

# UNDERSTANDING SHARIA

*knowing what it is, and what it is not*



With the recent rise of Islamophobia in the U.S., and the increase in anti-Sharia legislation spreading across our nation, there has been a campaign of misinformation that has permeated into our government, media, and public discourse with regards to Islam & Sharia. This flier was created to help combat the most common misconceptions surrounding Islam that were created in Oklahoma during the 2010 elections in an attempt to ban Sharia through a ballot initiative.

## SHARIA IS NOT...

### 1. Sharia is NOT a book of laws & codes

- Sharia literally means “path”, and it is a set of INTERPRETATIONS that are dynamic and intended to ACCOMMODATE the time, place, and laws (in our case the US Constitution) of a particular community. Thus Sharia is interpreted differently based on it’s surroundings.

### 2. Sharia is NOT a form of government for American Muslims

- Sharia governs the religious practice of Muslims, however explicitly mandates Muslims to RESPECT THE LAW OF THE LAND they live in. Thus Sharia acknowledges the need to abide by laws independent of Islam- not to overthrow or replace them.

### 3. Sharia does NOT conflict with the US Constitution

- The US Constitution does not allow for any foreign or religious law to conflict with and replace the law of the land. It is literally impossible for Sharia to be used in American courts in conflict to our own laws.

### 4. Sharia is NOT a code of punishments for crimes

- In accordance to the above, criminal punishments are not a part of Sharia for American Muslims because our government enforces criminal laws. American Muslims are mandated to respect the criminal system of the US, not to create their own.

### 5. Sharia is NOT defined by any foreign government or body

- Islamic law enforced by the Saudi Kingdom, the Supreme Council of Iran, or the Taliban is nothing more than a law used to rule over a people. These governments are not regarded as authorities in Islam, and American Muslims do not refer to them, or any foreign government, to interpret Sharia.



protestors in New York were handed signs of Sharia written in what appears to be blood

## SOURCES:

*What is Sharia, and Why Does It Matter?*

Professor Sherman Jackson

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sherman-a-jackson/what-is-shariah-and-why-d\\_b\\_710976.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sherman-a-jackson/what-is-shariah-and-why-d_b_710976.html)

*Who's Afraid of Sharia?*

Sumbal Ali-Karamali

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sumbul-alikaramali/whos-afraid-of-shariah\\_b\\_701331.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sumbul-alikaramali/whos-afraid-of-shariah_b_701331.html)

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**CAIR**  
OKLAHOMA



**OUTLAWING SHARIA LAW**  
OKLAHOMA PUSHES BILL TO BAN ISLAMIC PRACTICE  
OF SUPPLY SHIPS TWO WKS. AT MIE

FOX News discusses push to  
"ban Islamic practice"

## SOURCES:

*What Sharia Law Actually Means*

Justin Elliot & Abed Awad

<http://www.salon.com/>

[2011/02/26/sharia\\_the\\_real\\_story/](http://www.salon.com/2011/02/26/sharia_the_real_story/)

*Islamic Law in American Courts*

Abed Awad & Noura Jebara

<http://islamiclawinamerica.com/>

## SHARIA IS...

### 1. Sharia is a dynamic set of interpretations on how to practice faith

- Nearly 100% of Islamic principles outlined in Sharia change to accommodate various circumstances of a community in order to achieve one main goal- The Goal of Sharia is to bring benefit to society.

### 2. Sharia is compliant and consistent with the US Constitution

- Sharia mandates Muslims to respect the law of the land in which they live. From the beginning of Islam, to today, Islamic principles were derived within the context of pre- & co-existing legal codes.

### 3. Sharia is a guidance for Muslims in many private matters

- Sharia principles can be used to guide Muslims in marriage contracts, business contracts, child custody agreements, dietary customs, non-interest-based financial agreements, wills and testaments, charitable giving, and more.

### 4. Sharia has historically been allowed & considered in American courts

- Sharia can be considered and enforced by US courts the same way other religious laws, or foreign laws can be applied- that is in a manner consistent with public policy. The situations mentioned in #3 above are examples of matters the courts will consider and enforce.

### 5. Sharia is protected by the 1st Amendment and any attempt to restrict it is unconstitutional

- If your state legislature is considering a ban on Sharia and other foreign or religious laws, contact your local CAIR office to help defend the Constitution

CAIR-OK is a local chapter of the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, & build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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