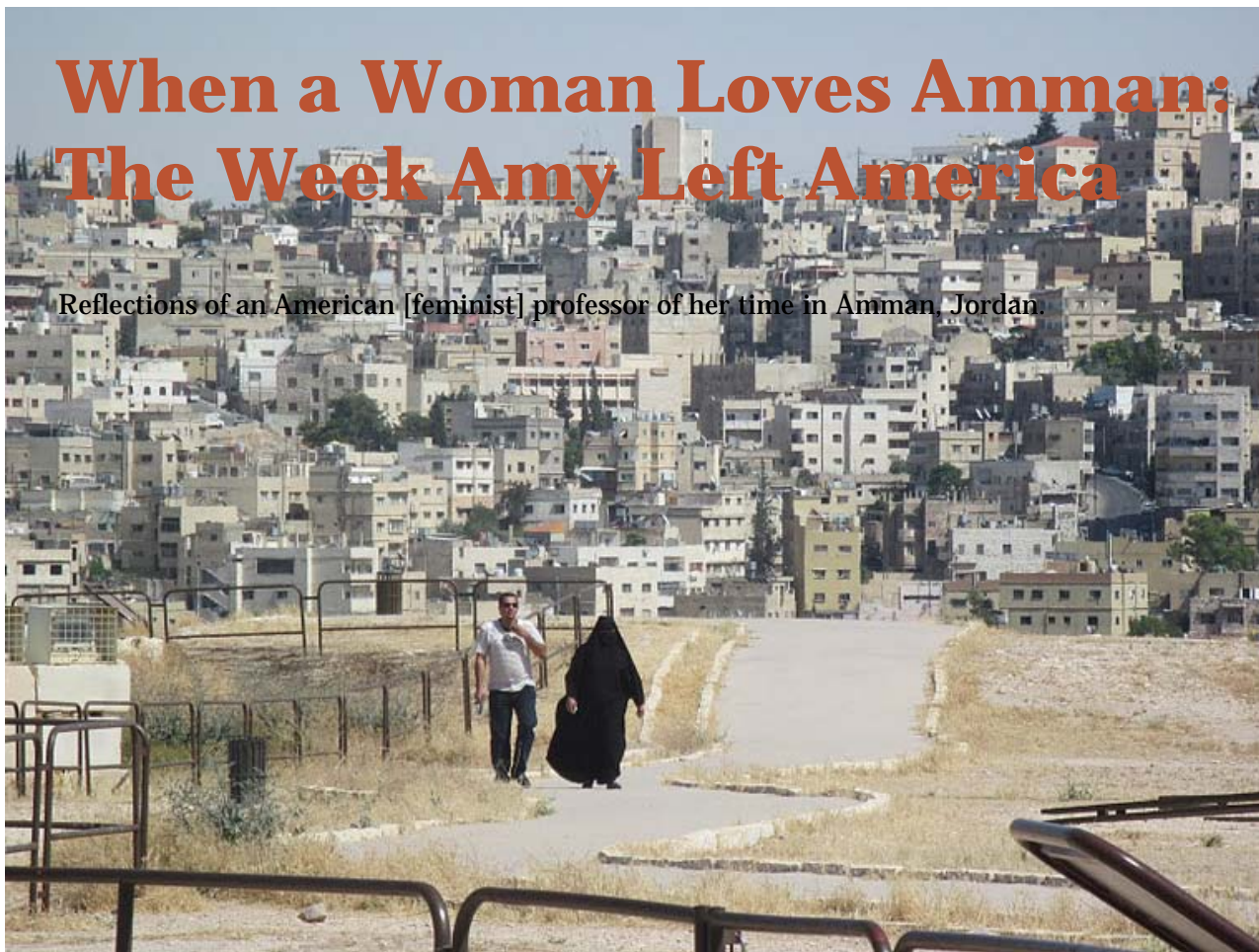


# When a Woman Loves Amman: The Week Amy Left America

Reflections of an American [feminist] professor of her time in Amman, Jordan.



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2011

## Presentation Scheduled

Dr. Amy Aldridge Sanford and Dr. Dilene Crockett will discuss their International Faculty Development fellowships in Jordan with a presentation, "Reflections on Jordan," on Sept. 29 at 2 p.m. It will be shown on ITV in Room 220 of Business and Technology in Tahlequah and Room 114 of Liberal Arts in Broken Arrow. Further movie screenings are Oct. 11 at 3 p.m. in Seminary Hall, Room 204, and Oct. 12 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 139 of the Education building in Broken Arrow.

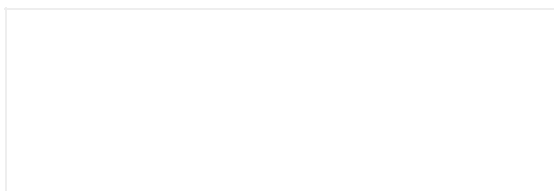
Posted by Amy Aldridge Sanford at 11:01 PM 0 comments



Labels: [presentation](#)

SUNDAY, JULY 31, 2011

## Reactions to my Hijab



### SOME PHOTOS FROM MY TRIP



### BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2011 (20)
  - ▼ September (1)
    - [Presentation Scheduled](#)
  - ▶ July (3)
  - ▶ June (15)
  - ▶ May (1)

### ABOUT ME



**Amy Aldridge Sanford**  
Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK, United States



Rasha and me. Rasha was the assistant who helped us with EVERYTHING while we were in Amman. She is wonderful.

During my last day in Amman, I asked Rasha to go with Dilene and me to McDonald's and to the tunnel that led to the university. There were shops in the tunnel and I wanted to buy some souvenirs. One of the shops was full of scarfs that women use to cover their heads (commonly referred to as hijabs). There were probably 50 scarfs--in bright, beautiful patterns. Rasha asked me if I'd like for her to put one on me. Honestly, I was honored that she wanted to do it. I told her sure and asked her to pick out the one that she liked the best. Since I had admired her collection of hijabs over the last week, I trusted her taste.

Once Rasha had chosen the scarf, she put it on me while Dilene filmed and Rasha spoke to the camera. I asked Rasha if me wearing a hijab would offend anybody. She said of course not. And sure enough, the locals just smiled and watched. Rasha had the scarf on in no time. I put my sunglasses on and was ready to go. She asked me if I was wanted to keep it on. I said of course. I wanted to feel what it was like to walk down the street. I had walked down the street many times during the last week as an uncovered woman; I wanted to cover and see if I felt any difference. Rasha beamed and looked at my uncovered elbows and lower arms. After all, women wear the head covering to promote modesty. My naked elbows weren't too modest. I took the other scarf that I had around my neck and used it to cover my arms.

Rasha took a photo of me walking down the street from the tunnel back to the CIEE office. That is the photo that ran in my university's newspaper last week. I have been told that at least one person feels that she needs to pray for me because she believes I am Muslim or maybe she thinks I'm too friendly with Muslims. I'm not really sure.

I'm not going to spend time on whether or not I'm Muslim. I think that a stranger making that assumption about me is about as ignorant as the spam emails accusing President Obama of being Muslim. I do want to spend some time on why wearing a head covering doesn't make anybody anything. It's a head covering. It's like wearing a hat or a 'do-rag. For me, it was an opportunity to embrace the culture and take a walk down the street.

And while I'm on the topic, I'm afraid many American's ideas of what is Muslim is way off. Christians, do you want people to think of David Koresh as a mainstream Christian? Osama bin Laden and his posse were NOT mainstream Muslims. They were extremists, just like Koresh was an extremist. Rasha is a mainstream Muslim, and she is a wonderful, loving, fun person. I would like to think she (and her beautiful hijab collection) would be welcome in Tahlequah.

Posted by Amy Aldridge Sanford at 10:51 PM 0 comments



Labels: fashion, hijab, The Northeastern

SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2011

Biggest sin

Amy is a department chair, graduate program director, and a tenured assistant professor of communication studies. Her research areas include popular culture, activism, and feminism. Recently she helped spearhead an effort to begin a Women's and Gender Studies program at her university. Amy traveled to Jordan with a small group of American university professors and administrators in June 2011. The trip was organized by CIEE (see link below).

[View my complete profile](#)

#### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- [I Speak for Myself](#)
- [Gender Trouble](#)
- [The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf](#)
- [Woman at Point Zero](#)
- [Nine Parts of Desire](#)
- [The Cry of the Dove](#)
- [The Inheritance](#)
- [The Awakening](#)
- [Pillars of Salt](#)
- [Murder in the Name of Honor](#)
- [Fast Times in Palestine](#)

#### LINKS

- [Jordan Times article](#)
- [NSU news article](#)
- [Northeastern State University \(where I teach\)](#)
- [CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange \(trip organizers\)](#)
- [Jordanian National Commission for Women](#)
- [Crowne Plaza Amman \(where we stayed\)](#)
- [Weather in Jordan](#)
- [Exchange Rates](#)
- [U.S. State Department](#)
- [U.S. Embassy in Amman](#)
- [Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre](#)
- [Grace Network](#)
- [Princess Basma](#)
- [King Hussein Foundation](#)
- [Gender & Social Fund](#)
- [7iber.com](#)
- [The Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development](#)
- [The Women's Movement in Jordan: A Dissertation](#)

Many of you have asked about the "biggest sin" I committed that I referenced in an earlier blog entry. This is the scene of the crime:



This is a section of a very long wall of murals in King Hussein Park. The murals are a timeline of the country. As you can imagine it is a VERY long wall. What you're looking at here is the very end of it (which is where we started). As I continued to make my way down the wall, I came across this plaque:



Next to the plaque was a door. I tested the knob and it was unlocked. So I walked in. I thought of it as a replica. I've been to Silver Dollar City. Replicas are meant to be explored. Same rules don't apply in Jordan though. As soon as I walked out of the closet-sized mosque, the Jordanian leader of our group told me I committed the biggest sin. I immediately knew she was telling me I should have covered my head.

I asked her what I should do. She told me to ask Allah for forgiveness. Uhhhhhhh. I'm not Muslim. Now I happen to believe God is God no matter what we call it, but I wasn't sure how most Muslims felt about that. I didn't want to commit another sin before I even got forgiven for this one.

At that point, I felt very ostracized by our leader and the rest of the group. I'm sure it was mostly in my mind since most of our group didn't even know about my cultural mishap. It still didn't feel good.

I ended up asking Rasha (the Jordanian graduate student who worked for CIEE) to ask Allah to forgive me. She assured me that what I did wasn't a big deal. Allah bless her.

What did I learn? I shouldn't use American tourist rules in another country. Just because the door is unlocked, I should just walk in it.

- [Rana Husseini \(author\)](#)
- [German Jordanian University](#)
- [Southern Badia](#)

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