

## Islamophobia Reflection

The discussion on islamophobia is the one that I, along with another student, facilitated. After having discussed the topic once in the MLK design seminar course during IAP, I was interested to see how this discussion would go. The previous discussion I had had on this topic during IAP had been very heated, which made me curious about how this class would react to this topic. Though the discussion wasn't nearly as heated as that of the MLK class, but it was definitely a lively discussion.

I was pleased to find that the class as a whole believed that islamophobia exists, though most could not agree on where the line between islamophobia and just plain aggression should be drawn. Similar to issues such as racism, it is sometimes difficult to know whether an act against a Muslim is committed as a result of islamophobia. There are cases where it is clear that islamophobia is at the root of the act committed such as the burning of the Koran by a Florida pastor. However, in many cases it is hard to decipher whether a person is targeted because they are Muslim or whether the victim just happened to be Muslim. This grey area seems to be where most of the class disagreed.

One of the readings we chose for this discussion explained how islamophobia plays a role in the race for president for the 2012 elections. This article is interesting because it points out the little things that people say and do that clearly have a root in islamophobia or at least in the dislike of the Islam religion expressed by many Americans. One of these little things is the fact that right-wing conservatives have accused Barak Obama of being Muslim in the hopes that Americans will believe this and refrain from voting for him. This is morally wrong in the sense that they are spreading false information in order to help their cause. However, it is also wrong because they are using Muslim as a derogatory term. This, I think, is a clear sign that islamophobia is alive and well in the US. If people did not view being Muslim as being a terrible thing, no one would be able to use calling someone a Muslim as a campaign tactic to discredit their opponent.

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Spring 2012

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