

Exercise #4 – Evaluate a Textbook

Read the two selections from the 2006 textbook *United States Government: Democracy in Action* (written by Richard C. Remy and published by Glencoe/McGraw-Hill).

The first selection poses the question: How is the role of religion different in Islamic governments than in democratic ones? Note that the question counterposes “Islamic” and “democratic” as comparable adjectives describing types of governments. This statement would be more objective if it compared the role of religion in Islamic, Christian, Jewish or Buddhist governments or if it compared authoritarian vs. democratic governments.

The section called “Islamic Governments” begins with the sentence, “Islam is a religion spread by the prophet Mohammad, who lived from A.D. 570 to 632.” Note the use of language: “Islam is a religion spread by...” rather than “Islam is a religion based on teachings...”

Analyze the rest of the first segment and assess how it addresses the issues raised in the definitions of Islamophobia in Exercise 1.

The second selection includes sections called “International Terrorism” and “A New Terrorist Threat.” The “International Terrorism” section links together terrorist attacks, Middle Eastern groups, Muslim fundamentalists, and the governments of Libya, Syria, Iraq and Iran. However, it doesn’t mention the fact none of the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks were from these four countries. Nor does it say that Libya, Syria and Iraq were among the most secular nations in the region at the time and were not involved in supporting “Muslim fundamentalists” who turned to terrorism to achieve “a return to traditional Muslim religious laws.”

The “New Terrorist Threat” section discusses the rise of Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, which it says “recruited Muslims and channeled money and arms to the Afghan resistance” to the Soviet supported government of Afghanistan. It does not mention that the U.S. also channeled money and arms to the Afghan resistance. Did the U.S. support of the Afghan resistance make the U.S. a state sponsor of terrorism?

Analyze the rest of the second segment and assess how it addresses the issues raised in the definitions of Islamophobia in Exercise 1. Pay special attention to incomplete, missing or misleading information that could cause the unwary reader to false or prejudicial conclusions.