



# National Arab American Heritage Month *April 2022*

**#ArabAmericanHeritageMonth**



# EDUCATOR'S CURRICULUM KIT



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# MODULE I: OVERVIEW OF THE ARAB WORLD

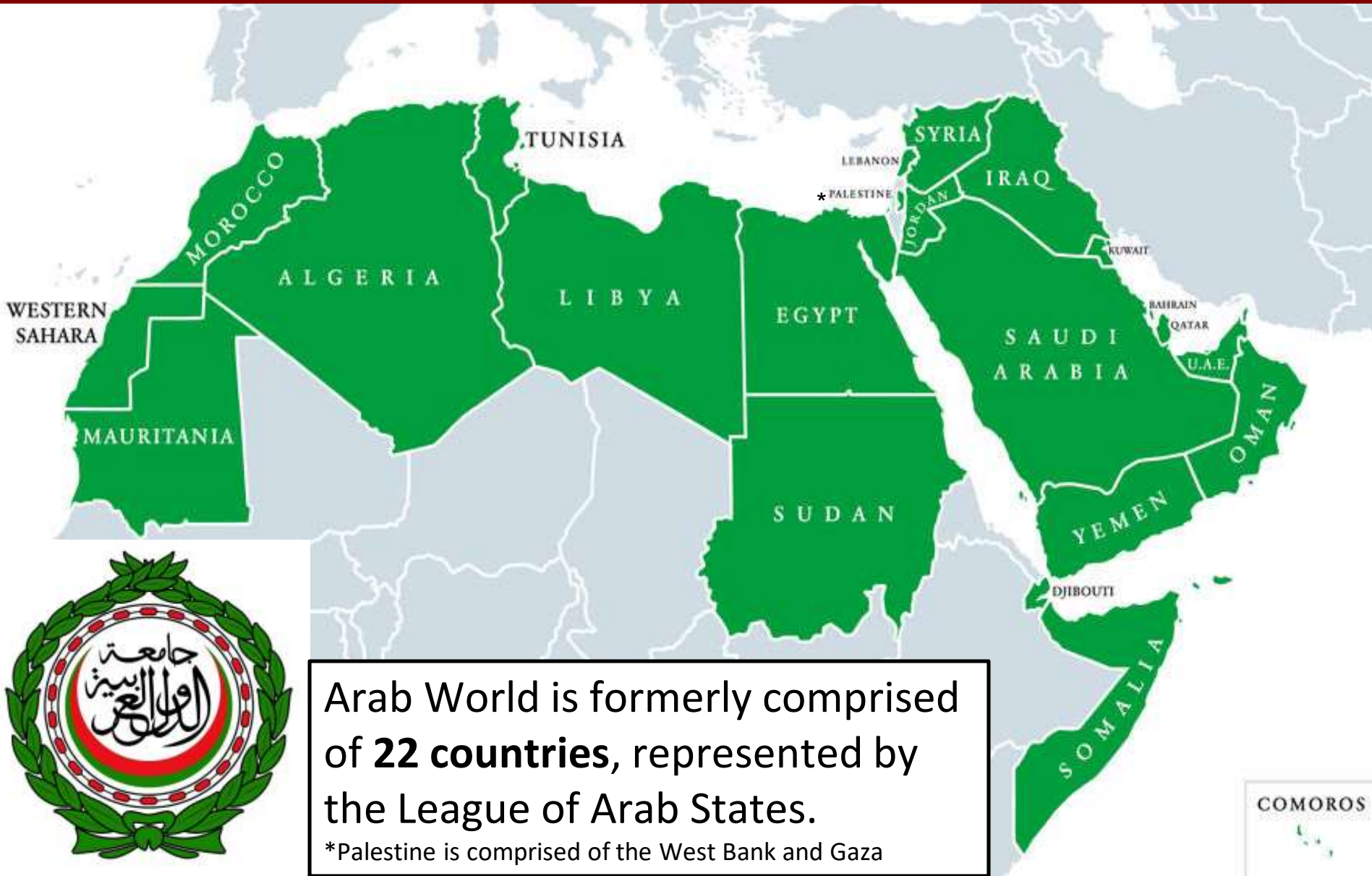


# Overview of the Arab World

## Module Goals

- Understand the distinctions between different geographic classifications in the Arab World
- Identify traits that make up Arab culture
- Recognize the various faith traditions in the Arab World

# Arab World Data



Arab World is formerly comprised of **22 countries**, represented by the League of Arab States.

\*Palestine is comprised of the West Bank and Gaza

# Arab World Data



The Arab World can be divided into three major geographical regions:

- **The Maghreb (North Africa)**
- **The Gulf Region**
- **The Levant**

# Arab World Data

The population of the Arab World is estimated to be at 377.0 million (2014). In terms of age distribution, the population is very young, with a median age of about 22 years. The Arab World had a GDP of \$2.853 trillion (USD) in 2012.

## Economy & Growth

GNI per capita, Atlas method  
(current US\$)

**\$7,197**

2012

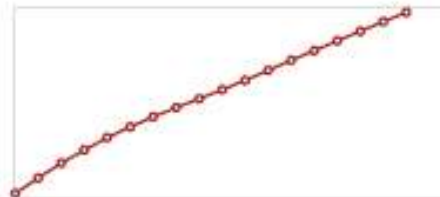


## Health

Life expectancy at birth, total  
(years)

**70**

2012



## Education

Primary completion rate, total  
(% of relevant age group)

**89%**

2012



# Arab World Data



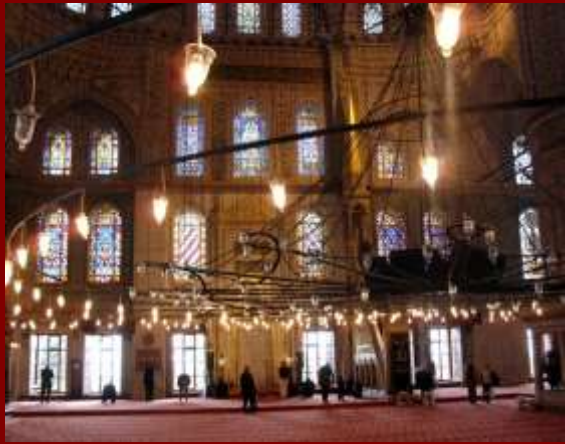
The category “**Middle East**” refers to a region of the world that is linked by a shared location, but ***not*** a common culture. Therefore, Arab Americans ***should not*** be referred to as Middle Eastern Americans.

# Who are the Arabs?

- Technically speaking, anyone who is a citizen of an Arab country is classified as an Arab.
- Culturally speaking, not everyone who lives in the Arab World sees themselves as Arab.
- It is virtually impossible to create a common Arab persona, given the diversity in the region.
- However, the majority of Arabs are united by a common language (with different dialects), and a shared identity in Arab history and similar customs.

# Central Arab Cultural Elements

Three dominant themes can be found across the Arab World, and the descendants that followed those who emigrated:



## **FAITH**

Faith plays a very important role in the lives of most Arabs, regardless of their specific faith tradition.



## **FAMILY**

Family is an extremely vital element to the lives of Arabs, not only as a source of support, but also of identity.



## **COMMUNITY**

An extension of faith and family is community. It is a connection to culture for enjoyable and organizational purposes.



Comoros



Kuwait



Oman



Jordan

# Diversity of the Arab World

The Arab World is extremely diverse in terms of its people, history, dialects, and local customs. There is no one version of Arab culture. While united by a common language and values, these commonalities can obscure cultural diversity that exists.



Tunisi



Mauritania



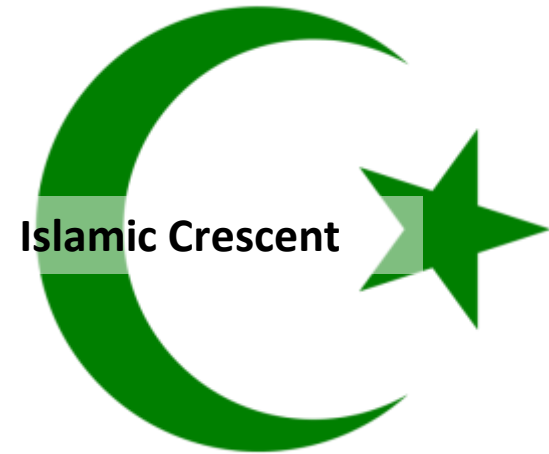
Algeria



Egypt

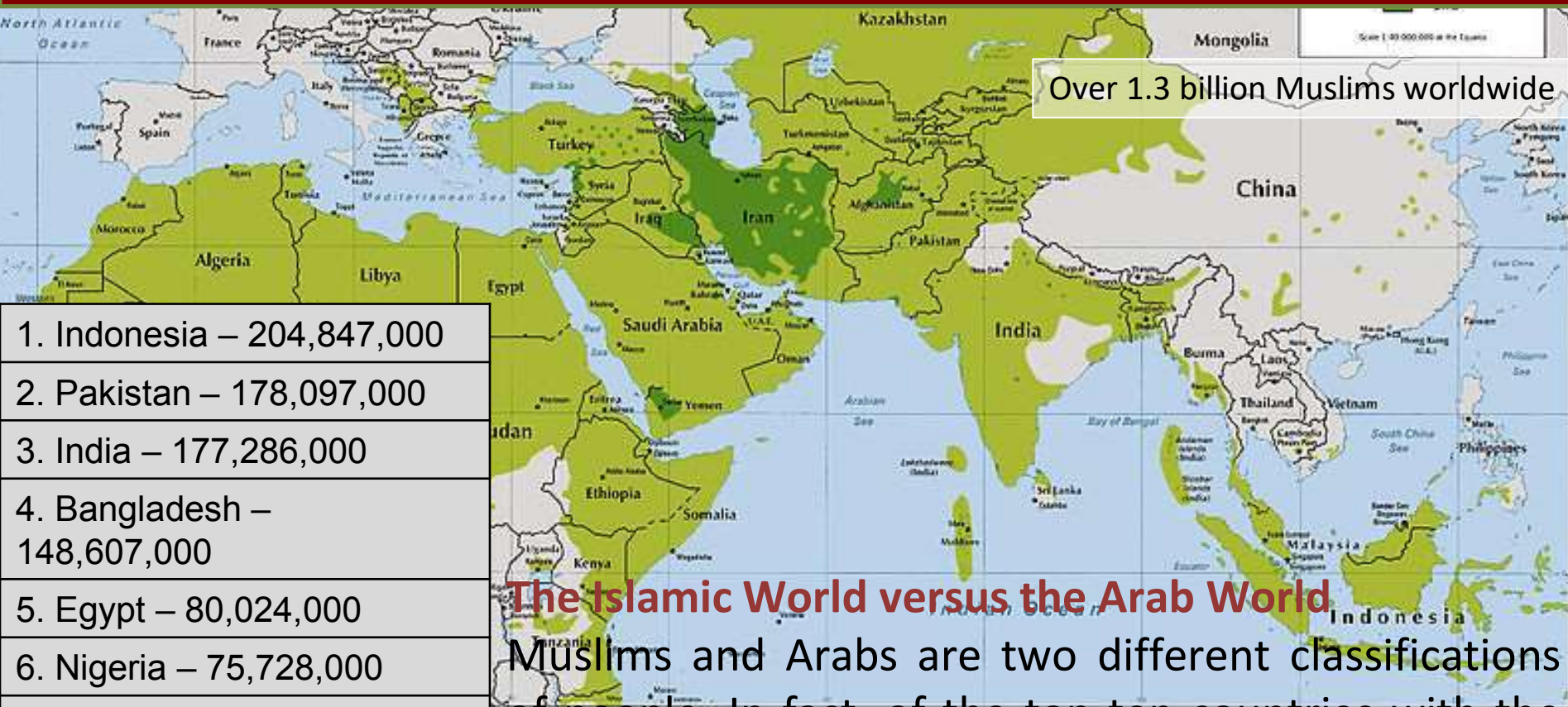
# Religion in the Arab World

Arabs are a people who can encompass all religious faiths. The three Abrahamic traditions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism) are the faiths primarily represented among the Arab peoples.



All three of the Abrahamic faiths share a lineage of certain prophets, and as such bear some commonalities in traditions and faith elements (among other differences).

# The Islamic World versus the Arab World



1. Indonesia – 204,847,000
2. Pakistan – 178,097,000
3. India – 177,286,000
4. Bangladesh – 148,607,000
5. Egypt – 80,024,000
6. Nigeria – 75,728,000
7. Iran – 74,819,000
8. Turkey – 74,660,000
9. Algeria – 34,780,000
10. Morocco – 32,381,000

## The Islamic World versus the Arab World

Muslims and Arabs are two different classifications of people. In fact, of the top ten countries with the largest Muslim populations, only three are Arab. While Muslims can be found all over the world, they are predominantly found in parts of Africa and Asia.

# Overview of the Arab World

## Summary Points

- The Arab world is made up of 22 countries that are members of the Arab League
- The Arab world spans from North Africa to West Asia, giving way to diversity in faith, race, and dialects
- The three largest religious groups in the Arab world are Abrahamic: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- Faith, family, and community are essential components to Arab culture

# Review Questions for Module 1

**1. The Arab World is how many countries large?**

- a) 15
- b) 5
- c) 22
- d) 33

**2. Which is not a central component of Arab culture?**

- a) Money
- b) Family
- c) Faith
- d) Community

**3. Which country has the largest Muslim population?**

- a) Egypt
- b) Saudi Arabia
- c) Iran
- d) Indonesia

**4. What are three regions of the Arab World?**

- a) The Middle East
- b) The Maghreb
- c) The Levant
- d) The Gulf

**5. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all Abrahamic religions?**

True or False

# MODULE II: HISTORY OF ARAB AMERICAN IMMIGRATION



# Arab Immigration into the US

## Module Goals

- Understand the impact of US immigration law on immigration patterns
- Recognize the long history of the United States with the present-day Arab World
- Learn the waves of Arab immigration to the United States
- Understand the diversity of Arab immigrants in terms of reasons for leaving their homeland



# US Immigration Law

## Immigration Act of 1924

- Established quotas that significantly limited immigration from non-Western European countries.

## Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

- Removed quotas, and expanded immigration preferences for various professional categories, and family reunification.

## Anti-Terrorism & Effective Death Penalty Act 1996

- Limited judicial review over immigration cases; established indefinite detention for immigrants after case brought forward; allows use of secret evidence.

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

## Late 1800s – 1940s

The first immigration wave from the Arab World began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



The majority of these immigrants were from “Greater Syria”, which is present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

The early Arab immigrants shared a number of common features, which included:

- primarily Christians from what is today Lebanon and Syria
- being from generally rural areas
- having little to no education
- initially being composed of men, who were then followed by increasing numbers of women

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

## Late 1940s – 1960s

The 2<sup>nd</sup> wave Arab immigrants possessed more diverse characteristics, which included:

- a larger number of Muslims, as well as more Christians
- being from both urban and rural locations
- being highly educated, along with others who had little education
- families arriving together and settling into established immigrant communities

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

This resulted in a **brain drain**, where highly educated immigrants never returned to their homeland.

Common to many immigrant groups, a brain drain can result in a scarcity of professionals in the 'old country', potentially hurting civil, social, and economic development in the Arab World.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

## 1970s – 1990s

The 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of immigration is marked less by changes in points of origin and characteristics of those arriving.

Rather, the differences lie in the social, legal, and governmental climate resulting, from terrorist attacks in the US, and military involvement in the Arab (and Islamic) World.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

Recently, more displacements have occurred as a result of the US war in Iraq, civil war in Syria, and continued conflicts in Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine.

This can create a very different dynamic in the Arab American community, as the motivations of movement can be different (push versus pull).

Additionally, the services required for this population, many of whom have experienced the atrocities of war, can be much greater than previous immigration waves.

# 4<sup>th</sup> Wave Arab Immigration to the US

## 2000s - Present

Today, Arab (and Muslim) immigration is part of the larger debate on immigration reform in the US.

Much of this discussion is in the context of security concerns, and whether or not increased immigration from the Arab World (even in the form of student visas) should be allowed.

# History of the Arab American Community

## Summary Points

- The US, since its first formation, has had a long history of engagement with the Arab World.
- Changes in immigration law continue to have significant impacts on the Arab American community.
- Arab immigration to the US has existed over 100 years.
- Each immigration wave has its own unique characteristics.
- There are “push verses pull” factors contributing to modern-day immigration

# Review Questions for Module II

1. What features characterized the pre-1924 Arab immigration cohort?
  - a) Predominantly Christian
  - b) Low education
  - c) Rural population
  - d) All of the above
  
2. The *brain drain* refers to what immigration phenomenon?
  - a) Reduction of national IQ due to uneducated immigrants
  - b) The taking of educational resources of immigrants from American children
  - c) The loss of educated and skilled persons through immigration to another country.
  - d) A loss of intellectual property through immigrant worker programs.
  
3. Arab American communities can differ greatly based on factors, such as national origin, immigration wave, demographic characteristics, and Arab identity.

True      False

# MODULE III: ARAB AMERICANS AND RELIGION



# Arab Americans and Religion

## Module Goals

- Understand the religious diversity in the Arab American community
- Identify the dominant religions represented amongst Arab Americans
- Learn about specific religious traits and practices in these groups
- Recognize stereotypes associated with various groups

# Arab Americans and Religion

Given that the Arab World, and more specifically the Middle East, is home to three of the world's largest religions, it is not surprising to find religious diversity among Arab Americans. This goes beyond the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Within each of these there is more diversity to be found. While much might be shared on one level, subtle differences can result in the formation of different communities and different identity, despite sharing a common national origin.



Coptic Cross



Arabic Word for God



Druze Flag



Melkite Coat of Arms



Chaldean Seal



Star of David



Antiochian Orthodox



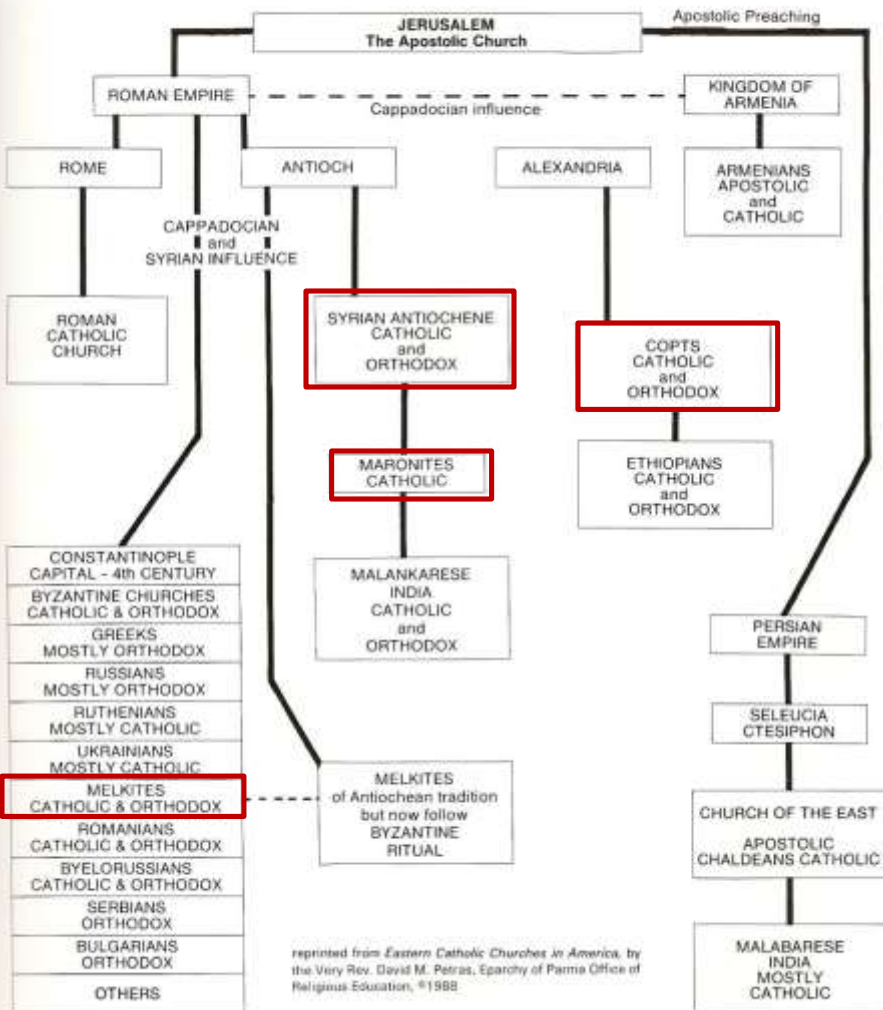
Syrian Orthodox Emblem



Maronite Patriarch Coat of Arms

# Christian Arab Americans

## THE PARTICULAR CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM



Based on various reports, 65-70% of Arab Americans are Christian. For those who follow the faith of their ancestors, they primarily fall into what is known as Eastern Rite churches.

Some of these churches, such as the Maronites, Melkites, and Chaldeans, fall under the Catholic Church in Rome. Others, such as the Syrian Orthodox and Egyptian Copts, fall under their own religious orders.

Other Arab Americans left their Eastern Rite churches for Roman Catholic churches as a matter of convenience.

# Christian Arab Americans



The Coptic church has its origins in Egypt and very early Christianity. The Copts constitute the largest number of Christians in the Arab World. Copts immigrated to the US primarily after the 1950s. Today, Coptic parishes can be found throughout the US to service its expanding population. It is the largest growing Christian Arab population in the US.



The Maronite church is found in Lebanon, and is an Eastern Rite tradition of the Catholic Church. Early Arab immigrants were Maronite, but left to attend Roman Catholic churches that were more convenient and allowed for assimilation. Today, however, the Maronite Church in the US is very prominent and has led to some returning based on their family origins. Maronites may consider themselves to be more Lebanese American than Arab American.



The Melkite church is also referred to as the Greek Melkite Church, owing to its origins in the ancient world. However, today it is a primarily Arab church in its culture and liturgical home. Primarily found in Syria, it is an Eastern Rite tradition of the Catholic Church. Melkites were part of the early Arab immigration wave, and churches can be found primarily in California, the Northeast, and Midwest.

# Christian and Jewish Arab Americans



Orthodox Christianity dates back to the very beginnings of Christianity. The Antiochian and Syrian Orthodox Churches in the US were established early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to service its members who began immigrated in the late 1800s. The Orthodox churches can be found throughout the Arab World. Likewise, parishes can be found throughout the US.

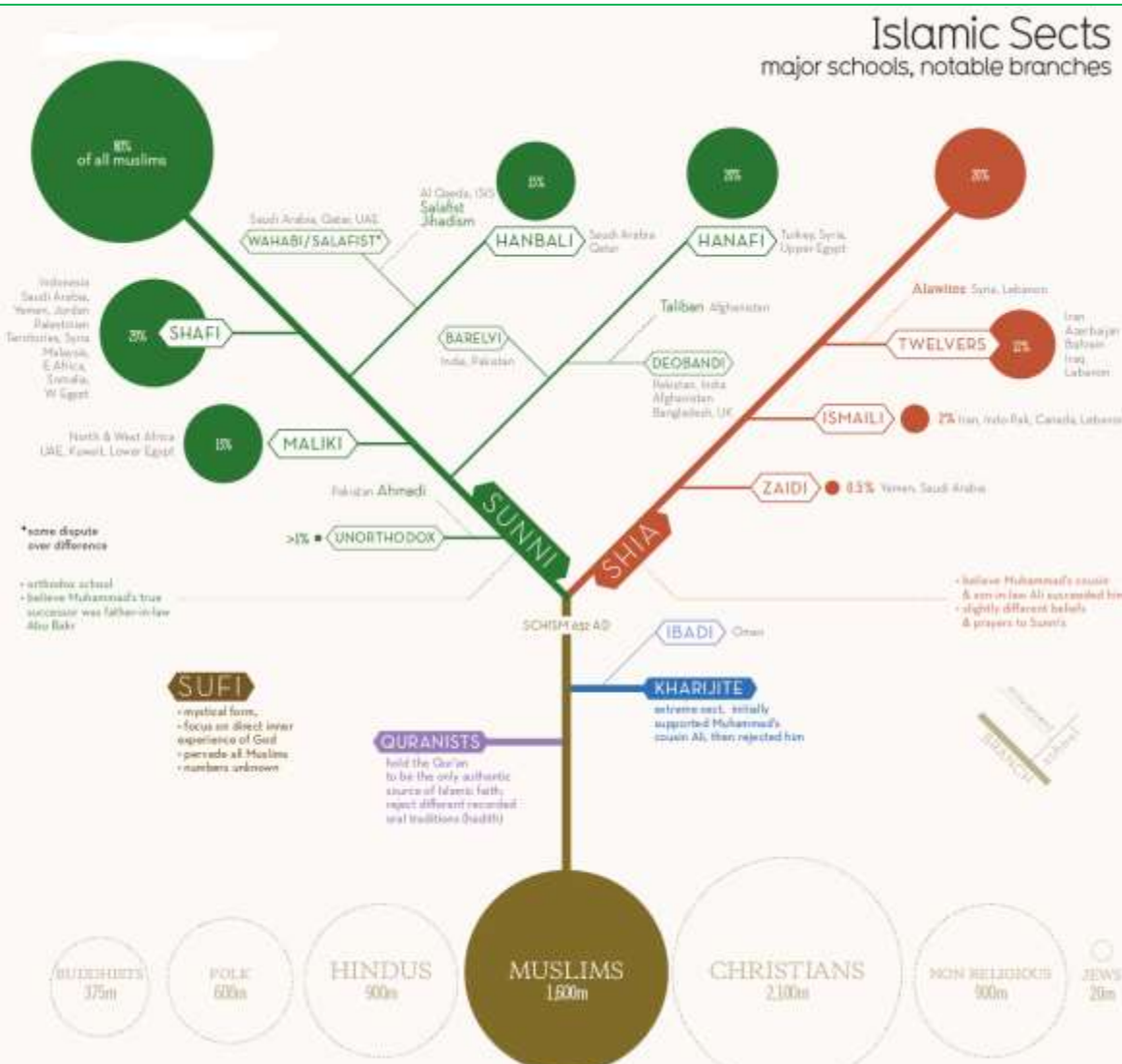


The Chaldean Church was found in Iraq, and is an Eastern Rite tradition of the Catholic Church. While early Chaldean immigrants established the first communities, it was not until the second wave after the 1960s that the community really grew. Today, Chaldeans are primarily found in the Detroit area, with five churches. Additionally, four churches can be found in California. There has been a resurgence of teaching the Chaldean language, and many Chaldean Americans may not consider themselves to be Arab Americans.



A minority of Arabs have been practicing Judaism since its founding. Arab American Jews make up an extremely small percentage of the population; they migrated to the US from Egypt, Iraq, and the Levant, mostly. They are often referred to as “Mizrahi” or “Sephardic” Jews. However, since the establishment of Israel, many have dropped the Arabic language and customs in order to be included in the national narrative of Israel.

# Muslim Arab Americans



A Muslim is a follower of Islam. Islam often is viewed as a singular religion. However, it is a diverse religion that has many important distinctions.

The major distinction is between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Like with all religions, the schisms occur as followers devote themselves to the messages of different leaders, which then become their own branches.

30-35% of Arab Americans are Muslims. This does not account for all Muslim Americans, as many come from non-Arab nations, or are not of immigrant origins (such as the Nation of Islam).

In the past 10 years, most Arab immigrants have been Muslim as compared to 15 to 30 years ago when they were mostly Christian.

# Muslim Arab Americans



The majority of Muslims in the world are Sunni Muslims. Similarly, the majority of Muslims in the United States are Sunni, as well. In fact, the majority of American Muslims are not Arab, but either South Asian or African American. The primary distinction between the two main branches of Islam is who was chosen to follow after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD.



In the Arab World, Shi'a Islam is primarily found in Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Bahrain. Outside of the Arab World, Iran has the largest Shi'a population. In the US, fairly sizable Shi'a communities can be found in places like Dearborn, Michigan. As the Shi'a community has grown, so have their own community institutions, making them a more notable part of the American Muslim setting.



Druze Muslims are primarily found in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. While a very small part of Islam, their early immigration to the US makes them an important part of many Arab American communities. While Muslim, the Druze incorporate a variety of belief systems into their theology, which is described as a gnostic movement.

# Muslim Belief System

As an Abrahamic religion, Muslims share many of the same theological elements as Judaism and Christianity. It is monotheistic, believing in one God. It gives reverence to the prophets associated with Judaism and Christianity, including Moses and Jesus. Muhammad is seen as the last prophet to deliver God's word on earth. Unlike Christianity, Muhammad is not seen as God. Rather, "there is no God but God, and Muhammad is his Messenger" (a phrase which is known as the *shahadah*).

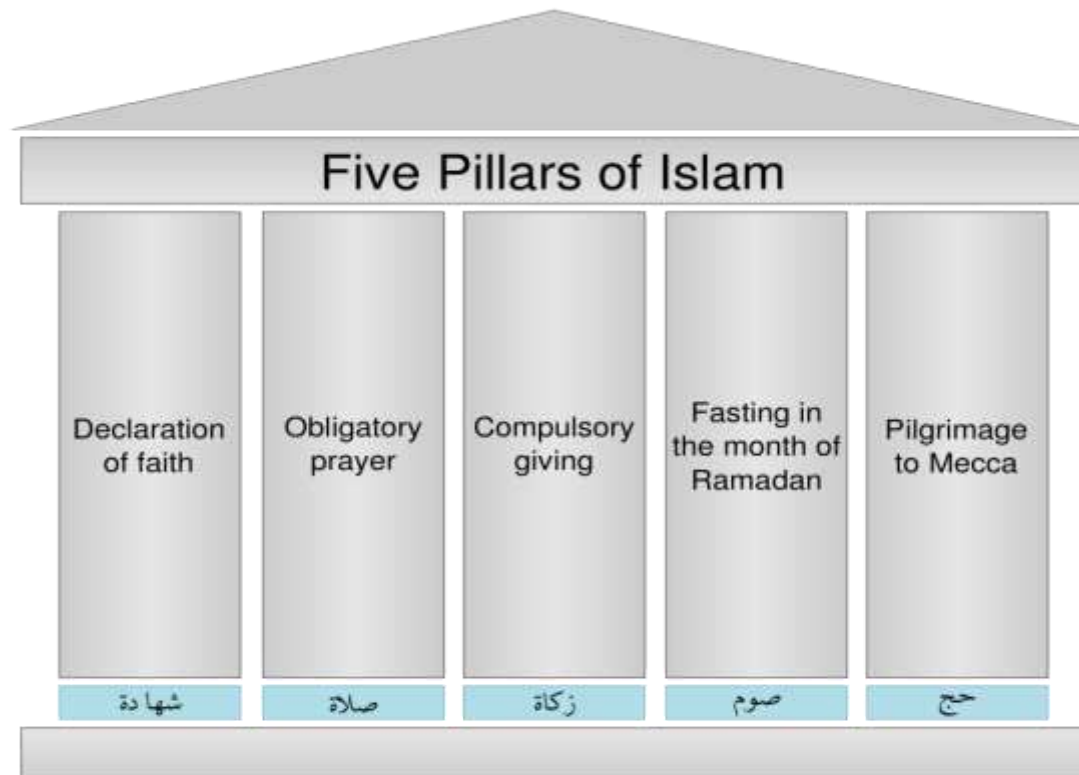
The word for "God" in Arabic is Allah. It would be the same word used when attending an Arabic religious service whether Muslim or Christian. Saying "Allahu Akbar" simply means "God is Great." It is similar to saying "Praise God," although the saying in Arabic has many cultural connotations, depending on the context. In other words, what it means depends on when and how it is used.

Depictions of the Prophet Muhammad are shunned from Islam in order to prevent worshippers from idolizing him like a God. Therefore, Islam is often represented by a picture of the word "Allah".



# 5 Pillars of Islam

There are five principle components to Islam that all Muslims are supposed to follow during their lives. In general, these tenets are very similar to the tenets of other major religions in that they cover: a belief in God, prayer obligations, charitable giving, ritualistic fasting, and visiting holy sites.



# 5 Pillars of Islam

**Shahada:** This is the declaration of faith that “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

Every religion has some kind of declaration of faith. This is the fundamental creed for all Muslims to recite. It can be found throughout the Islamic World, including on flags and other important national and religious symbols.



# 5 Pillars of Islam

**Salat:** This refers to the Islamic daily prayer cycle. Muslims are supposed to pray five times a day, as possible. This can be performed wherever the person is, and is done facing the city of Mecca (in Saudi Arabia) and more specifically the Kaabah (the Black Stone building in Mecca). Friday prayer is typically done in a congregation as a mosque.



iSalam: Smartphone compass app to find the direction for prayer

# 5 Pillars of Islam

***Zakat:*** This refers to charitable giving, which is based on a person's wealth. As a pillar, it is obligatory that a Muslim does so as she or he is able.



Muslims donate water to Flint, Michigan with Islamic Relief USA



A mosque in Missouri raise funds to help restore vandalized Jewish cemeteries

# 5 Pillars of Islam

## *Sawm:*

This refers to fasting that is performed in accordance with the Islamic calendar and traditions, such as during Ramadan. During this holy month, Muslims (as physically able and of a certain age) are to abstain from food and drink during the daylight hours.

Beyond fasting, Ramadan is meant to be a time of other observances, during which Muslims try to be better people (and thus better Muslims).



# Women and the Hijab

In Islam, the idea of wearing a *hijab*, or head covering, is rooted in modesty. Whether or not a woman wears a hijab, and the manner in which it is worn, is based more in local cultural customs. Some women will coordinate the hijab worn to match their outfit.



Saudi Women's Rights Activist  
Manal al-Sharif

The wearing of the hijab has undergone ebbs and flows in Arab and Muslim society. In the period after September 11, 2001, many more American Muslim women adopted the hijab out of a sense of solidarity to combat the negative reactions aimed at Muslims.



Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan

Other women choose not to wear the hijab at all. This can have less to do with a sense of liberation than a personal choice. Also, some wear it in certain contexts only, like religious events or family gatherings.

# Arab Americans and Religion

## Summary Points

- For those who practice a religion, Arab Americans are predominantly Christian.
- While Shi'a Muslims are a minority in the Islamic World, they constitute a large number of Arab Americans.
- Islam has five pillars to which all Muslims are supposed to adhere (as possible).
- The tradition of wearing the hijab is varied, and not followed by all Muslim women.

# Review Questions for Module III

**1. Which is not a Christian rite to which Arab Americans typically belong?**

- a) Melkite
- b) Maronite
- c) Orthodox
- d) Mormon

**2. The pillar of *Ramadan* refers to what practice?**

- a) Prayer
- b) Fasting
- c) Pilgrimage
- d) Charity

**3. Wearing of the *hijab* is rooted in what concept?**

- a) Subordination
- b) Property rights
- c) Modesty
- d) Shame

**4. Which church has its origins in Egypt?**

- a) Zoroastrian
- b) Coptic
- c) Melkite
- d) Protestantism

# MODULE IV: ARAB AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHICS



# Arab American Demographics

## Module Goals

- Identify the common community features of Arab Americans
- Learn the general areas in which Arab American communities can be found
- Understand the diversity among Arab Americans
- Understand the differences between ethnicity and race

# Who are the Arab Americans?

On the one hand, we can say anyone who has ancestry in the Arab World could technically be called an Arab American.

On the other hand, not everyone with this ancestry sees themselves as Arab American, just as not everyone with ancestry from other parts of the world sees themselves as being associated with those areas.

For most Americans, ethnic identity is a matter of selecting and choosing from many different ancestral options. Relatively few Americans can be considered “pure breeds” in terms of ethnicity. This is especially true for those whose ancestors came to the United States more than a century ago.

The same is true for Arab Americans, many of whom have greatly varied ancestral heritage from around the world, as well as around the Arab World.

# How Many Arab Americans are There?

It can be extremely difficult to know how many people there are in the United States who have Arab ancestry. Estimates have been given in the range of 3 to 4 million individuals.

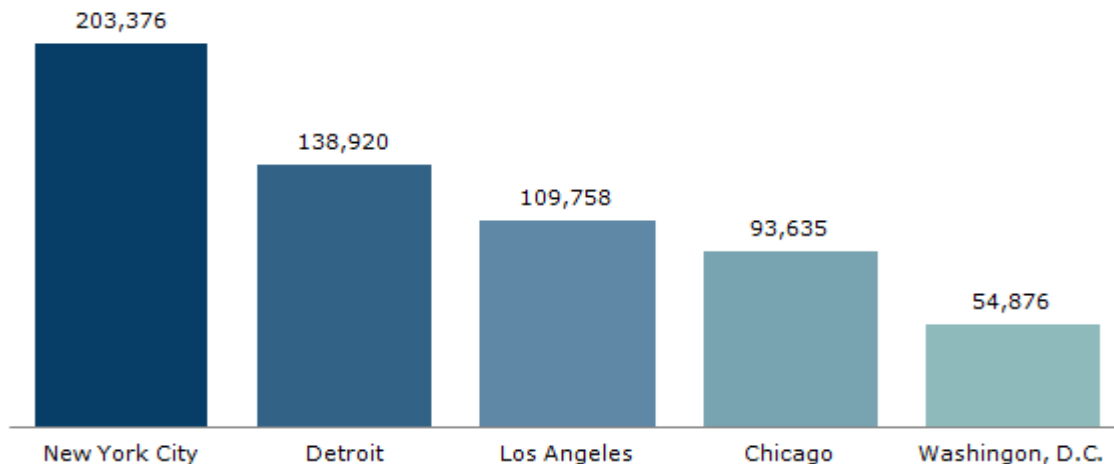
This can be either an over-estimate or under-estimate, depending on who is asked and who is counted. For instance, if a person has a grandparent with Arab ancestry, should that person be counted as Arab American, even if that person does not identify as such?

For many non-European ethnic groups, there can be an expectation that some elements need to be possessed for the person to be seen as a legitimate member of the group, such as identifiable ethnic name, second language ability, relatives in the ancestral homeland. Without those features, the person is not necessarily seen as a member of the ethnic group.

# Where do Arab Americans live?

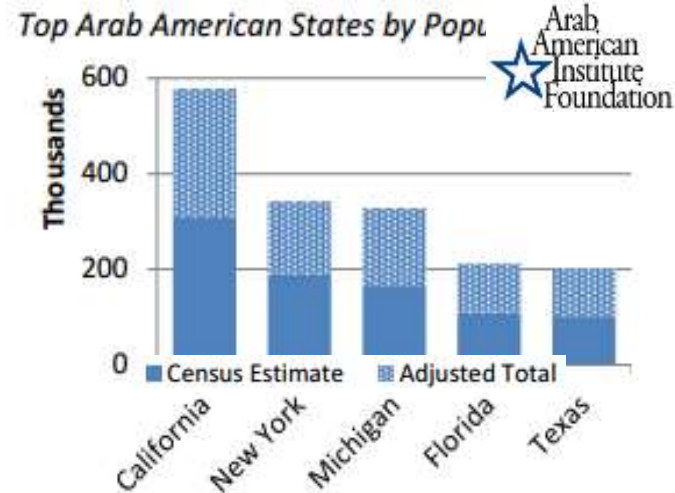
Arab Americans can be found throughout the United States, and literally in every state. However, there are certain areas that are known to have large Arab American communities. Not surprisingly, these are around major metropolitan areas, such as New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington, DC. The largest concentration of Arab Americans can be found in Michigan, where some estimate that upwards of 400,000 residents are of Arab descent.

**Population of Top Five Arab American News Markets**



**Source:** Arab America: Demographics, U.S. Census 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates  
**Note:** Washington D.C. population from 2010 ACS 1-Year Estimates; all other populations from the 2011 ACS 1-Year Estimates

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Arab American Institute Foundation

# Arab Americans and Race

Officially, Arab Americans are classified as “White” in government statistics regarding racial categories.

This has not always been the case, since much of the Arab World lies on the continent of Asia. As a result, Arab immigrants were not originally classified as White, and thus not eligible for naturalized citizenship under early immigration laws.

Further complicating this, parts of the Arab World lie in North Africa. However, Egyptian Americans are not classified as “African Americans” even though they (or their ancestors) are technically from Africa. At the same time, Sudanese Americans could be classified as Arab Americans, and could also be classified as African Americans since they can more closely resemble what is considered as “Black.”

Under the current administration, the White House is no longer considering a “Middle East and North Africa” checkbox on the 2020 Census to gain a better understanding of Arab American demographics.



Lopez Lomong, Olympic athlete, Sudanese American, African American, and Arab American.

# Arab American Demographics

## Summary Points

- Arab Americans are in many ways distinct from American society, and in other ways very similar.
- Not everyone with Arab ancestry identifies as Arab American.
- While Arab Americans live throughout the United States, there are certain areas where Arab Americans predominantly live.
- Arab Americans are technically classified as “White” although they come from Asia and Africa.

# Review Questions for Module IV

## 1. How many Arab Americans live in the US?

- a) 1-2 million
- b) Less than 1 million
- c) 3-4 million
- d) 5 million

## 2. Which state has the highest concentration of Arab Americans?

- a) Michigan
- b) New York
- c) California
- d) New Jersey

## 3. Officially, Arab Americans are categorized as what race by the U.S. Census?

- a) Asian
- b) White
- c) Black or African American
- d) None of the above

## 4. Arab Americans choose to identify as Arab based on personal relativity to the culture and their ancestors.

True

False

# MODULE V: ARAB AMERICAN CULTURE, CUSTOMS, AND TRADITIONS



# Arab American Culture, Customs and Traditions

## Module Goals

- Understand the different ways in which immigrant groups undergo cultural change
- Identify common Arab cultural traits
- Learn specific components of Arab American culture

# Assimilation and Acculturation

All immigrant and ethnic groups undergo processes of *assimilation*, *acculturation*, and *hybridization*:

**Assimilation** refers to a process where an ethnic group gives up cultural traditions in order to better fit into a new cultural context.

**Acculturation** involves the adaptation to and adoption of certain cultural traits of the majority society in order to better engage in it. This is while still retaining elements of the traditional culture, which may only be used in the ethnic community.

**Hybridization** can be thought of as incorporating elements from a variety of cultural influences, thereby creating a new mixed form of culture.

# Assimilation and Arab Americans

Throughout various points in American history, immigrant groups have tried to assimilate more into American society, going so far as to change names and remove all cultural remnants of their homeland traditions, including Arab Americans.

At other times, there has been greater acceptance of cultural diversity, allowing immigrant groups to keep some traditions, while adopting new ones.

For Arab Americans, the presence of multiple waves of immigration groups has allowed a constant cultural renewal, and created the opportunity for later-generation ethnics to become reacquainted with the culture of their ancestors.

# Arabic Language

Later generations of Arab Americans generally do not speak the Arabic language. However, an emphasis on maintaining Arabic in the household is strong with first generation Arab Americans and new immigrants.

The Arabic language is comprised of 28 letters, and is written from right to left.

ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ
alif	baa	taa	thaa	jiim	haa	kha
د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص
daal	thaal	raa	zaay	siin	shiin	saad
ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق
daad	taa	thaa	ayn	ghayn	faa	qaaf
ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي
kaaf	laam	miim	nuun	ha	waaw	yaa

English	Transliteration	Translation
Welcome	Ahlan wa sahlan	أهلاً وسهلاً
Hello	Marhaba	مرحباً
Goodbye	Ila eltiqaa	إلى اللقاء
Good morning	Sabah elkayr	صباح الخير
Good afternoon	Masa elkayr	مساء الخير
Thank you	Shokran	شكراً
Sorry	Aasif	آسوف
Please	Min fadlek	من فضلك
Yes	Naam	نعم
No	Laa	لا
Come here	Taala huna	تعالى هنا

# Arab Americans and English Language

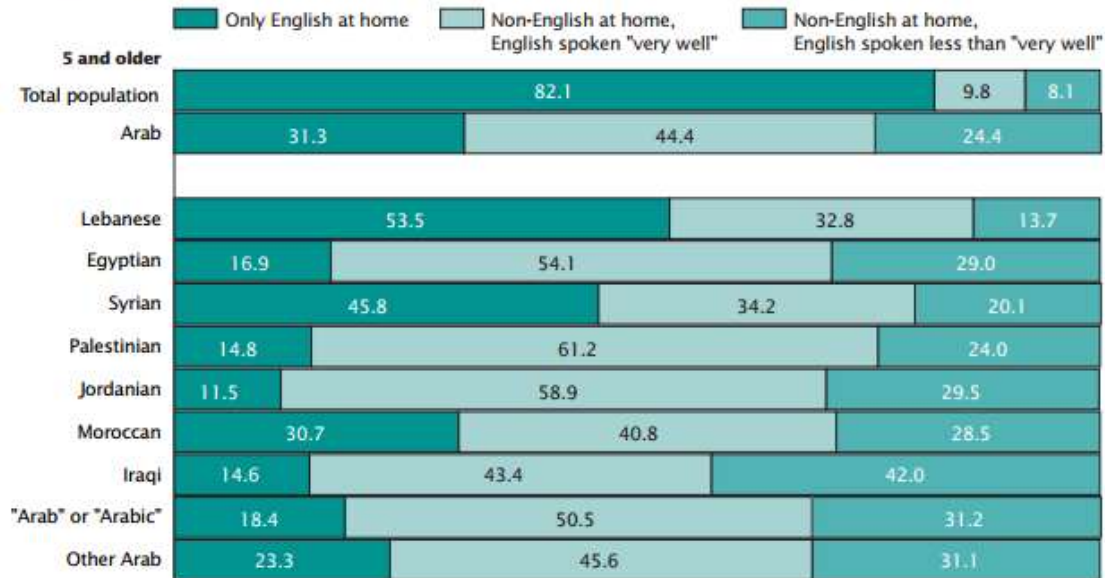
Arab Americans can see two general language patterns. For those who are descendants from the early immigration waves, English is the primary (and perhaps only) language spoken.

For more recent immigrants, they can live in a bi-lingual household. Census data indicates that almost 25% speak English less than “very well.” On the other hand, this means three-quarters do speak English very well.

Depending on the country of origin, other languages, such as French which could be spoken in addition to Arabic.

## Language Spoken at Home and English-Speaking Ability: 2000

(Percent distribution of population 5 and older. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf))



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

# Arabic Calligraphy

Arabic Calligraphy is the art form in which phrases in Arabic, often taken from the Quran, are written in a beautiful script. This is why it is also known as Islamic Calligraphy.

In its modern form, Arabic calligraphy can be found in the logos of companies, and in representations of animals.



# Hospitality in Arab Culture

Hospitality is very important in Arab culture and this holds true for Arab Americans, as well. Providing food and drink, such as tea or coffee, is typical when visiting a home, or even business.

It is important that this hospitality is accepted and appreciated, as rejecting such attempts is a breach with customs and norms.

أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا

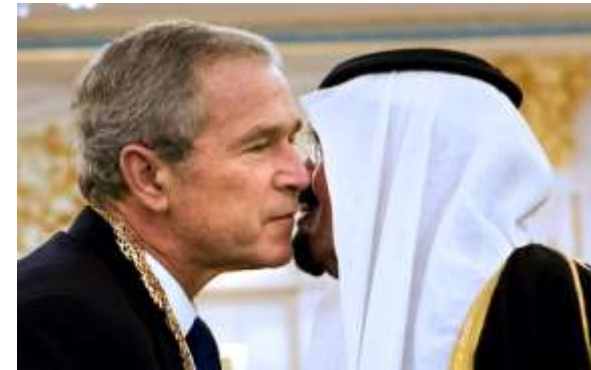
**Ahlan wa Sahlan**  
**“Welcome”**



# Greetings in Arabic and Arab Culture

Greetings in Arab culture can take on a variety of forms, depending on the context and familiarity between people. Often, a handshake in formal settings will be expected, although this can be withheld by persons who follow the religious tradition of not touching members of the opposite sex who are not related. In these settings, a slight nod, a right hand placed above the heart, or bow will be substituted.

For those who are close friends, a kiss on each cheek may occur. This can occur between men and between women. This is even the case between heads of state.



Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud and President George W. Bush exchanging greetings. Mandel Nan/AFP/Getty Images

**Marhaba--Hello**

**Ahlan wa Sahlan--Welcome**

**Assalaam Alaykum—Peace be upon you (religious expression)**

# Arab American Holidays

Most celebrations for Arab Americans coincide with religious events and national holidays. These combine both Arab and American traditions, food, and family gatherings.

There are also events to celebrate their ancestral heritage and homeland. Such as *mahrajans/festivals* are opportunities for families to reunite, as well as persons of non-Arab ancestry to experience a taste of Arab culture.



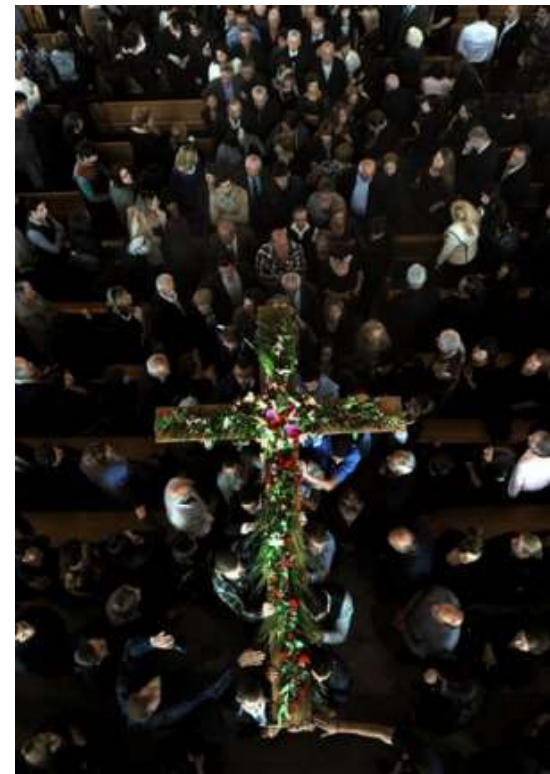
Rihanna Harajli, 3, of Dearborn gets her face painted by Manal Alaktama, 19, also of Dearborn, during Sunday's Eid Festival.



Our Lady of Lebanon Mahrajan, Wheeling, WV



Dearborn Arab International Festival, photo from the festival site



The cross is carried out of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Friday's Easter service. Photo: Mal Fairclough

# Food for Special Occasions



As with other cultures, certain foods are associated with certain special occasions. These traditions remain throughout the generations, eliciting fond memories of childhood and homeland.



*Mlabbas (Jordan almonds)* are almond candies that are served mainly during weddings.

*Ma'amoul*, pastries filled with dates and nuts, is typically enjoyed during holidays, especially during Easter and Ramadan.



Deep-fried *zalabieh* and *awwamat*, served in syrup, is eaten for all occasions and is often made during Epiphany.



Many variations of baklava are enjoyed at all celebratory occasions.

# In the Arab American Home

Within many Arab American homes, you can find elements of ethnic pride and ancestral heritage. This might be in the form of artifacts carried by immigrants, pictures of villages, and/or general symbols of Arab identity.



# Arab American Culture, Customs and Traditions

## Summary Points

- Assimilation, acculturation, and hybridization are parts of the processes through which immigrants go through when arriving to a new society.
- While Arab culture is diverse, there are certain traits that are central to it.
- Most Arab Americans speak English as native speakers.
- Food plays a central part of Arab (American) culture and holiday traditions.

# Review Questions for Module 5

1. Which is not a process that immigrants typically go through?
  - a) Assimilation
  - b) Radicalization
  - c) Hybridization
  - d) Acculturation
2. What traits are important in Arab American culture?
  - a) Generosity
  - b) Family
  - c) Food
  - d) All of the above
3. What does the phrase “Asalaam Alaykum” mean?
  - a) Life begins at 40
  - b) Death to the infidels
  - c) Peace be upon you.
  - d) Blessed are the peace-keepers
4. Arabic is written and read from right to left.

True                  False

# MODULE VI: ARAB AMERICAN PROFESSIONS, EDUCATION, AND ACHIEVEMENTS



# Arab American Professions, Education, and Achievements

## Module Goals

- Identify the ways in which Arab Americans have engaged in economic activity from their arrival to today
- Recognize the importance of educational achievements in the Arab American community
- Become aware of the scope of Arab American achievements and impact across American society

# Arab American Professions

While many early Arab immigrants sought opportunity in traditional immigrant routes of industrial work and homesteading, *pack peddling* (or peddling) became a hallmark. Peddlers would travel through the country side door to door, selling general products and 'novelties from the Holy Land' to customers. All what they needed was the determination to succeed, and a few goods to sell.



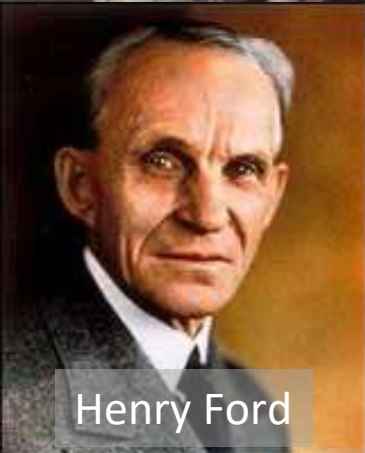
This eventually led to the opening of grocery stores, as peddlers looked for more stationary opportunities. Marriage and families also helped, providing the staff needed to run a store, creating a true family business and the achievement of their American Dream.



# Arab American Professions



As with other immigrants, many Arab immigrants worked in manufacturing. After Henry Ford offered “\$5 a day” for work, immigrants flocked to Detroit, Michigan to answer the call of higher wages. This led Detroit, and subsequently Dearborn (Michigan), to establishing a very large and diverse Arab-American community



Henry Ford



# Arab American Professions

Immigrant parents wanted a better and easier life for their children. They *strongly* encouraged them into more professional vocations. Primarily, Arab immigrants looked for their children to become doctors, lawyers, or engineers - jobs that were seen to provide a healthy income, reliable stability, and social status that were part of their American dream.

Doctors, lawyers, and engineers became the calling for many Arab American youth, helping to fulfill the hopes of their parents, and integrating them into American economic life.



# Arab American Professions

Today, Arab Americans are integrated into every aspect of professional and economic life. They continue to be centered primarily in managerial, professional and related professions, as well as in sales. Many would relate this to the entrepreneurial spirit that encompasses Arab culture, which was predicated on trading and business throughout its history back to ancient times.



## Occupation: 2000

(Percent distribution of employed civilian population 16 and older. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf))



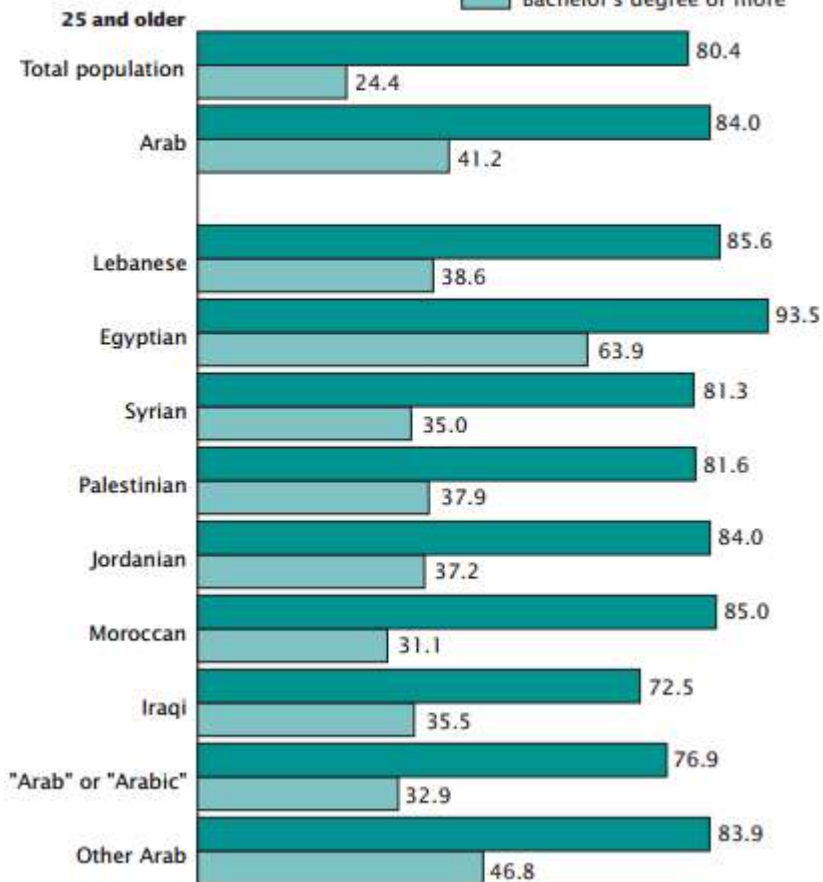
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

# Arab Americans and Education

## Educational Attainment: 2000

(Percent of population 25 and older. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf))

High school graduate or more  
Bachelor's degree or more



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

Arab Americans have historically placed a very high value on educational attainment. This has resulted in Arab Americans having education rates that exceed that of the general US population.

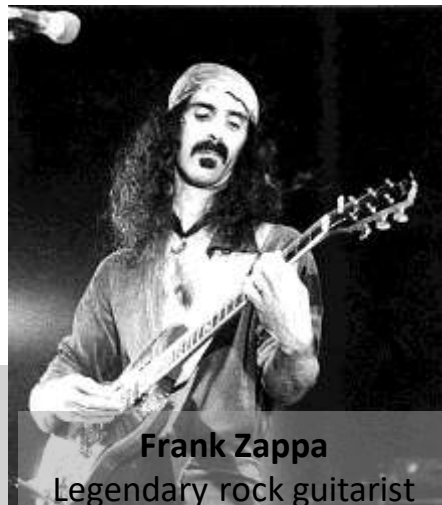
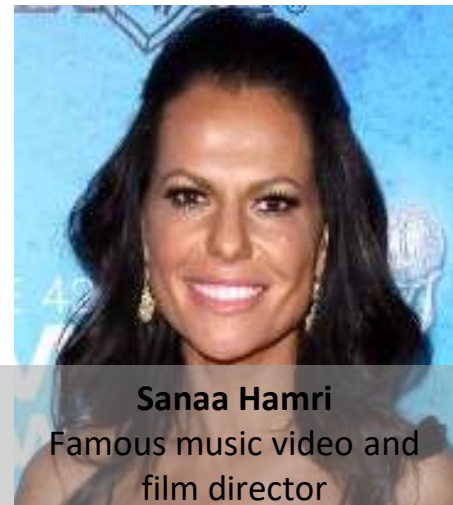
Census reports indicate that over 40% of Arab Americans have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 24% of the general US population.



# Notable Arab Americans

Throughout their time in the United States, Arab Americans have contributed in significant ways to American society. Whether it be through their everyday work, extended family, broader community networks, and integration into civic life, their presence (along with that of other immigrant groups), has helped to form the nation.

This tradition continues today in ways large and small. The following section identifies prominent Arab Americans across a variety of areas.



# Notable Arab Americans in Entertainment



## **Rami Malek**

Academy Award Best Actor winner was Egyptian-American Rami Malek for his role in “Bohemian Rhapsody” He was the first Coptic-Egyptian to receive an Oscar.



## **Shakira**

Shakira Isabel Mebarak is a Colombian singer, songwriter, dancer, and record producer of Lebanese heritage.



## **Gigi Hadid**

Palestinian American, Jelena Noura "Gigi" Hadid is an American fashion model who made her debut, ranking as one of the Top 50 Models in America.



## **Salma Hayek**

Lebanese American Actress Salma Hayek's father, Sami, is Lebanese-Mexican, hailing from the city of Baabdat, Lebanon.

# Notable Arab Americans in Politics and Activism



**Donna Shalala**

US Secretary of Health & human Services  
President of the University of Miami



**Ray LaHood**

US Congressman  
US Secretary of Transportation



**Rashida Tlaib**

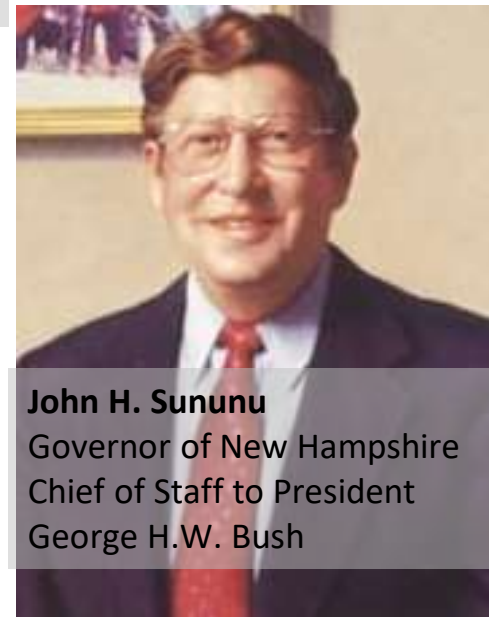
US Congresswoman



**Ralph Nader**

Consumer Advocate  
Candidate for President

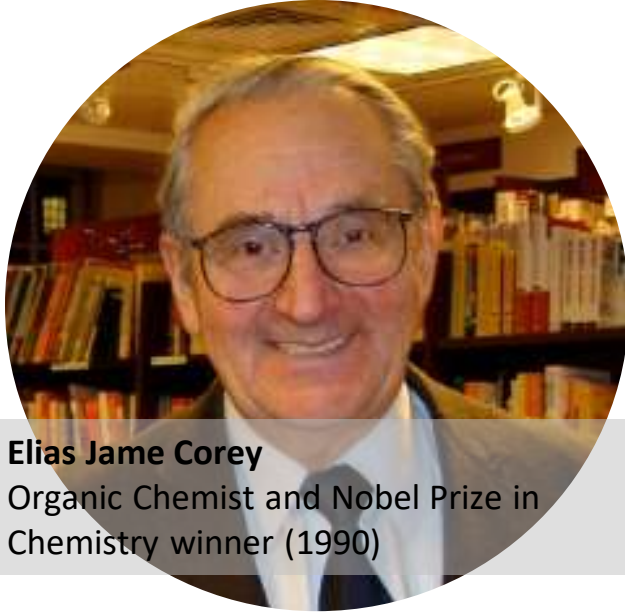
There are very notable Arab Americans who have served in politics and areas of activism. These individuals have contributed to the fabric of civic life through their engagement in political activities and commitment to social causes.



**John H. Sununu**

Governor of New Hampshire  
Chief of Staff to President  
George H.W. Bush

# Notable Arab Americans in Education & Science



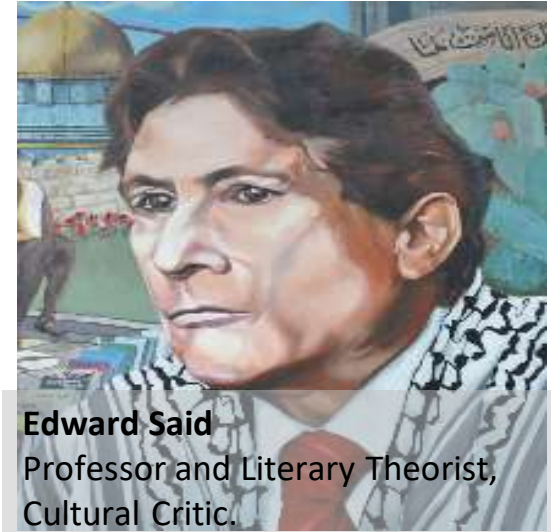
**Elias Jame Corey**

Organic Chemist and Nobel Prize in Chemistry winner (1990)



**Christa McAuliffe**

Teacher and Astronaut, killed in the Challenger tragedy.



**Edward Said**

Professor and Literary Theorist, Cultural Critic.



**George Doumani**

Geologist, author and explorer in Antarctica



**Jack Shaheen**

Professor and Media Analyst, focusing on Arab Stereotypes

Arab Americans have continued the legacy of advancement in science and advancement known in the historical Arab World. In a variety of fields, Arab Americans build on the culture's emphasis on education through leading research and discovery.

# Notable Arab Americans

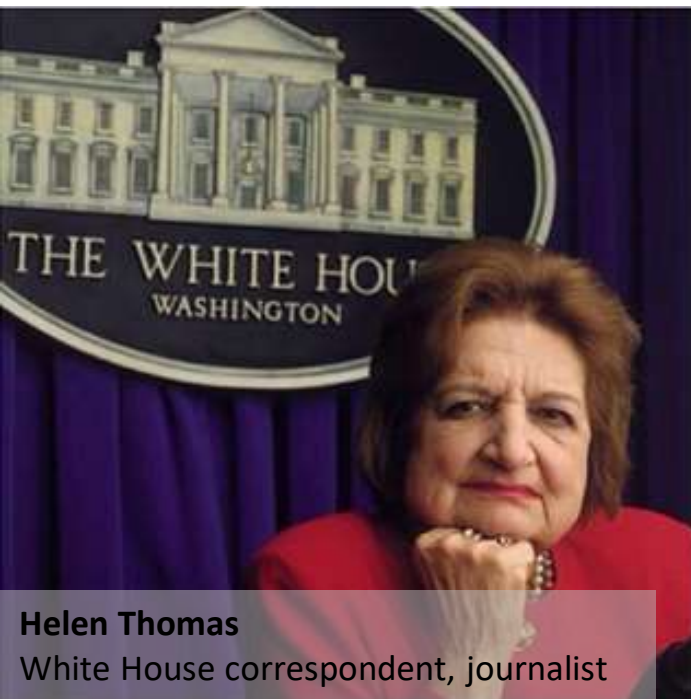
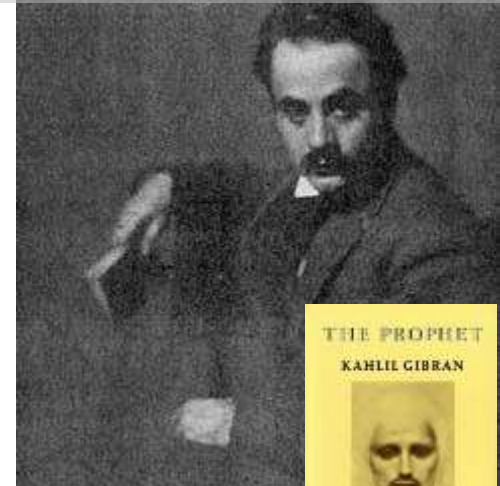


**Suzy Kassem**  
Writer, director, and poet

Arab culture has a long story-telling tradition. Arab Americans are continuing this tradition through literary, journalistic, and other media formats. The stories they tell and the work they do help to inform social and cultural life.

**Kahlil Gibran**

Poet, philosopher, literary author.



**Helen Thomas**  
White House correspondent, journalist



**Naomi Shihab Nye**  
Poet, songwriter, novelist



**Anthony Shadid**  
Journalist, correspondent, author,  
Pulitzer Prize winner

# Notable Arab Americans in Medicine



## **Danny Thomas**

Comedian and actor who went on to found St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. ALSAC in the title refers to the American Lebanese Syrian Associated Charities.



## **Michael DeBakey**

Renowned cardiac surgeon whose work was instrumental in changing heart surgeries, including pioneering the artificial heart.



# Notable Arab Americans in Business

Business and entrepreneurship are viewed by Arabs as part of their cultural legacy. Arab American, descendants of immigrants in search of opportunity, still look for opportunities in business. Some of the most notable innovators in their areas of business are of Arab ancestry, fulfilling the American dream that their ancestors hoped.



**Paul Orfalea**  
Founder of the Kinko's  
copy-center chain.



**Sam Maloof**  
Furniture designer, craftsman and  
woodworker, MacArthur fellowship  
recipient.



**Farouk Shami, CEO**  
Farouk Systems and  
Founder of CHI hair  
products.



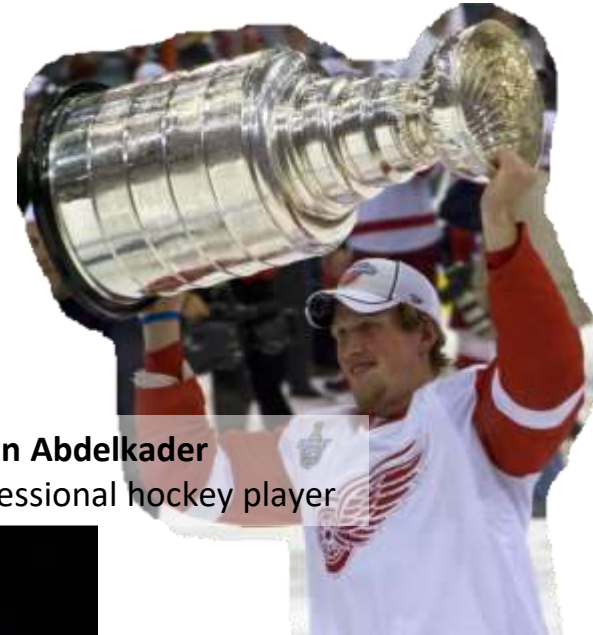
**Steve Jobs**  
Co-founder, chairman, and  
CEO of Apple, Inc.

# Notable Arab Americans in Sports



**Omar Hassan**  
Professional skateboarder

Arab Americans have excelled in a variety of athletic pursuits, achieving championship status in their respective sports.



**Justin Abdelkader**  
Professional hockey player



**Doug Flutie**  
Professional football player in the NFL and CFL



**Kelly Slater**  
World Champion professional surfer



**Bobby Rahal**  
Champion race car driver

# Arab American Professions, Education, and Achievement

## Summary Points

- Arab Americans, upon arriving to the US, engaged in a variety of economic activities.
- Some of these, like working in manufacturing, agriculture, and mining, were similar activities to other immigrants.
- Others, like pack peddling, were largely unique to Arab Americans.
- The emphasis on education in the Arab American community resulted in greater educational attainment rates when compared to the general American society.
- Arab Americans have made substantial impacts across a variety of professional and occupational areas, some achieving iconic status in the United States.

# Review Questions for Module 5

**1. What was the name for the economic activity used by many early Arab Americans?**

- a) Cruising
- b) Peddling
- c) Selling
- d) Pawning

**2. What drew many Arab immigrants to Detroit, Michigan?**

- a) Pleasant weather
- b) Proximity to Canada
- c) \$5 a day for work
- d) Government programs

**3. Which job sector has the least amount of Arab American participation?**

- a) Fishing and farming
- b) Manufacturing
- c) Sales and office
- d) Service

**4. Which famous Arab American founded St. Jude Hospital?**

- a) Salma Hayek
- b) Jamie Farr
- c) Danny Thomas
- d) Doug Flutie

**5. On average, Arab Americans are less educated than the general US population?**

True

False

# MODULE VII: ISSUES FACING ARAB AMERICANS



# Arab American Stereotypes and the Media

## Module Goals

- Understand key concepts related to stereotyping and discrimination
- Identify how stereotypes are spread through types of media
- Examine the pervasiveness of Arab and Muslim stereotypes
- Explore how stereotypes can lead to active discrimination
- Be exposed to attempts aimed at undoing stereotypes and discrimination

# Stereotypes & Othering

Stereotypes are preconceived notions that people have about another group, or persons who belong to that group. They are generalizations that are built from noticeable traits, which then come to categorize and define the characteristics of that group.



Even when stereotypes positively depict a group of people (e.g. 'Asians are good at math'), they can still have a negative impact because they still create the perception that everyone in the group is the same. This process of group generalization and removal of diversity is known as *Othering*.

Othering refers to a process through which a group (and those belonging to it) are constructed as fundamentally opposite and in an essentially negative way. Like stereotyping, Othering results in a structured perception in which all members of the groups are seen as not only different from, but more importantly *less than*. This then provides a justification for any treatment in which the group and its members are discriminated.

# Ethnocentrism

The traits we notice tend to be those that differ most from traits we are most accustomed to seeing. Ethnocentrism then is the practice of evaluating other cultures and groups in relation to our own, with your own norms and expectations serving as the primary frame of reference for what is 'normal'.



# Stereotypes and the Media

Stereotypes of Arabs (and Muslims) pervade media in America. In many ways, Arabs are perhaps the most stereotyped group in the media. This is by no means a recent phenomenon, but one that has a long history and legacy.

The portrayal of Arabs and Arab Americans in news and entertainment media can be damaging to the understanding of Arab identity. Arab American actors like Amr El-Beyoumi and Yasmine Al-Massri have spoken out about the lack of three-dimensional roles available to them.

The roles of Arabs in film and television as terrorists, villains, or unnamed bystanders killed by US soldiers can perpetuates harmful stereotypes and indirectly relate all people of Arab background to the bad guys they see in the media.

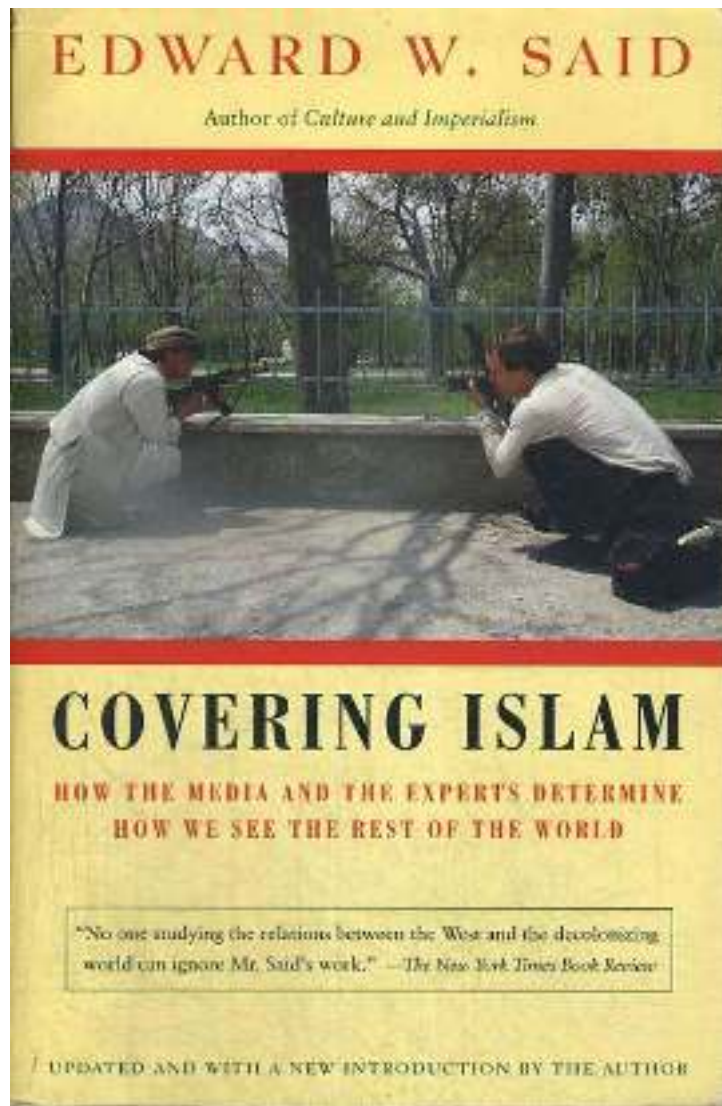


The TV show **Homeland** has been accused of trafficking false images of the Arab world



The film **American Sniper** has been linked to hundreds of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim threats on Twitter

# Arabs & Muslims in the News



Coverage of the Arab and Islamic worlds in the news media also have a major impacts when images presented are not balanced.

While one can find news stories that support the predominant stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, there also are stories and framing of events that would provide alternative depictions. However, such stories frequently are ignored in favor of those that support the dominant narrative around Arabs and Muslims.

Assumptions of who is victim and who is aggressor continue to structure how events are covered and images portrayed, especially related to conflicts in the Arab World and Middle East.

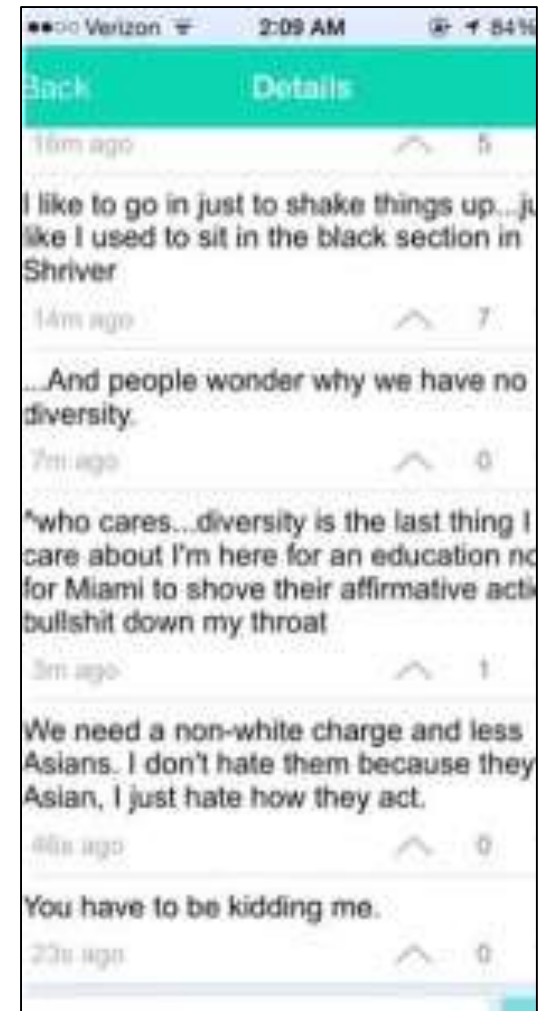
# Stereotypes and Social Media



Like other forms of media, social media can become a haven for prejudicial and stereotypical representations. Apps like Yik Yak, which allow for anonymous postings and geographic-based feeds, are being used to target members of various ethnic groups (especially on college campuses).

## Racist Posts On Yik Yak Prompt Student Protest At Colgate University

Posted: 09/24/2014 6:19 pm EDT | Updated: 09/24/2014 6:59 pm EDT



# Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games

While video games might be seen as entertainment, they are also a form of mass media. When one considers how much is communicated through video games, there is little doubt that they are a form of media. This is especially the case with today's games, which create very realistic looking environments in which players almost freely navigate.

Vit Sisler examined how Arabs are represented in video games:

*“Within these games, it demonstrates how the diverse ethnic and religious identities of the Islamic world have been flattened out and reconstructed into a series of social typologies operating within a broader framework of terrorism and hostility.”*



# Confirming Biases in Social Media

**City in Michigan First to Fully Implement Sharia Law**

Posted about 3 days ago · 270 comments



«NationalReport» In a surprise weekend vote, the city council of Dearborn, Michigan voted 4-3 to become the first US city to officially implement all aspects of Sharia Law. The tough new law, slated to go into effect January 1st, addresses secular law including crime, politics and economics as well as personal matters such as sexual intercourse, fasting, prayer, diet and hygiene. The new law could see citizens stoned for adultery or having a limb amputated for theft. Lesser offenses, such as drinking alcohol or abortion, could result in flogging and/or stoning. In addition, the law imposes harsh laws with regards to women and allows for child marriage.

## Dearborn, Michigan Is Under Sharia Law, Says Satirical Website, But City Is Not Amused

The Huffington Post | By Yasmine Hafiz

Posted: 10/30/2013 5:42 pm EDT | Updated: 10/31/2013 10:34 am EDT

### City of Dearborn Responds to Satirical 'Sharia Law' Article

*City of Dearborn is "not amused by falsehood; sets record straight."*

By Jessica Nunez (Patch Staff)

October 30, 2013 at 1:49pm

In October 2013, the satirical news website *The National Report* issued a 'story' that Dearborn, Michigan was going to implement Sharia law. Sharia law is reference to the idea of a strict, fundamentalist Islamic set of laws and penal codes. Dearborn was used in reference to the large concentration of Arab Americans and Muslim Americans who reside there. The story quickly is taken up as evidence of 'creeping Islam' in America, despite it not being true.

# Bias in Politics

Terrorists are typically driven by particular ideologies. In this respect, domestic terrorists are a widely divergent lot, drawing from a broad array of philosophies and worldviews. These individuals can be motivated to commit crimes in the name of ideas such as animal rights, white supremacy, and opposition to abortion, for example.

**The Domestic Terrorist Threat:  
Background and Issues for Congress**

Despite the fact that definitions of and concerns over 'domestic terrorism' span the gamut of political ideologies and social activism, it is the focus on Arab and Muslim Americans that can contribute to the stereotypes and bias that are actively constructed. Some in Congress have called for the explicit profiling of Arabs and Muslim Americans

## Muslims to Be Congressional Hearings' Main Focus

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN  
Published: February 7, 2011

WASHINGTON — The new chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee said Monday that he planned to call mostly Muslim and Arab witnesses to testify in hearings next month on the threat of homegrown Islamic terrorism.

**The New York Times**

Representative [Peter T. King](#), Republican of New York, said he would rely on Muslims to make his case that American Muslim leaders have failed to cooperate with law enforcement officials in the effort to disrupt terrorist plots — a claim that was rebutted in recent reports by counterterrorism experts and in a forum on Capitol Hill on Monday.



# Selective Perception



Selective perception functions to highlight certain elements that we experience in a way that confirms our previously held beliefs. In this case, Muslim women and Catholic nuns might cover their heads as a symbol of religious devotion. However, the Muslim woman can be viewed very differently (as suppressed, for example) when compared to the Catholic women.

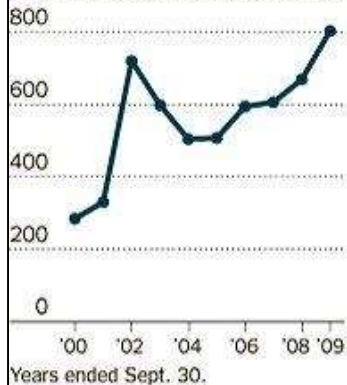
# Workplace Discrimination

## Rising Complaints of Bias

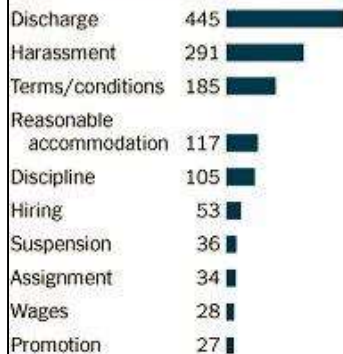
More complaints of religious bias were filed by Muslims in 2009 with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission than in the year following Sept. 11, 2001.

### BIAS COMPLAINTS FILED

Each may involve more than one issue.



### TOP ALLEGATIONS CITED IN 2009



Source: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

In the years after the attacks on September 11, 2001, discrimination against Arabs and Muslims increased dramatically. A 2010 *New York Times* story stated:

At a time of growing tensions involving Muslims in the United States, a record number of Muslim workers are complaining of employment discrimination, from co-workers calling them “terrorist” or “Osama” to employers barring them from wearing head scarves or taking prayer breaks.

Such discriminatory behavior could include actions like: offensive language, not allowing the wearing of certain clothing or religious symbols, not reasonably accommodating religious obligations (e.g. prayer), joking aimed at demeaning, unfair evaluation or dismissal, and outright abuse.

# Hate Crimes Against Arab Americans

It can be difficult to know the number of hate crimes that have been committed against Arab Americans, largely because the FBI has only been tracking them since 2015. According to the FBI's 2015 statistics, hate crimes against American Muslims rose 67% in 2015.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has also reported a sharp increase in anti-immigrant hate crimes against Arab, Muslim, and Sikh Americans (who are often confused as Arab or Muslim) since the 2016 presidential elections.



# Bullying of Arab American Students

Despite the increased attention on bullying since a spate of teen suicides highlighted the problem a year ago, news reports and academic studies document dozens of examples in which school officials have dismissed Muslim bullying complaints. In some instances, teachers themselves are the bullies.

Among other examples, a substitute teacher at a school in Hillsborough County, Fla., was disciplined in 2007 for harassing a sixth-grader because his name was Islam. In 2006, a substitute teacher in Gaithersburg, Md., had to be escorted from a school after berating a group of students for speaking Arabic.

THE HUFFINGTON POST  
BREAKING NEWS AND OPINION

Terrorist

Sand N\*gger

Camel jockey

A-rab

Towel head

Osama

For Arab American and Muslim American students, bullying can be an everyday feature of life. This is further complicated by adults who can share in the biases possessed by those doing the bullying. Global events, such as wars, economic crises, inflammatory political rhetoric, coupled with cultural differences create a climate that is ripe for victimization of children.


In the end, group-based bullying is rooted in the larger social and cultural climate. Images experienced in movies, on television, video games, and music, as well as through the words of educators, create a kind of tacit approval targeting Arab and Muslim-American students is permissible, even admirable, when those actions are seen as patriotic.

# Dehumanization & Rehumanization

Rehumanization refers to the process through which people who have been marginalized (or dehumanized) by stereotypical portrayals are reconstructed to appear more human, or “just like everyone else.”

This is done by emphasizing traits that everyone is thought to possess, or at least those who are seen as ‘normal’ and exhibited the normative standard in society.

Areas of emphasis can include: paying taxes, having a professional career, participating in civic activities, raising a family, being educated, and being law-abiding.



**WE'RE AMERICAN AND WE'RE MUSLIMS**

**MY NAME IS AMINAH KAPADIA**, and I'm a wife, a mom and a student. I'm studying for a Master's degree in education, and I volunteer at our children's school, where I'm also active in the PTA. I was born in Philadelphia, as Puerto Rican parents, and have lived in the United States my entire life. My husband, Zuhair, is from India, but has called America home for more than thirty years. He's an attorney and former economic officer for the U.S. Department of State. Now he spends his days running a consulting firm and coaching our sons. "I will and I never leave."

Like many Americans, my husband and I face the challenge of raising our children in an unpredictable world. That's why the basic principles of our religion, like tolerance, justice and devotion to family, are a central part of our lives. As the Prophet Muhammad told us, "The best of you is he who is best to his family. None of you will have faith until he cares for his brother what he wishes for himself."

We believe the morality of our nation is dependent upon the strength of our families, and Islam teaches us the values that provide that strength.

**WE'RE AMERICAN MUSLIMS**

**CAIR**  
Center for American Islamic Relationship

Number five of fifty listed in the latest in America's 5000.  
To learn more about the center, visit [www.cair.com](http://www.cair.com)

# Arab American Stereotypes and the Media

## Summary Points

- Stereotyping, while a common tendency, and lead to harmful caricatures, even when positive.
- Arab and Muslim stereotypical portrayals are very common in mass media.
- Social media and other forms of media have led to further stereotyping of Arab and Muslim Americans.
- Stereotyping can increase the incidence of discrimination and violence against Arab and Muslim Americans.

# Review Questions for Module 7

**1. What word relates to preconceived notions that people have about another group?**

- a) Ethnocentrism
- b) Discrimination
- c) Stereotype
- d) Confirmation Bias

**2. What word relates to the practice of evaluating other cultures and groups in relation to our own?**

- a) Ethnocentrism
- b) Discrimination
- c) Stereotype
- d) Confirmation Bias

**3. The process through which people who have been marginalized are reconstructed to appear more human is known as what?**

- a) Rehumanization
- b) Dehumanization
- c) Self-perception
- d) Ethnocentrism

**4. Bullying attitudes have been found to be influenced by video games.**

- True
- False

# Educator's Curriculum Kit



*Produced by:*  
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