



The California Three Rs Project

Rights, Responsibility, and Respect

February 2016

BULLETIN

Volume 13, Number 2

California Three Rs Advisory Council

Avi Black
History-Social Science Professional
Development Consultant

Cheryl Brown
CA Assembly, 47th District

Julian Crocker
California County
Superintendents Educational Services
Association

Marshall Crodgy
Constitutional Rights
Foundation

Connie DeCapite
California International Studies Project

Michelle Deutchman
Anti-Defamation League

Maha ElGenaïdi
Islamic Networks Group

Lisette Estrella-Henderson
Curriculum & Instruction
Steering Committee

Jay Fiene
California State University
San Bernardino

Mynga Futrell
Objectivity, Accuracy, and Balance in
Teaching about Religion

John Hale
Center for Civic Education

Mary Hendra
Facing History and Ourselves

Steve Herrick
American Academy of Religion

Robert F. Kane, Esq.
Americans United for
Separation of Church and State

Jyotswaroop Kaur
Sikh American Legal Defense and
Education Fund

Judith Lessow-Hurley
San Jose State University

Shabbir Mansuri
Institute on Religion
and Civic Values

Nancy Martin
Chapman University

Kenneth McDonald
California Department of
Education

D. Keith Naylor
Occidental College

Kathy Northington
Association of California School
Administrators

Jacqueline Regev
Institute for Curriculum Services

Brian Rivas
California School Boards
Association

Beth Slutsky
California History-Social
Science Project

Sally Todd
Catholic Diocese of Orange

Forrest Turpen
Christian Educators
Association International

Teaching About Islam: Resources for Social Studies

Damon Huss

Senior Editor and Curriculum Specialist, Constitutional Rights Foundation

Muslims have lived in North America since the earliest days of Western European colonization here. From 1530 on, roughly 10–30 percent of the African slaves brought here were Muslims. In 1805, Thomas Jefferson himself hosted a feast, or Iftar dinner, in the White House to celebrate the conclusion of the month-long fast of Ramadan in order to welcome the first Muslim ambassador to the United States.

Today, roughly 3.3 million Muslims live in the United States, comprising about 0.9 percent of the population. (Pew Research Center projects that by 2050, the number of Muslims in America will increase to 8.1

million, or 2.1 percent of the population.)

At the same time, several national and world events as well as political campaigns have thrust Islam into the forefront of many Americans' awareness. Because of terrorist acts committed by a few in the name of Islam, debates in the media and in private life have heated up. Disagreement frequently surfaces about everything from the meaning of "jihad" to what restrictions should or should not be placed on Syrian refugees.

We view the recent focus on Islam in our media as an opportunity to help educators gain clarity about Islam in the

United States. It is an opportunity to think about what a healthy discourse about Islam or, for that matter, any religious view or opinion can look like. In this spirit, we provide in this issue of the CA3Rs *Bulletin* an annotated list of resources to help educators understand the religion itself and its role in the world today.

(Continued on Page 2)

Inside this issue:

Teaching About Islam: Resources for Social Studies 1

The Three Rs Come to CCSS 4

The 2016 Annual Meeting 4

The California Three Rs Project is co-sponsored by Constitutional Rights Foundation, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, and the Religious Freedom Center at the Newseum.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CENTER
OF THE NEWSEUM INSTITUTE

We view the recent focus on Islam in our media as an opportunity to help educators gain clarity about Islam in the United States.

Resources Available Through CA3Rs

We start with introductory resources to increase religious literacy about Islam. These free resources are hyperlinked in the electronic copy of this *Bulletin*, but all can be accessed through the “World Religions and Philosophies” page on the website of the CA3Rs (ca3rsproject.org). [Access Islam – Timeline](#)

This timeline includes a section on Islam in America with notable events such as John Quincy Adams’ freeing of Abdul Rahman ibn Sori and the 1998 Ramadan Iftar meal hosted by the Pentagon for Muslims on active duty in the U.S. armed forces. The website is produced by the Educational Broadcasting Corporation, local public television affiliate Thirteen/WNET New York, and the PBS *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* program.

[Access Islam – Video](#)

Here is a menu of 19 short video segments from PBS’s *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*. The videos help describe madrasahs (religious schools), the observance of Ramadan (the month-long period of daily

fasting and prayer), and the cultural gaps between native-born American Muslims and immigrant Muslim communities. The videos range from two or three minutes to 10 minutes in length.

[Frontline: Muslims](#)

Frontline is an investigative journalism program produced for PBS. This website provides links to its program *Muslims*. Of particular interest to today’s educators would be the interview with University of Malaysia Professor Chandra Muzaffar on “Islam and the West.”

[Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet](#)

This film presented by KQED radio in Northern California and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting profiles Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam.

[Islam: Empire of Faith](#)

The resources and lessons here are designed to help teachers use the PBS series *Islam: Empire of Faith* and companion website in secondary social studies, civics, religion, and language arts classes. The lesson plans

may also be adapted for use as stand-alone resources.

[Islam Divided: The Shiites and Sunnis](#)

In this lesson from *Bill of Rights in Action*, students learn about the history and differences between these major Muslim sects. In a map-making activity, students identify major Shiite and Sunni nations as well as dominant ethnic groups in the Middle East.

Constitutional Rights Foundation Resources

These CRF materials provide information about Islam by viewing historic and current conflicts through the lens of law and policy. Unless otherwise noted, the following free resources can all be found on CRF’s “America Responds to Terrorism” web page (crf-usa.org/america-responds-to-terrorism/america-responds-to-terrorism.html). CRF has updated the page, which also includes material related to domestic terrorism, whether religiously motivated or otherwise.

[The Origins of Islamic Law](#)

In this web lesson, stu-

(Continued on next page.)

dents learn that “Islamic law, like Judaic law, represents one of the world’s great legal systems.” Topics covered are the development of Sharia, family law, criminal law, criminal procedure, and Islamic law today. In a discussion activity, students examine excerpts from Sharia in order to make logical inferences about Islamic society and culture.

[Ibn Battuta: The Greatest Traveler in the Middle Ages](#)

In this web lesson, students learn about 14th century traveler Ibn Battuta’s many journeys in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe. In a research activity, students examine the cultures of areas he traveled to.

[Islamist Terrorism from 1945 to the Rise of ISIS](#)

In this web lesson, students are provided with a survey history of conflicts in the Middle East in the 20th and early 21st centuries that have affected the West. Students learn to differentiate between Islam, the religion, and Islamism, the political ideology. Even further, students learn to separate jihadism, or violence done in the name of Islam, from mainstream Islamism. In a discussion activity, students evaluate U.S. foreign policy proposals on confronting threats from Islamist-based terrorism.

[Civil Conversation: The Syrian Refugee Crisis and U.S. Policy](#)

What should U.S. policy be for refugees from the Syrian civil war? In this web lesson accessible through the *Educating About Immigration* website, students use a balanced reading to address this question. In the civil conversation method, students are “encouraged to engage intellectually with challenging materials, gain insight about their own point of view, and strive for a shared understanding of issues.”

[Blasphemy! Salman Rushdie and Freedom of Expression](#)

In this lesson from *Bill of Rights in Action*, students learn about novelist Salman Rushdie’s book *The Satanic Verses*, which angered many Muslims, who accused Rushdie of blasphemy and insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Students consider what, if any, limits there should be on freedom of expression. Then, in a role-play simulation activity, students can evaluate a proposed constitutional amendment on blasphemy laws.

[How Do You Feel? What Do You Think?](#)

Students need a chance to reflect on their thoughts and feelings in troubled times. In this web lesson, students have the opportunity to express their feelings and discuss their perceptions of traumatic events, such as acts of terrorism or violence.

Miscellaneous Resources on Contemporary Issues

[Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Muslims](#)

The Islamic Networks Group (ING) is a California-based nonprofit advocacy organization whose mission is to “counter prejudice and discrimination against American Muslims by teaching about their traditions and contributions in the context of America’s history and cultural diversity” Careful to disclaim any authority to speak on behalf of all Muslims, and drawing from its own base of Muslim scholars, ING presents this FAQ on such questions as *What is the difference between “Islam,” “Islamic,” “Muslim,” and “Arab”?* and *What does Islam Teach?*. ING is also represented on the CA3Rs’ Advisory Council.

[A Short History of Islamism](#)

This *Newsweek* article by journalist Robin Wright gives a thorough yet concise history of the political movement known as Islamism. “Islamists now take many forms,” writes Wright, “from moderates in Tunisia to militants in the Islamic State, also known as ISIS.” Wright is a joint fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the U.S. Institute of Peace.

[Extended Interview: Millennial Muslims on Life in America](#)

In this *CBS News* interview from December 2015, five young Muslims born in the United States discuss their lives. Scott Pelley of CBS is the interviewer.

Damon Huss, J.D., M.Ed.

Director, California Three Rs Project
Constitutional Rights Foundation
601 S. Kingsley Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90005
Phone: 213-316-2117
E-mail: damon@crf-usa.org

Dr. Margaret Hill

Co-Director, California Three Rs Project
College of Education-ELC (retired)
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Pkwy.
San Bernardino, CA 92407
Phone: 909-946-9035
E-mail: mhill@csusb.edu

For information on teaching world religions:

Dr. Bruce Grelle

Director, Religion and Public Education Project
Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities
California State University, Chico
239 Trinity Hall
Chico, CA 95929-0740
Phone: 530-898-4739
E-mail: bgrelle@csuchico.edu

For information on First Amendment religious liberty:

Dr. Charles C. Haynes

Director, Religious Freedom Center
555 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-292-6288
E-mail: chaynes@newseum.org

The California Three Rs Project (CA3Rs) is a program for finding common ground on issues related to religious liberty and the First Amendment in public schools. The CA3Rs' approach is based on the principles of American democracy and citizenship, reflected in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights and applied in a public school setting.

For over a decade, the CA3Rs has provided online resources, professional development, and leadership training for teachers and education professionals in order to disseminate essential information about religious liberty and the history of religion in America.

Common Ground Resources

Haynes, Charles C., and Oliver Thomas. *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in the Public Schools*. Nashville: First Amendment Center, 2007.

< <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/madison/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/FCGcomplete.pdf> >

Religious Freedom Education Project at the Newseum.

< <http://religiousfreedomeducation.org> >

Special thanks to CRF Board reviewer, Rachel Lerman.

The Three Rs Comes to CCSS

The CA3RS is delighted to inform readers of the *Bulletin* that Dr. Peg Hill and Damon Huss will be co-presenting a session at the upcoming 55th Annual Conference California Council for the Social Studies Conference at the Hilton Orange County in Costa Mesa, California.

"The Third Rail? Teaching About Religion is Rigorous, Engaging, and . . . Constitutional!" will be the session with lesson demonstration on the free exercise of religion on **Friday, March 4, at 2:15 p.m.** at the conference. Register now at www.ccss.org/conference. Hope to see you there!

The 2016 Annual Meeting

For those of you on either the Advisory Council or Planning Committee of the CA3RS, please note our annual meeting is fast approaching on **March 3, 2016**, at the Orange County Department of Education. The Planning Committee meeting will be at 10:00 a.m., and the Advisory meeting will follow at 12:00 p.m. If you are planning to come but did not respond to the original Doodle poll for RSVPs, please send Damon an email at damon@crf-usa.org.

Are you on Twitter?

Use the hashtag **#CA3Rs** whenever you tweet about religion in public schools. And catch the **#CA3Rs** feed at www.ca3rsproject.org!