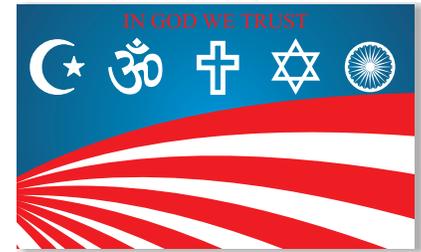




This month's theme: Religious Diversity in America



## Muslim Life in America

Adapted by Stephanie Woodard



Muslim-Americans have enriched the United States since early on in its history. They have fought in American wars, served in government, started businesses, won Nobel Prizes, and have lit the Olympic Torch. When the first Muslim-American was recently elected to Congress, he took the oath to defend our Constitution using the same Holy Koran that one of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson, kept in his personal library. Muslims in America comprise a diverse group of people from all around the world. These groups include people from South Asia, the Middle East, South East Asia, Europe, and Africa, as well as a small but growing group of Hispanic-Muslims as well as Americans who have converted to Islam.

There are mosques and Muslim social and cultural institutions throughout the country, in urban and in rural communities alike. There is a mosque in every state of our union, making over 1200 mosques within our borders. Because the United States does not track population by religion, there is no authoritative count of our Muslim population. Estimates range widely from two million to seven million or more. Of that number, approximately 34 percent are from South Asia and 26 percent are Arab. Another 25 percent of Muslim-Americans are indigenous; largely African-Americans adding more layers to the rich Muslim -American experience.

Want to visit the International Museum of Muslim Culture – the first Islamic history museum in the United States? Forget about traveling to New York or Washington; instead you must head for the Arts District of Jackson, Mississippi. Dearborn, Michigan, is home to the nation's largest Arab-American population. Muslims from South Asia and Africa form vibrant growing communities in the New York-New Jersey area. Somalis have settled in substantial numbers in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, and Southern California is home to the country's largest Iranian-American population. Yet even these ethnic communities are hardly monolithic. Generalizing about such a diverse population can obscure more than it explains.

In 1965, a new immigration law profoundly reshaped the inward flow of new Americans. No longer would national-origin quotas determine who could come. In their place were categories based on family relationships and job skills. With this change, immigration numbers soared, bringing the first significant numbers of Muslims from South Asia and the Middle East to the United States. The tale of American-Muslims adds immeasurably to the vibrant diversity of our nation which was founded not on common ancestry but, on shared values of freedom, opportunity and equal rights. Life in America has allowed many Muslim-Americans to embrace their faith in different ways. Even so, the U.S. Government has gone to court to protect the rights of women and girls to wear the hijab, and to punish those who would deny it.

With growing numbers, confidence, and organization, Muslim-Americans contribute in every field, from business and scholarships to sports and the arts. Their stories range from Pakistan-born Samiul Haque Noor, whose spicy halal dishes earned him the 2006 award for best food street vendor in New York City, to Dr. Elias Zerhouni, from Algeria, head of the National Institutes of Health from 2002 to 2008, to Representative Keith Ellison of Minnesota, the first Muslim member of the U.S. Congress. The contributions of Muslim-Americans have added to the girth of American diversity and pride. So, as our president, Barack Obama, stated in his 2009 speech in Cairo, Egypt, "...let there be no doubt that Islam is a part of America." Like the global population, the majority of Muslim-Americans are Sunni, although there are large numbers of Shia and groups which actively follow Sufi traditions. Despite this diversity, says Paul Barrett, author of the 2007 book, *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion*, "...distinctions that possibly loomed elsewhere are instead in America 'diluted' in the deep pool of pluralism that characterizes American society..."

Sources: *Being Muslim in America*, United States Department of State/Bureau of International Information Programs

"A New Beginning," President Obama's Cairo Speech, June 4, 2009

Stephanie Woodard works at the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai

### The American Center

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E-mail: [mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov](mailto:mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov); Website: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>  
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Monday through Friday)

### H O L I D A Y S

August 15: Independence Day (Indian)  
August 19: Parsi New Year  
August 31: Ramzan Id (Id-ul-Fitar)

## A WORD FROM THE CENTER

Dear Readers,

In August, the American Center, Mumbai is celebrating “Religious Diversity.” The U.S. is not alone in being a multicultural, multi-religious country – India is also home to a diverse population of many faiths. This is one of the many bonds our two countries share.

In addition to our “Religious Diversity” programming, the American Center has been busy preparing for the play *Success* that will be performed in Mumbai on August 12 and 16. The play is being performed by a new American theatre company, Theatre MXT, and features three well-known and experienced American actors, John Kishline, Deborah Clifton, and Edward Morgan. This performance of *Success* is a true U.S.-India partnership with Indian actress, Kriti Pant, completing the ensemble. The American actors did not know Pant before casting her in the role, and rehearsals were conducted over Skype!

The play follows 75 minutes of real time in the life of a highly successful American advertising executive named Rick Sterling, whose company has helped elect the President of the United States. It examines the public and private definitions of success and the costs of its pursuit. *Success* set a new box office record when it premiered in Milwaukee in 1991 and has been rewritten to keep up with the times.

We're very excited about the play and I hope that you will join us. On August 12, it will be performed at the Y. B. Chavan Auditorium at Nariman Point and on August 16, it will be performed at St. Andrew's Auditorium in Bandra. Both performances are free and passes are available at the venues and at the American Center Library.

Please visit

<https://www.facebook.com/amcentermumbai?sk=events> for detailed information.

And, as always, we'd love to hear from you. You can email us at [mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov](mailto:mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov).

Regards,



Angela L. Gemza  
Cultural Affairs Officer

## DID YOU KNOW

- Sixty-five percent of the Muslim-American people are first-generation immigrants, and 61 percent of the foreign-born arrived in 1990 or later.

- Iftar dinners at the White House during Ramadan have become a regular occasions since the mid-1990s.

- An imam can serve in several different roles in the United States. In most African-American mosques, the imam operates in both spiritual and administrative capacities. In predominantly immigrant mosques, however, the imam is more likely to be a spiritual leader only.

- The largest mosque in the United States, opened by the Islamic Center of America in 2005, is in Dearborn, Michigan.

## Government

- Muslim-Americans work in federal, state, and local governments throughout the United States.

- Diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad has served as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations and as U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli served as a senior advisor to the United States Secretary of State.

## Business

- Scientist Ahmed Zewail of the California Institute of Technology won the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

- The books of author Yahya Emerik present Islamic themes and history to non-Muslim audiences.

- The innovations of structural engineer Fazlur R. Khan, led to Chicago's 110-story Sears Tower, the world's tallest building when completed in 1974.

## Sports

- Boxer Muhammad Ali became the heavyweight champion of the world in 1964. The boxer had changed his name and converted to the Nation of Islam. Later, Ali became a Sunni Muslim, and he now practices Sufism.

- Basketball player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who retired from professional basketball in 1989, is the National Basketball Association's all-time leading scorer.

- Professional American football player Az-Zahir Hakim had a ten-year career in the National Football League.



presents **SUCCESS**  
A play examining the benefits and costs for embracing global capitalism



<b>Actor/Playwright</b>	John Kishline
<b>Actor</b>	Deborah Clifton
<b>Actor/Director</b>	Edward Morgan
<b>Actor</b>	Kriti Pant
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Sam Kishline



## First show

**When:** August 12, 2011 at 7:00 PM

**Where:** Y.B. Chavan Auditorium,  
General Jagannathrao Bhonsle  
Marg, Nariman Point,  
Mumbai 400 021

**Cost:** FREE! \*

**Duration:** 75 minutes,  
No intermission

## Second show

**When:** August 16, 2011 at 7:00 PM

**Where:** St. Andrews' Auditorium,  
St. Dominic Road, Bandra west,  
Mumbai 400 050

**Cost:** FREE! \*

\*Passes for free entry will be available at the respective auditoriums and the American Center Library on a first-come, first-serve basis starting August 1st.

The American Center Library is located on the ground floor of the American Center, 4 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020.  
Hours of operation: Monday - Saturday from 10:00AM - 6:00PM

**Follow us online**

<http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>

<http://www.facebook.com/amcentermumbai> <http://twitter.com/amcentermumbai>

## NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

Select Resources Available on Religious Diversity in America  
and Recent Additions to the Library

### Books

#### ***The Last Life***

by Claire Messud  
Harcourt, Inc., 1999

Narrated by Sagesse LaBasse, a young French-American woman with a ruthless regard for truth, *The Last Life* reveals the secret histories of a household shattered by an inexplicable act of violence. As she unravels her family's carefully spun stories, Sagesse struggles to come to terms with the LaBasses' haunted legacy and to forge her own future.

#### ***Abundant Light: Short Fiction***

by Valerie Miner  
Michigan State University Press, 2004

A collection of short stories from literary journals such as *The Georgia Review*, *New Letters*, *Salmagundi*, *Southwest Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, as well as from BBC Radio 4 and *Ms.* The stories look closely at definitions of family. They also explore friendship as it is enriched by differences in nationality, race, class, and gender.

#### ***One Amazing Thing***

by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni  
Voice/Hyperion, 2009

This book revolves around nine people who are trapped by an earthquake in a passport and visa office in an unnamed American city. While the office begins to flood, survival becomes an issue. To pass the time, each person is invited to tell a story, a story about "one amazing thing" that happened in their lives.

#### ***Queen of Dreams: A Novel***

by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni  
Anchor Books, 2005

This book revolves around Rakhi, a young painter and single mother, who is struggling to come to terms with her relationship with ex-husband Sonny, and with her dream-teller mother, who has rarely spoken about her past or her native India. After a national tragedy turns her world upside down, Rakhi loses her mother in a freak car accident. However, uncovering her mother's dream journals allows Rakhi to discover her mother's long-kept secrets.

### E-Publications

#### ***Being Muslim in America*** (March 2009)

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/books/being-muslim-in-america.pdf#popup>

In this publication, men, women, and children demonstrate everyday what it is like to be Muslim in America.

#### ***Freedom of Faith*** (August 2008)

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0808ej4.pdf#popup>

In the 21st century, the United States pulses with a unique cultural chemistry brought on by a wave of immigration which has brought followers of more diverse faiths to many communities. This edition of eJournal USA examines how the nation adjusts to these demographic changes to remain true to the principles of freedom of faith.

#### ***The President's Speech in Cairo: A New Beginning***

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issue/s/foreign-policy/presidents-speech-cairo-a-new-beginning>

"I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."

-President Obama, Cairo, June 4, 2009



Stay tuned for the September Video Conference with the author **Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni** in the American Center auditorium.

American Library timings: Monday to Saturday (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)  
Internet-based library catalog: <http://amlibindia.state.gov>; E-mail: [libref@state.gov](mailto:libref@state.gov)

**The Rise and Fall of America's Motor City  
And How Detroit is Making a Comeback**

Discussion led by Katie Plona

**Monday, August 22, 2011  
American Center Auditorium**

**6:00 p.m.**

In 1908, Henry Ford put Detroit on the map with the launch of the Model-T, and this rust belt city has never been the same – for better or worse. Learn about Detroit's storied history, from its evolution as the Motor City to the 1967 riots that forever changed Detroit, to the city's place as the birthplace of Motown music. Hear what today's Detroiters are doing to preserve the city they love.

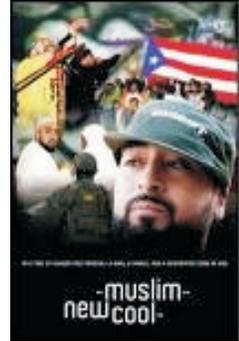
**Katie Plona** works at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai. She grew up in the Detroit area and lived in Madison, Wisconsin, for several years. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in history and women's studies. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Katie worked in legislative and electoral politics in Wisconsin. Most recently, before joining the Foreign Service, Katie was the Wisconsin Department of Health's liaison to the Wisconsin Legislature. She will leave Mumbai in November and return to Washington, D.C. to learn Spanish, before serving her next tour in Caracas, Venezuela. She still calls Detroit "home" and enjoys visiting family and friends there.

**American Center Auditorium  
3:30 and 6:30 p.m.**

**Friday, August 5**

This documentary follows Puerto Rican Muslim-American hip-hop star Hamza Perez's search for a deeper understanding of the realities of the post-9/11 world, taking viewers on his ride through the streets, projects and jail cells of urban America, following his spiritual journey to surprising places in a world that never stops changing. Set in working-class Pittsburgh, the film shows that even when there are obstacles, Americans can be true to their religion and still "fit in."

**New Muslim Cool  
(2009, 56 mins)**



**Friday, August 26**

Clint Eastwood delivers a raw, touching performance as recently widowed Korean War veteran Walt Kowalski, a racially prejudiced loner who forges a bond with Thao (Bee Vang), a Hmong teenager who lives next door and who tried to steal Walt's treasured 1972 Gran Torino on a dare. When Thao and his family are harassed by a gang prowling the streets of their Michigan neighborhood, Walt becomes the clan's unlikely protector. Coproduced and directed by Clint Eastwood.

**Gran Torino  
(2008, 116 mins)**



**Saturday, August 27 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**



Throughout the year, the American Center hosts a Kids' Saturday@American Center program in the auditorium on the last Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Entry is free of charge and on a first-come, first-served basis. The event is for children aged between 6 and 15 years. All children under 14 must be accompanied by a parent. While the themes vary, the programs strive to be interactive, educational, and fun, with a focus on American culture and topics that are of mutual interest to citizens from both our countries. A collection of books and educational board games is also available at the Kids' Corner@American Library, Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Please check [www.facebook.com/amcentermumbai](http://www.facebook.com/amcentermumbai)

Send text  
**'JoinUS Kids'**  
OR  
to **54999**  
SMS Updates

For more information, please call 2262-4590, ext. 2204,  
or e-mail us at [mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov](mailto:mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov).

Edited and designed by  
**Swati Patel and Dhaval Ninawe**  
Copy edited by **Eva Doctor**

Admission to American Center Programs, restricted to persons over 14, unless otherwise specified, is on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will be open 30 minutes before the start of the program

## Upcoming Events

The American Center, Mumbai, invites you to interact with Christopher Platt, Director of collections, New York Public Library via Digital Video Conference on **Thursday, August 18, 2011, at 6:30 PM** in the American Center auditorium. Platt will address issues related to "Developing an E-Book Collection" with librarians, students and bibliophiles and will give insights into managing e-book collections from sourcing, buying, processing, and circulating. So come join us to find out how e-books are changing today's libraries and the future of reading!

## What has the American Center been up to in July?



On June 30 and July 1, American Center, Mumbai staff celebrated American Independence Day at the American Corner in Ahmedabad in collaboration with the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA). On June 30, 34 students, academics, press, and general public engaged in a discussion on Independence Day history, facts, and how the Fourth of July is celebrated in the United States and saw bright photos of fireworks, parades, and other Fourth of July celebrations throughout the United States. Later, the audience was glued to their seats during the Hollywood feature film *The Patriot*, which echoed July's American Center theme: patriotism. On July 1, American Center staff interacted with U.S. exchange program alumni from the Ahmedabad area and later with 44 students and four teachers from the Access English Microscholarship program in Ahmedabad through an Independence Day presentation, screening of the documentary *Independence Day: The History of July 4<sup>th</sup>*, and a fun Fourth of July/patriotism quiz geared for the 12-15 year old Access students.

On July 7, the American Center, Mumbai hosted a DVC on U.S. –India Relations with Dr. Daniel Markey, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Markey spoke on the state of U.S. – India relations and briefed the audience on the current debates in Washington and the Obama administration. The discussion focused around the "quadrilateral" relationship between India, China, Pakistan, and the United States and was appreciated by students and academics alike.



On July 9, a member of the U.S. Consulate community in Mumbai delivered a lecture on "Founding Fathers of the U.S." while celebrating Independence Day with under privileged children. Muktagan, an NGO that strives to provide education to under privileged children, partnered with the American Center for this event. The lecture was followed by a screening of the film *Born on the Fourth of July*.

On July 11, the American Center, Mumbai welcomed Professor Sree Sreenivasan, Dean of Student Affairs and Professor of Digital Media at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, for a three-day speaker program in Mumbai and Indore. Professor Sreenivasan entertained and educated journalists, bloggers, students, and business and NGO leaders in both cities on the new trends in Social Media and how to more effectively harness its power to increase the spread of one's message. Professor Sreenivasan also appeared as a special guest on the live broadcast of E TV Now news, reaching more than 7 million viewers with his social media expertise.



(Continued from page 6)



On July 14, American Center staff visited Jamia Ayesha Carewell Model Madrasa in Indore, a girls' madrasa founded and operated by International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) alum Halim Khan. Prof. Khan introduced a secular curriculum into the school after his IVLP program thereby allowing the girls a practical education as well as a religious one. The madrasa now has 750 girls in grades 5 through 12. American Center staff interacted with an 8th grade English class and a Koran class, answering questions about the U.S. and encouraging the girls to continue their education and pursue their goals of becoming teachers and doctors. The students were given copies of the State Department publication, *Being Muslim in America* and the Urdu version of *An Outline of American History*.

(On July 15, American Center staff spoke to undergraduate students about “Studying in the United States” at the Indore Professional Studies (IPA) Academy. More than 200 students showed up to hear the talk about education in the U.S. and were treated to a presentation featuring the ins and outs of selecting the right program and school and giving an overview of the admissions process and advised the students to make use of the EducationUSA advisors at the U.S. - India Education Foundation (USIEF).



The American Library welcomed 93 undergraduate students in two orientation sessions on July 16 and July 18 from St. Xavier's College and S.N.D.T. Women's University. The students were treated to a session on “Effective Research on the Internet,” a demonstration of the eLibraryUSA databases, a library tour, and a film screening.

On July 18, the American Center, Mumbai welcomed the public to its monthly Mumbai Mondays series where a member of the U.S. Consulate community shares a slice of American life with the people of India. In honor of U.S. Independence Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>, the topic was the “Birth of Patriotism in the United States.” The presentation focused on the history of patriotism in the U.S. and its association with nationalism and revealed the origins of U.S. patriotic symbols and their role in American culture.



On July 28, the American Library hosted a discussion on “The Role of Librarians in the Future” via Skype with Professor David Lankes from Syracuse University. Prof. Lankes encouraged the packed audience of library professionals and library science students to go back to the “fundamentals” of libraries and examine how knowledge is learned. He encouraged libraries to break away from the traditional notion that libraries are just a place to collect and store knowledge and move into becoming catalysts for knowledge creation.



# SATURDAY SCI-FI SERIES

Screenings on Saturdays at 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 6

## Close Encounters of the Third Kind

(1977, 135 mins)



Writer/director Steven Spielberg's visually stunning sci-fi masterpiece stars Richard Dreyfuss as an Indiana electrical lineman whose late-night brush with a UFO overwhelmingly drives him, along with other "encounterers," to a breathtaking meeting at Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming. With Melinda Dillon, Teri Garr, Francois Truffaut, Bob Balaban.

Saturday, August 13

## Minority Report

(2002, 146 mins)



In 2054 Washington, detective Tom Cruise works for a government agency that use psychics known as "Pre-Cogs" to locate would-be murderers before they act. When a vision shows Cruise will be a killer, he must dodge federal agent Colin Farrell and his crew to find the potential victim and the truth behind the premonition. Steven Spielberg's electrifying filming of a Philip K. Dick story also stars Max Von Sydow, Samantha Morton, and Peter Stormare.

Saturday, August 20

## E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial

(1982, 121 mins)



One of the most popular films of all time, Steven Spielberg's science-fantasy epic of an alien stranded on Earth and the young boy who befriends him and helps him look for a way home is a warm and wonderful fable for all ages. Henry Thomas, Dee Wallace, Peter Coyote, Robert MacNaughton, and Drew Barrymore star.

Saturday, August 27

## A.I.: Artificial Intelligence

(2001, 145 mins)



Scripter/director Steven Spielberg's realization of a long-in-the-works Stanley Kubrick project is set in a future where robots are used as workers and for human companionship. A couple adopts David, the first "mecha" designed to love, as a replacement for their cryogenically frozen son. But when the boy recovers, David is abandoned and undertakes a perilous quest to become "a real boy." Haley Joel Osment, Jude Law, Frances O'Connor, and William Hurt star.

Venue:

American Center Auditorium,  
4, New Marine Lines,  
Churchgate, Mumbai-400020