

# Module 5. Freedom of Speech

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## *Note to Educators*

The Teaching Beyond September 11th curriculum project seeks to capture the events of the two decades (2001-2021) following 9/11 as a means for youth to understand the post-9/11 global order. Developed by a team of educators from the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with inter-/national scholars, practitioners, and community activist leaders, each stand-alone module is grounded in at least one of six identified themes and is anchored in an event in a particular year following 9/11. The curriculum does not need to be taught sequentially. Lessons within a module may be taught sequentially or individually unless specified.

The curriculum is ideal for advanced high school and early college students. Educators are encouraged to adapt lessons to meet the needs of their classroom and student academic level. The curriculum framework at the end of this document highlights guiding questions for students to grapple with and enduring understandings that we wish for students to glean from these lessons.

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## Module 5: Freedom of Speech

Primary Theme: **Media and Representation**

Secondary Theme: **Public Opinion, Perception, & Anti-Muslim Sentiment**

Year in focus: **2005, 2015**

Grades: **11 and 12 and freshman college**

Entry points (subject area): **Global History, World History, Gov't and Politics, Art**

### Module Context

2005 marked the 4th year since the US began the War on Terror, with wars raging in Afghanistan and Iraq creating a flow of refugees, some of whom made their way to Europe. For a small country like Denmark, the arrival of refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan in the early 2000s - though only in the low thousands - increased feelings of resentment and animosity towards the refugees and many immigrants from Muslim majority countries. Questions of “assimilation” into Denmark were at the forefront of people’s minds, with accusations against the growing Muslim population for not integrating into Danish society. Thus, one Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, decided to conduct an “experiment” to challenge what they saw as self-censorship among the Muslim population by printing caricatures of Prophet Muhammad, considered to be the last Prophet by many Muslims across the world and hence an important religious figure. Given that pictorial representation of any Prophet is forbidden in Islam, these caricatures were met with protests by Muslims in Denmark, and which then spread across the world. Though they were initially peaceful, they eventually turned violent, leading to an estimated 200 deaths globally. In the name of “solidarity”, several European media outlets republished the cartoons while the US media did not. One of the European magazines to republish the cartoons was *Charlie Hebdo*, a satirical French magazine that often prints controversial images. In 2011, they printed new, disparaging satirical images of the Prophet Muhammad. In 2015, two gunmen entered the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, killing a dozen staff members leading many around the world to stand in solidarity with the magazine.

### Module Goal

Students will be able to use their independent learning to identify Islamophobic sentiment under the banner of free speech. Specifically, they will be able to understand that the line between free speech and hate speech is blurred when it comes to Muslims and Islam. Students will be able to identify how the Danish Cartoon Controversy (and later *Charlie Hebdo* Controversy) was portrayed in a socio-political and historical vacuum.

### Module Overview

This module provides students with an understanding of various perspectives on freedom of speech. Over the course of two (stand-alone) lessons, students will use articles and videos to explore the various nuances with regards to the Danish cartoon controversy of 2005 and the role the media played in how the controversy was presented to the public - for example, focusing more on Muslims’ reactions and less

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on the provoking nature of the cartoons. Throughout the lesson, students will assess the role of journalists and state officials in debating and upholding Western values, and where Muslims are placed in relation to these values –including Muslims in and from “the West”.

### **Lesson 1 – The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Anti-Muslim Racism or Freedom of Speech?**

In this lesson, students will learn about the Danish Cartoon Controversy of 2005 as well as the Charlie Hebdo shootings and controversy of 2015. The Danish Cartoon Controversy arose after Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons that depicted satirical images of the Prophet Muhammad under the heading “The Face of Muhammad”. As depictions of religious figures is forbidden in Islam, Muslims across the world took great offense to the cartoons, some of which depicted the Prophet Muhammad in a very negative light. While these protests started off peacefully and called for an apology from the publishers, the editors of Jyllands-Posten and the Danish Prime Minister at the time, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, refused to withdraw the cartoons or issue an apology, arguing that these cartoons fell under freedom of speech, which does not exclude critiquing of religion. A decade later, the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, published a new set of offensive images of the Prophet Muhammad. Two gunmen entered their offices and shot 9 members of staff (and another three people) to “avenge the Prophet.” While understanding there is never a justification of violence, students will examine the relation between both incidents to debate to discuss the nuances of freedom of speech.

### **Lesson 2 – The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Role of the Media**

In this two-part lesson, students will learn (more) about the Danish Cartoon Controversy. This lesson builds on lesson one (though it can be used stand-alone as well). Students will explore freedom of speech arguments that arose during (and after) the Danish cartoons controversy. Students will interrogate arguments for and against printing the cartoons as a way to understand what constitutes free speech versus hate speech. Specifically, this lesson will examine the media’s role in shaping the overall narrative about the controversy. Students will interrogate the way in which the media coverage presented certain values as more important than the fact that the cartoons were offensive and racist, resulting in a particular framing of the controversy.

### **Curriculum Connections**

Module 7. Understanding Islamophobia

Module 14. Islamophobia in Global Context

Module 19. Challenging Muslim Representation in Popular Culture

# Lesson 1. The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Anti-Muslim Racism or Freedom of Speech?

## *Overview, Background Resources and Materials Needed*

In this lesson, students will learn about the Danish Cartoon Controversy of 2005 as well as the Charlie Hebdo shootings and controversy of 2015. The Danish Cartoon Controversy arose after Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons that depicted satirical images of the Prophet Muhammad under the heading “The Face of Muhammad”. As depictions of religious figures is forbidden in Islam, Muslims across the world took great offense to the cartoons, some of which depicted the Prophet Muhammad in a very negative light. While these protests started off peacefully and called for an apology from the publishers, the editors of Jyllands-Posten and the Danish Prime Minister at the time, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, refused to withdraw the cartoons or issue an apology, arguing that these cartoons fell under freedom of speech, which does not exclude critiquing of religion. A decade later, the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, published a new set of offensive images of the Prophet Muhammad. Two gunmen entered their offices and shot 9 members of staff (and another three people) to “avenge the Prophet.” While understanding there is never a justification of violence, students will examine the relation between both incidents to debate to discuss the nuances of freedom of speech.

### **Background reading for educators before Lesson 1**

It would be beneficial for educators to review the following resources. These resources may also be used as a supplementary reference list for students as per the educator’s discretion.

1. Educator background resource on the Danish Cartoon and *Charlie Hebdo* controversies. (provided in supplementary materials)
2. Were Charlie Hebdo cartoons only about free speech? Maybe not.  
<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2015/0118/Were-Charlie-Hebdo-cartoons-only-about-free-speech-Maybe-not>
3. UN human rights experts call for dialogue in wake of cartoon controversy.  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2006/02/168672-un-human-rights-experts-call-dialogue-wake-cartoon-controversy>
4. Hervik, P. (2012). The Danish Muhammad Cartoon Conflict. Malmö University for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM). Current Themes in IMER Research No. 13. Chapter 2 is recommended: A STRUGGLE OF NEWS AND VIEWS: ENTRY-POINTS TO JYLLANDS-POSTEN’S CARTOON STORY <https://mau.diva-portal.org/smash/resultList.jsf?aq=%5B%5B%7B%22localid%22%3D14094%7D%5D%5D&dswid=-7082>

## Key Terms in Lesson 1

- **Aniconism:** Simply defined as the opposition to the use of idols and images. When applied to religion, it is the opposition to the use of icons or visual images to depict living creatures or religious figures. Such opposition is particularly relevant to the Jewish, Islamic, and Byzantine artistic traditions.
- **Anti-Muslim racism:** An exaggerated bias, hatred, or fear of Islam as a religion and those who practice Islam, Muslims. Islamophobia extends to other communities and individuals who are perceived to be Muslim as well. Also known as Islamophobia.
- **Freedom of speech (UN definition):** According to the United Nations, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- **Freedom of speech (US definition):** Under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, Americans are guaranteed the right to express views, spoken or written, without fear of discrimination or retaliation from the government.
- **Satire:** A way to make fun of or ridicule through an exaggerated form of expression, either literary or graphic. Often used in the context of contemporary politics, satire can also be a form of discrimination or a microaggression against a group of people. As such, many argue that satire can sometimes be a form of hate speech.
- **Self-censorship:** The act of censoring oneself out of fear or out of deference (respect) to the preference of others.
- **Stereotype:** A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
- **Welfare State:** A system whereby the government plays a key role in the economic and social well-being of its citizens, especially those in financial or social need, by means of grants, pensions, and other benefits.

## Materials Needed for Lesson 1

1. Lesson 1 Slide Deck
2. **Agree** and **Disagree** signs and tape to hang up on two sides of the classroom
3. *BBC's dilemma over cartoons* (link to be shared as pre-reading homework; can also be printed out)  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/newswatch/ukfs/hi/newsid\\_4670000/newsid\\_4678100/4678186.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/newswatch/ukfs/hi/newsid_4670000/newsid_4678100/4678186.stm)
4. Lesson 1 Handout 1: **Paul Farhi Interview Discussion Questions (Graphic Organizer)** (1 per student)
5. Lesson 1 Handout 2: **Transcript of Paul Farhi interview** (1 per student)
6. Interview with Paul Farhi of *The Washington Post* from the Danish national broadcasting station (DR) to be projected to the class. <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/udland/washington-post-viser-ikke-muhammed-tegninger-det-er-unoedigt-kraenkende>

# Lesson 1. The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Anti-Muslim Racism or Freedom of Speech?

## *Learning Plan*

### **Pre-Class Reading**

Assign the following articles to students to read before class. Ask them to jot down the salient points to be shared in class.

1. BBC News (2006). **BBC's Dilemma Over Cartoons:**  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/newswatch/ukfs/hi/newsid\\_4670000/newsid\\_4678100/4678186.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/newswatch/ukfs/hi/newsid_4670000/newsid_4678100/4678186.stm)
2. The Guardian (Sept, 2020) **Charlie Hebdo reprints cartoons of prophet ahead of terror trial**  
<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/sep/01/charlie-hebdo-reprints-muhammad-cartoons-prophet-terror-trial>

### **Opening – 5 minutes**

Open the lesson by asking the students what they know about the country of Denmark. Allow students to give their associations, if any.

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slides 2-4]: If no associations come up, show students Lesson 1 slides that introduce the country of Denmark.

### **Key concepts overview – 10 minutes**

Follow up by asking if they have heard about the Muhammad/Danish Cartoon Controversy (also known as the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad Cartoons Controversy).

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 5]: Introduce the controversy by reading out (or asking for a volunteer) to read overview text written by Human Rights Watch (HRW).

*On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published twelve cartoon depictions of the Prophet Mohammed that its editors said they solicited as part of an experiment to overcome what they perceived as self-censorship reflected in the reluctance of illustrators to depict the Prophet. The cartoons were highly offensive to Muslims because Islam is understood to prohibit graphic depictions of the Prophet and because most of the depictions were extremely derogatory, for example, by associating him, and by implication all Muslims, with terrorism.*

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 6] The paragraph above can be used to introduce the following concepts to the class: **self-censorship**, **satire**, **aniconism**, **stereotypes**, **hate speech**, and **freedom of speech**. While showing the definitions on the slide, explain:

- The *reluctance of illustrators to depict the Prophet* in visual form is viewed by the editors as **self-censorship**. Self-censorship is the act of censoring oneself out of fear but self-censorship can also be out of deference (respect) to the preference of others.
- The *experiment* that the editors refer to is the use of **satire** to depict the Prophet as a way to challenge the idea of self-censorship. **Satire** is a way to make fun of or ridicule through an exaggerated form of expression, in this case graphic expression. Satire can also be a form of discrimination or a microaggression against a group of people as was the case in these cartoons, which were very derogatory representations of the Prophet.
- The cartoons of the Prophet were very offensive to Muslims given that in Islam the visual depiction of any religious figure or prophet is forbidden, hence even benign representations of the Prophet Muhammad would be upsetting. *Prohibiting graphic depictions* of religious figures is known as **aniconism**.
- In this particular case, the images were also very derogatory and perpetuated **stereotypes** of Muslims, such as the Muslim-as-terrorist stereotype that had been in circulation for a long time but heightened after 9/11. A **stereotype** is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
- As such, some consider these cartoons a form of **hate speech**. Hate speech covers many forms of expressions which advocate, incite, promote, or justify hatred, violence, and discrimination against a person or group of persons for a variety of reasons.
- Ultimately, the editors argued this was a matter of **freedom of speech**, which the UN defines as the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Segue to the next activity by explaining that now that students have an understanding of the controversy and key terms, they will be discussing whether these cartoons should have been published.

### Application – 25 minutes

Invite students to share what they identified as the main points in the BBC article, “BBC’s dilemma over cartoons” and *The Guardian* article, “Charlie Hebdo reprints cartoons of prophet ahead of terror trial”, which they read in preparation for the lesson. Given students have read this in advance, this should go fairly quickly (approx 5 mins).

#### *Anticipated answers for BBC article:*

- Media executives faced a dilemma of whether they should print the cartoons and risk offending their Muslim audience or jeopardize allowing the audience to make the decision themselves.
- Audience members complained that they could not make an informed decision about the cartoons without seeing them, with some arguing that it was a double standard for the BBC to not show the cartoons, given that it did broadcast *Jerry Springer: The Opera*.
- BBC decided not to use still images focusing on the cartoons, but instead showed moving images to give context while not offending their audience.



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- Peter Horrocks, editor of TV news, did not agree with the comparison between *Jerry Springer: The Opera* and the cartoons, as the BBC had commissioned the musical work.
- Mr. Horrocks denied accusations of censorship, as the BBC had gone further than the rest of the UK press but had decided to not go any further, keeping their Muslim viewers in mind.
- Steve Herrmann, editor of BBC News Interactive, argued that they took the viewers' cultural sensitivity into consideration. However, the BBC described the cartoons in detail and linked to *Jyllands-Posten's* website, so viewers who chose to see the cartoons could do so.
- Mr. Herrmann emphasized the responsibility of reporting on a story without offending the audience, as visuals could be quickly absorbed without taking the context into consideration.

### *Anticipated answers for The Guardian article:*

- The *Charlie Hebdo* attacks occurred in January 2015 when two brothers went on the rampage at the *Charlie Hebdo* Paris offices, killing nine journalists (including some of France's most famous cartoonists), a maintenance worker and two police officers.
- The French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* republished the controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad to mark the start of a trial of suspected accomplices of terrorist gunmen who attacked its offices in January 2015.
- They also republished some of the cartoons from the Danish Cartoon Controversy of 2005.
- Its editorial team felt that now was the right time to republish the cartoons, saying it was "essential" as the trial opens.
- In response to the editor's decisions, French President Macron argued that freedom to blaspheme went hand in hand with the freedom of belief and that "Satire is not a discourse of hate".
- Countries like Pakistan criticized this move arguing that Pakistan condemned the decision to republish the cartoon, with the ministry of foreign affairs tweeting, "Such a deliberate act to offend the sentiments of billions of Muslims cannot be justified as an exercise in press freedom or freedom of expression. Such actions undermine the global aspirations for peaceful co-existence as well as social and inter-faith harmony".

Once it is clear that students understand both sets of controversies (see Educator Handout for more information on both), explain to students that they will be watching a 3-minute video and then will be answering some questions that will draw on both the video and readings they did for homework. Explain that the video brings together both cartoon controversies that occurred a decade apart. It features an interview with journalist Paul Farhi of *The Washington Post*. The video is from the Danish national broadcasting station (DR) and was aired a week after the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings in 2015.

Now, go over the questions the students will be answering after the video.

- 1) How does American journalist Paul Farhi define freedom of speech?
- 2) How did that definition differ in deciding to print the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons but not the Danish cartoons?
- 3) In what way do journalists **self-censor** or **edit** every day?

4) How do these two terms (self-censor & edit) differ from each other?

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 7] Next, play the video of the interview with journalist Paul Farhi of *The Washington Post* from the Danish national broadcasting station (DR)

<https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/udland/washington-post-viser-ikke-muhammed-tegninger-det-er-unoedigt-kraenkende>

After showing the video, students should be divided into smaller groups to answer the previously introduced questions using Lesson 1 Handout 1: Graphic Organizer and Lesson 1 Handout 2: Transcript of Paul Farhi interview.

*Educator note:* While students are engaging in group work, prepare for the upcoming activity by adding a large post-it or piece of paper on each end of the classroom to denote the end points of an agree/disagree continuum.

Following the group work, ask a representative of each group to present their responses to the questions. Other students should be encouraged to chime in if they feel additional points need to be raised.

While the students are presenting their answers, keep track of the answers on the board.

Following the above exercise, conclude by summarizing the points on the board for both the article and video and leading the students into a group exercise described below.

Anticipated student responses / Key takeaways re: Farhi on freedom of speech:

- Paul Farhi argues that freedom of speech allows you to do certain things, as well as not to do things. However, no one tells the newspaper, including government or religious groups, what should or should not be published.
- He states that there are a number of criteria that editors like himself base their decisions on. A key consideration is the sensitivity of the newspaper's viewers which is balanced with the value of the news.
  - *The Washington Post* decided, for example, to print the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoon, as they deemed the former cartoons not to be “deliberately insulting or provocative” compared to the Danish cartoons, adding that it is, overall, a subjective standpoint.

Anticipated student responses / Key takeaways re: Farhi on editing:

- Farhi places the cartoons in the same category with other sensitive imagery, such as accidents, nudity, and pornography, that newspapers edit out for the viewers. Farhi calls this editing, while the Danish journalist argues others might call it self-censorship.
- Farhi argues that editing content and images takes place by journalists every day on behalf of the viewers.

- Farhi discusses how in the US there is a respect for the diversity among the readership and for not doing things that might be insulting. There is also religious respect, pointing to the religious cultural difference between the US and Europe, where the US is more conservative.

The key point to highlight for students here is that **freedom of speech comes with responsibility and that editing and self-censorship must be understood in context**. In this case, the context of anti-Muslim sentiment is noteworthy (e.g. the Danish interviewer's framing of his questions - that by not printing the cartoons *The Washington Post* was "caving into the terrorists" - which points to the general anti-Muslim racism that all protestors or those opposing the printing of the cartoons were terrorists).

### Take a Stand Activity – 10 minutes

Direct students to visualize a line on the floor, marking that one end is "agree", and one end is "disagree".

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 8]. Present students with the question on the slide (see below) and ask them to **think independently as to whether they agree or disagree that there should be limitations to freedom of speech or if they are somewhere in-between**.

Read the question (also on slide):

- Taking the BBC's approach to the publication of the Danish cartoons, and the DR video's "for" and "against" arguments, should there be limitations on the visual publication of the Danish cartoons?

Direct students to silently place themselves between the two points. They may be able to switch positions later, but for now they should aim to choose one.

After the students have moved to their chosen places, ask each "point on the continuum" to talk together for two minutes about why they have selected that position.

*Note to educator:* You may have 4-5 "points" on the line since some people will be on either ends and others will be in various points between those two extreme positions - this is okay as it shows nuances in these positions.

After the intra-group discussion, invite a member of each point on the continuum to present their arguments or reasons for choosing their position that they have discussed amongst each other. It is important that no student is interrupted. Facilitate the discussion amongst the students, allowing students to switch positions as they talk and think through other arguments.

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Additional questions to spur further discussion (time permitting):

- What is the context in which the Danish Cartoon Controversy took place? Does this context matter?

*Anticipated answers:*

- The general anti-Muslim (Islamophobic) rhetoric that continues to plague Europe, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that were raging at the time and in which Denmark was also involved.
- A consequence of these wars was the influx of refugees from these Muslim majority countries to Denmark (and other parts of Europe).
- How do you think *Jyllands-Posten* overlooked or incited anti-Muslim (Islamophobic) sentiment?

*Anticipated answers:*

- Cartoons were deliberately offensive and created to provoke
- Lack of apology
- See context response above
- How do you draw the line on what journalists and news publications should or should not be allowed to edit?

*Anticipated answers:*

- Journalists should take into consideration their readership
- Must understand that freedom of speech comes with responsibility.

### Debrief – 5 minutes

Briefly reflect on the Take a Stand activity with the students.

- Discuss how **being physically distant and standing on opposite ends of the line can stimulate a feeling of polarization, especially if the “agree” and “disagree” arguments are not polar opposites**. For example, one might agree that reporting on the cartoons should be done, but in ways that take the targeted community into consideration. One way might be to not print the cartoons in focus; another might be by linking the original cartoons for viewers to access if curious.
- It is also important to **highlight the nuances that exist in the definition of “freedom of speech”**. While freedom of speech is a granted freedom, there is often a responsibility to not stereotype (for example, connect religious figures to terrorism) so as not to further stigmatize a group in society, in which case **it can become hate speech**.
- Further, **if one practices their freedom of speech, they must also expect that another group might wish to practice the freedom to protest**. Remind students that **the protests were peaceful for over a month and called for an apology** from the *Jyllands-Posten* editor, which he refused to do for four months (by which time, the protests got violent and Danish goods had been boycotted).
- Finally, highlight that **freedom of speech does not mean a platform should be given for those ideas**. It is possible to defend the right to speech - even racist speech - without promoting or sponsoring the content of that speech.

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In closing, ask students to complete a 3-2-1 exit ticket (can be assigned as homework using an online form, such as MS forms or google forms).

**Three** things they've learned from today's class

**Two** questions they still have or things they're confused about

**One** thing that surprised them about today's class (optional)

Note to educator: Be sure to clarify any misconceptions that come up in the exit tickets in the next class meeting.

# Lesson 1. The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Anti-Muslim Racism or Freedom of Speech?

*Student Handouts and Supplementary Teaching Materials*

1. Lesson 1 Slide Deck Preview [Please download separate slide deck file]
2. Lesson 1 Handout 1: **Paul Farhi Interview Discussion Questions** (Graphic Organizer)
3. Lesson 1 Handout 2: **Transcript of Paul Farhi interview**
4. Lesson 1 **Educator Resource: Introductory text to the Danish Cartoon and *Charlie Hebdo* controversies.**

## Lesson 1 Slide Deck Preview (9 slides)

**The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Anti-Muslim Racism or Freedom of Speech?**

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Denmark is a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe, consisting of several islands referred to as the Danish archipelago

A part of the European Union, it is surrounded by the Baltic and North Sea, with Germany, Norway and Sweden as neighboring countries

Greenland and the Faroe Islands are part of the Danish commonwealth



General population of Denmark: 5.5 million people

Approximately 300,000 are Muslim (18% of total population)



The country is governed by a constitutional monarchy, in which the head of the government is the Prime Minister

Denmark is generally known for its comprehensive welfare system



**The Danish Cartoon Controversy:**  
Background from Human Rights Watch

“(New York, February 15, 2006) –On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoon depictions of the Prophet Mohammed that its editors said they solicited as part of an experiment to overcome what they perceived as self-censorship reflected in the reluctance of illustrators to depict the Prophet. The cartoons were highly offensive to Muslims because Islam is understood to prohibit graphic depictions of the Prophet and because most of the depictions were extremely derogatory, for example, by associating him, and by implication all Muslims, with terrorism.”

Source: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/02/15/questions-and-answers-danish-cartoons-and-freedom-expression/when-speech-offends#>

**The Danish Cartoon Controversy:**  
Key terms

- **Self-censorship** is the act of censoring oneself out of fear, but self-censorship can also be out of deference (respect) to the preference of others.
- **Satire** is a way to make fun of or ridicule through an exaggerated form of expression, in this case graphic expression. Satire can also be a form of discrimination or a microaggression against a group of people.
- **Aniconism** is the prohibiting of graphic depictions of religious figures.
- A **stereotype** is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
- **Hate speech** covers many forms of expressions which advocate, incite, promote or justify hatred, violence and discrimination against a person or group of persons for a variety of reasons.
- **Freedom of speech** is defined by the UN as the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

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Interview with journalist Paul Farhi of *The Washington Post* from the Danish national broadcasting station (DR), during the *Charlie Hebdo* controversy in 2015.

<https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/udland/washington-post-viser-ikke-muhammed-tegninger-det-er-unoedigt-kraenkende>

**Activity:**  
**Take a Stand**

**Question:**

Taking the BBC's approach to the publication of the Danish cartoons, and the DR video's "for" and "against" arguments: **Should there be limitations on the visual publication of the Danish cartoons?**

**YES**  **NO**

**3-2-1**  
**Exit Ticket**

**3** things you've learned from today's class

**2** questions you still have or things you're confused about

**1** thing that surprised you about today's class



## Paul Farhi Interview Discussion Questions

Directions: After watching the interview with Paul Farhi of *The Washington Post*, answer the following questions with your group.

<b>1. How does American journalist Paul Farhi define freedom of speech?</b>	
<b>2. How did that definition differ in deciding to print the <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> cartoons but not the Danish cartoons?</b>	
<b><i>Charlie Hebdo</i> cartoons</b>	<b>Danish cartoons</b>
<b>3. In what ways do journalists self-censor or edit every day?</b>	
<b>4. How do these two terms (self-censor &amp; edit) differ from each other?</b>	

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## Paul Farhi Interview Transcript

*Transcript of interview with Paul Farhi (Washington Post editor) on Danish national broadcasting station (DR) about the Charlie Hebdo (2015) and Danish Cartoon controversies (2010). Recorded: 14 January, 2015.*

**Interview Context:** While DR News and other Danish and European media chose to show the cartoon of Prophet Muhammad on the front page of *Charlie Hebdo*, major American media outlets, such as *The New York Times* and CNN chose not to show it. *The Washington Post* (WaPo) only showed a small picture of the *Charlie Hebdo* cover on the internet edition of the American newspaper. Further, the US media never showed a single one of *Jyllands-Posten*'s 12 Muhammad cartoons from 2005.

**Paul Farhi (WaPo):** I think there's a long tradition in American journalism of not insulting large groups of our readership. And I think there's been a general sense for quite a while, since the Danish cartoons in 2005, that we weren't going to show these out of respect for Muslim readers and people in our community.

**Interviewer (DV):** But, but there will be people who say this is a sort of self-censorship and that we are caving into the terrorists. We, when we don't do that, when we don't show what the dispute is all about?

**Paul Farhi:** Well, you can call it self-censorship. I think we would call it editing. We make these kinds of decisions every single day about other less hot button issues. For instance, we don't show the bodies of American soldiers killed in war. We don't show traffic accidents. We don't show nudity, we don't show pornography. So in some sense, this fits into the same kind of topic as well,

**Interviewer:** But there will be people who say, why don't we let the readers judge when there is a controversy like, like we see right now about whether this is insulting or not.

**Paul Farhi:** We make the judgments for our readers every single day by the photos we select, by the stories we select, by the way we write our stories. You know, obviously readers are free to get information anywhere they can, they don't have to come to us. But we are the proxy for our readers. And we are the ones who edit the newspaper for their consumption.

**Interviewer:** Why, why do you think there is sort of a, a more reluctant sense in America about showing these things when you compare it to, for instance, Europe?

**Paul Farhi:** I think there's a long tradition, journalistically, about the plurality of our readership, about the diversity of our readership. We've never really been in the business of doing things that might be gratuitously insulting. I think there is a religious respect here, a more conservative religious culture here than there is in Europe. And I think that kind of guides our decisions. It's obviously quite a cultural difference between us and Europe and goes back a very long way.

**Interviewer:** But do you not understand some of the issues that, you know, our, as it is you know, some people say right now this is about the right to free speech. Don't you understand that battle as well?

**Paul Farhi:** Of course we do. We also have a long tradition of free speech in America. But free speech gives us the right not to do things as well as to do things. It - no one tells us what we can and cannot do. We make the decisions based on a number of factors, including as I said how our readers will receive the kind of information we're putting out. But the government doesn't tell us, religious groups don't tell us, we get feedback all the time and we're trying to be respectful for everyone. Meanwhile, by balancing that against the news value of what's available - and in the case of the latest *Charlie Hebdo* cartoon, we did decide to run that. The decision was made here at the Post that this was not a deliberately insulting or provocative cartoon, and that we were going to run this one, whereas we decided not to run the previous ones. Now that's subjective there. These decisions are all subjective, but that was the thinking behind it.

## Educator Resource: Background information on the Danish Cartoon and *Charlie Hebdo* controversies:

In September 2005, Ritzau, a Danish news agency, published an article titled “Danish artists afraid to critique Islam”, arguing that Danish cartoonists refused to draw the Prophet Muhammad for a children’s book and are afraid to express themselves. As a response, **a Danish newspaper by the name of *Jyllands-Posten* asked the cartoon union whether the members would draw the Prophet Muhammad, as the newspaper argued its stance on freedom of speech.**

It was in late September 2005 when 12 Danish cartoonists’ drawings were published in *Jyllands-Posten*, and thus marked the beginning of the Danish Cartoon Controversy. The most well-known cartoon, drawn by cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, was a depiction of the Prophet Muhammed with a sizzling bomb for a turban on his head. While the majority of the cartoons implicitly related Islam’s main religious figure to terrorism, a few mocked *Jyllands-Posten* for being reactionary. **Leaders of mosques in Denmark and Muslim majority countries requested Denmark to withdraw the cartoons and apologize to Muslims.** (It is worth noting that just three years prior, *Jyllands-Posten* [refused to print satirical pictures of Jesus Christ](#) arguing that their readers might not appreciate them and that they “might cause an outrage”).

Meanwhile, the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen argued that the cartoons were an expression of freedom of speech, which also includes being critical of religion. **Rasmussen had also refused to meet with 11 ambassadors from Muslim majority countries**, arguing, “That is something of principle. I do not want that, because it is so self-evidently clear what Danish society is based on in terms of principles, that there is no background for holding a meeting”.

**The cartoons had significant economic and diplomatic consequences.** In the beginning of 2006 the boycott of Danish products continued to increase, heavily affecting Danish companies like LEGO and the dairy company Arla. Several Muslim majority countries decided to close down their Danish embassies, as no apology for the cartoons had been given. Several demonstrations and unlawful attacks against Danish embassies around the world took place. As a response, *Jyllands-Posten* apologized in both Danish and Arab majority news for having stepped on Muslim’s feelings, yet stood by its decision to publish the cartoons.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen followed *Jyllands-Posten*’s announcement with his own announcement, arguing that he would personally not draw Jesus or Muhammad, but that the Danish government is vigilant about freedom of speech and would therefore neither apologize nor get involved in the publication of the drawings. However, Rasmussen’s announcement, which seemed to acknowledge the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue, was at odds with his earlier justification for refusing to meet with the ambassadors, when he dismissed the controversy as something that did not even warrant a meeting.

The Danish high court rejected a case by 27 Muslim organizations against *Jylland-Posten* for blasphemy, receiving praise from the EU’s Minister of Justice, who argued that this showcased how a democracy

functions. However, **the same case was sent to the [United Nations Human Rights commission, resulting in a report by the UN Special Rapporteurs](#) who concluded that the Danish government had not upheld international law with regards to race discrimination.** Independent United Nations Human Rights experts expressed the **importance of freedom of speech, which fosters an environment for debate and dialogue. However, they found that the Danish cartoons were using stereotypes that were not conducive for dialogue, while they also condemned the unlawful violence that erupted on account of the cartoons.**

To show solidarity with Denmark and affirm a stance on Freedom of Speech, several European magazines decided to re-print the Danish cartoons, including the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. ***Charlie Hebdo* is a magazine that is known for depicting religious figures and politicians in satirical form. It has often been accused of publishing content considered racist.**

Following the Danish cartoon controversy of 2005, *Charlie Hebdo* reprinted the cartoons in 2006 in solidarity. Then, in 2011, it printed new disparaging satirical images of the Prophet Muhammad. In 2015, two gunmen entered the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, killing a dozen people, including 9 members of the *Charlie Hebdo* staff, claiming to “avenge the Prophet”. Several rallies took place under the slogan “*Je Suis Charlie*” to show solidarity with the magazine and with the people killed. **The President of the French Council for the Muslim Faith Mohammed Moussaoui argued that nothing could justify violence.**

In 2020, *Charlie Hebdo* reprinted the original Danish cartoons as well as the 2015 cartoons on the eve of a related court hearing.

To put into context the type of magazine *Charlie Hebdo* is, in March 2021, *Charlie Hebdo* published a cartoon of Queen Elizabeth II and her daughter-in-law, Meghan Markle (the Duchess of Sussex), which caused [outrage](#) the world over. The cartoon was printed following Oprah Winfrey’s interview with the young royal couple (Prince Harry and Meghan Markle). It depicted the British Queen kneeling on the neck of Meghan Markle invoking the death of George Floyd. **This time, in place of the slogan “*Je Suis Charlie*”, the paper received criticism as exemplified by these tweets, connecting back to the 2015 controversy:**



## Lesson 2. The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Role of the Media

### *Overview, Background Resources and Materials Needed*

In this two-part lesson, students will learn (more) about the Danish Cartoon Controversy (see module context). This lesson builds on lesson one (though it can be used stand-alone as well). Students will explore freedom of speech arguments that arose during (and after) the Danish Cartoon Controversy. Students will interrogate arguments for and against printing the cartoons as a way to understand what constitutes free speech versus hate speech. Specifically, this lesson will examine the media's role in shaping the overall narrative about the controversy. Students will interrogate the way in which the media coverage presented certain values as more important than the fact that the cartoons were offensive and racist, resulting in a particular framing of the controversy.

#### **Background reading for educators before Lesson 2:**

It would be beneficial for educators to review the following resources. These resources may also be used as a supplementary reference list for students as per the educator's discretion.

1. Caricatures of Muhammad: From Insult to Crisis by NPR  
<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/5181082>
2. UN human rights experts call for dialogue in wake of cartoon controversy by UN  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2006/02/168672-un-human-rights-experts-call-dialogue-wake-cartoon-controversy>
3. Freedom of by S.T.I.C.S - Sounds That Inspire Conscious Souls (Scandinavian music group)  
<https://genius.com/Stics-freedom-of-lyrics>

#### **Key Terms in Lesson 2:**

- **Aniconism:** Simply defined as the opposition to the use of idols and images. When applied to religion, it is the opposition to the use of icons or visual images to depict living creatures or religious figures. Such opposition is particularly relevant to the Jewish, Islamic, and Byzantine artistic traditions.
- **Anti-Muslim Racism:** An exaggerated bias, hatred, or fear of Islam as a religion and those who practice Islam, Muslims. Islamophobia extends to other communities and individuals who are perceived to be Muslim as well. Also known as Islamophobia.
- **Freedom of speech (UN definition):** According to the United Nations, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

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- **Freedom of Speech (US Definition):** Under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, Americans are guaranteed the right to express views, spoken or written, without fear of discrimination or retaliation from the government.
- **Hate speech:** Any form of discrimination towards an individual or group based on their faith, ethnicity, race, etc. Hate speech can take multiple forms including: verbal harassment, bullying and cyberbullying, vandalism.

### Materials Needed for Lesson 2

1. Lesson 2 Slide Deck
2. Article from *The Guardian*, “**Does the right to freedom of speech justify printing the Danish cartoons?**” <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2006/feb/04/mainsection.garyyounge>
3. Lesson 2 Handout 1: **Limits and Responsibilities of Freedom of Speech [Graphic Organizer]**



## Lesson 2. The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Role of the Media

### *Learning Plan*

*Note to educator:* If you have already introduced the Danish Cartoon Controversy to the students through Lesson 1, you may simply refresh students about the controversy and move straight to the key concepts review.

#### **Day 1**

##### **Opening – 5 minutes**

Open the lesson by asking the students what they know about the country of Denmark.

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slides 2-4]. Introduce Denmark to the class. Next, ask them if they have heard about the Muhammad/Danish Cartoon Controversy. It is unlikely that students have heard about this. Explain that you will be focusing on this controversy and that the lesson will contain language that addresses violence or violent language.

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 5] Explain the Danish Cartoon Controversy.

*On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published twelve cartoon depictions of the Prophet Mohammed that its editors said they solicited as part of an experiment to overcome what they perceived as self-censorship reflected in the reluctance of illustrators to depict the Prophet. The cartoons were highly offensive to Muslims because Islam is understood to prohibit graphic depictions of the Prophet and because most of the depictions were extremely derogatory, for example, by associating him, and by implication all Muslims, with terrorism. (Human Rights Watch)*

##### **Key concepts overview – 15 minutes**

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 6] The slide provides a screenshot of a Google News search for the issue during the years 2005-2006. (Note: Similar results show up in both a Danish and US context, however the articles differ in order).

*Educator note:* if you have more time, you may also try googling in class together with the students. Set the desired date range under the Tools tab in Google News.

**Ask students what they notice about the news article headlines. Instruct them to select key phrases or ideas from the slide and call them out as you write them on the board.**

Now ask: **What is given more weight in this general media coverage, and, as a result, what might one interpret about the controversy from the google search of the headlines?**

*Anticipated answers (or points to highlight for the students)*

- The reaction to the cartoons received more attention than the fact that the cartoons were offensive. For example:
  - A focus on the death toll as a result of the Danish cartoons
  - Consulate burning
  - The disruption of Spanish rituals [*Educator note*: the headline related to this is referencing the Festival of Moors in Spain, which celebrates the expulsion of Muslim Moors from Spain by burning effigies of Muslim and even Jewish figures]
- More concern about the Islamic or Muslim influence in the West
- The linking of “Islamic” anger arising from the cartoons to other world events
- Reprinting of cartoons to show solidarity with the Danish newspaper that printed the cartoons
- Little to no discussion of the weeks of peaceful protests and demands for an apology from the editors

Use the students’ responses that you have been writing on the board to frame the lesson.

Highlight that today’s lesson will focus on the general media portrayal of the Danish Cartoon Controversy and how the controversy’s general coverage was isolated from:

1. the general anti-Muslim (Islamophobic) rhetoric that continues to plague Europe, and
2. the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that were raging at the time and in which Denmark was also involved; a consequence of these wars was the influx of refugees from these Muslim majority countries to Denmark (and other parts of Europe).

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 7] Here, lesson concepts like Hate Speech, Free speech, and Anti-Muslim Racism can be introduced, so that students may start using these concepts in their upcoming discussion exercise.

- **Aniconism:** Simply defined as the opposition to the use of idols and images. When applied to religion, it is the opposition to the use of icons or visual images to depict living creatures or religious figures. Such opposition is particularly relevant to the Jewish, Islamic and Byzantine artistic traditions. **In Islam, the pictorial depiction of any Prophet is forbidden.**
- **Anti-Muslim Racism:** An exaggerated bias, hatred, or fear of Islam as religion and those who practice Islam, Muslims. Islamophobia extends to other communities and individuals who are perceived to be Muslim as well. Also known as Islamophobia. **Islamophobia has a long history in Europe.**
- **Freedom of speech (UN definition):** According to the United Nations, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

- **Hate speech:** Any form of discrimination towards an individual or group based on their faith, ethnicity, race, etc. **Satirical cartoons can be a form of hate speech.**

### **Application – 25 minutes**

[Lesson 2 Handout 1]. Divide the class into small groups and pass out the graphic organizer. Instruct all students to read *The Guardian* article, “Does the right to freedom of speech justify printing the Danish cartoons?”. Instruct half the group to focus on summarizing the “for (yes)” arguments by journalist Philip Hensher and the other half to focus on summarizing the “against (no)” arguments by sociology professor Gary Younge.

Instruct students that they have 20 minutes to read the part of the article assigned to them and answer the questions on the graphic organizer (see Lesson 2 Educator Resource 1: Guardian Article Suggested Answer Key):

1. What are the main arguments made by your respective expert regarding the printing of the Danish cartoons? Provide examples that the authors use to justify their arguments.
2. How does each author informally define freedom of speech?
3. How are Muslims positioned on each side of the argument?

### **Closing – 5 minutes**

Ask students if they have any questions and let them know that in tomorrow’s class, they will be presenting their perspective. If they have to do more work to do as a group, they should use these last few minutes to divide up the work.

## Day 2:

### **Opening – 5 minutes**

Before continuing on from yesterday’s class, tell the students that today's class requires dialogue-based skills, such as asking open questions, active listening, and mirroring.

- **Open questions:** Asking open ended questions to each other that do not result in a “yes” or “no” answer. For example: “What do you mean when you say..?”
- **Active listening:** Listening attentively to what is being said, and using non-verbal language to showcase your attentiveness. For example: keeping eye contact, and not looking elsewhere.
- **Mirroring:** Paraphrasing and acknowledging what the other person is saying.

### **Key Concepts – 15 minutes**

Allow students to regroup in their groups from the previous class in preparation to present on two perspectives on the Danish Cartoon Controversy. (5 minutes)

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Invite the groups representing **Hensher's point of view** to each present one point from their response. Instruct them to avoid repeating points and to add to, or build on, what others have already said.

Next invite the students representing **Gary Younge's perspective** and repeat as above. As students are reporting out, keep track of the "for" or "against" arguments on the board. Following the group discussion, end by summarizing the following points.

Key takeaways include:

- Both authors agreed that the content was offensive.
- Hensher believed that offense is not enough to censor the cartoons. At the same time, he argues that journalists should practice "good taste" and should avoid hateful caricatures.
- Younge argues that the right to offend comes with responsibility. If you print something that causes offense then you should be prepared to deal with the responses of those who are offended. The initial protests were peaceful. It took a month for them to start becoming violent and still another three months before the editor finally apologized.
- The anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe and especially the pervasive Muslim stereotypes since 9/11 cannot be ignored. Muslims' offense to the cartoons is seen by Danes as an integration issue about compatibility between the West and Islam (compared to the "West" and other groups).

Segue into the group exercise described below.

### Application – 20 minutes

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 8] Explain to students that now that they have an understanding of the controversy, they will be required to take a stance on it.

[Educator note: If desired, you may write out the four positions below and tape them onto sides of walls]

**Direct students to place themselves silently in the middle of the classroom.** Then ask the question below and present them with the 4 possible answers physically located in 4 different corners of the classroom. Ask students to think silently and then place themselves where they agree most, keeping in mind that they may change their positions during the exercise.

The question is: **Are the Danish cartoons a form of hate speech?**

The four corner answers (positions):

- 1: No, they are an expression of free speech.
- 2: No, but Islamophobic sentiment should have been considered.
- 3: Yes, Muslims were stereotyped as terrorists, and the cartoons should be censored.
- 4: Yes, and any printing of the cartoons should be done responsibly.

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Give students 3 minutes in each corner to discuss why they decided to stand where they are. Give space for each corner to give their answers, thereby facilitating a discussion among the students, showcasing the nuances and the power relations in the coverage of the Danish Cartoon Controversy. If the discussion is not stimulated enough, educators can draw on the answers written on the board the earlier presentations to ask further questions.

### Debrief – 10 minutes

Reflect with the students on how they felt during today's exercises. Suggested prompts include:

1. Which side of the debate was more convincing?
2. Were there any moments that made the 4-corner activity difficult?
3. Can you think of other examples where freedom of speech might be questioned? e.g. cartoons that are antisemitic, xenophobic, etc. Do these topics change how you feel about free speech?

Close the lesson by highlighting the complexity of the Danish cartoon controversy by referring back to the “for” and “against” points made for publishing the cartoons.

Here it is important to point out how **the general media attention helped shape the overall narrative about the cartoons**, as well as the way in which certain values, such as **“the right to publish the cartoons” were presented as more important than the fact that the cartoons were offensive and racist.**

Remind students that **most Muslims support the notion of aniconism** (avoidance of images of religious figures); **further, many Muslims found these cartoons humiliating** (and hence a form of “hate speech”) and felt that they were **grounded in long-standing anti-Muslim sentiment**. The anti-Muslim sentiments had grown in recent years with the influx of immigrants and especially refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries caught in the War on Terror.

Some additional points to highlight:

- The Danish high court rejected a case by 27 Muslim organizations against *Jylland-Posten* for blasphemy (and received praise from the EU's Minister of Justice, who argued that this showcased how a democracy functions)
- **The same case was sent to the United Nations Human Rights commission with a different result.**
  - **A report was commissioned by the UN Special Rapporteurs who concluded that the Danish government had not upheld international law with regards to race discrimination.**
  - Further, independent United Nations Human Rights experts expressed the importance of freedom of speech, which fosters an environment for debate and dialogue. However, **they found that the Danish cartoons were using stereotypes that were not conducive for dialogue, while they also condemned the unlawful violence that erupted on account of the cartoons.**

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While the **violent response to the cartoons cannot be ignored or condoned under any circumstances**, the lack of attention to *why* Muslims were protesting also needs to be considered, which was the point of today's lesson, as well as what constitutes hate speech.

## Lesson 2. The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Media portrayal

*Student Handouts and Supplementary Teaching Materials*

4. Lesson 2 Slide Deck Preview [Please download separate slide deck file]
5. Lesson 2 Handout 1: **Limits and Responsibilities of Freedom of Speech** [Graphic Organizer]
6. Lesson 2 Educator Resource: ***Does the right for freedom of speech justify printing the Danish Cartoons?*** Suggested Answers Key

## Lesson 2 Slide Deck Preview (8 slides)

### The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Role of the Media

Module 5, Lesson 2

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Denmark is a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe, consisting of several islands referred to as the Danish archipelago

A part of the European Union, it is surrounded by the Baltic and North Sea, with Germany, Norway and Sweden as neighboring countries

Greenland and the Faroe Islands are part of the Danish commonwealth



General population of Denmark: 5.5 million people

Approximately 300,000 are Muslim (18% of total population)



The country is governed by a constitutional monarchy, in which the head of the government is the prime minister

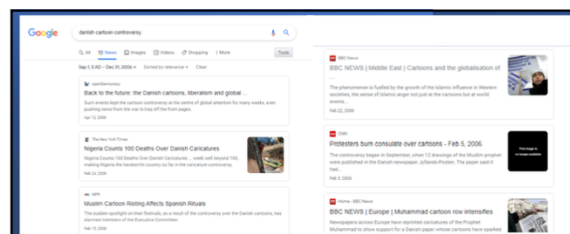
Denmark is generally known for its comprehensive welfare system



### The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Background from Human Rights Watch

“(New York, February 15, 2006)—On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoon depictions of the Prophet Mohammed that its editors said they solicited as part of an experiment to overcome what they perceived as self-censorship reflected in the reluctance of illustrators to depict the Prophet. The cartoons were highly offensive to Muslims because Islam is understood to prohibit graphic depictions of the Prophet and because most of the depictions were extremely derogatory, for example, by associating him, and by implication all Muslims, with terrorism.”

Source: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/02/15/questions-and-answers-danish-cartoons-and-freedom-expression/when-speech-offends>



The Danish Cartoon Controversy: US Google News search (2005-2006)



<h3>The Danish Cartoon Controversy: Key terms</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Aniconism:</b> Simply defined as the opposition to the use of idols and images. When applied to religion, it is the opposition to the use of icons or visual images to depict living creatures or religious figures. Such opposition is particularly relevant to the Jewish, Islamic and Byzantine artistic traditions. <u>In Islam, the pictorial depiction of any Prophet is forbidden.</u></li><li>• <b>Anti-Muslim Racism:</b> An exaggerated bias, hatred, or fear of Islam as religion and those who practice Islam, Muslims. Islamophobia extends to other communities and individuals who are perceived to be Muslim as well. Also known as Islamophobia, <u>Islamophobia has a long history in Europe.</u></li><li>• <b>Freedom of speech (UN definition):</b> According to the United Nations, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.</li><li>• <b>Hate speech:</b> Any form of discrimination towards an individual or group based on their faith, ethnicity, race, etc. <u>Satirical cartoons can be a form of hate speech.</u></li></ul>				
<h3>Activity: Four Corners</h3>	<p><b>Question:</b> Are the Danish cartoons a form of hate speech?</p> <table border="1"><tr><td data-bbox="1055 405 1198 485">1: No, they are an expression of free speech.</td><td data-bbox="1218 405 1360 485">3: Yes, Muslims were stereotyped as terrorists, and the cartoons should be censored.</td></tr><tr><td data-bbox="1055 499 1198 579">2: No, but Islamophobic sentiment should have been considered.</td><td data-bbox="1218 499 1360 579">4: Yes, and any printing of the cartoons should be done responsibly.</td></tr></table>	1: No, they are an expression of free speech.	3: Yes, Muslims were stereotyped as terrorists, and the cartoons should be censored.	2: No, but Islamophobic sentiment should have been considered.	4: Yes, and any printing of the cartoons should be done responsibly.
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2: No, but Islamophobic sentiment should have been considered.	4: Yes, and any printing of the cartoons should be done responsibly.				

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## Limits and Responsibilities of Freedom of Speech (Graphic Organizer)

Directions: Read *The Guardian* article “Does the right to freedom of speech justify printing the Danish cartoons?” by Philip Hensher and Gary Younge, and then answer the following questions with your group.

<b>1. What are the main points in the “for” or “against” arguments on printing the Danish cartoons? What examples do the authors use to justify their arguments?</b>	
<b>2. How does each author informally define freedom of speech?</b>	
<b>Philip Hensher</b>	<b>Gary Younge</b>
<b>3. How are Muslims positioned in the “for” or “against” arguments?</b>	



## **Educator Resource: *Does the right for freedom of speech justify printing the Danish Cartoons?* Suggested Answers Key**

Potential student responses to the questions based on *The Guardian* 2006 article “Does the right for freedom of speech justify printing the Danish Cartoons?”

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2006/feb/04/mainsection.garyyounge>

1. What are the main points in the “for” or “against” arguments on printing the Danish cartoons? What examples do the authors use to justify their arguments?

*The “for” argument by Philip Henscher:*

- The cartoons are offensive and deliberately so.
- Despite the offensive nature of the cartoons, personal offense should not be a basis for any legal action or restrictions.
- Freedom of speech – regardless of cause of offense – should be preserved
- Debate in many areas is already limited in many Muslim majority countries. Freedom of speech in these countries is already much tighter - even in relatively liberal Muslim majority states.
- Cartoonists should “exercise good taste” in such an area as they already do on “parallel subjects” for example, drawing a Jewish politician and avoiding antisemitic caricature.
- Anti-democratic forces in the “Muslim world” might be encouraged if their protests result in restrictions on what is printed.

*The “against” argument by Gary Younge:*

- Liberal left should not sacrifice their freedom to religious censorship - no matter what the religion in question is.
- However, the freedom of speech is not a duty to offend or be insensitive.
- There is no contradiction between supporting someone's right to do something and condemning them for doing it.
- Commitment to freedom of speech and anti-racism should be the same. Muslims in Europe already have to deal with terrorist stereotypes - these cartoons simply support such prejudice.
- The right to offend must be accompanied by responsibility. If the media maintains the right to offend, then those on the receiving end retain the right to be offended and, importantly, the right to protest.

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- The initial protests were peaceful and it took a month before they became violent. It took the editor of *Jyllands-Posten* four months to finally apologize - had he done so sooner, the protests would likely have fizzled away.
- There is a discrepancy in how Muslims' offense to the cartoons is seen by Danes as an integration issue about compatibility between Islam and the West versus that of other groups. For example, after News Statesman's printing of antisemitic content Action Against Antisemitism received an apology, and no discussion of clash of values was brought up.

### 2. How does each author informally define freedom of speech?

Philip Henscher defines freedom of speech as the right to express, regardless of personal or collective offense. Gary Younge argues freedom of speech should be defended, but the purpose is not to offend, as in the case of the Danish cartoons.

### 3. How are Muslims positioned in the "for" or "against" arguments?

Philip Henscher portrays Muslim countries as intolerant of freedom of speech, and believes that offense should not be the basis for the cartoons not to be printed. Gary Younge argues that Muslims were provoked and offended and then stigmatized again for protesting against these cartoons (hence being expected to maintain "freedom of speech" but not "freedom to protest").

# Appendix to Module 5: Freedom of Speech

## Curriculum Framework

### Goal

Students will be able to use their independent learning to identify Islamophobic sentiment under the banner of free speech. Specifically, they will be able to understand that the line between free speech and hate speech is blurred when it comes to hate speech against Muslims and Islam. Students will be able to identify how the Danish Cartoon controversy (and later *Charlie Hebdo* controversy) was portrayed in a socio-political and historical vacuum.

### Essential questions

1. What is freedom of speech?
2. How should the news media balance reporting on offensive speech/imagery and keeping the public informed?
3. Where should the line between media editing and self-censorship be drawn?
4. How does political satire play a role in shaping societal views?
5. Should there be limitations on freedom of speech?
6. When does free speech become hate speech?

### Understandings

Students will understand that...

1. The media coverage of the Danish Cartoon Controversy is embedded in anti-Muslim racist sentiment: Muslims' incompatibility with living in the West, as well as understanding and respecting freedom of speech.
2. The right to freedom of speech is nuanced and comes with responsibility, especially on the part of the media.
3. Freedom of speech has been used to justify hate speech against Muslims and Islam.

### Knowledge

Students will know...

1. The key events of the Danish Cartoon and *Charlie Hebdo* controversies and how they fit into a larger socio-political context.
2. Why the printing of the cartoons in *Jyllands-Posten* was deeply offensive to Muslims.
3. How media outlets justified printing the cartoons and how those justifications contributed to a broader anti-Muslim narrative.

### Skills

Students will be able to...

1. **Interrogate** the justifications put forth by media outlets for printing offensive speech/imagery.
2. **Analyze** how media coverage of the Danish Cartoon Controversy shaped public perception of events.
3. **Summarize** the arguments for and against printing the Danish cartoons.

### Summary of Performance Tasks (Assessment)

1. **Interview with Paul Fahri:** Students will watch an interview with Paul Farhi of *The Washington Post* in which he discusses the newspaper's decision not to reprint the Danish cartoons. Then, students will fill out a graphic organizer exploring definitions of free speech and the line between self-censorship and editing.
2. **Take a Stand Activity:** Students will use the Paul Fahri interview and the article *BBC's dilemma over cartoons* to respond to the question: should there be limitations on the visual publication of the Danish cartoons? Students will position themselves in the classroom to indicate whether they agree, disagree, or are somewhere in-between.
3. **Google News Search:** Students will view the results of a google search for articles written between 2005 and 2006 describing the Danish Cartoon Controversy. Then, students will interrogate which events were given more weight in the media coverage at the time and how that shaped the overall narrative.
4. **The Guardian Article Analysis:** Students will read an article from *The Guardian* that presents arguments for and against printing the Danish cartoons. In two groups, students will fill out a graphic organizer that summarizes the arguments. They will then present the arguments to the full class.
5. **Four Corners Activity:** Students will consider the question, "Are the Danish cartoons a form of hate speech?" Then, they will position themselves in one of four corners according to their response to the question. The students will discuss their stances within their groups, and then each group will present to the class.
6. **Debriefs and whole-class discussions:** In each lesson, students will apply key concepts in groups or individually, then return to the whole class space to articulate their findings and takeaways.

## Common Core Standards

### History/Social Studies 11th and 12th Grade

#### Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.



## Teaching Beyond September 11<sup>th</sup>

### **Craft and Structure:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

### **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

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## *About the Contributors*

**Fatima Awad** is an Egyptian-Danish educational anthropologist interested in educational equity, learning and community building. She currently works as a freelance educator, with former experience as a research assistant at Århus University, and as a workshop coordinator at The Centre for Muslims Rights in Denmark (CEDA). She views injustice through a sacred/spiritual activist lens, that engages with issues holistically, and draws upon divine guidance. Her passion lies in exploring alternative paradigms for authentic and sustainable living.

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