

DESIGN PROJECT 2

YOUR CHALLENGE: Redesign Muslim philanthropy in the US

THE BRIEF:

Although Muslim individuals and households in the U.S. donate regularly, their real giving potential is largely untapped. Charity is a core pillar in Islam, but Muslims in America do not have many charitable institutions and they have traditionally not funded nonprofit institutions (aside from mosques and schools), despite a long and rich tradition within Islam of doing so.

Very little research or understanding exists as to why. You will be participating in one of the first known attempts to bring a human-centered approach to deeply investigate the root causes of this situation. Your solutions may result in innovations that transform philanthropic opportunities for Muslim Americans and unlock their giving potential.



Your challenge as designers:

- Engage members of American Muslim communities to gain empathy for them
- Uncover useful insights by seeking to understand their perspectives toward, behaviors around, and underlying needs relating to personal philanthropy and personal social impact
- Develop a framework that reveals barriers and opportunities in this space and articulate a clear, meaningful point-of-view
- Create prototypes of solutions to spur new conversations with your users, allowing you to learn more
- Design new ways for Muslims in America to be involved in philanthropic activities

During your final presentation:

- Compel us to care about your work by highlighting your empathy findings
- Show your synthesis of your fieldwork by sharing developed frameworks, needs, and insights
- Use one solution to illustrate your insights and ideas

Tips:

Focus your scope: The user group of “Muslim Americans” is full of opportunities for rich empathy work, but it also has a huge range of people and needs. Focus early. Narrow near the beginning of the project to a subset of the possibilities (for example, focus on people who are already giving but not consistently, or young Muslims who have never given, or consider using a community foundation as the user you’re designing for). Then concentrate on the meaningful issues that come forward during your fieldwork, and let those guide your subsequent focus.

Plan deep empathy work: Find users with whom you can connect and ask to set up appointments for longer (hour-plus) interviewing and observation. This will likely require multiple interactions with your users; start early.

AMCLI has identified a number of people (Muslims, philanthropists, or others working on this topic) who are willing to be interviewed at length, in person or via Skype. Your team will be given 1 or 2 names to follow up with and arrange interviews. Please note that these interviews will **NOT** be sufficient to complete your empathy work and are just a starting point.

During your empathy activities, try to unpack what the Muslim identity means... and whether that’s important to your users. Consider other lenses on identity, such as national origin, ethnicity, or something else entirely.

Be open to many interpretations of “philanthropy” or donation. Listen for what your users are revealing about their values around social impact.

Investigate particular angles of the issues: Go in depth by doing some contextual research on your choice of topic areas like the following:

- Background on Muslim charitable giving in the U.S.
- Research on historical forms of Muslim charitable giving around the world
- Dig into the technical financial aspect: while interest plays a central role in American philanthropic institutions, can interest be used in Muslim charitable institutions? Or for Muslim-led charitable efforts?
- Look to precursors or analogues for inspiration: what charitable models and tools are used by other religious communities (e.g., Jewish or Mormon communities) to unlock resources within their respective religious communities?

CALENDAR AND DELIVERABLES:

Coaching and time for project work will be provided during class time on each Friday of the project. There will be a number of check-in points to serve as opportunities for teams to get meaningful feedback on their progress. The deliverables listed below will be used as inputs for activities in class that day.

Key milestones:

- Friday October 7: Project Launch // Coaching // Find a focused starting point, plan fieldwork
- Monday, October 10: Empathy // Come to class having done at least one empathy activity per team
- Friday, October 14: Coaching // Come with notes from multiple interviews and empathy map(s)
- Friday, October 21: Coaching // Come into class with multiple solutions to prototype
- Friday, October 28: Dress Rehearsal // Come prepared to give your final presentation (for feedback)
- Monday, October 31: Final presentation day with partner and panel of interested organizations

The final deliverables for the project are:

1. A three-minute presentation of your work on October 31. Plan to present with the projector and computer available. Use of video is encouraged but not required to deliver a concise and compelling message. Each presentation will be followed by a five minute Q&A.
2. A one-page document headlining your insights and solution. If you have done your project work well and documented your major findings along the way, this should be easy to complete. We will provide further instructions on the one-pager part way through the project.

OCT. 3	4	5	6	7 DP2 LAUNCH!
10 COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE INTERVIEW BEFORE CLASS	11	12	13	14 COACHING BRING NOTES FROM INTERVIEWS AND EMPATHY MAP
17	18	19 BRING POV	20	21 COACHING BRING MULTIPLE SOLUTION CONCEPTS
24	25	26	27	28 DRESS REHEARSAL COME PREPARED TO GIVE PRESENTATION
31 DP2 DUE!				