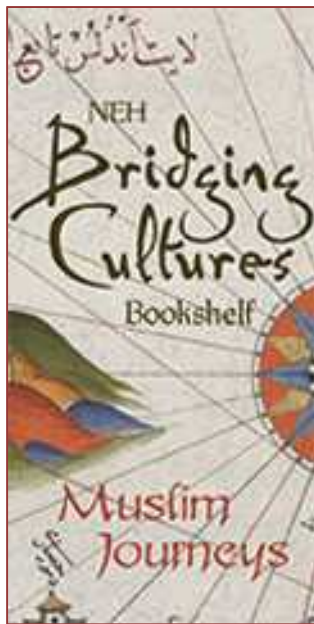


Russian Advice for Muslim Journeys Libraries

Islam is the second most widely practiced religion in the Russian Federation today, and Muslims are in the overwhelming majority in other countries where Russian has historically been spoken, including Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Even many residents of Afghanistan have some command of Russian, due to Afghanistan's long history of entanglement – constructive and otherwise – with the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union.

Despite the persistent presence of Islam in Russian society and culture, the role of the Muslim people in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and today's Russian-speaking states has been plagued with conflict and misunderstanding. The predominant attitude toward Muslims among other Russians speakers is one of suspicion, and Islam is linked in the minds of many Russian speakers either with exotic locales and barbaric customs or with rebellion, terrorism, and a refusal to integrate with “real” Russian culture. In that sense, of course, the views of most Russian speakers (both in the US and in their native countries) have much in common with the views of many English-speaking Americans.

Naturally, Muslims also hold a prominent place among recent Russian-speaking immigrants to the United States. They are as diverse as any other sector of the world Muslim population in terms of religious affiliation, degree of secularism, socioeconomic background, and level of education. But old concepts are difficult to escape, and current events in the US have put the spotlight on Muslim immigrants from Russia with extremist views. That makes promoting understanding of Islam and the history of the Muslim world more important than ever.



As you conduct events in conjunction with the Muslim Journeys program, bring Russian speakers in your community into the discussion, and make sure Russian-speaking Muslims are included. Please consult our **list of recommended Russian books** on the Muslim experience. Some are Russian translations of the works included in the Muslim Journeys bookshelf, while others are good alternatives to those titles or will complement your conversation in other ways. FairVega can help you purchase some or all of these titles in order to encourage the Russian-speaking community to get involved with your program, and to make sure your Russian-language collection reflects the cultural and religious diversity of the Russian speakers at your library. **Contact** us today!