

The JPW Library presents

North American Christians and Islam: Reframing the Views of a Dominant Culture

Rev. Dr. David D. Grafton,

Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford Seminary

Thursday Evenings during Lent, 7 p.m. in JPW

Islam is highly controversial in a polarized American society, and disputes about it seem to be stuck across the political aisles. Some argue that Islam is inherently a violent religion bent on destroying America, and that it is un-American.

Others say that it is a religion of peace that is simply misunderstood.

Meanwhile, social media fans the flames of debate.

These sessions will assist American Christians to critically engage resources and provide opportunities to re-think how a dominant American culture frames our view of Islam.

These five sessions can be attended a la carte or as a whole



MARCH 14: Session I **The Context of Christian-Muslim Relations in America
Post-9/11: Islamophobia, Immigration and Racism**

This introductory session will explore the current atmosphere of American Christian "interest" in Islam and the general views of Muslims.

MARCH 21: Session II **Who are American Muslims?**

American Muslims are often viewed as being Middle Eastern immigrants. Yet the largest group of American Muslims are African-Americans. This session will look at the incredible diversity of American Muslim communities and our assumptions of just who a Muslim is and what they believe.

MARCH 28: Session III **Who Speaks for Islam? Islamic Authority**

When Osama Bin Laden issued his infamous fatwa in 1998 calling for the death of American citizens, what was the basis of his authority in the Muslim world? This session will look at the concept of authority in Islam, and explore the built-in diversity of religious opinions among traditional religious scholars and lay activists.

APRIL 4: Session IV **Reading the Qur'an**

American Christians who read through the Qur'an often find it bewildering and confusing. This session will explore the concept of the Qur'an as Scripture, and how non-Arabic speaking non-Muslims approach English translations.

APRIL 11: Session V **Evangelical and Mainline views of Islam**

This final session will examine the various ways in which North American Christians have viewed Islam, either as a fulfillment of the End Times or as an Abrahamic partner in interreligious dialogue.



12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT • whfirstchurch.org
860-232-3893 • jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org

