# 9/11 Backlash: Being Muslim in America

## College Level

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<th>Overview</th>
<th>Students will learn about how the media influences our perception of different groups of people.</th>
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<td>Objective</td>
<td>Students will be given time in class to research how television programs and movies affect our perception of ethnic groups and will also watch a movie; they will then share their findings through a debate on FriendFeed about whether the media shapes our ideas about different groups of people.</td>
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| Materials | 1. *9/11 Backlash: Being Muslim in America* video  
2. VCR, or DVD and DVD player  
3. Computer with internet access  
4. An account on friendfeed |
| Procedure | 1. Discuss the ways different ethnic groups, such as African Americans, Hispanics, and Muslims, are portrayed on television and in the movies. Do students notice any trends or patterns? For example, do they think that African Americans are often presented as bad guys? Are white people usually the heroes? Do students think that television programs and movies attempt to convey the complexity of any of the characters?  
2. Tell students that experts on the media continue to debate the role television and movies plays in shaping our ideas about different ethnic groups. During today's lesson, students will debate this issue. One side will take the position that television and movies shape our attitudes toward ethnic groups. The second side will argue that television and movies do not shape our attitudes.  
3. Divide students into two groups and assign each group a position. Give students time in class to discuss their position with their teammates. Encourage students to consider the following questions as they work to frame their arguments:  
   - Are different ethnic groups usually presented in the same way? For example, are African Americans always the bad guys, or have you seen them as the good guys as well? What about other ethnic groups, such as Muslims?  
   - Can the media show complexity, or are most characters one-dimensional?  
   - Has the way that characters from different ethnic groups been portrayed on television or in the movies changed over the last few years?  
   - Does the number of hours a person watches television or movies affect the degree to which the media can shape attitudes? Does more viewing result in a greater influence?  
4. Suggest students watch the segment "Casting Recall" from the video *9/11 Backlash: Being Muslim in America*. The following Web sites also provide helpful information:  
   - What Television Teaches Kids  
     [http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,45-9416,00.html](http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,45-9416,00.html)  
   - A Century of Abuse: Ethnic Images on the Screen  
     [http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article384.html](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article384.html)  
   - The Harm of Native Stereotyping  
     [http://www.bluecorncomics.com/stharm.htm](http://www.bluecorncomics.com/stharm.htm)  
   - Escape from Gilligan's Island  
   - Does TV Shape Ethnic Images?  
     [http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article388.html](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article388.html)  
5. Over the next couple of days students will have an online debate on the topic using the Web 2.0 application, FriendFeed. Students will need to sign up for an account, and join the room that the teacher has created for this specific debate. Students will post their research, views, and opinions on the topic.  
6. Discuss in class if they think that one side won the debate. Is there a class consensus about this question? Do most students think that television and the movies shape their views about different ethnic groups? |
| Evaluation | Students were highly engaged with their groups while planning the debate; participated actively in the debate; were highly involved in class discussions following the debate. |

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1Adapted from: [http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/911backlash/](http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/911backlash/)