Arab and Muslim American Studies Bibliography – A Snapshot of Recent Work

These are a few titles (not at all exhaustive) and book synopses to give a sense of what it looks like to include Muslim Americans into our framework. You might notice that those that write about Arab Americans also include Muslim Americans in their framework, and those who write about Muslim Americans discuss African Americans, South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, etc.

Hishaam Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (Knopf Doubleday, 2014).

This fascinating, timely, and important book on the connection between music and political activism among Muslim youth around the world looks at how hip-hop, jazz, and reggae, along with Andalusian and Gnawa music, have become a means of building community and expressing protest in the face of the West's policies in the War on Terror. Hisham Aidi interviews musicians and activists, and reports from music festivals and concerts in the United States, Europe, North Africa, and South America, to give us an up-close sense of the identities and art forms of urban Muslim youth. We see how the current cultural and political turmoil in Europe's urban periphery echoes that moment in the 1910s when Islamic movements began appearing among African-Americans in northern American cities, and how the Black Freedom Movement and the words of Malcolm X have inspired the increasing racialization and radicalization of young Muslims today. More unexpected is how the United States and some of its allies have used hip-hop and Sufi music to try to deradicalize Muslim youth abroad. Aidi's interviews with jazz musicians who embraced Islam in the post–World War II years and took their music to Europe and Africa recall the 1920s, when jazz inspired cultural ferment in Europe and North Africa. And his conversations with the last of the great Algerian Andalusi musicians, who migrated to Paris's Latin Quarter after the outbreak of the Algerian War in 1954, speak for the musical symbiosis between Muslims and Jews in the kasbah that attracted the attention of the great anticolonial thinker Frantz Fanon. Illuminating and groundbreaking, *Rebel Music* takes the pulse of the phenomenon of this new youth culture and reveals not only the rich historical context from which it is drawn but also how it can foretell future social and political change.

Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond* (University of California Press, 2009).

For most Americans, September 11, 2001, symbolized the moment when their security was altered. For Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans, 9/11 also ushered in a backlash in the form of hate crimes, discrimination, and a string of devastating government initiatives. This book provides the first comprehensive analysis of the impact of the post-9/11 events on Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans as well as their organized response. Through fieldwork and interviews with community leaders, Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr show how ethnic organizations mobilized to demonstrate their commitment to the United States while defending their rights and distancing themselves from the terrorists.

Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does it Feel to be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America* (Penguin Press, 2008)

Arab and Muslim Americans are the new, largely undiscussed "problem" of American society, their lives no better understood than those of African Americans a century ago. Under the cover of the terrorist attacks, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the explosion

of political violence around the world, a fundamental misunderstanding of the Arab and Muslim American communities has been allowed to fester and even to define the lives of the seven twentysomething men and women whom we meet in this book. Their names are Rami, Sami, Akram, Lina, Yasmin, Omar, and Rasha, and they all live in Brooklyn, New York, which is home to the largest number of Arab Americans in the United States. We meet Sami, an Arab American Christian, who navigates the minefield of associations the public has of Arabs as well as the expectations that Muslim Arab Americans have of him as a marine who fought in the Iraq war. And Rasha, who, along with her parents, sister, and brothers, was detained by the FBI in a New Jersey jail in early 2002. Without explanation, she and her family were released several months later. As drama of all kinds swirls around them, these young men and women strive for the very things the majority of young adults desire: opportunity, marriage, happiness, and the chance to fulfill their potential. But what they have now are lives that are less certain, and more difficult, than they ever could have imagined: workplace discrimination, warfare in their countries of origin, government surveillance, the disappearance of friends or family, threats of vigilante violence, and a host of other problems that thrive in the age of terror. And yet *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?*takes the raw material of their struggle and weaves it into an unforgettable, and very American, story of promise and hope. In prose that is at once blunt and lyrical, Moustafa Bayoumi allows us to see the world as these men and women do, revealing a set of characters and a place that indelibly change the way we see the turbulent past and yet still hopeful future of this country.

Louise Cainkar, *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2009).

In the aftermath of 9/11, many Arab and Muslim Americans came under intense scrutiny by federal and local authorities, as well as their own neighbors, on the chance that they might know, support, or actually be terrorists. As Louise Cainkar observes, even U.S.-born Arabs and Muslims were portrayed as outsiders, an image that was amplified in the months after the attacks. She argues that 9/11 did not create anti-Arab and anti-Muslim suspicion; rather, their socially constructed images and social and political exclusion long before these attacks created an environment in which misunderstanding and hostility could thrive and the government could defend its use of profiling. Combining analysis and ethnography, Homeland Insecurity provides an intimate view of what it means to be an Arab or a Muslim in a country set on edge by the worst terrorist attack in its history. Focusing on the metropolitan Chicago area, Cainkar conducted more than a hundred research interviews and five in-depth oral histories. In this, the most comprehensive ethnographic study of the post-9/11 period for American Arabs and Muslims, native-born and immigrant Palestinians, Egyptians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese, Jordanians, and others speak candidly about their lives as well as their experiences with government, public mistrust, discrimination, and harassment after 9/11. The book reveals that Arab Muslims were more likely to be attacked in certain spatial contexts than others and that Muslim women wearing the hijab were more vulnerable to assault than men, as their head scarves were interpreted by some as a rejection of American culture. Even as the 9/11 Commission never found any evidence that members of Arab- or Muslim-American communities were involved in the attacks, respondents discuss their feelings of insecurity—a heightened sense of physical vulnerability and exclusion from the guarantees of citizenship afforded other Americans. Yet the vast majority of those interviewed for Homeland Insecurity report feeling optimistic about the future of Arab and Muslim life in the United States. Most of the respondents talked

about their increased interest in the teachings of Islam, whether to counter anti-Muslim slurs or to better educate themselves. Governmental and popular hostility proved to be a springboard for heightened social and civic engagement. Immigrant organizations, religious leaders, civil rights advocates, community organizers, and others defended Arabs and Muslims and built networks with their organizations. Local roundtables between Arab and Muslim leaders, law enforcement, and homeland security agencies developed better understanding of Arab and Muslim communities. These post-9/11 changes have given way to stronger ties and greater inclusion in American social and political life. Will the United States extend its values of freedom and inclusion beyond the politics of "us" and "them" stirred up after 9/11? The answer is still not clear. Homeland Insecurity is keenly observed and adds Arab and Muslim American voices to this still-unfolding period in American history.

Carol Fadda-Conrey, *Contemporary Arab American Literature: Transnational Reconfiguations of Citizenship and Belonging* (NYU Press, 2014)
The last couple of decades have witnessed a flourishing of Arab-American literature across multiple genres. Yet, increased interest in this literature is ironically paralleled by a prevalent bias against Arabs and Muslims that portrays their long presence in the US as a recent and unwelcome phenomenon. Spanning the 1990s to the present, Carol Fadda-Conrey takes in the sweep of literary and cultural texts by Arab-American writers in order to understand the ways in which their depictions of Arab homelands, whether actual or imagined, play a crucial role in shaping cultural articulations of US citizenship and belonging. By asserting themselves within a US framework while maintaining connections to their homelands, Arab-Americans contest the blanket representations of themselves as dictated by the US nation-state. Deploying a multidisciplinary framework at the intersection of Middle-Eastern studies, US ethnic studies, and diaspora studies, Fadda-Conrey argues for a transnational discourse that overturns the often rigid affiliations embedded in ethnic labels. Tracing the shifts in transnational perspectives, from the founders of Arab-American literature, like Gibran Kahlil Gibran and Ameen Rihani, to modern writers such as Naomi Shihab Nye, Joseph Geha, Randa Jarrar, and Suheir Hammad, Fadda-Conrey finds that contemporary Arab-American writers depict strong yet complex attachments to the US landscape. Â She explores how the idea of home is negotiated between immigrant parents and subsequent generations, alongside analyses of texts that work toward fostering more nuanced understandings of Arab and Muslim identities in the wake of post-9/11 anti-Arab sentiments.

Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012)
Linking discontent and unrest in Harlem and Los Angeles to anticolonial revolution in Algeria, Egypt, and elsewhere, Black leaders in the United States have frequently looked to the anti-imperialist movements and antiracist rhetoric of the Muslim Third World for inspiration. In *Black Star, Crescent Moon*, Sohail Daulatzai maps the rich, shared history between Black Muslims, Black radicals, and the Muslim Third World, showing how Black artists and activists imagined themselves not as national minorities but as part of a global majority, connected to larger communities of resistance. Daulatzai traces these interactions and alliances from the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power era to the "War on Terror," placing them within a broader framework of American imperialism, Black identity, and the global nature of white oppression. From Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali to

contemporary artists and activists like Rakim and Mos Def, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* reveals how Muslim resistance to imperialism came to occupy a central position within the Black radical imagination, offering a new perspective on the political and cultural history of Black internationalism from the 1950s to the present.

Zareena Grewal*, Islam is a Foreign Country: American Muslims and the Global Crisis in Authority* (NYU Press, 2013).

In Islam Is a Foreign Country, Zareena Grewal explores some of the most pressing debates about and among American Muslims: what does it mean to be Muslim and American? Who has the authority to speak for Islam and to lead the stunningly diverse population of American Muslims? Do their ties to the larger Muslim world undermine their efforts to make Islam an American religion? Offering rich insights into these questions and more, Grewal follows the journeys of American Muslim youth who travel in global, underground Islamic networks. Devoutly religious and often politically disaffected, these young men and women are in search of a home for themselves and their tradition. Through their stories, Grewal captures the multiple directions of the global flows of people, practices, and ideas that connect U.S. mosques to the Muslim world. By examining the tension between American Muslims' ambivalence toward the American mainstream and their desire to enter it, Grewal puts contemporary debates about Islam in the context of a long history of American racial and religious exclusions. Probing the competing obligations of American Muslims to the nation and to the umma (the global community of Muslim believers), Islam is a Foreign Country investigates the meaning of American citizenship and the place of Islam in a global age.

Sally Howell, *Old Islam in Detroit: Rediscovering the Muslim American Past* (Oxford University Press 2014).

Across North America, Islam is portrayed as a religion of immigrants, converts, and cultural outsiders. Yet Muslims have been part of American society for much longer than most people realize. This book documents the history of Islam in Detroit, a city that is home to several of the nation's oldest, most diverse Muslim communities. In the early 1900s, there were thousands of Muslims in Detroit. Most came from Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and British India. In 1921, they built the nation's first mosque in Highland Park. By the 1930s, new Islam-oriented social movements were taking root among African Americans in Detroit. By the 1950s, Albanians, Arabs, African Americans, and South Asians all had mosques and religious associations in the city, and they were confident that Islam could be, and had already become, an American religion. When immigration laws were liberalized in 1965, new immigrants and new African American converts rapidly became the majority of U.S. Muslims. For them, Detroit's old Muslims and their mosques seemed oddly Americanized, even unorthodox. Old Islam in Detroit explores the rise of Detroit's earliest Muslim communities. It documents the culture wars and doctrinal debates that ensued as these populations confronted Muslim newcomers who did not understand their manner of worship or the American identities they had created. Looking closely at this historical encounter, Old Islam in Detroit provides a new interpretation of the possibilities and limits of Muslim incorporation in American life. It shows how Islam has become American in the past and how the anxieties many new Muslim Americans and non-Muslims feel about the place of Islam in American society today are not inevitable, but are part of a dynamic process of political and religious change that is still unfolding.

Sally Howell, Andrew Shryock, and Nabeel Abraham, *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade* (Wayne State University Press, 2011)
Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Detroit's large and nationally prominent Arab and Muslim communities have faced heightened prejudice, government surveillance, and political scapegoating, yet they have also enjoyed unexpected gains in economic, political, and cultural influence. Museums, festivals, and cultural events flourish alongside the construction of new mosques and churches, and more Arabs are being elected and appointed to public office. Detroit's Arab population is growing even as the city's non-Arab sectors, and the state of Michigan as a whole, have steadily lost population. In *Arab Detroit 9/11: Life in the Terror Decade,* a follow-up to their volume *Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream* (Wayne State University Press, 2000), editors Nabeel Abraham, Sally Howell, and Andrew Shryock present accounts of how life in post-9/11 Detroit has changed over the last ten years.

Sunaina Maira, *Missing: Youth, Citizenship, and Empire after 9/11* (Duke University Press, 2009).
In *Missing*, Sunaina Marr Maira explores how young South Asian Muslim immigrants living in the United States experienced and understood national belonging (or exclusion) at a particular moment in the history of U.S. imperialism: in the years immediately following September 11, 2001. Drawing on ethnographic research in a New England high school, Maira investigates the cultural dimensions of citizenship for South Asian Muslim students and their relationship to the state in the everyday contexts of education, labor, leisure, dissent, betrayal, and loss. The narratives of the mostly working-class youth she focuses on demonstrate how cultural citizenship is produced in school, at home, at work, and in popular culture. Maira examines how young South Asian Muslims made sense of the political and historical forces shaping their lives and developed their own forms of political critique and modes of dissent, which she links both to their experiences following September 11, 2001, and to a longer history of regimes of surveillance and repression in the United States. Bringing grounded ethnographic analysis to the critique of U.S. empire, Maira teases out the ways that imperial power affects the everyday lives of young immigrants in the United States. She illuminates the paradoxes of national belonging, exclusion, alienation, and political expression facing a generation of Muslim youth coming of age at this particular moment. She also sheds new light on larger questions about civil rights, globalization, and U.S. foreign policy. Maira demonstrates that a particular subjectivity, the “imperial feeling” of the present historical moment, is linked not just to issues of war and terrorism but also to migration and work, popular culture and global media, family and belonging

Nadine Naber and Amaney Jamal, Eds. *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11* (Syracuse University Press, 2008)
Bringing the rich terrain of Arab American histories to bear on conceptualizations of race in the U.S., this groundbreaking volume fills a critical gap in the field of ethnic studies. Unlike most immigrant communities who either have been consistently marked as non-white, or have made a transition from non-white to white, Arab Americans historically have been rendered white and have increasingly come to be seen as non-white. matters to the study of Arab American histories and asks essential questions. What is the relationship between U.S. imperialism in Arab homelands and anti-Arab racism in the lives of Arab Americans? What are the relationships between religion, class, gender, and anti-Arab racism? What is the significance of whiteness studies to Arab American studies? Transcending multiculturalist

discourses after September 11 that have simply added on the category Arab American to the landscape of U.S. ethnic and racial studies, this volume locates September 11 as a turning point, rather than a beginning, in the history of Arab American engagements with race, multiculturalism, and Americanization.

Nadine Naber, *Arab America: Gender, Cultural Politics, and Activism* (NYU Press, 2012
Arab Americans are one of the most misunderstood segments of the U.S. population, especially after the events of 9/11. In Arab America, Nadine Naber tells the stories of second generation Arab American young adults living in the San Francisco Bay Area, most of whom are political activists engaged in two culturalist movements that draw on the conditions of diaspora, a Muslim global justice and a Leftist Arab movement. Writing from a transnational feminist perspective, Naber reveals the complex and at times contradictory cultural and political processes through which Arabness is forged in the contemporary United States, and explores the apparently intra-communal cultural concepts of religion, family, gender, and sexuality as the battleground on which Arab American young adults and the looming world of America all wrangle. As this struggle continues, these young adults reject Orientalist thought, producing counter-narratives that open up new possibilities for transcending the limitations of Orientalist, imperialist, and conventional nationalist articulations of self, possibilities that ground concepts of religion, family, gender, and sexuality in some of the most urgent issues of our times: immigration politics, racial justice struggles, and U.S. militarism and war.

Sherene Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (University of Toronto Press, 2008).
Three stereotypical figures have come to represent the 'war on terror' - the 'dangerous' Muslim man, the 'imperilled' Muslim woman, and the 'civilized' European. Casting Out explores the use of these characterizations in the creation of the myth of the family of democratic Western nations obliged to use political, military, and legal force to defend itself against a menacing third world population. It argues that this myth is promoted to justify the expulsion of Muslims from the political community, a process that takes the form of stigmatization, surveillance, incarceration, torture, and bombing. In this timely and controversial work, Sherene H. Razack looks at contemporary legal and social responses to Muslims in the West and places them in historical context. She explains how 'race thinking,' a structure of thought that divides up the world between the deserving and undeserving according to racial descent, accustoms us to the idea that the suspension of rights for racialized groups is warranted in the interests of national security. She discusses many examples of the institution and implementation of exclusionary and coercive practices, including the mistreatment of security detainees, the regulation of Muslim populations in the name of protecting Muslim women, and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. She explores how the denial of a common bond between European people and those of different origins has given rise to the proliferation of literal and figurative 'camps,' places or bodies where liberties are suspended and the rule of law does not apply. Combining rich theoretical perspectives and extensive research, Casting Out makes a major contribution to contemporary debates on race and the 'war on terror' and their implications in areas such as law, politics, cultural studies, feminist and gender studies, and race relations.