

NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION PRESENTS

# ISLAM IN ASIA: PEOPLE, PRACTICES, TRADITIONS



The Henry M. Jackson  
School of International Studies  
University of Washington



Newspapers In Education

**The Seattle Times**

Inspiring Students To Learn

## ABOUT THE *EXPLORING ASIA* PROJECT AND THE “ISLAM IN ASIA: PEOPLE, PRACTICES, TRADITIONS” SERIES

**Exploring Asia** is a collaborative project between the Newspapers In Education program of The *Seattle Times* and the University of Washington’s Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies’ Asia and Global Studies outreach centers. The project consists of a five-article series, a teaching guide and a pre-series workshop for secondary teachers. Designed with young readers in mind, articles in this year’s *Exploring Asia* online newspaper series titled “Islam in Asia: People, Practices, Traditions” focus on social, political, educational, devotional and cultural practices in Islamic societies in Asia, where a majority of the world’s Muslims live. The five-part series includes articles on Indonesia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and China, as well as an overview of Islam in Asia. This teaching guide provides a lesson plan for each article and activities to do with students before, during and after reading the featured weekly article. Together, the articles and accompanying lessons take students on an exploration of Islam in several Asian countries, asking students to look at the issues from multiple perspectives and to promote understanding. The points of view represented in the articles and the guide materials are a sampling of perspectives among many viewpoints on these issues.

## AUTHOR OF THE TEACHING GUIDE

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- The East Asia Center
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- The Ellison Center
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- The South Asia Center
- The Southeast Asia Center

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## Islam in Asia

Pair with “Islam in Asia” by Anand Yang (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 3, 2012).

### Introduction

The lessons in this teaching guide, paired with five articles appearing in The Seattle Times’ Newspapers In Education series, will introduce students to Islam in Asia. We will focus on these countries: Pakistan, Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), China and Indonesia. As Talant Mawkanuli notes in the upcoming China article, “Many Americans’ curiosity about Islam began only after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and the vast majority perceive Muslims as a homogenous and monolithic group. However, as nearly one-fourth of the world’s population ... Muslims are a very diverse community living all over the globe.” In this first lesson, students will explore some of the misconceptions that they may have about Islam and/or Asia.

Where is the birthplace of Islam? What are the beliefs and practices of Muslims? Where in the world will you find the majority of Muslims? Anand Yang’s article “Islam in Asia” — the first in this NIE series — will guide students as they begin to discuss these and other questions.

### Objectives

1. Students will learn about the significance of Islam in Asia.
2. Students will explore some of the misconceptions that they may have about Asia and/or Islam.
3. Students will begin to think about how Islam in Asia continues to shape and be shaped by local societies, cultures and politics.

### Focus questions

1. Where in the world do most Muslims live?
2. What is the impact of Islam in Asia today?
3. Why is it important to be aware of the stereotypes and misconceptions that some Americans may have about Asia and/or Islam?

### Materials

- The Seattle Times article “Islam in Asia” by Anand Yang
- Computer/Internet access

## Activities

### Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of Islam. Ask students the following questions about Islam: Where is the birthplace of Islam? Where in the world do most Muslims live today? What are the top five countries with the largest Muslim populations? What are the beliefs and practices of Muslims (generally termed the Five Pillars of Islam)?
2. View the websites listed below to build student knowledge. (Teachers with limited time should choose one or two sites that best fit their students’ knowledge level of Islam.) As students view these websites or videos, ask them to jot down on a piece of paper short facts that describe Islam. After all of the websites have been reviewed, ask students to add to and/or revise the list on the board. Finally, ask students to discuss something new that they learned. Did anything surprise them?

#### Islam: Basic Beliefs

This United Religions Initiative site provides a quick overview of the basic beliefs in Islam that can be used and understood by many age groups.

[www.uri.org/kids/world\\_isla\\_basi.htm](http://www.uri.org/kids/world_isla_basi.htm)

#### FAQs About Islam

This PBS “Frontline” site focuses on questions about Muslims and the Islamic faith and sheds light on some of the misconceptions about Islam.

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/muslims/etc/faqs.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/muslims/etc/faqs.html)

#### Muslim Voices: Voices and Visions of Islam and Muslims from a Global Perspective

This site includes numerous videos promoting dialogue and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. The “voices” include some American Muslim leaders describing what each of them sees as the basic elements of their faith.

<http://muslimvoices.mirocommunity.org/>

3. Assess students' prior knowledge of Asia. Ask students: What countries are located in Asia? How many people live there? What religions do they practice? Ask them to describe different geographical features. What do students know about the history and culture of this region?
4. View these websites to build students' knowledge, as in step 2:

**Asia Society: "Countries and History: Country Profiles"**

This site provides an alphabetical listing of all countries in Asia. Each country's page includes a map, which can be expanded to show all of Asia or zoomed in to focus within the country. Basic data, including major religion, is provided for each country.  
<http://asiasociety.org/countries/country-profiles>

**BBC Country Profile**

Full profiles provide an instant guide to history, politics and economic background of countries and territories, as well as background on key institutions. They also include audio and video clips from British Broadcast Corporation archives.  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country\\_profiles/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm)

During and after reading

1. Ask students to highlight information that is new to them as they read the article. After reading, ask students to share at least one new fact that they learned. Did any information dispel any stereotypes or misconceptions that they had of Asia and/or Islam? Merriam-Webster.com defines stereotype as "a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or uncritical judgment."
2. Next, ask students to form small groups to discuss the article. Ask half of these groups to list two columns ("Facts about Asia" and "Stereotypes/misconceptions about Asia") on a sheet of butcher paper. They can include the information already listed on the board as well as new facts gleaned from the article and from the Asia Society and BBC websites. Ask the other half of these small groups to list two columns ("Facts about Islam" and "Stereotypes/misconceptions about Islam") on a sheet of butcher paper. Similar to the Asia assignment, students working on the Islam columns can include the information already listed on the board as well as new facts discussed in the article and from the suggested sites on Islam.
3. Ask one student from each group to present their findings to the entire class. Then ask students to think about how Asia and Islam are portrayed in the news, movies, TV programs, YouTube shorts, magazines and in their community. Encourage them to give concrete examples of something they have recently seen or heard. Why is Asia often portrayed to be so different from the West? Why is Islam often misunderstood? Why are many Americans unaware of Islam's link to Judaism and Christianity? Why does the press cover the vocal and sometimes violent minority of Muslims and not the silent, peaceful majority? What do your students think are the best ways to "break stereotypes" or clear up misconceptions? Invite your students to bring up any personal experiences they wish to share.

**Assessment**

Ask students to find a news report about Islam in Asia. This report can be either a written article or a radio or TV broadcast. Ask students to share what they have found with the class by giving a short oral commentary that discusses the contents of the article, including what they think is the perspective of the author. Encourage students to search both Western and non-Western sources. Most government websites list national and local online newspapers published in English. For Western sources, students may want to check The New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, British Broadcast Corporation, The Economist and National Public Radio. Conclude this activity by asking students to comment on the array of perspectives represented in the class collection of articles. Does anything surprise them? Do they see any trends?

## LESSON TWO

Pair with “Education in Pakistan” by Ethan Casey (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 10, 2012).

### Introduction

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to education issues in Pakistan today. How can Pakistan’s weak civilian government meet its basic obligations to its fast-growing and increasingly young population while also raising its low literacy rate? (Pakistan’s literacy rate is under 50 percent, and in some areas of Pakistan it is as low as 5 percent.) How are some educational programs rising to this challenge? This lesson encourages students to grapple with potential solutions to educate youth in the diverse regions that make up the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

### Objectives

1. Students will learn about the challenges facing Pakistan in providing education for all.
2. Students will explore potential solutions to educate youth in the diverse regions of Pakistan.

### Focus questions

1. What are the main challenges facing Pakistan today with regard to its burgeoning youth population and low literacy rate?
2. Why is it important to invest in education?
3. What educational projects are working? In what ways can nongovernmental organizations, commonly known as NGOs, play a role?

### Materials

- The Seattle Times article “Education in Pakistan” by Ethan Casey
- Computer/Internet access

## Activities

### Before reading

1. What have students learned about Pakistan so far? Where in Asia is it located? What countries does it border? Why is it in the news almost every day? Point Pakistan out on a classroom map and/or project the following topographical map on the wall to aid in discussing these questions.

<http://www.ezilon.com/maps/asia/pakistan-physical-maps.html>

If time permits, you may want to project the following interactive map on the board and explore other details about Pakistan by clicking on rivers, cities, etc.

[http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Pakistan&ar\\_a=1](http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Pakistan&ar_a=1)

2. Explain to students that The Seattle Times article about Pakistan focuses on youth and education. Share with them the following facts: Forty percent of the population is under 15. The adult literacy rate is 49.9 percent (63 percent for males and 36 percent for females). Ask students these questions: Why do they think the literacy rate is below 50 percent, and why is the female rate at 36 percent? Why are some rural areas as low as 5 percent? The author of the article we are going to read writes: “The challenge of primary education in Pakistan is daunting, especially given the distractions and competing priorities facing Pakistani society.” What does he mean? What challenges do you anticipate he will bring up in his article?”

### During and after reading

1. Encourage students — as they read the article — to *underline* what is written as a fact (a statement that can be proven) and to *highlight* in yellow any opinions or views (a belief or way of thinking about something).
2. Write “Pakistan: Do You Know?” on the board. List the facts (that they underlined), writing them under this title. You may want to add some facts that your students may find interesting that are not included in the article, such as:
  - More than 30 percent of the population lives on less than \$1 a day.
  - Pakistan is twice the size of California and contains about 3 times as many people as California.
  - Forty of the world’s 50 highest mountains are in Pakistan.
  - Thirty-six percent of the population is urban; 64 percent is rural.
  - Benazir Bhutto became the first female head of state of a Muslim majority country in modern history (in 1988).

Future plans to improve education must take these demographics into account. Ask students to guide you in circling the most significant factors on the board.

3. Divide the class into small groups for discussion. Ask them to discuss the following quotes from the article:
  - a. “With the government either unable or unwilling to prioritize education, a wide range of nongovernmental organizations has stepped in to meet the need.” Ask students to discuss why the government would be “unable or unwilling” to prioritize education. Should education for all youth in Pakistan be a national priority? Why or why not?
  - b. Casey mentions that a wide range of nongovernmental organizations have been set up to address some of Pakistan’s educational needs but that “the impact of these NGOs is uneven and minimal, and religious and more secular-minded groups have competing agendas.” Discuss ways in which these organizations may have competing agendas.
4. Casey also lists a number of NGOs that are establishing education programs in Pakistan. If students have access to computers, ask them to peruse some of these NGOs mentioned in the article: The Citizens Foundation, [www.thecitizensfoundation.org/](http://www.thecitizensfoundation.org/); the Human Development Foundation, [www.hdf.com/programs/where-we-work/](http://www.hdf.com/programs/where-we-work/); Developments in Literacy, [www.dil.org/](http://www.dil.org/); the Paid to Learn program of Zindagi Trust, [www.zindagitrust.org/paidtolearnoverview.php](http://www.zindagitrust.org/paidtolearnoverview.php).

If time allows, encourage students to go online to find other groups or individuals involved in educational projects in Pakistan. If student access to computers is difficult, you could do a Google search on one or more of the NGOs listed above and project their websites on the board. Ask students what they would look for as markers of success. Then ask them to take a look at the outcomes. Do these appear to be successful projects?

### Assessment

Ask students to find an article that focuses on youth and education from the point of view of a Pakistani journalist (see the list of possibilities below). As they did in the earlier assignment, ask them to *underline* what is written as a fact (a statement that can be proven) and to *highlight* in yellow any opinions or views (a belief or way of thinking about something). Ask them to write a brief (500-word) analysis of this report. What is the background of the writer? What are the main points of the article? What do you think is the author’s main purpose in writing this article? What perspective is being promoted by the publication the article appears in? How does the Pakistani author’s perspective compare with Casey’s perspective? What facts and viewpoints do they share (or not)?

### News from Pakistan

- Dawn  
[dawn.com](http://dawn.com)
- Friday Times  
[thefridaytimes.com/](http://thefridaytimes.com/)
- Pakistan Daily  
[daily.pk](http://daily.pk)
- Pakistan News  
<http://pakistannews.net/>
- Pakistan Press Foundation  
[pakistanpressfoundation.org/](http://pakistanpressfoundation.org/)
- Pak Tribune  
[paktribune.com](http://paktribune.com)
- Pakpositive Daily Pakistani News  
[pakpositive.com/](http://pakpositive.com/)

### Extension

Students who are interested in current U.S.-Pakistan relations may want to do an independent study on this complex topic by reading one or more of the articles listed below. Encourage interested students to give a short oral presentation for class, using the interactive map at the bottom of this list:

#### Council on Foreign Relations

Congressional Research Service: Summary of U.S.-Pakistan Relations  
[www.cfr.org/pakistan/congressional-research-service-summary-us-pakistan-relations/p26397](http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/congressional-research-service-summary-us-pakistan-relations/p26397)

#### Carnegie Endowment

Who Benefits from U.S. Aid?  
<http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/30/who-benefits-from-us-aid/8kpc>

#### The Washington Post

Highs and lows in U.S.-Pakistan Relations (timeline)  
[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/special/pakistan-timeline/timeline-us-pakistan-relations.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/special/pakistan-timeline/timeline-us-pakistan-relations.html)

#### CQ Researcher

U.S.-Pakistan Relations — Overview (must be a subscriber or pay for the PDF)  
<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2011080500&type=hitlist&num=0>

#### National Geographic

Struggle for the Soul of Pakistan, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/09/pakistan/don-belt-text>  
Interactive map of Pakistan, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/09/pakistan/pakistan-interactive>

## Islam in Central Asia

Pair with “Islam in Central Asia” by David E. Merrell (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 17, 2012).

### Introduction

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to the practice of Islam in Central Asia. For most of the 20th century, the Soviet Union suppressed Islam (and other religions) in Central Asia. After the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Central Asian Muslims began to more openly explore and practice Islam. This lesson looks at the changing face of Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia.

### Objectives

1. Students will consider how the practice of Islam in Central Asia has been influenced by unique historical, cultural and political factors.
2. Students will explore new and old sacred Islamic pilgrimage sites in Central Asia.
3. Students will prepare a news report about a current event in one of the five countries of post-Soviet Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

### Focus questions

1. Why is it important to study Central Asia?
2. What impact has the dissolution of the Soviet Union had on Islamic religious practices in each of these five countries?
3. What are the current issues facing the countries of Central Asia individually and/or as a region?

### Materials

- The Seattle Times article “Islam in Central Asia” by David E. Merrell
- Computer/Internet access

### Activities

#### Before reading

1. Explain to students that the article explores the fact that there are many ways to practice Islam, using Central Asia as an example.
2. Ask students to identify the five countries of Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Next, project this map on the wall and ask the students to find these five countries.  
[www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/caucasus\\_central\\_asia\\_pol\\_2009.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/caucasus_central_asia_pol_2009.jpg)  
Ask students, from what they observe on this map, why they think Central Asia is an important region to know about.
3. Ask students to pull out their notebooks and write across the top of the page “Five Central Asian States, Five Notable Points.” Then direct them to divide the page into five columns, with each country listed at the top of one of the five columns. Ask them to fill in any points that they may already know about these countries (current events, historical facts, etc.). They can add geographical information that they can glean from the map.
4. Ask the students to view the websites listed below in order to finish their list of five notable points for each country. Depending on computer access, this can be done individually or as a class. Encourage students to pay close attention to the political, religious and cultural history of this area.

#### Asia Society

Country Profiles

<http://asiasociety.org/countries/country-profiles>

#### BBC News

Country Profile: Kazakhstan

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country\\_profiles/1298071.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1298071.stm)

## During and after reading

1. Read the article in The Seattle Times on Islam in Central Asia.
2. After reading, have students form small groups and list examples of public and private practices of Islam that are noted in the article. Ask them to discuss examples of public and private religious practice that they have witnessed in the United States (or their homeland, if they are immigrants). Although one of the objects of this lesson is to discuss the public and private practices of Islam, teachers may want to encourage students to discuss Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, etc., as well as practices attributed to Islam. This is a good opportunity for Muslim students in your class to share their religious practices and holidays with their classmates.

## Assessment

Below are two activities. Teachers may want to choose one for the final assessment and use the other as an “extension” assignment for independent study.

1. Divide the class into five groups and assign each group a country. Task each group to:
  - a. Construct a timeline of five to 10 historical events that have impacted the people, culture, religion and politics of their assigned country.
  - b. Draw a map of their country that includes some important Islamic pilgrimage sites. These sites might include famous mosques, tombs or a sacred natural wonder. Photos of these sacred sites can be included on the map. Ask students to include a tag line that briefly explains the public and private practices of pilgrims at these sites. Ask students to identify two pilgrimage sites that they would like to visit as a Western tourist. Finally, have each group present their timeline and map to the class, pointing out how the practice of Islam over the years in each of the countries has been influenced by unique historical, cultural and political factors. Besides the resources that they have been using throughout this unit (BBC, Asia Society, etc.) encourage them to go to the government and tourism sites for each country.
2. In this assignment, students will be tasked to investigate recent events and report on them. Ask each student to find two or three articles that interest them on a topic of their choice. If you want to give students topic suggestions, they could include articles about private and/or public practices of Islam, Islamic pilgrimage sites, relations between the Central Asian countries, U.S.-Central Asia relations, China-Central Asia relations, environmental issues or energy issues. These articles should also include local voices or quotes from Central Asians. News sources that frequently report on Central Asia include BBC News, The Economist, EurasiaNet, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), The New York Times, Al Jazeera, NPR and “PBS NewsHour.” Ask students to try to find a second article dealing with their topic from a news source based in Central Asia. Access in-country newspapers by checking government websites or doing a Google search of English-language newspapers based in Central Asia. Task students to act as if they are TV reporters, and ask them to prepare and present a two-minute news report on this topic to the class. Students should include who, what, where, when and how using some direct quotes. What impact, if any, does this topic or event have on the rest of Central Asia, the United States or other parts of the world? Note: If presentation time is limited, teachers may want to make this a small-group assignment rather than an individual one.

## Ethnic Diversity Among China's Muslims

Pair with "Ethnic Diversity among China's Muslims" by Talant Mawkanuli (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 24, 2012).

### Introduction

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to China's diverse Muslim population. This lesson challenges students to look at China not as a homogeneous nation but as a multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious country. It will explore diversity among China's Muslims.

### Objectives

1. Students will identify the names of the ethnic groups that practice Islam in China and the areas of China where they are located.
2. Students will research the 10 most populous Muslim ethnic minorities that live in China, investigating religious traditions and current political issues.

### Focus questions

1. How does geography impact culture?
2. Discuss this statement: "For Muslims all over China, not only is Islam a faith that inspires personal piety and provides meaning and guidance for everyday life, but it also is an important identity marker of their ethnicity and culture."
3. How has 9/11 impacted the Chinese government's relations with the Muslim ethnic groups that live in northwestern China near the Pakistan and Afghanistan borders?
4. What challenges do Muslims in Xinjiang face today?

### Materials

- The Seattle Times article "Ethnic Diversity among China's Muslims" by Talant Mawkanuli
- Computer/Internet access

## Activities

### Before reading

1. Assess students' prior knowledge of Muslim communities in China. (Students may be surprised to learn that China's Muslim population is nearly double that of the European Union's.) Hand out a blank map of China and ask them if they can identify areas on the map where they might find the largest concentration of Muslims. Print a copy of this blank map for each student.  
[www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary\\_spring04/eyeon/chinamap.jpg](http://www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary_spring04/eyeon/chinamap.jpg)

Unless they have studied this subject before, this will probably be a difficult assignment. You can assist them by projecting the following two maps:

- a. This map highlights the four provinces in China with the largest numbers of Muslims. Students can use this map to identify the Muslim groups; ask them to shade in the areas on their blank map where concentrations of Muslims live.  
[http://islaminchina.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/china\\_muslim\\_regions.gif](http://islaminchina.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/china_muslim_regions.gif)
- b. Next, project this map of the Silk Road.  
[www.silkroadproject.org/Portals/0/images/lg\\_SilkRoadWallMap\\_color.jpg](http://www.silkroadproject.org/Portals/0/images/lg_SilkRoadWallMap_color.jpg)  
Encourage students to trace the path some Muslims traveled to enter present-day Pakistan, Central Asia and China.

2. Ask students this question: Recalling the introductory article about Islam in Asia and how it adapted and spread, why do they think the majority of China's Muslims live along China's borders and coast? Point out to the students that there is a Muslim group called the Hui who do not mainly live along the borders but are dispersed throughout the country, inhabiting every region, province and city. Why do they think the Hui are sometimes referred to as Chinese Muslims as compared to the other groups that are called non-Chinese Muslims? Many are descendents of Muslim traders who traveled the Silk Road during the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) and settled down and married Chinese women who converted to Islam. They have assimilated linguistically and culturally with the Han Chinese. (The People's Republic of China soon after it was established in 1949 classified its people into 56 nationalities. The Han nationality makes up approximately 92 percent of the population, while the other 8 percent are grouped into one of 55 national minorities. Today, the Hui are the third most populous of the 55 recognized national minorities.)

## **During and after reading**

1. Ask students as they read to highlight the names of the ethnic groups that practice Islam and the areas of China where they tend to live. Ask them to finish tagging and shading these areas on their maps.
2. Next, ask students to jot some of their thoughts down on paper regarding this question: How does geography influence culture? Project a map of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China.  
<http://johomaps.com/as/china/xinjiang/xinjiang1.html>

This huge region (the size of Iran) accounts for almost one-sixth of China's landmass. The majority of China's Muslims live in Xinjiang, and most of them are ethnically related to their Central Asian neighbors. This vast, sparsely populated region is made up of vast deserts, oases and soaring mountain ranges. Next, "take students to Xinjiang" by sharing with them several sounds of northwestern China. Listen to three PBS field audio recordings from northwestern China. Project this website on the wall.  
[www.pbs.org/kqed/chinainside/soundmap/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/kqed/chinainside/soundmap/index.html)

Watch and listen to the following three one-minute clips by clicking on links located in the top left corner of the map for:

- a. Muslim Prayers
  - b. Kashgar Market and
  - c. The Silk Road. If students enjoyed listening to the Silk Road music, they may enjoy watching a well-known Central Asian musician named Yerbolat Myrzaliev perform his unique skills on the kobyz, an ancient Kazakh instrument with strings made from horsehair. Scroll to the second video (not the first one in the top left corner) for this unforgettable two-minute performance.  
<http://asiasociety.org/arts/performing-arts/music/dombras-and-dutars-central-asian-music-celebration>
3. Ask students to share their thoughts about how geography influences culture. If time permits and students have access to computers, ask each student to find one photo from Xinjiang that reflects this theme (pilgrimage sites built out of the side of a mountain, delicacies made from sheep, etc.). Inform students that over the past century, more and more Han Chinese have migrated to northwestern China. Today nearly one-half of Xinjiang's 21 million people consist of Han. Uyghurs make up about 45 percent of the population. The other Muslim ethnic groups located there are the Kazak, Kirgiz, Dongxiang, Salar, Tatar, Uzbek, Tajik and Hui. How might demographic change impact local culture? How might economic growth in the region impact local culture?
  4. Organize students into small groups. Assign each student to read the article "Ethnic Tension in China" by Asian Studies professor Jonathan Lipman.  
[www.mtholyoke.edu/news/channels/33/stories/5682495](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/news/channels/33/stories/5682495)

If time is limited, the article (which is arranged in Q&A form) could easily be divided up for each group member to read just a section. Next, ask the students to review the challenges (discussed at the end of The Seattle Times article) facing China and Muslims in Xinjiang. Ask each group to list these challenges on a sheet of paper and discuss. If they could ask Professor Lipman questions regarding these challenges, what would they ask? What might he have answered? Students could use the following World Affairs Council guide "Who Are the Uyghurs? Understanding China's Silk Road Today" to find these answers.  
[www.world-affairs.org/resources/who-are-uyghurs-understanding-chinas-silk-road-today](http://www.world-affairs.org/resources/who-are-uyghurs-understanding-chinas-silk-road-today)

## **Assessment**

Divide your class into small teams of students. Assign each team to research one of the 10 most populous Muslim ethnic minorities that live in China: Hui (Tungan), Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Salar, Uzbek, Tatar, Tajik, Dongxiang and Bonan. As they begin their research, ask them to keep in mind this statement: "For Muslims all over China, not only is Islam a faith that inspires personal piety and provides meaning and guidance for everyday life, but it also is an important identity marker of their ethnicity and culture." Have each team look for evidence to support this quote and design an info-poster with visuals and quotes. This poster can highlight language, religious practices, cultural celebrations, folklore, music, livelihood, dress and historical sites. Finally, ask students to include a short bulleted list (on the poster or as a separate sheet) of any current tensions between the Chinese government and the ethnic group they are researching.

## **Extension**

Students who are interested in learning about current political clashes between various minority groups and the Chinese government may also be interested in viewing The New York Times interactive map of minorities in China.  
[www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/07/10/world/20090711-xinjiang.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/07/10/world/20090711-xinjiang.html)

## Islam in Java: A Powerful Presence

Pair with “Islam in Java: A Powerful Presence” by Christina Sunardi (article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 31, 2012).

### Introduction

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to the religious and cultural influence of Islam on Java, the most populated island in Indonesia. Students will explore Islam’s powerful presence in Javanese society and performance arts.

### Objectives

1. Students will explore the strong presence of Islam in Javanese society and performing arts and how, notwithstanding the rise of Islam, Javanese society and culture has remained distinctive.
2. Students will research how Islam in Indonesia continues to shape and be shaped by local societies, cultures and politics.

### Focus questions

1. What is the relationship between the location and geography of Java with the spread of Islam?
2. Why didn’t the rise of Islam erase all earlier Javanese practices and beliefs?
3. What is the mixture of pop and traditional culture on Java today?

### Materials

- The Seattle Times article “Islam in Java: A Powerful Presence” by Christina Sunardi
- Computer/Internet access

## Activities

### Before reading

1. Explain to students that this article is about the strong presence of Islam in Javanese society and performing arts.

2. Assess students’ prior knowledge of Indonesia. Do they know where it is located on the map?  
Project the following map on the wall.

[www.geographicguide.com/pictures/maps/indonesia-map.jpg](http://www.geographicguide.com/pictures/maps/indonesia-map.jpg)

Ask students to consider how geography impacts culture; ask one student to be in charge of writing students’ ideas on the board. These are some facts that you might want to share with students:

- a. Indonesia (almost three times the size of Texas) is the world’s largest archipelagic state, with 17,508 islands that straddle the equator.
  - b. Indonesia is home to the world’s largest Muslim population; Indonesia’s population is 245 million (compared to the U.S. population of 313 million), and Muslims make up 86 percent of the Indonesian population (compared to 0.6 percent in the United States).
  - c. Indonesia is the third most populous democracy in the world.
3. Next, assess students’ prior knowledge of Java. Ask students to find Java on the map. In 2006, this fairly small island was home to more than 130 million people. That was 59 percent of Indonesia’s population and more than the entire population of the U.S. west of the Mississippi. The capital city of Jakarta and other major cities are located here. Explain that for more than 1,000 years, Muslim sailors, traders, holy men and adventurers from Arabia, Persia, India, Sumatra, China and Europe have journeyed to Java’s coastal cities. While the term globalization has become commonplace only recently, ask students to debate this question: Is globalization new to this area of the world? Ask them to write down in their notebooks examples of globalization as they begin to study Indonesia.
  4. Ask students to close their eyes while you read to them the first line of the article: “When in Java, the most populous island in Indonesia, it is hard to forget that one is in the largest Muslim country in the world.” Based on their knowledge of Islamic influence in other parts of Asia, what would they expect to hear and see and experience if they traveled to Java? Collect these ideas on the board under the title “Examples of Islamic influences in Java.”

## **During and after reading**

1. Read the article in The Seattle Times about the presence of Islam on the Indonesian island of Java. If students have any questions, ask them to jot them down in their notebooks. As they continue this lesson and find the answers to their questions, ask them to record their answers.
2. After reading, ask students to discuss the main points of the article. Add any new examples of Islamic influence to the list on the board. For example, they will want to list the common greeting "Assalam Alaikum!" and the response "Wa Alaikum Assalam!" What language is this greeting derived from? What does this greeting and response mean? (It is based on a standard Arabic greeting — one that has been adopted in many parts of the Muslim world. The greeting means "Peace be upon you!" and the response means "And upon you peace!")
3. Divide your class into small groups of five or six students. Ask students to discuss the following statement: "The rise of Islam in Asia did not erase all earlier practices and beliefs." Do they agree or disagree with this statement? Ask each student to support his or her answer (using The Seattle Times article as a reference). In order to explore more examples of Islamic influence, ask students to read the short yet comprehensive article "Islam in Southeast Asia: Visual Arts, Literature and Performance" from the Asia Society website.

[http://sites.asiasociety.org/education/islam\\_in\\_seasia/essays-arts.htm](http://sites.asiasociety.org/education/islam_in_seasia/essays-arts.htm)

While they are reading, ask them to think about the mixing of Indic and Islamic architecture, music, dance, theater and literature from the past to the present and their localization in Java. Ask them to record in their notebooks Indic and Islamic influence through the ages on visual arts, literature and performance by listing names of:

- a. Real or mythological people
- b. Oral stories or written texts
- c. Architecture and sacred sites
- d. Puppet theater, dance and/or music performances.

Have them highlight the ones that spark their interest for further research. Next, ask students to share what they have highlighted, why they highlighted these, and what they would like to know more about.

## **Assessment**

Prepare students for their final assignment. Divide them into teams of two and ask them to present a short report on one example of an old or modern-day Javanese mix of traditions. This could include an example of architecture, music, dance, theater and literature that they highlighted in the above assignment. Or encourage them to find their own example of how Islam has influenced local culture but also absorbed elements of Java's own distinctive culture. Ask each group to present a three-minute oral report on their topic, keeping in mind Anand Yang's quote from the introductory article: "Islam in Asia continues to shape and be shaped by local societies, cultures and politics." Encourage them to use visuals such as examples of architecture or a two-minute clip of an Islamic tale performed by shadow puppets. Inspire them by showing one or both of the following short videos:

1. The end of the Asia Society article notes: "In recent times one of the major personae of the Indonesian performance arts is the young woman known as Inul. She is famous for her suggestive style of jaipongan dancing, as well as her strict observance of Islam." She is very controversial. This song with English subtitles is her response to this controversy. It is entitled "Goyang Gosip" (Gossip Dance).  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSBWSwbTiy0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSBWSwbTiy0)
2. Last May, the Asia Society hosted the Jogja Hip Hop Foundation, the foremost hip-hop group from Java. They perform a unique blend of ultramodern hip-hop beats and protest lyrics mixed with traditional Javanese spells, wishes and poetry. Their songs are developed from various sources that range from gamelan, "shalawatan" (Javanese-Moslem prayer recital) and dangdut (a form of Indonesian pop music) to the rhythm of Jathilan dance (a popular Javanese dance based on rhythmic-trance dance). See the following website for more background information on this group, as well as a five-minute video highlighting their performance in New York on May 14, 2011.  
<http://asiasociety.org/arts/performing-arts/music/jogja-hip-hop-reaches-birthplace-hip-hop>

## Concluding activity

*This is a post-series activity.*

### Introduction

In this final lesson, students will continue to expand their knowledge of Islam in Asia. They will have a chance to explore new resources that are available online and in the Puget Sound area.

### Objectives

1. Students will discover that there are many resources available for exploring Islam in Asia.
2. Students will continue exploring the diversity of Muslim communities in Asia and how they continue to shape and be shaped by local cultures.
3. Students will consider the importance of promoting understanding about Islam in Asia.

### Focus questions

1. What messages are conveyed by contemporary Asian Muslim artists?
2. How can we better understand the diverse communities of Muslims throughout the world and in our community?
3. How can we learn more about Islam in Seattle?

### Materials

- Computer/Internet access

## Activities

Choose from the variety of activities listed below to help extend your students' focus on Islam in Asia, breaking stereotypes of Muslims around the world, and exploring Muslim communities in the Puget Sound area:

1. Share this 5 1/2-minute clip with your class titled "Creative Voices of Muslim Asia."  
<http://asiasociety.org/arts/creative-voices-muslim-asia>

Afterward, ask students to share their impression of this video. Next, ask them to discuss these comments taken from the video:

- a. "The arts provide a universal language that break down the barriers and the borders that separate us as different cultures, different ethnicities, different nationalities, different religions."
  - b. "Once you know someone, it is increasingly difficult to stereotype them."
  - c. "To really know a civilization is to know its art, to know its music, to know its film, to know its literature — those cultural issues are how civilizations define themselves, not by who their political or religious leaders are."
2. Choose a public figure from a Muslim community of Asia (writer, politician, businessperson, artist, journalist, actor, singer, religious leader) and write a short report about their work. Students may be interested in researching one of the artists highlighted in the "Creative Voices of Muslim Asia" video. They included Mehreen Jabbar (filmmaker), Omar Rahim (dancer, actor, choreographer), Samina Qureshi (architect, designer), Zerobridge (rock band) and Jogja Hip Hop Foundation (hip-hop group discussed in Lesson Five).
  3. Ask students to choose one of these discussion points:
    - a. Islam has been growing in Asia; discuss the domestic and external factors contributing to this.
    - b. Across Asia, Muslim communities continue to shape and be shaped by local cultures and politics. Next, ask them to find articles from both U.S.- and Asia-based press that support the discussion points.

4. Have students explore the resources in the Puget Sound area for understanding more about Muslim communities in Seattle. Discuss what students can do to help build awareness of them. Encourage them to explore the local resources listed below (they can also do a Google search of mosques in Seattle for more sites):

**Islamic Educational Center of Seattle**

IECS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing educational, cultural and religious services in the greater Puget Sound area. This Shia institution is not affiliated with any political organization, political party or government.

<http://iecseattle.org/template.php?page=main.php>

**Idriss Mosque**

Idriss Mosque is a nonprofit religious organization established in 1981. Idriss Mosque is the flagship mosque for Seattle in Washington state. It was the first mosque west of the Mississippi River designed in an Arabesque architectural style.

[www.simq.org/](http://www.simq.org/)

5. Seattle is home to the Three Interfaith Amigos, three Seattle clergymen — Pastor Don Mackenzie, Rabbi Ted Falcon and Sheikh Jamal Rahman — who make interfaith presentations around the country. In this four-minute video, they share their humorous approach to deepening the wisdom of their spiritual traditions.

<http://muslimvoices.mirocommunity.org/video/21/interfaith-amigos-channel-the->

Interested students may want to see them the next time they speak in Seattle or invite them to a school assembly.



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The outreach centers of the Jackson School of International Studies offer professional development programs for educators and lending libraries of curriculum materials and films. For current offerings and a list of materials available for loan, please contact the outreach centers or visit the centers' websites.

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