

Covering Islam 2015: Muslims, Politics, and the Media

February 9, 2015 4-6PM

Grand Hall at the IU Neal Marshall
Black Culture Center



Arsalan Iftikhar

With Panelists

Rosemary Pennington (Managing Editor, Muslim Voices), Nazif Shahrani (Professor, Anthropology, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Central Eurasian Studies), and Matthew Tully (Columnist, Indianapolis Star)

The complicated intersection of Islam and the media continues to be a weighty global issue--driving public discourse, argued as heated social and political debates, and even directing policy across the world.

Most journalists are not trained as specialists, even though they often pick up a reporting specialty over the course of their careers. This is not especially problematic when covering local issues, but it can become a concern when a journalist is asked to cover a topic he or she is unfamiliar with or one that requires some expertise to cover well. At times relying on cultural interpretations or what others have already said about a subject to frame their stories, journalists often, consciously or not, perpetuate stereotypes. This is clearly the case when it comes to covering issues pertaining to Islam and Muslims in the North American and world news media. Rather than questioning representations, digging through the complexity of the issues, or framing stories from diverse perspectives, journalists too often fall back on misrepresentations, social panics, and misunderstanding of Muslims and their faith. This has been prominent in the recent controversy over Indiana Congressman André Carson's appointment to the House Intelligence Committee, being the first Muslim to sit on this committee. Surrounding these media representations and misrepresentations are also the deeply held and revered rights of free speech and freedom of expression, which have been particularly visible in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris. All of these responsibilities, diverse framings, cultural readings, and politics are at play as media practitioners craft their narratives, consider their accountabilities, and portray Muslim communities in a variety of global contexts.

Covering Islam 2015: Muslim, Politics, and the Media will bring together journalists and scholars to consider media representations of Islam from a global and local context, discuss the ramifications of these images and words, and contemplate best practices and approaches to covering Islam and Muslim life. Panelists will also explore the rights and responsibilities associated with media representations of Islam and Muslims and consider the roles these representations have on national and international policy.

Arsalan Iftikhar is an international human rights lawyer, global media commentator and author of the book *Islamic Pacifism: Global Muslims in the Post-Osama Era*. He also serves as Senior Editor for The Islamic Monthly magazine. For nearly a decade, Arsalan was a regular on-air weekly commentator for National Public Radio (NPR) and he was also named one of the top 12 Muslim Twitter accounts in the world by The Huffington Post in May 2011. He has regularly appeared in virtually every major media outlet in the world including: CNN, BBC World News, Al-Jazeera English, The TODAY Show, National Public Radio (NPR), FOX News Channel, MSNBC, Associated Press, C-SPAN, Voice of America (VOA), Agence France-Presse (AFP), USA TODAY, NBC Nightly News, The Washington Post, ABC World News Tonight, Los Angeles Times, CBS News, The New York Times, Rolling Stone, TIME, Newsweek, The Economist & NBC News “Meet The Press” (and many more worldwide). <http://www.themuslimguy.com/>

Hosted by



Co-sponsored by



and



and the Departments of Communication and Culture and American Studies