

In the Spring Quarter of last year, I had the privilege to be in Professor Brizendine's Quranic Interpretation class to understand the meaning of the Quran better. I found the simple truth of Islam through the facts of the Quran. I truly enjoyed how Islam is stated within the holy book, rather than what people perceive it to be due to negative stereotypes after 9/11. Many government officials blamed Muslims for the attacks of 9/11 and they proceeded to “watch” Muslims thinking that they were all terrorists. Growing up many people and even my friends, in society were influenced by the decision of the government, and had false perceptions of what Islam stands for. I was bullied on several accounts for the way I looked, not being able to eat the pepperoni pizza at parties, praying, and wearing a head scarf. It was always such a fairly unusual and uncomfortable, feeling around people who didn't understand what it meant to be Muslim. I had wished for more classes in school to be created for ethnic and religious studies so students to understand and truly appreciate other differences, and not be influenced by negative perceptions. Therefore, this Qu'ran interpretation class has not only taught me that there are certain struggles that we have to go through as Muslims to become better devoted to God but also to strengthen our community and build up what we can while we can on this earth. In general, it is important to cultivate safe spaces that people can be comfortable in, and not have to hide their identities. This class has shown me those other ethnic minorities just as Muslims face discrimination and racialization in the United States more often due to the influence of negative government-created conceptions. The discrimination that many of these minority populations have experienced is the basis of their alliances, and it is clear that the only way to overcome these problems is by supporting one another. Due to the numerous barriers that the US government has placed in the way of people's life, like deportation, inaccurate face recognition that results in criminalization, or overall racialization based on skin color, it is easy to say but more challenging to uphold. To free themselves from the stigmas and problems that the government has attributed to them, these groups must keep fighting alongside one another.

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