American Stories
Developed by Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, Reed College

While the large presence of Muslims in the United States dates to the 1960s, Muslims have been a part of the formative history of America since colonial times. American Muslims’ stories draw attention to ways in which people of varying religious, cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds interact to shape both their communities’ identities and our collective past.
Connected Histories
Developed by Giancarlo Casale, University of Minnesota

Centuries before the dawn of the modern age, the world was already a surprisingly interconnected place. Readings for this theme introduce a way of understanding the past in which Islam and the West are seen as products of a shared, cosmopolitan, and inextricably intertwined past. These books help envision the world of our ancestors, which was every bit as complex and dynamically interconnected as the world we live in today.

Leo Africanus by Amin Maalouf
The Ornament of the World by Marla Rosa Menocal
In an Antique Land by Amitav Ghosh

Literary Reflections
Developed by Leila Golestaneh Austin, The Johns Hopkins University

Over the centuries, Islam has provided a source of inspiration through which Muslims experience, understand, and guide their everyday lives. The readings for this theme can be seen as literary reflections on Muslim piety and communal concepts such as ethics, governance, knowledge, and identity. Each one reveals the transformation of faith and identity, as Muslims living at different times and in different places have interpreted Islamic traditions to meet their distinctive cultural realities and spiritual needs.

The Conference of the Birds by Farid al-Din Attar
The Arabian Nights edited by Muhsin Mahdi, translated by Husain Haddawy
Leo Africanus by Amin Maalouf

The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance by Jim Al-Khalili
When Asia Was the World: Traveling Merchants, Scholars, Warriors, and Monks Who Created the “Riches of the East” by Stewart Gordon

Snow by Orhan Pamuk
Minaret by Leila Aboulela

Dreams of Trespass by Fatima Mernissi
Pathways of Faith
Developed by Frederick M. Denny, University of Colorado

Following the correct pathway to spiritual fulfillment and success is a key Islamic principle. Readings for this theme explore the basic requirements of learning and obeying the Qur’anic revelation, following the Prophet’s teachings, and engaging in specific formal practices. Also introduced are the pathways leading from Judaism and Christianity to Islam, the youngest of the three Abrahamic religions; the divergent pathways followed by the Sunni and Shia communities; and the mystical pathways to spiritual fulfillment known as Sufism.

Points of View
Developed by Deborah Amos, National Public Radio

The drama of conflict, chaos, and war come to Western readers in daily newspaper stories, but the news gives us scant details about how people live their lives in Islamabad, Fez, Cairo, or Tehran. Through the titles in “Points of View,” readers will experience Islamic culture through memoirs and novels representing a diverse geography and some of the best works in contemporary storytelling.

The Art of Hajj by Venetia Porter
The Story of the Qur’an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life by Ingrid Mattson
Rūmī: Poet and Mystic edited and translated by Reynold A. Nicholson
Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood by Marjane Satrapi
House of Stone by Anthony Shadid
In the Country of Men by Hisham Matar
Dreams of Trespass by Fatima Mernissi
Broken Verses by Kamila Shamsie

Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood by Marjane Satrapi
House of Stone by Anthony Shadid
In the Country of Men by Hisham Matar
Dreams of Trespass by Fatima Mernissi
Broken Verses by Kamila Shamsie