 6-12), but content on religions appears in diversity and community studies in elementary grades, and in US history classes. The framework for discussing religious beliefs in textbooks and classrooms should adhere to constitutional guidelines that prevent either promotion or denigration of any faith. The heart of sound coverage of world religions lies in portraying the beliefs and practices of each faith as their adherents understand and value them, not through secular or other filters. It is this aspect of the guidelines that ensures mutual respect and avoids phenomena such as the orientalism of the past century. Academics portrayed Islam, for example, through the filter of their own beliefs and prejudices, making statements that questioned its veracity, even while pretending to accuracy, but in fact engaging in serious distortion of Islamic beliefs and practices. Muslim schools should also strive for accurate portrayal of other faiths, using attributive language—“Buddhists (or Hindus, Christians or Jews) believe that…”—as Muslims would have their own faith portrayed in the public arena, what Charles C. Haynes of the First Amendment Center calls “learning about our deepest differences.”

In terms of content on the world religions, standards for teaching world history within the framework of the constitutional guidelines can result in highly worthwhile learning experiences for all, based on excellent scholarship. CIE has been working toward this goal for over a decade. The new paradigms for teaching world history based on a global world view—not on any centric view (whether Western or Muslim)—can truly educate students of every faith about the deeply held beliefs of each group, and about the history of the human spiritual experience. Education in world history has superseded the narrow view that one culture’s experience should have primacy in the account, with all others reduced to more or less marginal roles. A standards-based framework for teaching about the world religions does not proselytize, nor does it exoticize or denigrate any faith. The role of religions in world history is complex, geographically more diverse than the boundaries of any one civilization, and should be followed
over time, not frozen in an unchanging past. Finally, if teaching about religion is to have any lasting value for students, it should engage with the values and ethical foundations of the religion, so as to establish a foundation for common humanity and work toward social justice for all. Only this way can we avoid the impression that learning about other faiths and cultures is just a matter of gathering more trivia about faraway people and places.

**Issues in Teaching World History and Geography**

Current social studies courses and textbooks present a mixed picture. On one hand, textbooks for middle and high school have not yet changed their structure enough to qualify as supporting recent world history scholarship. Individual chapters and features have improved, but much more must be done to bring them up to date with advances in world history scholarship. On the other hand, major publishers’ textbooks for college courses do reflect this scholarship, and have been authored by leading world historians. The new Advanced Placement World History programs at many high schools use these books, introducing their scholarship into secondary education. Through the College Board training programs, sponsored by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the World History Association (www.thewha.org), these courses have embraced a global view at the same time they have attracted tens of thousands of new students and excellent scholar-teachers. Muslim high schools should look into teacher training in AP world history, and develop overall programs that integrate teaching about Islam and Muslim history into this exciting new global framework. In world history courses throughout the country, students are learning about the important role Muslim societies played between the 9th and 16th centuries as a huge region that fostered cultural exchanges in the eastern hemisphere. These advances in global history should be available in Muslim schools. Where textbooks fall short, supplementary resources developed by CIE for use in middle and high school programs represent an effort to bring this scholarship to younger students as well. Development of these teaching resources, which are featured on the next pages, are based on these objectives:

1. To prepare student-ready lessons on Islam and Muslim history that meet the objectives of world history and geography courses for middle and high school, that provide accurate information based on good scholarship. The approach is to provide a level of evidence and tools for learning that are based on acquiring historical thinking skills.

2. To help students understand the development of Muslim civilization in a global historical context, including contributions from earlier and contemporary civilizations such as India, Persia and China. Lessons should bring understanding of complex historical processes like the spread of Islam, the rise of cities and trade, and the role of scholarly classes in spreading and unifying Muslims.

3. To make primary sources available to students and teachers in secondary classrooms, which would otherwise be available only to specialists. These teaching units feature Muslim literary culture, the development of the sciences and arts, and the role of Muslim civilization as an engine of trans-hemispheric cultural, economic and knowledge exchange. Thorough citation of sources, and development of teaching activities that help students engage with the material, are part of each unit.

4. To address issues and challenges relevant to contemporary Muslim societies, bringing current knowledge and discussion into the classroom. Bringing evidence and argument, stimulating discussion and analysis.
Descriptions of CIE Teaching Resources available at www.cie.org

Teaching About Islam and Muslims

This is the third edition of CIE’s popular handbook for teachers, and contains a straightforward, concise introduction to Islam arranged in Question & Answer format. The publication also includes a useful guide to the religious needs of Muslim students for which schools can provide legal accommodation, a list of recommended books, videos and other materials, and a glossary of terms.

This and all CIE resources are listed on the California Department of Education’s "Instructional Materials Approved for Legal Compliance."

Beyond a Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization

Discover this rich and varied collection of Muslim literature, compiled specifically with teachers in mind. Types of primary source literature represented include historical writing, travel literature, scientific writing, folktales, and poetry, among others. Each selection is accompanied by critical-thinking questions, illustrations using artworks from the period and suggestions for student activities. Pages are reproducible and wire-bound for easy copying.

- Let African scholar al-Jahiz tell why paper is better than parchment, written just when that Chinese innovation was being adopted in Abbasid Baghdad.
- Read a page from Ibn Rushd’s (Averroes) commentary on Aristotle, a work that Thomas Aquinas read by candlelight, and get medical advice from al-Razi.
- Let al-Khwarizmi introduce the new branch of mathematics called al-jabr (algebra), with formulas and word problems written in the 9th century, and learn why al-Biruni studied shadows.
- Read beautiful lyric poems from Spain that became part of the romantic, chivalric tradition of medieval songs, and get plans for building a mechanical lamp and water fountain.
- Laugh as you learn the simple wisdom of Goha, the universal "Charlie Chaplin" figure known across the Muslim world, and ponder deep questions raised by Muslim philosophers.
- Follow Muslim geographers, scientists and travelers as they introduce chess and backgammon, make a pilgrimage to Makkah, and take a tour of 10th century Baghdad with one of its famous residents.
- Find out what Egyptian scholar al-Jabarti thought of Napoleon’s invasion, and how the Syrian knight Usama viewed the Frankish crusaders.
The Emergence of Renaissance: Cultural Interactions between Europeans and Muslims

This collection of teaching resources was over five years in the making, and has inspired numerous presentations at conferences, universities and museums. It was inspired by the desire to show students, not just tell them, how Muslim advances in arts and sciences, technology, education, travel and trade stimulated developments in Europe from the 12th century onward. From hemispheric trade to the history of science, from art, literature and architecture to luxury consumer goods, and from religious expression to the rise of colleges, The Emergence of Renaissance lets students hear the voices and see the sights of places, people and fascinating artifacts that contributed to this formative period in Western and world history.

Covering learning standards related to medieval and Renaissance world history from virtually every state and national curriculum document, this flexible teaching tool contains dozens of illustrated texts, activities, literature and primary source readings. Teachers can utilize the materials for lecture preparation, for in-depth exploration of history in cooperative learning settings, and for student reading and classroom activities. The complete collection can be a mini-course or teachers can use the four segments separately, or select lessons and activities. A chart keys texts and activities to topics in the world history course, helping the teacher to select the right materials for middle school, high school, or mixed ability students. Useful in science, math, and art classes, too. 350 pages, with a CD image disk to accompany slide show lessons.

Muslim Holidays

This new edition of the teaching resource contains a guide for teachers that describes the religious needs of Muslim students pertaining to Muslim holidays. The publication also includes student readings for primary, elementary, and middle/high school levels, along with discussion questions and suggested activities for students. Students learn why Ramadan and the Hajj are important to Muslims, and how they celebrate the associated holidays: Eid al-Fitr, the festival of breaking the fast, and Eid al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice. Students also learn about the importance of Friday as a day of congregational worship and community interaction, and about other important dates in the Islamic calendar.

References to these CIE teaching resources are also featured in lessons from the free downloadable online curriculum for world history entitled World History for Us All at http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/.
Primary Source Lesson Sets produced by CIE for the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA

The Crusades from Medieval European and Muslim Perspectives

This unit provides a first-hand look, through historical primary sources, at the various types of cultural interactions that took place during the Crusades. This resource is on the California Department of Education's "Instructional Materials Approved for Legal Compliance" list. Lesson topics include:

- Crusaders Living in Muslim Lands
- Crusader Meets Mujahid: The Military Encounter
- Salah al-Din (Saladin): An Ideal Muslim Leader
- Ideals and Motivations for the Crusades, and the Muslim Response
- Glimpses of Women’s Experiences During the Crusades

Images of the Orient: European Travelers to Muslim Lands

This unit provides a first-hand look, through historical primary sources, at the experiences of Europeans traveling to distant lands during the era of industrialization. Students gain insight into how the works of these travelers influenced the perception of Islam and Muslims in Europe from the nineteenth century onwards. Lesson topics include:

- Pilgrims and Tourists
- Colonial Officials
- Archaeologists and Antiquarians
- Political Figures
- Artists, Architects, and Photographers
- Literary Figures.

Muslim Women Across the Centuries

This unit, developed by CIE and co-published by the National Center provides a first hand look, through historical primary sources, at the rights accorded to women by Islam, at how gender issues were actually addressed in classical Muslim society, and at the diverse roles that Muslim women played historically. Lesson topics include:

- Women’s Rights and Protections in Islam
- Gender Roles and Women’s Identities in Muslim Society
- Muslim Women Leaders Through the Centuries
- Famous Muslim Women as Role Models.
Lesson Packet for Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet
These lessons were designed to help teachers make the most of viewing the documentary film in the classroom, in connection with basic content on Islam and Muslims in world geography/cultures and world history or US history courses.

- Pre-viewing Vocabulary Activity
- Student Note-taking Grids
- Geography and History of the Arabian Peninsula and Overview of Islam
- Biographical Sketch of Muhammad's Life
- Biographical Notes on the Experts in the Film
- Sequencing Events in Muhammad's Life
- Key Figures in Muhammad's Life
- The "Constitution of Madinah" and the Mayflower Compact
- Three Major Events in the Rise of Islam
- The "Battle of the Trench" and the Concept of Treason in Comparative Law
- The Concept of Prophethood in Islam
- Personal and Civic Values in Islam
- American Muslim Responses to September 11, 2001

Lesson Packet for Frontline: Muslims
These lessons make the most of the film, in world geography/cultures and world history or US history classroom, providing context for the scenes from a variety of contemporary Muslim societies.

- Pre-Viewing Vocabulary Activity  Student Note-taking Grids & Critical Thinking Questions
- The Life of Muhammad: Geography and History of the Arabian Peninsula, and Overview of Islam (Map & Background Info)
  A reading and map explain Arabia and its historical importance, with an overview of basic beliefs and practices, and a chart shows how the Five Pillars and their many dimensions relate to Muslim civilization.
- Critical Thinking about Terminology Related to Islam and Muslims
  This lesson helps students critically evaluate some of the phrases and concepts used to describe Islam and Muslims.
- Biographical Sketch of Muhammad's Life
- Overview of Muslim History and the Spread of Islam from the 7th to the 21st Century
- The Geography & Cultures of Muslim Countries
  This lesson features hands-on projects for students that help them learn about the Muslim country of their choice.
- Values and Practices of the Faith
  Analyze comments by individuals concerning faith, family and community, unity and diversity, American society, and extremism.
- The Masjid in the American Landscape: Civic Rights
  Students explore the relevant civic issues and rights, and consider the role of interfaith dialogue as a means to achieve greater understanding between groups of Americans as Muslims seek to build a masjid (mosque) in Palos Heights, IL.
- What is Shariah? Major Sources and Principles of Islamic Law
  Background reading on the nature of Islamic law, the process of making a legal judgment, and the role of legal scholars in Muslim history.
  Study and compare three primary sources quoted from Thomas Jefferson, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, the Qur'an and Hadith.
- Women's Rights and Marriage in Islam
  Students contextualize the film's content about women's rights, including marriage and divorce. Students compare Islamic teachings and ideals with the practice of Muslims in various cultural and national settings.
- Secularism in Comparative Perspective: The Hijab as Case Study in Three Countries
  Readings and press coverage on Muslim women and headscarves in three countries helps students explore secularism and its relationship to religious freedom.
- Making Sense of Jihad vs. Hirabah (Terrorism)
  Explanation of the Islamic concept of jihad is distinguished from hirabah, a term used by Muslim jurists for unlawful acts of public violence that today would be labeled "terrorism," showing the and legal condemnation of terrorism.