
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ARAB
AND MUSLIM WOMEN'S RESEARCH AND
RESOURCE INSTITUTE

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2022 CONFERENCE DISABILITY AT THE INTERSECTION OF HISTORY, CULTURE, RELIGION, GENDER, AND HEALTH




CALLING ALL PARTICIPANTS!




In conjunction with faculty and student researchers at Marquette University, the Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute is hosting a conference on the relationship between disability and identity in communities throughout the United States.

Building on our study of differences of ability in Milwaukee's Muslim community, we invite papers and speakers that offer a critical analysis of how disabilities have been viewed in historical contexts as medical conditions, social/cultural constructs, and overall perceptions of normalcy or normative bodies. We particularly welcome papers dealing with normalcy narratives, discourse, and issues of stigmas evolving around disabilities in marginalized communities with an emphasis on the intersection of disability (as an identity and minority) with gender, culture, and religion.

We encourage proposals of individual papers, panels, workshops, roundtable discussions, and thematic conversations. Graduate student submissions are encouraged, and we welcome all who are passionate or curious about discussing disability in religious, social/cultural, linguistic, narrative, and/or medical contexts.



Disability is a living human experience. It is more than a medical or biological phenomenon, and this conference aims to promote open dialogue and a better understanding of disabilities in order to combat stigma.



To learn more about this conference or submit proposals, click the link below.

[HTTPS://WWW.CFPLIST.COM/CFP/32050](https://www.cfplist.com/cfp/32050)

MARQUETTE RESEARCHER REFLECTIONS

KATHRYN NADKARNI

CLASS OF 2021: MS IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

This year, I had the privilege of being a research assistant with the Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute (AMWRI) project seeking to study the impacts of COVID-19 on Muslim American individuals. To say this was a revealing and riveting project to be a part of is an understatement.

Generally speaking, the opportunity to be a research assistant for Marquette faculty members is an immense privilege. Every step of the way, our opinions were valued and cherished. The faculty members leading our project urged us to dig into the existing literature and provide our own insights into our studies. After laying the groundwork for our study, we research assistants had the honor of conducting intimate interviews with participants. The perspectives of our Muslim-American participants are unmatched. Each participant I spoke to provided me with a brand new view on the lived experience through COVID-19 of Muslim American individuals.

I particularly valued my time on this project because I was able to learn so much more about Islam itself. Especially in a time where globally, Muslims face persecution in different ways, I appreciate the one-on-one conversations that let me see what a beautiful and rich culture many Muslim Americans experience. Regarding how my experience working on this project will impact my future practice as a professional counselor, I am certain that I can employ my newfound insights with Muslim American clients that I may treat. Thank you, Dr. Othman and Dr. Ong!



SHAILA WADWHANI

PHD STUDENT: MARQUETTE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

I have had the great pleasure of working with the Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute (AMWRI) over the past 20/21 academic year. As a doctoral candidate in philosophy who works primarily with theoretical frameworks, the opportunity to work closely and personally with people in an interview setting has been an enriching experience. Some of my philosophical research has been in phenomenology, or the study of experience and consciousness. My research assistance has been focused on conducting interviews with a variety of individuals in the Muslim community in Milwaukee, including members of the clergy; to record the ways their communities and families have been impacted by COVID-19. In the intimate setting of a conversation and reflection on their lived experience, this project has been phenomenological in significant ways, leading me to consider questions of philosophical import about the role of experience in shaping cognition, imagination, and world views.

The project has also been significant in my life in that it has solidified my personal commitments to interfaith education and bridge-building. Getting involved with the particular challenges faced by the Muslim community here in Milwaukee has demonstrated the importance of communication, understanding, and support among diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural communities. The project has also helped me realize the ways in which the pandemic has affected us all in universal ways while each community has had their own unique challenges to their way of life. I am very grateful for this opportunity for dialogue and learning and know that it has been an invaluable experience that will impact my teaching, community outreach, and interfaith dialogues in and out of the classroom setting going forward.

ALLIE PERRY

CLASS OF 2021: MS IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

During my last year of my graduate degree, I had the honor to be a part of a research team for the Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute (AMWRRRI) focused on how Muslim Americans have responded to COVID-19 and social justice issues. It was an honor to contribute to increasing research on these topics for this population. Throughout the project, I contributed to the formulation of research questions and interviewed some of the participants. The process of this research project was very collaborative, considerate, and well-rounded. I have valued the information gathered in this research project and I believe that it can be very helpful for others to relate to or use to better understand how Muslim Americans experienced these events. I have been able to grow in my personal knowledge on how Muslim Americans were affected by events that happened over the past year. This has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how Muslim Americans respond to stressful events like covid-19 and how crucial their religion is to their daily life. It was inspiring to hear how hopeful many of the participants are throughout these hard times and their compassion is inspiring. I have deeply valued my time spent working on this research project and with the AMWRRRI.



NICO SALAZAR

CLASS OF 2021: MS IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Working on this project and being able to explore existing research, and conducting some of our own to address how individuals from non-dominant population groups, such as Muslim individuals living in the United States, are impacted personally, socially, and culturally by pandemic was such a wonderful opportunity. While I was not able to delve quite as deeply into this work as I wish I had been able to, I appreciated the opportunity to increase my own experience talking with, and relating in the ways I can, to a community where I have not had much professional experience with. While not fully addressing all potentials, taking part in this research has allowed me to grow in my own understanding of the ways that a pandemic and the surrounding culture in the United States can impact people, such as Muslims in the United States, and brought to light various aspects that counselors may benefit to keep in mind when working with individuals in this population and how to best serve them.



NIKKI DEEP

CLASS OF 2021: BA IN PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY MINOR IN ETHICS

I was connected with Dr. Othman and the AMWRRRI project team through a theology professor of mine, Dr. Omar, whose classes “Theologies of Non-violence” and “Islam: Faith and Practice” I have taken over this last year. The courses emphasized interfaith dialogue and education, which provided a wonderful basis for my participation in the AMWRRRI team this last spring semester. In addition, working with the AMWRRRI project provided a rich, out-of-classroom facet to what I was learning in the classroom.

What I initially brushed off in the “new normal” of life during a pandemic was the fact that all of my contributions to and involvement with this team were online. This project was different from any other undergraduate research endeavor, which had in-person interactions. Of course, most of the data we collected, transcripts we composed, and literature we reviewed were all done from home, but this experience was still something unique, and something I am still evaluating and thinking about!



I started my time with this team composing literature reviews and eventually conducted interviews and transcribed these interactions, which were all over the phone, and inquired about the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of Muslim-Americans. These interviews were a valuable part of my research experience with the team, not only because I was able to practice conducting, recording, and transcribing interviews (which I'm sure will be quite valuable as I move into graduate school and graduate-level research endeavors). On a very human level, hearing from individuals about the impact of COVID-19 was like zooming in on the individual narratives amidst the pandemic. And, as a Theology major at a Jesuit university, hearing about the impact of COVID on religious and, by extension, community and spiritual, realities was incredibly eye-opening and revealed a lot about the nature and role of faith in times of crisis.

While I was only with this community for a semester, what I learned was quite valuable, and I am grateful for the skills and lessons I am certain will be of great significance as I transition into a Master's program in human rights studies. Most particularly, the experience with literature reviews, research team meetings, and ethnographic interviews during my time with the AMWRRRI team have prepared me to be a better advocate, person, community member, research teammate, and scholar!



STEFAN REUTTER

**CLASS OF 2022: BA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
BS IN PHYSIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**



I have had the honor and privilege of working with AMWRRRI since I first came to Marquette in the fall of 2018. Going into college, I knew I wanted to be involved in meaningful research, but never expected to join a team where we would explore such a wide variety of topics and intersections regarding Muslim and Arab culture in Milwaukee and the United States.

Joining as a research assistant, I worked under Dr. Enaya Othman's guidance and learned to conduct interviews with healthcare providers, caregivers, religious leaders, and community members to investigate the stigma of disability in Milwaukee's Muslim community. Over the course of my first two years working with AMWRRRI, I would conduct and transcribe these interviews while performing literature reviews to supplement our research. As our team members have said, these interviews offered a unique and intimate perspective on the experiences of Muslim-Americans and allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of what resources or changes in attitudes are needed to accommodate individuals with differences of ability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted countless individuals across the world, and over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year AMWRRRI began a new project – this time to examine the impact of the pandemic on Muslim-American religious practices and life in general, as well as community stances on social justice issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement. The pandemic changed the way we approached this project, offering both new challenges and opportunities. While we could no longer conduct in-person interviews with members of Milwaukee's Muslim community and had to transition to phone and video calls, we were able to expand our research and interview Muslim-Americans from across the United States. In addition to our personal interviews offering individual perspectives, AMWRRRI conducted an anonymous survey to gain a better understanding of COVID-19's impact on the mental health of Muslim-Americans on a broader scale.

As the project's student research coordinator, my responsibilities include managing our team of researchers, contacting interviewees, editing and organizing interviews, and contributing to AMWRRRI's website as well as our digital archive. While I did not personally conduct interviews this past year, I was able to learn a great deal about the numerous ways in which the pandemic had influenced the routines and mindsets of individuals and families throughout the country. I am glad I had the opportunity to work with such a talented and passionate team of students this year, and while it pains me to see many of them graduating and moving on, I look forward to continuing our research this coming year. As I move to my final year at Marquette, I thank AMWRRRI for pushing me to expand my cultural competence and understanding of prominent issues in the world around me.

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