The Use of Fondren Resource in Muslim Women Research Project

This research project being submitted for consideration was conducted in Dr. Craig Considine’s SOCI 364 Class: Muslims in American Society. Five group members—Allison Yelvington, Alec Tobin, Sierra Cowan, Anu Dwarumpudi, and Thresa-Skeslien Jenkins pursued the research question, "What does it mean for Muslim Women to Cover in America?" This question was explored through a methodology of online and text based research paired with the collection of narratives of Muslim women through one-on-one interviews. The goal was to identify common experiences across Muslim Women related to covering, and share that data with a wider audience through a website, Facebook page, and in class Powerpoint presentation. Library resources were incredibly helpful in the research stages of this project.

The initial stage of research was online and text based, as we looked into the background of topics related to our research question. We investigated topics such as covering and religion, covering and culture, agency and oppression, covering and hate crimes, and covering in the workplace and academia. We used Fondren Library’s resources specifically through the form of the online databases to do this work. Additionally, in the course of research team member Allison Yelvington found a very valuable book for her research on covering in academia. The book “Muslim American Woman on Campus” by Dr. Shabana Mir is the first ethnography ever done on Muslim American students, and Allison was able to check it out (and recheck it) from Fondren library. The information from this ethnography was very useful for the background research.

Additionally, Fondren library was useful in the next stage of our research through one on one interviews. In order to properly study the experiences of Muslim women, it was crucial that we could record their thoughts with a device that kept their voice clear and was easy to upload. As such, we checked out an audio recorder from the digital media commons. Having access to
a Zoom H2N Audio Recorder meant that we had a high quality sound with every recording, regardless of the interview location. Being able to conduct over half of our interviews with these recorders ensured the highest quality and meant that we could have accurate transcriptions because we didn't lose words to audio quality. Also, during our presentation of our research project in class, we were able to play high quality audio clips in class. This was incredibly useful for generating discussion. Being able to actually hear the voices of the women we interviewed was also useful for generating empathy and greater understanding for the class listening to our presentation.

As a whole our research project elevated the voices of Muslim Women in the Houston area and collected valuable data about their experiences. It would not have been possible without Fondren Library. The library provided not only access to resources such as online databases and books, but also technology resources and a physical place to work in.