



CONTEMPORARY ISSUES  
Student Services Inc.



# ISLAM IN AMERICA:

## Understanding Intercultural Differences



**Monday, January 26**  
**9 A.M.-9:30 P.M. • Sykes Union Theater**

**Co-Sponsors:** Office of Co-Curricular Programs, Contemporary Issues, History Department, Philosophy Department, Political Science Department, Sykes Union Advisory Board, Sociology Department, Ethnic Studies, Office of Social Equity, Muslim Student Association, Student Activities Council, Academic Affairs & CCIT/University Forum. Special thanks to ARAMARK Food Services and the WCU Office of Graphics & Printing.

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## **ISLAM IN AMERICA: Understanding Intercultural Differences**

**Date: Monday, January 26, 2009 • 9 A.M.-9:30 P.M./Sykes Union Theater**

**9 A.M.-9:05 A.M.—WELCOME**—The Honorable Richard Yoder, Mayor of West Chester; Dr. Darla Coffey, Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs-West Chester University

**9:05 A.M.-10 A.M.—OPENING SPEAKER—IMAM HASSAN QAZWINI** Spiritual leader of the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan & Author of *AMERICAN CRESCENT: A Muslim Cleric on the Power of His Faith, the Struggle Against Prejudice, and the Future of Islam and America*/Presentation followed by a question and answer session with the audience

**10:10-11:10 A.M.—PANEL #1—Topic: THE BASIC TENETS OF MUSLIM BELIEF:** Moderator: **DR. LAWRENCE DAVIDSON**, Professor of Middle Eastern History —West Chester University History Department; Panel: **IMAM HASSAN QAZWINI**, Spiritual Leader of the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan; **DR. ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT**, Professor Emeritus of Middle Eastern History at Penn State University; **PHILLIP HOEFS**, Doctoral Candidate/Temple University

**11:20-12:20 P.M.—PANEL #2—Topic: THE MUSLIM STUDENT EXPERIENCE;** Moderator: **DR. VALERIAN DESOSA**, WCU Sociology Department; **FATIMA BEGUM**, Second Year WCU Student/Major: Computer Science; **DAVID NIEMEYER**, First Year WCU Student/Major: Undecided; **NASHRAH SHAH**, Third Year WCU Student/Major: Public Health-Environmental Health; **TARIQ NABEEL**, Second Year Temple University Student/Major: Finance; **SHAYMA HUSSAIN**, Third Year WCU Student/Major: Chemistry/Biology-Minor-Journalism/History

**12:20-1 P.M.—No Programming/LUNCH BREAK**

**1-2 P.M.—MAJOR SPEAKER #2: DR. ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT**, Professor Emeritus of Middle East History at Penn State University; Topic: **MILITANT ISLAM: Diversity of Approaches**/Presentation followed by a question and answer session with the audience

**2:10-3:10 P.M.—PANEL #3—Topic: AMERICAN MUSLIM REACTION TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY;** Moderators: **DR. LAWRENCE DAVIDSON**, Professor of Middle Eastern History & **DR. WILLIAM LESLIE HEWITT**, Professor of American History, West Chester University History Department; **DR. ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT**, Professor Emeritus of Middle East History at Penn State University; **DR. MAGHAN KEITA**, Professor of African, World, Class & Gendered Histories & Director of the Islamic Studies Program at Villanova University; **MR. IFTEKHAR HUSSAIN**, Chair, Council on America Islamic Relations for Pennsylvania; **DR. HAMID NASSIR**, Head of the Central Mosque in Chester County—Professor of Physics at Widener

**3:20 -4:20 P.M.—MAJOR SPEAKER- #3—MR. IFTEKHAR HUSSAIN**, Chair, Council on America Islamic Relations for Pennsylvania & Secretary General of the American Muslim Society of the Tristate Area of PA, NJ & DE); Topic: **AMERICAN MUSLIM ACTIVISM**/Presentation followed by a question and answer session with the audience

**4:30-5:30 P.M.—PANEL #4: Topic: WOMEN IN ISLAM;** Moderator: **DR. JANET AMIGHI**, Professor of Anthropology at Montgomery Community College; **DR. SHAMSHAD AHMED**, Professor at Marywood University in Pennsylvania and her dissertation was on the Mental Health of Muslims in the United States; **DR. MAHRUKH AZAM**, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at West Chester University/lecturer on the status of women in Islam; **PHILIP HOEFS**, Doctoral student in the department of religion at Temple University who specializes in Islamic Studies; **DR. HELEN SCHROEPFER**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at West Chester University; **SARAH NASSER**, Pursuing a master's degree in philosophy at WCU/graduate of the University of Toronto

**5:30-7 P.M.—DINNER FOR GUESTS/NO PROGRAMMING OR VIDEO PRESENTATION**

**7-8 P.M.—MAJOR SPEAKER #4: DR. MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI**, Associate Professor of English at Brooklyn College, the City University of New York/author of the book *HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A PROBLEM? Being Young and Arab In America*/Presentation followed by a question and answer session with the audience; Topic: **HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A PROBLEM? Being Young and Arab In America**

**8:10-9:30 P.M.: PANEL #5/Closing Session;** Topic: **THE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD FOR AMERICAN MUSLIMS;** Panel: **DR. LAWRENCE DAVIDSON**, **MR. IFTEKHAR HUSSAIN**, **DR. SHAMSHAD AZAM**, **DR. MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI**; **MR. PHILIP HOEFS**

**Date: Tuesday, January 27: 12 Noon-1 P.M./Sykes Union Theater**

**1. DR. LAWRENCE DAVIDSON, DR. HELEN SCHROEPFER, STEPHEN R. MCKIERNAN & AYESHA BEGUM** will lead a discussion with the audience covering the overall meaning of what took place the day before. How did what we learn at the conference make West Chester University and, student lives beyond the university, a more informed and aware constituency where understanding and respecting different cultures and religions is a central characteristic of being human in an all too inhuman world.

## I. Keynote Speaker – Islam In America Conference:

**IMAM SAYID HASSAN AL-QAZWINI** was born in the holy city of Karbala, Iraq in 1964. Al-Qazwini's family is well known in Iraq and the Muslim world at large for people of scholarship, leadership and dedication to serving their Muslim community.



Al-Qazwini's father was among the leading scholars in spreading the word of Islam in Iraq and engaging in Islamic activism. After several years, Saddam Hussein perceived the Al-Qazwini family as an ideological threat to his regime. Consequently, Al-Qazwini's family was forced to flee Iraq and seek refuge in Kuwait. In Kuwait, Sayid Hassan Al-Qazwini decided to pursue the path of his forefathers of becoming a scholar of Islam and religious leader. At the inception of the Islamic Revolution in Iran he immigrated to Iran along with his family. In 1980, Al-Qazwini joined the Islamic Seminary in Qum, Iran, which is the largest Shi'a seminary in the world today. After twelve years, Al-Qazwini graduated in 1992 with a fine grasp of the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence and Qur'anic commentary. During his studies, he administered a prominent Islamic journal called "Annibras," or Eternal Light plus he authored two books. Al-Qazwini immigrated to the United States in late 1992 along with his family. For some time he directed Azzahra Islamic Center, which was founded by his father, in Los Angeles, California. In 1993, he was invited by the Islamic Center of America, in Detroit, to be guest speaker for the Arabic program during the upcoming holy month of Ramadhan. This visit, to the oldest Shi'a mosque in the United States, was a stepping stone for his future in America. In 1997 Sayid Hassan Al-Qazwini established residence in Dearborn, Michigan, as the Islamic Center of America asked him to serve as scholar and religious leader. With this new role, he founded the Young Muslim Association in 1998. This organization, affiliated with the Islamic Center of America, is aimed at educating the Muslim American youth, fostering leadership amongst them, and creating an environment in which they can actively promote Islam. In less than five years, the Young Muslim Association has grown to one of the largest Muslim youth organizations in North America. Since the heinous attacks of September 11 when "the faith of Islam was hijacked," as the rabbi put it, Al-Qazwini multiplied and accelerated his efforts to depict a genuine representation of Islam and Muslims. He has spoken at over one hundred churches, colleges and universities about the genuine and authentic teachings of Islam, thereby dispelling the common misconceptions about Muslims in America.

John D. Dingell put it at the 108th Congress session after Al-Qazwini offered a prayer for the opening session: "Imam Qazwini has become a leading voice for Muslims in America. He has spoken movingly of the need for reconciliation, for tolerance, and for the recognition of our humanity. He has worked with leaders in both the Christian and Jewish communities to help bridge the differences between us and to dispel prejudice. His work has touched Muslim and non-Muslim alike, and his devotion to our State and our community of Dearborn has been recognized by the mayor, the governor and by President Bush."

Al-Qazwini has also effectively influenced numerous political leaders by convincing political leaders to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the Muslim communities. He has pressured American leadership to speak out publically against the infamous religious leaders who have time and again launched an attack against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. The White House invited him on several occasions to represent the Muslim community. He has met with President Bush, President Clinton and President-Elect Obama to discuss issues pertaining to Muslim affairs. The State Department and the

Defense Department have also invited him. Al-Qazwini continues to be one of the most outspoken and influential Shi'a religious leaders in the United States. He has been outspoken on *CNN*, *NPR*, *BBC*, *VOA*, the *New York Times*, the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*. Imam Hassan Qazwini is the author of the new book titled *AMERICAN CRESCENT: A Muslim Cleric on the Power of His Faith, the Struggle Against Prejudice, and the Future of Islam In America* (2007 Random House).

## II. Conference Speakers, Panelists & Moderators:



**DR. MOUSTAFA BAYOUMI** is an associate professor of English at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. Born in Zurich, Switzerland and raised in Kingston, Canada, he completed his Ph.D. in English and comparative literature at Columbia University. He is co-editor of *The Edward Said Reader* and has published academic essays in *Transition*, *Interventions*, *The Yale Journal of*

*Criticism*, *Amerasia*, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, *The Journal of Asian American Studies* to name a few. His writings have also appeared in *The Nation*, *The London Review of Books*, and *The Village Voice*. His essay "Disco Inferno," originally published in *The Nation*, was included in the collection *Best Music Writing 2006*. From 2003-2006, he served on the National Council of the American Studies Association and he is currently editor for *Middle East Report*. He is also an occasional columnist for the Progressive Media Project, an initiative of *The Progressive Magazine*, through which his op eds appear in newspapers across the United States. His book *HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A PROBLEM? Being Young and Arab in America* (2008 The Penguin Press) is a national best seller. One additional note, Dr. Christopher M. Kimmich, President of his college, at the 2004 commencement ceremonies recognized five graduates who had achieved exceptional academic and personal success—four of them were Dr. Bayoumi's students. He lives in Brooklyn.



**DR. ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT** is Professor Emeritus of Middle Eastern History at Penn State University where he taught from 1965-2000. He is best known for writing an introductory textbook, *A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST*, first published by Westview Press in 1979 and now being revised for its ninth edition. Other books he has

written include *MODERN EGYPT: The Formation of a Nation State* (second edition published by Westview in 2004), the second and third editions of the *HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF EGYPT*, and *A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF MODERN EGYPT*. His latest book is *A BRIEF HISTORY OF EGYPT*, published by *Facts on File* in 2008 and he is editing for that publisher the *Creation of the Modern Middle East Series*. He has also edited a book of specialized articles about aspects of Egypt's history from 1919 to 1952 and written the introduction to a collection of book chapters published by Westview Press. He chairs a committee to write the history of the International Association of Torch Clubs. In addition, he has written many articles, chapters in edited volumes, and book reviews. For his intensive work with both graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants at Penn State, as well as his textbook, Dr. Goldschmidt received the Middle East Studies Association's Mentoring Award in 2000. He has lived and conducted research in Egypt and several other Middle Eastern countries, with grants from the American Research Center in Egypt, the Social Science Research Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Fulbright Commission. He earned his B.A. from Colby College and his advanced degrees from Harvard University. In retirement he teaches courses for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Penn State's Elderhostel, and the Chautauqua Institution's Special Studies Program.



**MR. IFTEKHAR HUSSAIN** is currently serving as Chair on the Board of the Council on American Islamic Relations in Pennsylvania and as Secretary General of the American Muslim Society of the Tristate area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Mr. Hussain was born in Bangladesh and received his primary education in Kuwait. He is well traveled in the Middle East, Europe and Asia Pacific. His experiences include the following activities: 1) Serving on the advisory committee of the American Friends Service Committee, Middle East Peace Building Unit; 2) Strongly engaged in local educational initiatives with a focus on 'Islam and the Middle East' and 'US Foreign Policy and the Muslim World'; 3) Worked on interfaith initiatives in College Station, Texas, State College and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 4) Currently serving as Friday prayer service leader at Mainline mosques; 5) Started and volunteered for Pennsylvania and Texas Muslim communities. Mr. Hussain received his B.S and M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas. He is married and father of three and lives in Malvern, Pennsylvania.



**DR. MAGHAN KEITA** is Professor of History and the former Director of both Africana Studies and the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies at Villanova University. Dr. Keita now directs the University's undergraduate Institute for Global Interdisciplinary Studies. His areas of specialization are African, African American, and World History and Historiography; and, Issues in Class, Race & Gender. Dr. Keita's book, *RACE & WRITING OF HISTORY: Riddling the Sphinx* is the recipient of the 13th Annual Cheikh Anta Diop Award for Best Scholarly Book. Professor Keita's work on *HUCK FINN IN CONTEXT: A Teaching Guide*, developed with the Cherry Hill Public Schools and WGBH of Boston, received the 2000 Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing from the Association of Educational Publishers. He is the editor of the volume, *CONCEPTUALIZING/RECONCEPTUALIZING AFRICA: the Construction of African Historical Identity* (Brill, 2002). Professor Keita's most recent work is *A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH CARE IN SENEGAL* (Brill 2007). Dr. Keita is the Chair of the College Board Academic Advisory Council, and a member of the College Board's Board of Trustees. He is also on the editorial board of several academic journals, and author of a number of scholarly publications.



**DR. SHAMSHAD AHMED** holds a Ph.D. in Counselor Education from North Carolina State University and an MA in psychology from the University of Madras, Tamilnadu, India. Her dissertation was on the Mental Health of Muslims in the United States. She currently teaches at Marywood University and has given talks on Islam and its teachings, women and religion, and profiles of Muslim women.

**DR. MAHRUKH AZAM** holds a Ph.D. in Physical Biochemistry from Seton Hall University and an M.S. in Physical Chemistry from Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan. She is currently Assistant Professor in the chemistry department at West Chester University. She has recently presented several invited lectures on the status of women in Islam.

**PHILIP HOEFS** is a doctoral student in the Department of Religion at Temple University. He specializes in Islamic Studies and is writing his dissertation on Ethnic and Religious Identity in Medieval Islamic Spain. He has a B.S. from Swarthmore College and an M.A. from Temple University. He teaches at Temple University and Franklin and Marshall College, and frequently offers courses on Women and Islam.

**DO NOT BE SURPRISED IF WE ADD SPECIAL GUESTS!!!**

**DR. HELEN SCHROEPFER** holds a Ph.D. in Religion from Temple University, with a focus on Philosophy of Religion in contemporary thought, feminist theory, and religion and ethics. She is currently Assistant Professor in the department of philosophy/religious studies here at West Chester University and has developed courses on Women and Religion, Religion In America, and Islam.



**DR. LAWRENCE DAVIDSON** is Professor of History at West Chester University. He teaches courses in modern Middle Eastern history and his area of research is the history of US foreign policy toward the Middle East. He is the author of *AMERICA'S PALESTINE: Official and Popular Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (University Press of Florida, 2001), *ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM* (Greenwood Press, 2003), *CONCISE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST*, 8th Edition, with Dr. Arthur Goldschmidt (Westview Press, 2006) and *FOREIGN POLICY INC.: Privatizing American National Interests* (forthcoming January 2009 from Kentucky University Press). He travels widely and frequently in the Middle East and often speaks on issues relating to US relations with the region.

**DR. WILLIAM LESLIE HEWITT** is Professor of History and Graduate Coordinator at West Chester University. He received his B.A., M.A. from Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado and his Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming. Dr. Hewitt authored the book *DEFINING THE HORRIFIC: Readings in Genocide & HOLOCAUST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY* (2004) Prentice Hall. Other writings include three chapters in books by colleagues and two articles forthcoming.



**DR. JANET AMIGHI** is an anthropologist who teaches at Montgomery County Community College in southeastern Pennsylvania. She has a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri and did her field work in Iran. She lived in Iran for seven years and is fluent in Pharsi. Professor Amighi has published several pieces on Iran including the book, *THE ZOROASTRIANS OF IRAN* (AMS Press, 1988). She visits Iran on a regular basis and has also traveled extensively in Israel and the Occupied Territories. She has made a study of living conditions for both Israelis and Palestinians on both sides of the 1967 border. She speaks widely to academic and non-academic groups on Iran as well as on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**DR. VALERIAN DESOUSA** is a Professor of Sociology at West Chester University. Her interests are in British colonial history and she is doing research of colonial representations at the Worlds Great Fairs as well as globalization and the labor process.

**DR. HAMID NASSIR** is head of the Central mosque in Chester County and a professor of physics at Widener University.

**SARAH NASSER** is a graduate student at West Chester University and attended the University of Toronto, and specialized in physiology, evolutionary theory, and political science. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in philosophy.

**FATIMA BEGUM** is a second year student at West Chester University majoring in computer science.

**DAVID NIEMEYER** is a first year student at West Chester University and has not decided on a major at this point.

**NASHRAH SHAH** is a third year student at West Chester University majoring in public health and environmental health.

**TARIQ NABEEL** is a second year student at Temple University majoring in finance.

**SHAYMA HUSSAIN** is a third year student at West Chester University majoring in chemistry and minoring in journalism and history.

Islam In America Planning Committee: **STEPHEN R. MCKIERNAN** – Chair & Office of Co-Curricular Programs at West Chester University; **DR. LAWRENCE DAVIDSON** – Professor of History at West Chester University; **DR. HELEN SCHROEPFER** – Assistant Professor of Philosophy at West Chester University; **DANIEL JURASITS** – Senior History Major at West Chester University; **AYESHA BEGUM** – Second year Computer Science student at West Chester University. **AND AS ALWAYS – PEACE ALWAYS!**