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The Effects of Racialization on Sikhs in America: An Intersectional Approach

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THE EFFECTS OF RACIALIZATION ON SIKHS IN AMERICA: AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Graduation with
Honors from the South Carolina
Honors College

<May 2020>

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
ABSTRACT	4
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	11
3. COURSE SYLABUS	20
4. CONCLUSION.....	46
REFERENCES.....	47

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor for his continuous support throughout the whole process, for his patience, motivation, and knowledge. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor. I would also like to thank the rest of my second reader for being another resource and mentor for me to go to. I valued their feedback and used it to better my research.

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Abstract

Sikhs have been largely ignored in the literature surrounding social justice and religious tolerance. The many pressures Sikhs face, and the social assumptions that lead to them, must be brought into the broader conversation on these issues so that educators and politicians might help support the well-being of the Sikh community. Sikh identity has been misinterpreted and redefined in modern day American society. The lack of cultural and religious literacy of many Americans, coupled with Sikhs' distinct visible identity, has led to xenophobic violence against Sikhs since their arrival in the U.S. more than a century ago. The root of religious discrimination are hidden in race. Discriminations and racialization experienced by people of color has been researched and shown to have an effect on a person's place in society, psyche, and their self-identity. This research aims to examining the history of South Asian Americans and their experience. The literature analysis on the Sikh experience is contextualized by assessing trends through intersectionality and misconceptions in modern American society. Based on this analysis, a syllabus for a course on these concepts was created.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The identity of South Asians in the United States has proved to be problematic. This is the case primarily because of the notion of race, and the way Sikhs have been included in particular Sikh categories. Sikhs and other South Asian Americans encounter a triple quandary in that they have to navigate their Sikh identity, the pressures of being a model minority and the challenges of a disembodied marginalized identity. The basis of these issues can be linked to racialization and oppression as these concepts deal with race and identity. The religious nature of discrimination is overlooked because the visibility of the target population's ethnic and racial identity permits the presumption that the bias is racial/ethnic in nature (Khyati, 2006, p 222). Sikhs have had a role in the United States for over 125 years. Over this time, they have been exposed to various amounts of discrimination and social marginalization, before and after 9/11. There have been several cases of discrimination starting as early as the twentieth century like *United States vs Bhagat Singh Thind* to post 9-11, like that on Balbir Singh Sodhi. These cases not only are examples of discrimination but shed light on the racial or religious issues in America.

African American culture, politics, and philosophy have offered South Asian Americans vital resources for understanding their own racialization, political marginalization, and class exploitation in North America. What once was the equal oppression of all minorities eventually shifted. Vijay Prashad's *Karma of Brown Folk* explores the South Asian experience in America in the twentieth century and its relationship with that of Black Americans. He states how in the mid to late twentieth century, South Asian Americans came to be known as the "model minority" and were seen as a group of people that worked hard and stayed to themselves. They were held

up them up to black Americans as evidence for the sound state of social order. This praise eventually manipulated how South Asian Americans saw themselves in American society, as they were losing cultural authenticity according to Prashad. Even though they were a minority, Indian Americans developed a racial superiority complex on par with white Americans (Prashad, 2007, pg 20). With the majority of the praise falling on to Hindu Americans, this led to marginalization and racialization of minorities like Sikhs and Muslims in the South Asian community itself.

Racialization or ethnicization is the process by which certain phenotypical features like racial or ethnic identities of a group are attached to a particular religion or religions. Sikhs, along with Muslims, and Hindus make up one of these groups that are commonly racialized. In a 2006 article, Khyati Joshi examined the experience of these religious groups and how racialization renders those faiths theologically, socially, and morally wrong. It reduces people to one aspect of their identity and presents a homogeneous or static view of a larger ethnic group. A majority of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in and outside of America come from the same ethnic background, especially between Pakistan and India. Hinduism is the majority religion in India, Islam is the majority religion in Pakistan, and Sikhism is the majority religion in Punjab. Since Punjab is part of both countries, there is overlap between culture, language, and tradition. These religions may have different belief systems, but their adherents share some of the major outcomes of racialization. In America and most of the western world, Christianity is the major religion that provides the ideology that society follows. This dominant value system has caused other minority religions to be placed in an outgroup, characterized as “other”. In the present day, the racialization of Islam in the American context stems from orientalism and islamophobia. As a result, brown-skinned, non-Christian Americans become more than just “the other” but are

categorized as the enemy (Joshi, 2006, p. 215). They go from merely being a minority to being viewed as a potential threat based on their association with the “enemy” of Islam. The outcome of racialization is the conflation of racial and religious identities. This causes for religious identity to be seen as less meaningful to society than the brownness of one’s skin. This in turn may result in the underreporting or bias against hate crimes and causes less focus on solving religious prejudice and rather racial prejudice. In this case, racialization has put major pressure on turbaned men o the Sikh faith

Sikhs are no strangers to being an oppressed minority. Through the history of the religion Sikhs have faced persecution and oppression, from the Mughal Empire to present day. Sikhism is one of the youngest religions in the world, as it was founded in the 16th century. Even so, it has grown to become the fifth largest religion in the world with over 500,000 Sikhs in America and 27 million globally (Sikh Coalition, 2010). Sikhism preaches a message of remembrance and devotion to God at all times, truthful living, service to humanity, and social justice. The history of Sikhism started with the teachings of the first guru or Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who was born in modern day Pakistan Punjab. He preached about the equality of mankind regardless of caste or religion. At a young age, upon being enlightened, Nanak’s first words were “There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim so whose path shall I follow? I will follow God's path” (5). Later in his life he traveled around Asia learning and preaching the basics of Sikhi. Each Guru that was chosen for the Guruship to be passed down made a significant contribution to the Sikh faith. The tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji ended the succession and passed the Guruship to the “eleventh Guru” or the holy book the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The city of Amritsar was named the capital of the Sikh world and contains the holiest place for Sikhs, known as Harmandir Sahib or The Golden Temple.

A major attribute of Sikhs can be seen to be their appearance. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji established a Sikh order, the Khalsa Panth. The birth of the Khalsa was a pivotal event in the psyche and identity of Sikhs. The Khalsa was established as a way to emphasize the preaching of the Gurus and bring unity and identity. Members of the Khalsa originally were those that were baptized and were instructed to uphold the highest codes of conduct and morality. Over time the word “Khalsa” and “Sikh” have become synonymous terms, even though only a minority of Sikhs are initiated in the Khalsa. All Sikhs trace their personality, religious rites, name, prayers, actions, and how they identify themselves to the Khalsa (Saini, 2014, p 2). This identity is still prevalent in the current Sikh diaspora in the western world. Members of the Khalsa are given the names Singh and Kaur, for men and women respectively. Such naming a way to signify unity and that all are equal, regardless of name and caste. They are given five distinctive symbols marking them as members of the Khalsa. These are known as the Five K’s; Kirpan (dagger), Kesh (uncut hair), Kanga (wooden comb), Kachera (undergarment), Kara (steel bracelet). Sikhs in America and around the world can be distinguished by these symbols. The most common of these symbols is the turban, worn by Sikh men as a way to keep their Kesh covered. Ninety-nine percent of the men that wear turbans in America are Sikhs (Sikh Coalition). Thus, Sikhs have had to fight for their identity, and living in America is no exception.

The case of United States vs Bhagat Singh Thind was a landmark case for the Sikh community, as well as for the notion of citizenship for Asian Americans. Bhagat Singh was an Indian Sikh who filed to petition for naturalization under the Naturalization Act of 1906. This act allowed that only “free white persons” and “aliens of African nativity and African descent” to become U.S citizens. Thind was from the northern region of India or Punjab and came to the U.S for a higher education in 1913. He was granted naturalization after his first application of

citizenship, but it was then revoked. The case eventually made it to the Supreme Court in 1923. Thind argued that he identified as a “high-caste Hindu,” from north India. Such persons had been scientifically shown to be of Aryan or Caucasian descent (Thapar, 1996, p 14). This meant that he could be treated as a “white person” and a part of the “Caucasian race”. Thind argued that the Indo-Aryan languages are indigenous to North India as they are to Europe, making North Indians linguistically and racially of the same stock as European Aryans (United States v. Thind, 1923, p 261)

Ultimately the court ruled against Thind. They argued that the words “white person” and “Caucasian” are synonymous but only as words of common speech and not of scientific origin. Similarly, they argued that the term “Aryan” has to do with linguistic, and not at all with physical, characteristics, and mere similarities in language did not prove enough. The Aryan language could have been adopted by a variety of societies like the English language. And those who speak English cannot necessarily be racially classified as white. The Court also argued that the exclusion of non-whites was based on the idea of racial difference rather than the idea that one race is superior or inferior to another race. The racial difference between Indians and whites was so great that the "great body of our people" would reject assimilation with Indians (United States v. Thind, 1923, p 260). In conclusion, the Court also noted that Congress excluded all natives of Asia from admission into this U.S.

This is one of many cases of discriminator in a long list of such cases that Sikhs and South Asians have had to face. It illustrates how courts constructed “whiteness” in a way that best aligned with the institutionalized xenophobia they wanted to protect. The aftermath of this case included revoking the right for future Indian Americans from gaining citizenship. This in turn caused many of them to lose their jobs and property. While Thind was actually Sikh, the

term “Hindu” was used as a racial and geographical designation from South Asia, rather than a religious designation. He chose not to challenge the discriminatory nature of the case and instead used caste status as a means to align himself with whiteness. This can be attributed to the dire circumstances he and other Asian immigrants faced at a time when they had no real rights, leaving him with no real option. Eventually, even though Indian Americans and other minorities gained rights in the United States, the underlying racial issues still exist. As W.E.B. DuBois theorized, the main problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line (Kimberly 2004, p 57).

Over the past several decades, immigration has increased the racial and ethnic diversity in the United States. Once a mainly biracial society, with a large white majority and mainly black minority, the U.S has now become a society of multiple racial and ethnic groups. Along with the increase in diversity, there has been an increase in racism and discrimination, for specific groups more than others. Prior to 9/11 the discrimination towards Sikhs was along the lines of xenophobia. The majority of Sikhs immigrated to the United States in the late twentieth century as a way to seek asylum from persecution in India, due to the Sikh Genocide of 1984 (Arvind, 2015, pg 267-270). Immigrating to the United States around the time of 9/11 only made escaping oppression harder. This constant prejudice and shift in American culture has slowly led to an effect on the Sikh identity.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Growing up in America, the Sikh diaspora and identity has evolved over time. Cultural assimilation has subtly caused Sikhs to redefine their racial and ethnic identities several times over the past hundred years. Not to mention these visible symbols of religion have made Sikhs particularly vulnerable to discrimination and racial attacks. A significant amount of research exists on what creates negative perceptions or biases towards groups, especially minority groups, like Sikhs. The ways in which individuals are “presented” through media, policy, etc. further explains the sociological understanding of this issue. Discrimination exceeds hate crime and actually has an impact on an individual level. From effecting students growing up in America in the school system to going into specific career paths. Sikhs growing up in America often struggle with self-identity due to this, as they do not fit in one specific mold. The best way to learn how to target these issues regarding Sikhs, it is important to look at the theology behind them.

Manifesting of hate

To understand fear and how it develops, researchers have looked at points in which people are in a crisis situation or have an intense experience which in turn instill fear. This fear thus often manifests as hate. In this case for example, a report done by the American Journal of Criminal Justice, it explains that sociologically, minority communities like the Sikh community can be misinterpreted or stereotyped through events like 9/11 which cause fear and “moral panic”. The concept of “moral panic” explains that fear lingers and develops over a longer period of time when society as a whole believe there is injustice present. There are stages in the

development of moral panic. It starts with something or someone being perceived as a possible threat to a community or society, the media then depicts the threat in a certain light, which in turn arouses the public and leads to fear and hate.

For minorities like Sikhs and Muslims alike, terror attacks like 9/11 or the Boston Marathon bombing instilled resentment in many Americans. As shown in a number of studies that examine Muslims in the United States following 9/11, their findings suggest that coverage of the news caused a phenomenon called “attitudinal shocks” which ended up being “a driver” of increased “hatred [and/or] bigotry” (Hanes). People tend to develop defensive thoughts and behaviors. They will create exaggerated and negative beliefs about the other race to justify their actions in an attempt to secure their own safety and survival. The effect of the news coverage on individual perception was profound, which caused many citizens of the United States to feel the fear and panic (Gilman, 2016). And since the U.S does not have prominent Sikh figures to represent the community to the public, it was easier for “fear” to be the natural response to the image of a Sikh, or turban. It can be inferred by this theory of moral panic and research analysis that when seeing “terrorist” and “Sikh”, the average American would merge the two images into one single identity. If a similar type of event had happened in a place where Sikhs had a better representation in the public eye, it’s likely it would have provoked a different reaction by the public. The lack of education by media outlets has also shown to bend these images when in reality being a Sikh and a terrorist are two different entities. Research has shown that moral panic is a major determinant of the negative biases and bigotry towards a certain group (Singh, 2019). With the addition of negative connotations by media outlets, that if not changed can lead to long term ignorance.

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Intersectionality and Sikhism

Intersectionality is a theory used to broaden legal and epistemological frameworks for people at the intersection of multiple oppressions such as racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989). It

was developed in the 1980's by Kimberly Crenshaw as a way to address discrimination experienced by those that embody multiple oppressed or disadvantaged groups. Its notion is geared toward the racialized experience of minority women in the U.S but the concept can be further applied to religion. Intersectional Sikhism is thus a theoretical framework that analyzes Sikhs at the intersection of multiple forces of oppression, predominantly religious and racial majoritarianism in the US. Since 9/11 there have been several hate crimes and other forms of oppression against Sikhs and other religious minorities in the US. It is important to analyze the discrimination that comes along with the Sikh identity and the disorientation of the group in general. There has been no specific research on Sikhism using an intersectional framework, but there is research on Sikhs and their experience in society and the different forms of oppression they face. This research ranges from the first wave of immigrants moving to the US, to the continuous progression of the Sikh identity, discrimination, and disorientation of the group (Crenshaw, 1989).

To gauge the impact of this intersectional discrimination, it is important to analyze incidences of hate. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) reported over 600 hate crimes related to 9/11 committed against Arabs, Muslims, and those perceived to be Arab or Muslim, including Sikhs and persons of South Asian descent. It was also reported by the Sikh Coalition that over 300 hate crimes were committed specifically against Sikhs in the first month following 9/11. The first victim of hate crime after 9/11 was a Sikh American: a 49-year old man, Balbir Singh Sodhi was murdered while planting flowers at his gas station in Mesa, Arizona (Hanes, 2014, 247). This attack and many others alike were due to the fact that the attacker associated the outward appearance of an individual with Islam and terrorism. This misconception has led to extralegal violence for both groups. Intersectional combinations of

racism (white supremacy), Islamophobia, Christian supremacy, and nationalism (patriotism) can produce misperception and xenophobia.

A solution to facing multiple oppressions is through interconnectivity constituted by coalitions. This prompts group identity and affirmation. Sikhism and Islam are two religions that are most mistaken for one another, due to their similar traditions. This can be due to lack of education of the public and in the education system. Through intergroup alliances and solidarity, and working towards social justice, Sikhs can use the resilience of other minoritized groups to better advocate their own. Groups like the Sikh Coalition or The Sikh Foundation advocate for Sikh representation and rights in the U.S and globally.

Racialization of Religion

Racialization or ethnicization is the process by which certain phenotypical features like racial or ethnic identities of a group are attached to a particular religion or religions (Khyati, 2006, 211-226) Sikhs, along with Muslims, and Hindus make up one of these groups that are commonly racialized. Joshi examined the experience of these religious groups have and how racialization renders those faiths theologically, socially, and morally wrong (Singh, 2019). Reducing people to one aspect of their identity presents a homogeneous or static view of a larger ethnic group. A majority of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs come from the same ethnic background, especially between Pakistan and India. Hinduism is the majority religion in India, Islam is the majority religion in Pakistan, and Sikhism is the majority religion in Punjab. Since Punjab is part of both countries, there is overlap between culture, language, and tradition. These religions may have different belief systems, but they share some of the major outcomes of racialization. In America and most of the western world, Christianity is the major religion that

provides the ideology that society follows. This social value has caused other minority religions to be placed in an outgroup or as the “other”. In the present day, the racialization of Islam in the American context stems from orientalism and islamophobia. As a result, brown-skinned, non-Christian Americans become more than just “the other” but are categorized as the enemy. The outcome of racialization is the conflation of racial and religious identities. This causes religious identity to be seen as less meaningful to society than the brownness of one’s skin. Which in turn may result in the underreporting or bias against hate crimes and causes less focus on solving religious prejudice and rather racial prejudice. In this case, racialization has put major pressure on turbaned men of the Sikh faith.

In both the Sikh faith and in the Muslim faith, covering your head is very important. For Sikhs, this is mainly seen by men wearing turbans and in Islam, this is mainly seen by women wearing hijabs. In more Islamic states, like in the middle east, men do tend to cover their head and in America, the turban is often associated with being a terrorist

Impact of Hate on Self-identity

Sikhs in America encounter a triple quandary where they have to navigate their Sikh identity, the pressures of being a model minority and the challenges of a disembodied marginalized identity. Discrimination negativity impacts a person’s psychological well-being and this includes Sikh Americans. Oppression through racism and discrimination can occur in covert or overt, subtle ways like racial microaggressions. Such as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Capodilupo).

In the U.S Sikhs are seen to be a part of several different minority groups, each with their respective identities. Most Sikhs are an ethnic minority like African Americans but most African Americans are Christian, which is a majority religion. Sikhs are also a religious minority like Arab Muslims, but most Arabs are racially categorized as white. Thus, Sikhs have developed a multi-faceted form of identity (Saini, 2014).

The social identity theory states that people define themselves in terms of a personal identity, as well as in terms of multiple social identities (Tajfel, 1979). Personal identity refers to self-categories which define the individual as unique. This can be applied to ethnic/religious identities or the degree to which individuals perceive themselves to be included and aligned with a specific group. To Sikhs, the formation of the Khalsa Panth has given them a sense of identity. Sikhs have maintained a physical identity that makes them stand out in public, especially in the U.S. This identity includes the Five K's and distinguishes someone who has formally committed to the values of Sikhi. With their outward appearance and the association with being Muslim, Sikhs find their identity constantly under attack. Daily microaggressions and acts of discrimination can affect how a person sees themselves, as well as how other see them. This can cause it to be normal for a turbaned man to live in constant fear when stepping out of his home. For many adults, dealing with discrimination results in a state of heightened vigilance and changes in behavior, which in itself can trigger stress responses (The Impact of Discrimination).

Impact of the Education System

Teachers and school administrators are as responsible for the dignity and safety of these students in the classroom—as well as the quality of their education as they are responsible for students of other races and religious affiliations. In order to meet this obligation, we must

understand the major factors that differentiate these students from their “majority” peers—and, in particular, understand the way in which those factors interact with each other. Religion marks these students as outside the norm, but so do race and ethnicity. The current socio-political environment is permeated with Islamophobia and anti-immigrant political rhetoric.

This in turn leads to discrimination and acts of hate in all parts of society, from young kids to adults, both inside and outside of schools. The education system in America does not focus on religion and culture and if it does, it is mainly on the basis of Christianity. This in turn leads to lack of knowledge from a young age, that can turn into ignorance and hate.

Religious-based bullying is a multilayered issue particularly as it relates to the intersection of religion, ethnicity, race, and ancestry. The conflation of skin color and religion enables a perception of individuals of color to be considered as “other,” as “enemy,” and as “terrorist.” (Ansary, 2020). For Sikhs students, the majority of disclination stems from islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment. More than half of Sikh children are subjected to bullying in their schools (Sikh Coalition). The processes of linking the turban to antagonists of the United States have impacted the ways Sikh youth are treated by their non-Sikh peers (Klein, 2008, pg 19). Organizations like the Sikh Coalition are working with state-level agencies to try and change this. They have currently been able to get 14 states to add Sikhism to the state curriculum at a primary school level. This allows for non-Sikh children an opportunity to be exposed to Sikhi. According to Sikh students who experience bullying, ignorance breeds hate. And one of the best ways to keep them safe is to educate their teachers and classmates about the Sikhs and their religious traditions (Sikh Colation). There is also a limited amount of Sikh Studies on a college level. Based on research complied, a course outline with topics and readings was created as a possible course proposal

Chapter 3

The overall goal of this paper was to bring about awareness to the discrimination and racialization faced by Sikhs in America, which is produced by the intersection of their religious, racial, and national identities. Based on the literature researched and analyzed, it has shown that the best way to increase literacy on Sikhism would be through education. This research for this paper utilized a 'hybrid' approach, combining elements of anthropology, phenomenology and sociology to analyze and interpret research related to being Sikh in America. Research is collected through literature review of recent academic literature (about 20 articles) on the behavioral science, and incidence accounts of hate crimes against Sikh and Muslim Americans. The academic literature chosen was focused on the theory behind hate and bias. As well as the impact on Sikhs living in American society and how to attend to issues, they face. A review on social intervention was also conducted within the research on the best practices in intervention in conflict prevention and resolution. This data will all be compiled into the format of a course outline that aims to educate students about Sikhism and the issues that follows Sikhs living in America. The outline will contain a course description, learning objectives and a lesson plan. The course would be designed to be discussion based. A lesson plan for mini lectures or topics to be discussed were also o

Chapter 4

Syllabus Outline

The Effects of Racialization on Sikhs in America: An Intersectional Approach

Course Description

This course explores the history of Sikhs in the United States—and American discourses about Sikhism. The course will start with a general introduction to Sikhism and then shift into an exploration of the experience of being Sikh in America. The course also focuses on the racialization of Sikh Americans, along with other minorities sometimes misidentified including Muslims, South Asians, and Hindus. A major component of the course materials closely to discern underlying social and cultural processes in the US, including the theory behind the manifestation of hate, hate crimes, intersectionality, microaggressions, and their impact on Sikh identity in America. There is a need for a broader conversation on these issues so that educators and politicians might help support the well-being of the Sikh community.

The course will consist of lectures, seminars and weekly readings and discussions. Each session will begin with a lecture providing the essential theoretical and conceptual material and will be followed by a class discussion. Readings will be assigned for each class and students are expected to be done the reading by the next class in which the discussion on the topic will be held. We will be using Blackboard (BB) to access course documents, and the course documents and assignments can be found there accordingly.

Learning Objectives

The main objectives of this course are to bring about awareness to the issues faced by Sikhs in America, as there is a lack of literacy of such issues. The general aim of this course is to

contextualize, historicize, and familiarize students with Sikhism and the Sikh experience in the United States. At the end of the term, students should be able to.

- demonstrate essential knowledge and understanding of Sikh intellectual, religious, and cultural traditions, and how experiences of Sikhs are thought, built and shaped through social, political, economic realities and their imbricated dynamics.
- Understand essential conceptual ideas and be able to identify and explain the main theoretical perspectives about Sikhs and their interactions with concepts of race, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- be equipped with a sociological approach to contemporary Sikh communities that can be used to broaden understanding of the world from everyday interactions to transnational realities.
- Engage deeply and respectfully with views other than their own.

The course is divided into three parts. First, we will examine the history of the Sikh community from its founding in the fifteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first century. After establishing a broad historical framework, we will focus on examining the theoretical framework behind discrimination, intersectionality, and identity. We will study an array of social dynamics within Sikh communities over time; and learning about specific cases and issues faced in different historical contexts. Finally, we will trace the movement of the Sikh Diaspora in the United States and how to target these issues and their implications for the future of the American Sikh community.

Required Texts:

- No text need be purchased. Readings will be done based on the course schedule. Books and or articles can be found online or through library resources

Course Requirements

- Class participation (10%)
- Reflection papers (40%)
- Midterm (20%)
- Final paper (30%)

The grading scale is as follows:

- A: 90-100
- B+: 87-89
- B: 80-86
- C+: 77-79
- C: 70-76
- D+: 67-69
- D: 60-66
- F: 59 or less.

Total points are out of 100

Participation

Attendance is a requirement. The participation grade reflects a student's preparation for and active contributions to class. Participation in class means being present, attentive and willing and able to make meaningful contributions to discussions. This requires students to have carefully completed the assigned readings for each class-meeting. Good participation consists of more than just completing the readings. But instead, one of the best ways to participate is to ask questions about the things you have not understood. The more everyone participates, the more productive, interesting, and fun the class will be.

Reflection Paper guidelines

Reflection papers that will be done biweekly must be typed and double-spaced. When needed, you must use a notation format . The reflection papers should be no more than two pages long or

500 words The aim in these restrictions is to develop college level, critically sharp papers that (really!) say what you mean them to say.

Midterm

The midterm contains everything from the course up to that point. Students will be given a set of questions based on the course topics to critically evaluate. The midterm will be held in class.

Final

The final paper topics are decided by the students individually. The paper has a minimum requirement of five pages. The paper must also be typed, double spaced, and in MLA format.

Academic Integrity

Assignments and examination work are expected to be the sole effort of the student submitting the work. Students are expected to follow the University of South Carolina Honor Code.

Students found responsible for violations of the Code will be subject to academic penalties and whatever disciplinary sanctions are applied. Cheating or plagiarism on work will result in a 0 and may be referred to the University Department of Academic Integrity

Accommodating Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations for the class, contact the Student Disability Resource Center.. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services. Please take the initiative and arrange to see the professor in private to set up specific accommodations for a disability if needed.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Course Introduction

An overview of the course objectives, framework, and concepts that will be discussed

Week 2: introduction to Sikhism

Reading:

E. Nesbitt. *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction*. (pg 1-45)

K. Singh. *A History of the Sikhs*

Week 3: Community and Identity

Reading

R. Jaspal. *British Sikh Identity and the Struggle for Distinctiveness and Continuity*

N. Singh. The Birth of Khalsa. A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity

Week 4: Intersectionality

Reading:

M. Ratti. *Intersectionality, Sikhism, and black feminist legal theory. Reconceptualizing Sikh precarity and memorization in the US and India*

K. Crenshaw. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*

Week 5: Racialization

Reading

J. Singh, "The Racialization of Sikhs in the U.S." (2009)

K. Joshi. The Racialization of Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism in the United States

Week 6: Asian Immigrants in America

Reading

J. Lee. *Immigration, Race/Ethnicity, and Multiracial Identification*

United States v Bhagat Singh

Week 7: Early Sikhs in America

Reading:

V. Doctor. *How Sikhs migrated to US, fought prejudice and built a community*

A.C. Thompson. *Sikhs in America. A History of Hate*

Week 8: 9/11 and its Aftermath

Reading

M. Ahulwalla. *Sikh men post-9/11: Misidentification, discrimination, and coping*
SALDEF. *The First 9/11 Backlash Fatality: The Murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi*

Week 9: Hate Crimes against Sikhs

Reading

M. Barka. *Religion, Religious Fanaticism and Hate Crimes in the United States*
W. Carless. *The Hate Report: Sikh Americans continue being targeted in hate crimes*

Week 10: Sikhs and Comparative Racial Perspectives

Readings:

Sue. *Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice.*
J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 28-41

Week 11: Nonviolent Acts of Discrimination Against Sikhs

Midterm

Week 12: Impact on Sikh Identity

Readings

G. Saini. *Identity, Perceived Discrimination, and Psychological Well-Being in Sikh Americans*
S.B. Nadimpallii. *The Association between Discrimination and the Health of Sikh Asian Indians*

Week 13: Future Implications

P. Kurein. *Shifting U.S. Racial and Ethnic Identities and Sikh American Activism*
A. Ocheing. *Why American Sikhs Think They Need A Publicity Campaign*

Week 14 Sikhism in Education

Reading

W. Klein. *Responding to Bullying: Language Socialization and Religious Identification in Classes for Sikh Youth*

Sikh Coalition. *Including Sikhism in State Standards*

Week 15 Reflection

Final exam

Lesson Plan

Week 1: Course Introduction

Syllabus Overview

Week 2: Introduction to Sikhism

Learning Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gauge student knowledge - To know what Sikhism/Sikhi is - Be able to understand the history of the religion - To find out the life and history of the founder of Sikhism - Understand the basic beliefs and values of Sikhs and how they worship - Understand and be able to identify Sikhs in western society 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	Materials Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mandatory knowledge - Students should come with whatever background they have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - Nesbitt. <i>Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction</i>. (pg 1-45) - K. Singh. <i>A History of the Sikhs</i>
Information Provided:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductory power point - When/where it was it founded and who was its founder - The population of Sikhs spread across the world - The basic tenants of Sikhi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How do Sikhs worship o What are major values and belief systems - Introduce The Holy Book: Guru Granth Sahib and The Golden Temple as the Holiest place for Sikhs - The five K's and their significance in the Sikh religion - 	
Areas for Discussion/Review:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss the first impression students have about Sikhi - Are there similarities or differences seen by other known religions - Discuss Sikhs in western society and stereotypes based on their outward appearance - Discuss the lack of education and knowledge on the topic of Sikhi in America - Recap the objectives for the class and ask for questions
Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide images when needed to help in visualization (i.e. scripture, attire, five K's, the Golden Temple) -
Assessment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - none

Week 3: Early Sikhs in America

Learning Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the history of Sikhs and Indian Americans - Be able to identify specific events and their impact on Sikh Americans - Understand the social impact of Sikhs in American society 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	Materials Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic understanding of what Sikhi is and how it is practiced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - <i>The First Asian in U.S America Was a Sikh Inspired by Civil Rights Principles</i> - A.C. Thompson. <i>Sikhs in America. A History of Hate</i>
Information Provided:	

- Introductory power point
- When the first Indian/ Sikh Americans migrate to in America
- The laws and challenges of being a minority in the 19th - 20th centuries
- Provide specific examples of major Sikh Americans and their roles
- Impact of the civil rights movement
- Lifestyle and work that Sikhs leaned towards when in America
- The progression of their stature in American society
- Asian Americans/Sikhs that were key figures when coming to the US

Areas for Discussion/Review:

- Discuss and reflect on the mandatory readings
- Discuss immigration to America around the start of the 20th century and its effect on Asian Americans
- Discuss the impact of significant people and events involving Sikhs that effected western society
- How do you think Sikhs and Indian Americans were treated and judged during that time and how it has changed?

Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:

-

Assessment:

- none

Week 4: Community and Identity

Learning Outcomes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the basis of Sikh identity from an in group and out group perspective - Gain basic knowledge on Sikh tradition and culture that is often associated - Differentiate between ethno- cultural identities - Understand the affect identity and social pressures have on Sikhs - Differentiate between basic concepts of self-identity - Determine the role religion and culture have on each other - 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge from past weeks 	Materials Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - R. Jaspal. British Sikh Identity and the Struggle for Distinctiveness and Continuity
Information Provided:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theories of self-identity - Identity Process Theory - How Sikh identity was formed - Guru Gobind Singh Ji and the formation of the Khalsa - The five K's and their significance - Kes, Kara, Kanga, Keshera, Kirpan - Punjabi culture and how it correlates to Sikhi - Misconceptions and cross over between Sikhs and other groups like Muslims and Hindus 	
Guf	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the major aspects of Sikh identity? - The overlap of religion and culture - The role Sikhs play in America and in the South Asian community - The struggle of balancing multiple identities as a Sikh raised in America - How does the Khalsa identity instill a sense of belonging? 	
Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in examples for the five K's - Show video of how a turban is tied and the different types - 	
Assessment:	

- Have students write a question or answer a question based on the discussions and turn it in

Week 5: Sikhs and Comparative Racial Perspectives

Learning Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine the manifestation of racial microaggressions - Understand the change in racial perspectives of Sikhs over the 20th and 21st century - Identify the basis by which racial perspectives are formed - Compare the relation between religion/race/culture and racial perspectives - Compare perspectives towards Sikhs from other minority groups. - 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	Materials Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - notes from past lectures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Readings: Sue. <i>Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice.</i> J. S. Grewal, <i>The Sikhs of the Punjab</i>, 28-41
Information Provided:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define racism and its progression in American society - Define the concept of microaggressions and the different types - Forms of racism and microaggressions that Sikhs face on a daily basis - Effect of racism in institutions (i.e. schools, workplace) - Bullying, employment, etc - How Sikhs respond or react to different racial perspectives - Perspectives of ethnic minorities towards each other 	
Areas for Discussion/Review:	

- Discuss the shift in attitude towards Muslims and Sikhs post 9/11
- How does identity play into racial perspectives for Sikhs
- Has anyone experienced microaggression or witnessed it happen
- Ways to educate and improve racial perspectives

Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:

- none

Assessment:

- Ask students to reflect on discussion and ask question to be turned in at the end of class

Week 6: 9/11 and its Aftermath

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the effect of 9/11 on American society and people of color
- Determine the shift in attitude towards Sikhs before and after 9/11 towards
- Understand the magnitude of hate crimes towards the Sikh community
- Be able to explain the concepts of xenophobia and islamophobia
- Identify factors that contribute to discrimination towards Sikhs and Muslims

Required Prior Knowledge:

- Students should come in with a researched example of a hate crime incidence post 9/11

Materials Needed:

- M. Ahulwalla. *Sikh men post-9/11: Misidentification, discrimination, and coping*
- *15 years after 9/11, Sikhs still victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes. CNN*
-

Information Provided:

- Data on the number of hate crimes towards Sikhs and Muslims related to 9/11
- The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Com-mittee (ADC) reported over 600 hate crimes related to 9/11 committed against Arabs, Muslims, and those perceived to be Arab or Muslim, including Sikhs and South Asian descent.
- forms of racism faced before and after 9/11
 - verbal vs physical
 - Islamophobia
- specific cases of hate crime on individuals and groups
 - Balbir Singh Sodhi (first victim of hate crime after 9/11)
 - Institutional hate crimes like the Oak Creek shooting
- Effect on individual and the Sikh community by these hate crimes
 - Retouch on discrimination in schools and the workplace

Areas for Discussion/Review:

- What factors affect who is being attacked
- Discuss the misconceptions between Sikhs and Muslims
- What impact has 9/11 made on being a Sikh in America?
- Discuss future implications and how to improve this attitude towards Sikhs

Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:

Assessment:

- Ask students to write an in class reflection on the specific case of hate crime they were supposed to research to be turned in at the end of class.

Week 7: Hate Crimes against Sikhs

Learning Outcomes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the history of hate crimes in America - Understand the extent and causes of hate crimes towards Sikhs - Compare how religion and race correlates to hate crimes - Explain the outcomes and consequences of hate crimes - Identify the implications of discrimination on Sikh identity - Explain the social impact of hate on American society 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mandatory knowledge - Students should come with whatever background they have 	Materials Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - M. Barka. Religion, Religious Fanaticism and Hate Crimes in the United States - W.Carless. The Hate Report: Sikh Americans continue being targeted in hate crimes -
Information Provided:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way are Sikhs discriminated against? Why? - Examples include acts of violence like assault or attacks at Gurdwaras - mass shooting in 2012 at a gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin - Data and statistics on hate crimes against Sikhs - Effect of xenophobia and islamophobia - How Sikhs and Muslims react to hate crimes - Video with firsthand encounters of hate crime - Effect of hate crimes on Sikh identity 	
Areas for Discussion/Review:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a reason that many acts of violence like this are considered mass shootings and not acts of terrorism? - What impact does hate crimes have on the Sikh community? - What motivates people to commit hate crimes - Discuss ways in which hate crimes should be handled or how they should be prevented 	
Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	
Assessment:	

- Ask students to reflect on the discussion questions and write about them to be turned in

Week 8:
Midterm

Week 9: Impact on Sikh Identity

Learning Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the extent to how being Sikh in America effects individual identity - Understand the relationship between religious identity), perceived discrimination, and psychological well-being - Be able to identify factors that may affect how a person may see themselves - Determine future implications for the future of the Sikh community - Be able to understand a in group and out group perspective - 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	Materials Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mandatory knowledge - Students should come with whatever background they have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - G. Saini. <i>Identity, Perceived Discrimination, and Psychological Well-Being in Sikh Americans</i> - S.B. Nadimpallii. <i>The Association between Discrimination and the Health of Sikh Asian Indians</i>
Information Provided:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic definition or explanation of identity from a psychology basis - Define identity in terms of religion and group identity - The importance of faith and religion on Sikh identity - Social or outside factors that threaten Sikh faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How discrimination has forced Sikhs to change in order to succeed How social norms have forced Sikhs to change in order to fit in - Look at the intersectionality of multiple dainties for Sikhs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being a minority religion, minority race, being raised as an American, etc 	
Areas for Discussion/Review:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - discuss threats to Sikh identity - Discuss examples of social norms that may cause Sikhs to change - Discuss how multiple identities can cause internal turmoil <p>How is growing up in America as a Sikh boy with a turban difficult? Discuss how it may feel to not feel a part of a group bec? How can you balance multiple identities?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask students to reflect on the discussion questions and write about them to be turned in

Week 10: Intersectionality and Racialization

Learning Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to explain the concepts of intersectionality and racialization - Understand the intersection of different ethnicities and races - Be able to apply the concept of racialization to religion (Sikhi, Hinduism, and Islam) - Explain the outcomes that intersectionality and racialization have on being a Sikh in America - Understand the theoretical framework behind intersectionality 	
Required Prior Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mandatory knowledge - Students should come with whatever background they have 	Materials Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - <i>Intersectionality, Sikhism, and black feminist legal theory. Reconceptualizing. Sikh precarity and memorization in the US and India</i> - <i>J.K. Singh, "The Racialization of Sikhs in the U.S." (2009)</i> -

Information Provided:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define intersectionality - 3 types; political, representative, and social - Define racialization? - How intersectionality relates to being a Sikh - Sikhs are the intersection of multiple forces of oppression, predominantly religious and racial majoritarianism in the US - Examine the experiences of South Asian Americans in regard to racialization - How Sikh organizations are working to educate the public
Areas for Discussion/Review:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss Crenshaw's article on intersectionality - Discuss ways in which to combat racialization - How should someone act when being discriminated against for being a part of a group they are not? - Discuss the similarities and differences that factor into religious intersection
Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
Assessment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask students to reflect on the discussion questions and write about them to be turned in

Week 11: Sikh Diaspora

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the concept of a Diaspora and be able to apply it to the Sikh community
- Be able to trace the progression of the Sikh Diaspora in America
- Be able to explain how the ways in which Sikhi is practiced has shifted
- Explain the impact of American society on the Sikh community
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Required Prior Knowledge:	Materials Needed:
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- No mandatory knowledge
- Students should come with whatever background they have

- Articles
- *G.S. Mann, "Making Home Abroad: Sikhs in the United States," Nation of Religions*
- *V. Doctor. How Sikhs migrated to US, fought prejudice and built a community*

Information Provided:

- What is the Sikh Diaspora?
- the modern Punjabi Sikh migration from the traditional area of the Punjab region
- Compare Sikhs in Punjab vs in America
- Discrimination felt in both
- Obstacles the Sikh community had to face when migrating to the US
- The delusion of Sikh practice and values in America
- Factors that affect the Sikh Diaspora
- Future implications of American society on Sikhs

Areas for Discussion/Review:

- In what ways do you think the Sikh Diaspora shifted in America
- Discuss how the Sikh Diaspora is different in Punjab compared to the US
- Discuss on how Sikhs have always been an oppressed group throughout history
- What does the future for the Sikh Diaspora look like?

Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:

-

Assessment:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask students to reflect on the discussion questions and write about them to be turned in -
- Additional Notes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -

Week 12: Sikh and Representation in Media

Learning Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to explain the concepts of intersectionality and racialization - Understand the intersection of different ethnicities and races - Be able to apply the concept of racialization to religion (Sikhi, Hinduism, and Islam) - Explain the outcomes that intersectionality and racialization have on being a Sikh in America - Understand the theoretical framework behind intersectionality 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	Materials Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mandatory knowledge - Students should come with whatever background they have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - <i>P. Minhas. Media and the Sikh Movement</i> - <i>Stereotyped Sikh Images in Diaspora: Public Portrayals and Citizenry Identity Politics</i>
Information Provided:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How Sikhs are portrayed in American media - The language and images used to associate Sikhs - Misconception and incorrect information put out by the media - Impact of media coverage on the Sikh community - Likelihood of more discrimination and hate - Discrimination faced by Sikhs that wish to be in a position in the public eye - Major figure heads for the Sikh community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas for Discussion/Review:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What type of discrimination may be faced by Sikhs when being in the public eye? - Discuss how much of an impact media can have on causing false connotation about a group - Discuss how Sikhs often are asked to sacrifice a part of their identity - Sikhs often have to fight for keeping their hair - Compare the portrayal of Muslims and Sikhs in American society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask students to reflect on the discussion questions and write about them to be turned in - What public figures do you know that are Sikh? - How would you feel if you were asked to sacrifice a part of your identity to get a job or do follow a passion (i.e play a sport)

Week 13: Sikhs and the Education System

<p>Learning Outcomes:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine the extent to which Sikhi is a part of school standards in America - Understand the impact of lack of education on world religions like Sikhi - Explain the discrimination felt by young Sikhs in school and institutional settings - Determine how much of an impact Sikhi in schools would be on American society - 	
Required Prior Knowledge:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students should come with whatever background they have from past lectures 	Materials Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - <i>W. Klein. Responding to Bullying: Language Socialization and Religious Identification in Classes for Sikh Youth</i> - <i>Sikh Coalition. Including Sikhism in State Standards</i>
Information Provided:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data and statistics on the magnitude of bullying and discrimination towards Sikh children - Sikh boys are more likely to face bullying due to their turbans - The Sikh Coalition reported that more than half of Sikh children attending school in the U.S are subject to bullying - Lack of Sikhi taught in school and classes offered in college - Impact of discrimination in school on Sikh identity - Compare the teaching of Christianity in schools compared to minority religions like Sikhi - Organizations that are working with state governments to include Sikhi in schools tankards - Sikh Coalition 	
Areas for Discussion/Review:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss factors that affect why Sikhs are discriminated against - Discuss how students are supposed to react to constant hate when told not to have physical altercations - What can school administrators do to improve experience for students - Discuss the impact having Sikhi apart of school standards could have on American society - Can ignorance breed animosity? 	
Learning Enrichment or Enhancements:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	
Assessment:	

- Ask students to reflect on the discussion questions and write about them to be turned in

Week 14: Future Implications

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the goal of Sikh organizations to strive to introduce to the world the progressive ethics of Sikhs.
- Contribute Sikh perspective to issues of common human concern.
- Understand the importance of providing the quality resources for the academic and artistic study of Sikhism
- Determine the future implications of Sikh in America

Required Prior Knowledge:

- Students should come with whatever background they have from past lectures

Materials Needed:

- Articles
- *P. Kurein. Shifting U.S. Racial and Ethnic Identities and Sikh American Activism*
- *A. Ocheing. Why American Sikhs Think They Need A Publicity Campaign*

Information Provided:

- Research done with those in the Sikh community has shown that advocacy and education would be the best way to bring attention to Sikhs in America
- Advocacy groups include
 - SALDEF
 - Sikh Coalition
 - National Sikh Youth Federation
 - The Sikh Foundation
- The importance of having advocacy groups to educate the public
- Religious and cultural trends for the Sikh community
-

- Areas for Discussion/Review:

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The movement of Sikhs and South Asians to countries like the United States has opened doors to a new set of opportunities for the communities. Sikhs have been trying to build a religious presence like that in the Punjab. Based on data it can be concluded that Sikhs are a minority group that are often overlooked. It appears that the majority of Americans are improperly educated about their Sikh peers. Racialization of religion has caused groups like Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims to be discriminated against. The poor treatment of Muslims is particularly problematic in a post-9-11 world and such discrimination is shared with a much larger effort by the Sikh community in the United States. Islamophobia has led to further social issues that other than hate crimes, like microaggressions. The intersection of religion, race, and culture can all explain why minority groups like Sikhs are faced with hate.

This research analysis has shown that the merging of Muslims/Islam with Sikhs/Sikhism in America helps perpetuate the stereotypical notion that Sikhs are Muslims or that anyone who wears a turban and has a beard is an extremist. Organizations like SALDEF, the Sikh Coalition, the National Sikh Youth Federation, and The Sikh Foundation have started to develop initiatives or campaigns for the Sikh community. These programs are a way for Sikhs to contribute perspective to issues of common human concern. Surveys conducted by these organizations suggest that these stereotypes can be challenged, and perspectives can be changed. Thus, individuals can move beyond negative perceptions like “fear” and “hate” into more positive ones like “admiration” and “friendliness”.

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