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Laurier expert alert: Islamic Heritage Month

WATERLOO – October was officially named Islamic Heritage Month by the Canadian government in 2007. This month represents an opportunity to learn about Islam’s traditions, history, achievements and diversity; to be inclusive and celebrate Muslims as an essential part of Canada’s cultural fabric; and to overcome racism and other challenges faced by Canadian Muslims and others around the world.

The following list includes Laurier experts who are available to speak at this time but does not represent the full breadth of expertise that exists at our institution. For a more comprehensive inventory of our faculty researchers, please consult the [Experts at Laurier](#) database.

[Also, learn about Laurier-related events involving Islamic Heritage Month.](#)

[Maryam Khan](#) is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Social Work at Laurier. Prof. Khan’s research examines the lives and identities of queer, non-binary and trans (QNT) Muslims locally and globally from critical intersectional and feminist perspectives. Particularly her work explores the nexus of sexual and gender diversity, Muslim and an Islamic identity from Islamic Liberatory and Progressive lens that seek to uplift the lived experiences and resistance strategies of QNT Muslims. Professor Khan’s areas of expertise include the exploration and critical analysis of South Asian feminisms in Canada, community-based research, community development and clinical counselling. Contact: mkhan@wlu.ca

[Shahnaz Khan](#) is Professor Emerita, Global Studies and Women and Gender Studies at Laurier. Khan is an expert on gender and Islam, transgender communities in Pakistan and Readings of Hindi cinema. Her recent research examines the struggles by *khawaja sara* (transgender) for human and sexual rights in Pakistan. Contact: kshahnaz734@gmail.com

[Mariam Pirbhai](#) is a professor of English and Film Studies at Laurier. Her most recent novel is called *Isolated Incident*, where she gives voice to Canadian Muslim communities confronted by Islamophobia. Pirbhai is an expert on postcolonial studies, the literatures of the Caribbean and South Asian diasporas, and creative writing. Her research interests include the impact and legacies of European imperialism, transnational and diasporic identities, multiculturalism and social justice issues as they impact migrant or diasporic communities. Contact: mpirbhai@wlu.ca

[Engin Sezen](#) is a clinical social worker and adjunct faculty professor whose research explores the significance of faith and spirituality in diverse educational, organizational and business settings, as well as the relationships between mental health and attending faith-based group activities in diverse Canadian context. He is currently working on the concept of Whole Person Care in health care settings and the role of spiritual conversations in Canadian Muslims’ psychological well-being. Sezen is also an expert in Intercultural communication, Sufism, spiritual care and counselling. Contact: esezen@wlu.ca

[Selda Sezen](#) is an adjunct faculty professor and an expert on acculturation, immigrant and refugees, Muslim mothers and culturally sensitive parenting in Canada. She recently completed research on the impact of the Muslim faith on Muslim mothers’ parenting practices and the experience of immigrant Muslim mothers’ parenting in Canada. These studies contribute to the literature on culturally and spiritually diverse parenting practices and provide a cultural and spiritual perspective for psychotherapists, social workers and healthcare professionals who work for the well-being of a growing number of Muslims in Canada. Contact: ssezen@wlu.ca

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[Meena Sharify-Funk](#) is an associate professor in the Faculties of Arts and an expert on contemporary Muslim thought and identity, particularly in modern Muslim engagement with classical debates in Islamic intellectual history and recent developments in Western thought and culture. Her research interests include debates about the status of women in the Muslim world, transnational networking among Muslim activists, the construction of contemporary North American Muslim identities and Islamic mysticism's impact on Muslim social values. Contact: msharifyfunk@wlu.ca

[Ali Hassan Zaidi](#) is an associate professor in Global Studies as well as Religion and Culture. He is a social theorist with expertise in Islam, secularism, liberalism, modernity and the cultural side of globalization. Empirically, he focuses on Muslims in Western societies and on cultural changes in Pakistani society. Currently his research examines the work of two reformist Pakistani-American scholars each of whom fled into exile because of their hermeneutics of the Qur'an. Contact: azaidi@wlu.ca

[Jasmin Zine](#) is a professor of Sociology at Laurier and an expert on Islamic feminism, Muslim women's studies, and Muslims and education in the Canadian diaspora. Her most recent study explores the lives of Canadian Muslim youth belonging to the 9/11 generation as they navigate the fraught times of the global war on terror, focusing on the toll that contemporary manifestations of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism take on Muslim communities, especially youth. Contact: jzine@wlu.ca

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