



## **SYLLABUS**

# **UNIT 2: FOUNDATIONS & PRINCIPLES OF PROGRESSIVE ISLAM**

**THE PROGRESSIVE ISLAM  
CURRICULUM FOR ADULTS**

**PREPARED & PRODUCED  
BY MUSLIMS FOR  
PROGRESSIVE VALUES**

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funding from the A&A  
Foundation

# CURRICULUM PURPOSE

Founded in 2007, Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) is the oldest progressive Muslim nonprofit in the United States. Our mission is to advocate for human rights, social justice and inclusion in the United States and around the world by inculcating a culture rooted in human rights through public education, advocacy, and the arts. For over a decade, we have worked to return the American and global Muslim community to one that honors the original traditions of Islam, which uphold human rights and social justice for all. Recognizing that the only way to return the traditional practice of Islam to one that is rooted in social justice, compassion, and pluralism, we have sought out to produce educational resources for the general public to learn from. It is our belief that progressive interpretations of Islam should be accessible to all but for too long, these interpretations have remained in scholarly texts.

The Progressive Islam Curriculum, generously funded by the A&A Foundation, is a culmination of MPV's desire to increase accessibility of these progressive interpretations so that the general Muslim population has the tools to understand and practice the truly traditional form of Islam. It is our hope that by making previously scholarly academic interpretations more accessible, that generations of Muslims to come can be oriented towards and knowledgeable about an Islam that is rooted in human rights and in traditional and independent interpretations. In addition to providing the theological and legal basis for the ideas and theories in this curriculum, we also include real life examples of how Muslims for Progressive Values advocates for progressive interpretations of Islam. We hope as you reach the end of the curriculum, you feel more rooted and connected to Islam and the practices and beliefs that bring you closer to God.

# INTRODUCTION TO UNIT 2

Unit 2 of the Progressive Islam Curriculum, "Foundations and Principles of Progressive Islam," seeks to present readers with a concise description of the term Progressive Islam, the values and beliefs associated with this term, and the movement it is associated with. In this unit, readers will be introduced to a number of definitions of Progressive Islam according to today's scholars before learning about the historical roots of the movement. The unit emphasizes core tenets of Progressive Islam - ijihad and liberation theology, essential to interpreting Islam in a way that advocates for justice and accessibility for all. The unit concludes by highlighting the relationship between Islam and universal human rights.

# UNIT 2 LESSONS

- Lesson 1: Introduction to Progressive Islam
- Lesson 2: Historical Context of Progressive Islam
- Lesson 3: Ijtihad
- Lesson 4: Liberation Theology
- Lesson 5: The Intersection of Theology & Human Rights

# UNIT 2 OBJECTIVES

**Objective 1:** Readers will be introduced to Progressive Islam and its definition through an analysis of two scholarly definitions of the term. Their understanding of the term will be supplemented by core values that guide Progressive Muslims.

**Objective 2:** Readers will understand the historical context for Progressive Islam through an overview of the modernity movement before learning about the divergence of the two movements.

**Objective 3:** Readers will gain a deeper understanding of the term ijithad, including its evolution throughout Islamic history and why it is vital to the Progressive Islam movement today.

**Objective 4:** Readers will learn about the term Liberation Theology, along with its central tenants and values, and why it's so important to a progressive understanding of Islam.

**Objective 5:** Readers will be introduced to the relationship between Islam and human rights and the importance of an Islamic perspective of human rights as it relates to practicing Progressive Islam.

# ADDITIONAL LEARNING SOURCES

## TO READ

- The Imperatives of Progressive Islam - Adis Duderija
- Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism - Omid Safi
- Progressive Muslim Identities: Personal Stories from the US and Canada - Edited by Vanessa Karam, Olivia Samad, and Ani Zonneveld
- Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women - Khaled Abou El Fadl
- Qur'an of the Oppressed: Liberation Theology and Gender Justice in Islam - Shadaab Rahemtulla
- Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World - Fatema Mernissi
- Reopening Muslim Minds: A Return to Reason, Freedom, and Tolerance - Mustaga Akyol
- Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Sharia - Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im
- Islam and Muslims in the West: Major Issues and Debates - Adis Duderija, Halim Rane
- The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam - Omid Safi
- Orientalism - Edward Said

## TO WATCH

- [The Concept of Sunnah in Progressive Islam](#) - Adis Duderija
- [Major Themes in Progressive Muslim Thought](#) - Adis Duderija
- [Islam, Feminism and Human Rights](#) - amina wadud
- [A Synopsis of Progressive Islam Thought](#) - Adis Duderija
- [A Journey with Islam in the 21st Century](#) - Imam Yahya Hendi
- [What is Progressive Islam](#) - Ani Zonneveld
- [Dealing with Difference & Pluralism from the Perspective of Progressive Islam](#) - Adis Duderija
- [The Checklist of a Good Muslim](#) - Khaled Abou El Fadl
- [Islam is Morality and Ethics](#) - Imam Yahya Hendi
- [Dr. amina wadud on Islamic Reform](#) - amina wadud

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