

Directors' note

We are excited to present our very first newsletter, which highlights our progress in the first year since we established our Center and our plans for the upcoming year. As Co-Directors, running this center has been a new and thrilling experience for us, and we are learning and growing every day. Since we are also a couple, our teamwork is essential to our daily routine. We are committed to making this Center a success.

The Center of Muslim Experience in the United States was founded in the Fall of 2022 as the first university-based center dedicated solely to Muslim American experiences. Our focus on experience as lived knowledge is central to our mission to highlight the significant accomplishments of Muslim Americans and to change the narrative about Muslims. Our work at CME-US has the potential to enrich America's multicultural tapestry and instill a sense of dignity and belonging in the Muslim-American community.

Despite Muslim Americans' vast and varied contributions to American society and culture, their achievements often go unnoticed or unrecognized. For instance, Mubarek Ali Khan played a pivotal role in repealing the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924. We have uncovered rare and astounding documents of Mubarek Ali's civic advocacy work that paved the way for South Asians to become naturalized citizens of the United States. Additionally, Haji Ali, a Muslim Arizonian, created maps of northern Arizona that were instrumental in the development of the iconic Route 66. We are also researching Muslim Americans' groundbreaking contributions to various music genres such as jazz, hip-hop, and rap. Furthermore, there are many more stories of Muslim Americans' accomplishments in various fields that are waiting to be documented and shared. We plan to create a digital museum at CME-US to display these achievements.

However, we are also aware of the growing Islamophobia that poses a threat to the dignity and humanity of Muslim Americans. We have formed an international team of scholars to research Muslim minorities in Western and Asian democracies. At ASU, CME-US has attracted an interdisciplinary faculty who actively support the Center's work through various research and community initiatives to counter the harmful narratives surrounding Muslims. Many students volunteer in oral history projects, assist in creating a mentoring program for Muslim women's leadership, and initiate community interactions.

We will continue to push forward with our work to create new and transformative narratives that will bolster the place of Muslims in the country with your support. We appreciate your support and invite you to become a "friend" of our center by sharing your ideas, stories, and contributions.




Meet the team

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Newsletter Highlights

Research Projects

Outreach Projects

Student Engagement

Ways to get Involved

Undertake research to combat
negative representations of Muslims

Strengthen student success

Serve the community and connect
individuals with similar goals

Transform the image of
American Muslims

Strengthen Muslim
belonging

Research

Muslims in Europe and the U.S.

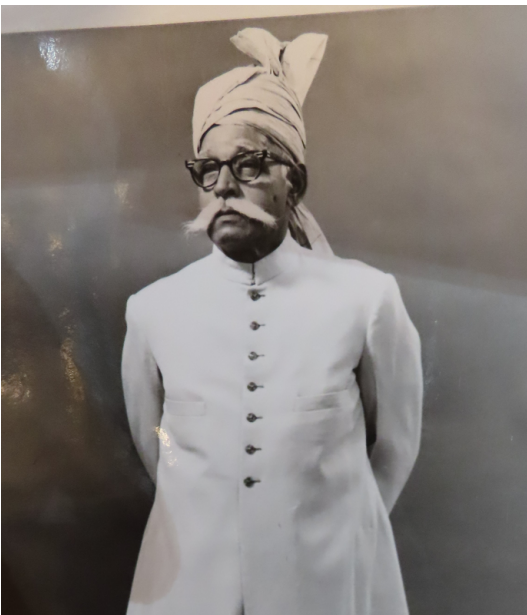
CME-US co-sponsored an international workshop on 'Muslim Minorities and Peaceful Co-Existence' where we launched a groundbreaking collaborative initiative including scholars from Europe and the United States. The collaborative will research Muslim exclusion in Western and Asian democracies and develop solutions for promoting Muslim integration as equal citizens. Renowned speaker Dr. Timothy Winter (Shaykh Murad) was in attendance, and also delivered the 2023 Hardt-Nickachos Lecture in Peace Studies, hosted by ASU's Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict.



The story of
American
citizenship
and Mubarek
Ali Khan

Yasmin's research into the citizenship struggles of South Asians and their contributions to the campaign has uncovered the story of Mubarek Ali Khan. Khan, originally from the United Provinces in British India, arrived in New York in 1923 and eventually settled in Phoenix. From there, he initiated a movement to repeal the Exclusion Act of 1924 that restricted American citizenship to white and black people only. Despite thousands of South Asians living and working in the U.S. since the start of the century, they were non-citizens and were denied certain privileges, such as owning land or businesses. They had to frequently renew their residency permits, were sometimes arrested, imprisoned, and their families suffered from the lack of status.

After nearly a decade of campaigning, including congressional hearings, appeals to government representatives, and letter-writing campaigns led by Khan and Jagjit Singh, President Truman signed the Luce-Celler Act for the Naturalization of Asians in 1946. This historic bill allowed 4,200 Indians to become American citizens, transforming their lives and giving them the ability to plan a future in the U.S. This achievement was spearheaded by a Muslim Indian, Mubarek Ali Khan, whose efforts have largely been forgotten by both American historians and the South Asian community. Khan passed away in 1963 and was buried in Greenway Cemetery in Phoenix, alongside 26 other Muslim pioneers of the local community. These men, who were mainly farmers, had a remarkable vision that continues to benefit us to this day.



An insight into the humanitarian side of research: introducing Dr. Mohammad Asefi and Najim Asefi



Paintings of the Islamic Community Center, Tempe, AZ by Dr. Asefi



Mohammad Asefi is well-known for his heroic efforts in rescuing Afghanistan's artwork during the Taliban's first takeover. At CME-US, Dr. Asefi is channeling his talent to create a series of paintings that highlight the cultural nuances of Muslim communities worldwide. To read more about him, see this [New York Times article](#).



Najim Asefi is undertaking oral history research of refugees in Phoenix, which is one of the leading cities for refugee resettlement. By listening to Afghan refugees' stories, Asefi aspires to bring attention to the obstacles they face and offer solutions to improve their condition. The stories will eventually be compiled into a digital repository, accessible to the public for a deeper understanding of the refugee experience.

Non-resident research fellows program brings together diverse perspectives to explore Muslim placemaking

Early this year we put out a call for research proposals for scholars interested in promoting a sense of belonging and encouraging intercommunity interactions through "Muslim Placemaking", and we received an overwhelming response from young scholars and activists around the country. In response, a preliminary seminar has been scheduled for next Fall to further this initiative. The two-day workshop will bring together early career academics, social activists, artists, and civil society actors to discuss proposals before selecting funded fellows. The fellows' work will shine a light on social isolation, discrimination, and how Muslims create a sense of belonging in the United States through their sacred and social spaces. All research will be published and written up as community reports that will be available on the CME-US website. Additionally, the seminar will establish a network of researchers who will conduct studies on five selected cities - New York, Chicago, Dallas, San Jose, and Phoenix. Each city will have a unique theme, highlighting their cultural diversity, civic engagement, spiritual work, entrepreneurship, and legal belonging.

Outreach

The global impact of Muslims

A grant from AZ Humanities, with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, will let us establish a public outreach program during Ramadan in Spring 2024. The main event will be an interfaith Eid dinner centered around the ethics of sharing food in Islamic culture and strengthening community through dialogue and discussion. By bringing together people from different faith traditions to share a meal, this event will highlight the presence of Muslims in all their diversity in the greater Phoenix area, as well as create opportunities for intra- and interfaith community and relationship building.

Brightening up Ramadan with illumination

CME-US, in partnership with ASU's Muslim Student Association and the Arizona Muslim Alliance, mounted a 15-foot crescent moon on Tempe's A-Mountain to commemorate Ramadan in 2023. The crescent moon is symbolic of the significance of the Muslim community and their right to be acknowledged and respected as part of the Arizona community during their holy month. This event is intended to be an annual tradition during each Ramadan, highlighting the importance of the occasion.



The intersection of religion and football



230211 Faith and Football Mercy, Forgiveness, Patience, and Prayers in Sports 1920x1080 h.26...

Shared with Dropbox



On February 11th, 2023, we organized a special event, one day before Superbowl LVII in Phoenix. The event featured Hamza Abdullah and Matt Ware, two NFL veterans, who shared their personal experiences about the significance of faith in their professional football careers.

Student Engagement

Muslims in the media:

An international project to combat Islamophobic media portrayals

The American Council of Learned Societies and the Henry Luce Foundation awarded CME-US a competitive grant to lead a project aimed at addressing negative and Islamophobic depictions of Muslims in the media. ASU will collaborate with Aligarh Muslim University in India and Södertörns University of Applied Sciences in Sweden to recruit students from all three universities. These students will participate in an intensive media literacy program, equipping them with the skills necessary to create a Muslim Youth Experiences media toolkit.



Local to national Muslim histories:

A research fellowship grant from the Dean of Humanities Office

The Center is proud to announce that ASU's Dean of Humanities Office awarded us a grant to support three student research fellowships. Our first project focuses on Muslim life in Arizona, with the primary goal of conducting interviews and collecting oral histories from local Muslims. Following this, we plan to expand our research efforts on a national scale. The student researchers will present their findings at a workshop event this coming Spring. If you are or have been involved in Muslim businesses or Muslim student life in the Phoenix area, and would be willing to be interviewed by our students, please email Florence.Sharp@asu.edu.

Meet our current fellows and learn about their exciting projects:



Simra Maheen

Simra is a sophomore at Barrett, The Honors College, where she majors in Psychology and minors in Religious Studies. She has been awarded the esteemed merit-based Flinn Scholarship for her undergraduate studies. Simra's work primarily involves oral history documentation, where she interviews Muslim-owned businesses, aiming to highlight Muslim contributions to the local economy and cultural diversity in the greater Phoenix Valley.



Omera Ali

Omera is a second-year student studying biological sciences with aspirations for a career in healthcare. Having lived in several states, she has called the Phoenix area home for the past eight years. Currently, Omera is researching the history of Muslim students at ASU, their on-campus communities, and the overall Muslim experience of the youth.

Muslim Women and Leadership:

Grant application for a new outreach project to tackle the lack of professional mentors for Muslim women students

Our organization is currently seeking funding for a meaningful outreach project that aims to address the importance of building Muslim women's leadership and the shortage of professional mentors for Muslim women students. Our primary objective is to invite emerging Muslim women leaders to become mentors for students, helping them build their professional goals and appreciate the value of Islamic principles and ethics in their careers. The ultimate outcome of the project will be an eBook and website showcasing prominent Muslim women professionals across diverse fields in the Western US.

Ways to be Involved

Financial

Support our programs and the Center by donating

To keep our programs and the Center running, we rely on donations from individuals like you. You can choose to make a one-time or recurring donation in any amount. By contributing just \$10 per month, you can become a “Friend of the Center”. To make a donation click the “donate” link or scan the QR code below.

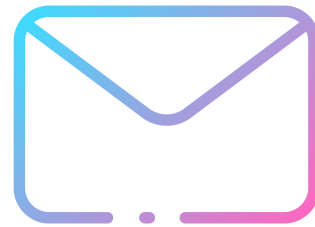
All donations are tax-deductible and sadaqa. For zakat donations, please contact the Center directly.

[Donate to the Center](#)



Collaborative

At CME-US, we strive to connect like-minded individuals and serve the community. Whether you're a student, academic, organization, activist, or community member, we welcome your involvement. Please reach out to us via email to learn more.



[Contact Us](#)

A big thank you to all of our donors and supporters:

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