Islamophobia 101
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*Goals: Participants will be able to understand how the status quo of American racism sheds light on the history of Islamophobia that seeks to terrorize Muslims, Arabs, Black and South Asian people in the global war for military domination. Participants will be able to connect the wars for oil resources with the militarization of the Middle East and South Asia by U.S. and European efforts securing political and socio-economic power.

*Questions to explore:
- What are the political events that led to the expansion of U.S. military events in the Middle East and how does Islamophobic terror in the United States and Europe feed into that narrative?
- How do the political identities of Muslim, South Asian, Black and Arab communities form as a result of the War on Terror?
- How is the State of national security benefitting the United States and Europe built on the dehumanization of Muslims?

Opening Discussion:
What is the historical context of Islamophobia in the United States today?
- 55% of Muslim students in the United States are bullied at school
- Attacks on Muslims have tripled in the past decade. Somali Muslim Hamza Warsame thrown off building, Chapel Hill, mosques burned down, Sikhs attacked & murdered, Wisconsin gurdwara shooting, suspensions of Black, Muslim, South Asian and Arab students, brutal attacks on those perceived to be Muslim all over the U.S.
- Expansion of Homeland Security, Immigration Customs Enforcement & Transportation Security Agency policies to target Muslims, Arabs, South Asian & Black communities
- Police departments & FBI surveillance in mosques, Islamic organizations and communities, entrapment of Muslims
- War on Terror has claimed the lives of 4 million people in the Middle East
- Military attacks on Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia
- Islamophobic ads by Pamela Gellar, Donald Trump's ban on Muslims

*Lead discussion into Defining and Understanding:

The Islamophobic War on Terror is not a new phenomenon. For decades, foreign policies have deemed the Wahabbi (or Salafi) state of Saudi Arabia as U.S. and European allies while the Cold War era produced Islamist militant groups like Mujahideen and the Taliban. The active targeting of the Middle East and South Asia has been a meticulous plan to dominate the region in efforts to secure finite gas and oil resources.

- What is Islamophobia & War on Terror?
- How has this agenda connected to a history of politically fueled oppression and "Othering" of people? (Use examples: Asian Americans Japanese internment, Chinese exclusion act, Communists during McCarthy era)
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*Concepts:

- Islamophobia: unfounded fear of and hostility towards Islam. Such fear and hostility leads to discriminations against Muslims, exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political or social process, stereotyping, the presumption of guilt by association, and finally hate crimes. (Definition from http://www.cair.com/issues/islamophobia/islamophobia.aspx)
- Patriot Act: a response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, significantly reduced restrictions in law enforcement agencies' gathering of intelligence within the United States; expanded the Secretary of the Treasury's authority to regulate financial transactions, particularly those involving foreign individuals and entities; and broadened the discretion of law enforcement and immigration authorities in detaining and deporting immigrants suspected of terrorism-related acts.

Historical Background:

On September 11, 2001: Word Trade Center was attacked. The terrorist group Al Qaeda, based in Saudi Arabia, claimed responsibility.

On September 20, 2001: The phrase 'War on Terror' was first used by U.S. President George W. Bush. The Bush administration and the Western media have since used the term to denote a global military, political, legal and ideological struggle—targeting both organizations designated as terrorist and regimes accused of supporting them. It was typically used with a particular focus on militant Islamists and al-Qaeda, ISIS, Taliban and PLO.

On October 7, 2001: The United States invaded Afghanistan. The Taliban, especially their treatment of women was given as reason for invasion.

On March 20, 2003: The United States invaded Iraq. Most of the population of the U.S. were led to believe that Iraq was responsible for 9/11. NO connection! Most were Saudi, but since the U.S. supports Saudi ruling class, we don't pursue this. Colin Powell claimed there were weapons of mass destruction, which was later debunked.

ISLAM 101:

Revealed to Prophet Muhammad in Saudi Arabia in 600 AD, Qu'ranic text and the stories of the Prophet followed. These were manifestations of a lifestyle devoted to Allah, where praying five times a day, fasting, no alcohol or pork, as well as pilgrimage to the Hajj are the fundamental pillars of the religion. Jihad: struggle with one's self, Shar'iah: Islamic law/jurisprudence. However, Islam isn't a monolithic religion or community, noting that there are Hindu, Buddhist, Sunni, Shi'ite, Sufi and indigenous communities that practice varying practices from the religion throughout the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

Resource defining Islamophobia, Islamophibic ideas, and basic facts on Islam:
http://www.cair.com/Issues/Islamophobia/Islamophobia.aspx

DEPICTION OF MUSLIMS IN MEDIA:

Muslims are often depicted as evil, violent, and uncivilized in both news media and other public mediums, i.e. visual art, film, books, etc. *Can you give any examples?* Participants will watch clip from "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QKxHINgloA) and discuss the villification of Muslims as well as the media's role in perpetuating phobias towards other groups, i.e. African Americans in America.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM, ISLAM & THE FBI:

- There is an extensive history of anti-Blackness throughout the Middle East and South Asia. For information on the Arab slave trade, check out this website: www.arabslavetrade.com/
- From the murder of a Black Muslim man by the FBI in Boston in 2015, to the targeting of Black Muslims in the Nation of Islam and the Black Power Movement, anti-Black racism and the expansion of imperialistic foreign policies worked together to demonize and infiltrate Black organizing spaces. The FBI released COINTELPRO documents revealing the extensive organizing done around disrupting Muslim and Black movement spaces.
- For more information on the Nation of Islam targeting by the FBI, check this out.

*Guiding Questions & Ideas:

We are connecting two big ideas: media & social beliefs are interconnected. How does the media shape the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East and South Asia?

- Who controls the media? (U.S. corporations Comcast and Fox) How does this type of control impact the way our society views Muslims in the United States?
- How does the War on Terror work in relationship to white supremacy and anti-Blackness ? Muslims come from varying backgrounds. The country with the most number of Muslims is Indonesia. The tops five countries with the most number of Muslims are Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Egypt.

  - Emphasize the ways in which language shapes public and political discourse: as part of the media propaganda, using "fear" and "terrorism" as complementary was critical to advancing Islamophobic agendas.
  - War on Terror has responded with mass media characterizing Muslims as the perpetrators of violence for hundreds of years, causing mass hysteria resulting in surveillance of Muslim communities, detainment of Muslim 'looking peoples,' hate crimes against Sikhs, who were the first group attacked after 9/11, as well as the entrapment of Arab, South Asian, Black and Muslim people by the FBI. Campuses throughout the country have been infiltrated, as well as mosques and Islamic institutions.

How do you organize against Islamophobia? Check a resource list here!