**Diversity Statement** **Safiyya Hosein**

While conducting my doctoral research on participatory Muslim audiences of Muslim superheroes, I was reminded of the diversity of Muslim identities. My participants’ spanned a range of ethnicities, cultures, levels of piety, and sexual identities. The nuances that this diversity contributed to the study surprised my research assistants and myself (who identifies as an Indo-Caribbean Muslim woman). Researching and writing about Muslim superheroes and fan identities only strengthened my commitment to diversity in the classroom and made me aware of the importance of creating an inclusive identity because it reinforced the meaning of marginalized representations to fans.

Having emigrated from Trinidad to Canada as a child, and then later pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies in Boca Raton, Florida, I know how it feels to be a minority. Diversity was not at all an abstract concept for me after living in Toronto most of my adult life – an area that boasts a variety of identities spanning different ethnicities, sexual identities, genders, religions, socio-economic classes, and even immigration statuses. While I was a teaching assistant for the “Women and Islam” course, I interfaced with students from a variety of backgrounds and worked with texts that spoke to the diversity of the Muslim world which included topics on Muslim ethnicities such as African-American, East Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern Muslim cultures. I was also exposed to texts that analyzed gender and sexuality in Islam – and which I later incorporated into my research, analyzing both topics and their impact on Muslim identity. Considering that a lot of research on Muslims analyze Middle Eastern representations, I also saw how many students of African, East Asian, and South Asian backgrounds appreciated having a syllabus that was diverse and inclusive of their identities. As a result, I decided that should I ever design any course materials on my research areas, I would ensure that it be inclusive of a variety of ethnicities, cultures, and sexual identities.

My research interests include comics and graphic novels. Having a breadth of knowledge on both mainstream graphic novels and independent ("indie") comics – which have always been inclusive of race, gender, and sexuality – I intend to incorporate these texts into any class I teach on this topic. My broader research area is popular culture, and I would also take the above approach were I to teach a class on film, music, fandoms, or traditional prose literature. Doing so would afford me the ability to appeal to a diverse group of students as well as educate others on backgrounds other than their own. I would also be conscious of not allowing only whites or white males to dominate class discussions, but would instead foster an environment where all students feel comfortable to speak up. I intend to tailor class assignments that promote engagement with diversity.

I have organized panels and roundtables that engaged with diversity, namelyat the Comic Studies Society on marginalized representation and American superheroes. Additionally, I organized the Critical Diasporic South Asian Feminisms in Canada Roundtable for the Canadian Sociological Association for the Congress of Humanities conference. During the time that I served on the graduate student caucus of the Comic Studies Society and engaged in many conversations on diversity and inclusion.

Diversity has always been one of my personal values, and I am committed to fostering research interests that analyze and make marginalized representation visible on your campus.