

AMSS 38th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“Islamic Traditions and Comparative Modernities”

Cosponsored by:
The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
September 25-26, 2009

Abstract Only – Work in Progress

“Muslim Time in America”

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The American experience of Islam is characterized by various encounters. For decades, Muslim communities have been in the process of codifying their American setting as a new habitat. This symbolic incorporation of America has both spatial and temporal dimensions. From identification of *qibla* to debates around moonsighting, their American location requires Muslims to settle some questions that are no longer asked in traditionally Muslim lands. While much of the academic work on American Muslims is devoted to issues of immigration, terrorism and media misrepresentations, the question of Muslim time remains unstudied. How does the Islamic calendar survive in American life? How do Muslims reconcile their two temporalities? Should Muslims follow a scientific, impersonal technique to determine the beginning and end of the month of Ramadan or should they rely on the naked eye and more personal techniques of *moonsighting*? While most Muslims feel embarrassed about the debate around *moonsighting* - or at least the way it intrudes into and complicates their relations with corporate America - it, in fact, provides a key to understanding the complexity of the Muslim time-sense and calendar in modern industrialized societies. Seeking to move beyond the rancorous mechanics of *moonfighting*, this paper draws on Simmelian insights in sociology and philosophical notions of time to explore the challenges faced by Muslims in America who find themselves caught between the lunar and solar calendars, between the cyclical and linear - or organic and scientific - conceptions of time. What are the competing discourses that attempt to shape Muslim time? What are the structural conditions under which Muslim time is codified? Since Muslim immigration to the United States has given rise to a number of challenges to the Muslim world; this paper seeks to understand what kind of consequences the transposition holds for the Muslim experience of time.