Welcome Class of 2019!

We are so excited to get to know you all and for you to get to know us as well! The Harvard Islamic Society (HIS) strives to be an inclusive, supportive community where you can make great friends and feel at home. Harvard has so much to offer and many new experiences lie ahead of you. As a freshman, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed, and we hope that you will find this guide a useful starting point. Inside you’ll find information on who we are, insider tips to life on campus, and more. This guide is one of many resources that you will find here on campus to ease the transition to college life, including members of HIS! Don’t hesitate to reach out to any of your HIS family with any questions, concerns, or just to chat. We’re looking forward to an awesome few years together, in sha’ Allah!

Sincerely,

The Harvard Islamic Society
The Harvard Islamic Society is what we make it. We are always looking for new ideas, perspectives, and opinions to better ourselves as an organization and as family. We welcome everyone, Muslim or not, to get to know us and be a part of our community. We don’t expect anyone to conform or change who they are as an individual. You may want to spend a lot of time with HIS and its members. Or you may want to keep a presence by coming to just the social events. The degree of your involvement is totally up to you!

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Faces of HIS:

Name: Yousra Neberai  
Concentration: Human Developmental and Regenerative Biology  
Year: Freshman  
Hometown: Stafford, VA  
“What I love most about HIS is the community aspect to it, and how the upperclassmen are so helpful and welcoming. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this community, alhamduliAllah!”

Name: Hassaan Shahawy  
Concentration: Near Eastern Languages and Cultures  
Year: Junior  
Hometown: Pasadena, CA  
“My favorite thing about HIS is the life changing opportunities and educational experiences it has provided me, alhumduliAllah!”

Name: Farhan Javed  
Concentration: Economics  
Year: Freshman  
Hometown: Tulsa, OK  
“The best part of HIS is its perfect representation of the diversity among Muslims and the social platform it provides Muslims to connect, engage, debate, and collaborate.”

Name: Zehra Naz  
Concentration: Computer Science  
Year: Senior  
Hometown: Miami Springs, FL  
“It’s amazing how the community of HIS gives me a sense of belonging with people who are going through the same things as I am.”

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Name: Fatima Bishtawi  
Concentration: Social Studies  
Year: Sophomore  
Hometown: Middletown, CT  
“The best thing about Harvard is the people and the great thing about HIS is how the community makes it feel like home!”

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Year: Senior  
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Year: Junior  
Hometown: Pasadena, CA  
“My favorite thing about HIS is the life changing opportunities and educational experiences it has provided me, alhumduliAllah!”

Name: Aisha Bhoori  
Concentration: History and Literature  
Year: Freshman  
Hometown: Middletown, NJ  
“What I love is that every member is so kind and welcoming to me, despite my lack of involvement. This underscores the open nature of HIS!”

Name: Zehra Naz  
Concentration: Computer Science  
Year: Senior  
Hometown: Miami Springs, FL  
“It’s amazing how the community of HIS gives me a sense of belonging with people who are going through the same things as I am.”

2015 BOARD

President: Lana Idris  
Vice President: Hassaan Shahawy  
Secretary: Zarin Rahman  
Treasurer: Zaahid Khan  
Director of Islamic Learning: Mohamed Ahsan  
Director of Internal Relations: Abeer Eltemtamy  
Director of External Relations: Zainub Dhanani  
Director of Development: Ameen Chaudry
What I Wish I Knew as a Freshman

Words of Wisdom from Your Friends at HIS

We asked Slims (Muslims) from all years around campus what advice they would give to their freshman selves. Here’s what they had to say:

“HIS is your community. I say that to emphasize that by being a Muslim student on this campus, you are already part of this community, no questions asked. The best part about this is that you can join HIS at any point and will be welcomed in, so I strongly encourage you, as freshman, to embrace getting to know your freshman class outside of HIS, especially during your fall semester, without worrying that not jumping head first into HIS will keep you from being able to integrate into the Muslim community on campus.

Remember that HIS is a resource, academic, spiritual, and otherwise. Always feel free to reach out--this is a campus where all you have to do is ask, and someone will help!

Eat in the Berg (Annenberg, freshman dining hall) and with as many new groups of people as possible! Even if its sometimes uncomfortable, the ability to sit at any random table and meet new people each meal is a freshman treasure that you will miss once you move into your upperclassman houses.

Take advantage of freshman seminars! It is a rare chance to learn from and get to know some incredible professors in such an intimate and laid back setting!

Participate in all the freshman traditions! From intramural competition day to Freshman Formal and Yardfest, your freshman memories are so unique, and definitely worthwhile!”

- Zainub Dhanani, Class of 2017

“Get to know upperclassmen and ask them for advice, favorite halal restaurants, internships, directions to the mosque, information about events in the area, anything! Sign up to be on the Harvard Islamic Society’s mailing lists so you can keep up with all the events. Then go to the events and meet new friends.”

- Zehra Naz, Class of 2015

“The importance of planning out your day nearly hour by hour and blocking out time in advance for everything (academics to social) is so crucial – not only for a smooth transition, but also a relaxing semester. One thing I can’t stress more is receiving at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night. It’ll not only make you feel better, but will make you more productive, happy, and focused! Aim to have things done by a certain time at night (I recommend midnight at the latest!) and force yourself to get it done by then. If you’re done by midnight, you can wake up at 7-8 AM with a refreshing 7-8 hours of sleep!”

- Zarin Rahman, Class of 2018

“My answer will be in two parts. The first is a more general ‘philosophy’ of sorts, and the second is practical advice about the most important aspect of living at Harvard--food.

First, I wish that I had known it was OK to quit something that I wasn’t enjoying. High school had given me this mentality of go go go, never quit anything. However, time is limited at college. If you absolutely hate your lab, leave it. If that club is giving you nothing but drama, it’s fine to quit. Quitting something you hate will give you more time to do what you love.

Also, don’t be afraid to take hard classes. In fact, don’t be afraid of doing anything just because you think it’s too hard. My most challenging courses were also the most rewarding. I still think of Chemistry 30 as one of the best courses I took at Harvard, but it was also one of the hardest. And I definitely did not come into Harvard with a strong chemistry background, but I was interested so I studied it. It’s corny but it’s true; don’t let fear hold you back.

Okay, now for the food advice. Some days, you will go down to dinner hungry and all they will have is pork wrapped in bacon with some vodka sauce drizzled on top. Worry not, dear reader. Order halal grilled chicken at the grill. Drizzle the chicken breast with olive oil and lemon juice, then liberally season with lemon pepper. Delicious. Make sure, however, that you give yourself time. The chicken takes a while to cook.

Now, let’s say this is the third day that the dining hall is serving tofu and you hate tofu with a passion that would put Westboro Baptist Church to shame. You’ve already had the halal chicken twice. What to do? Get the black bean burger at the grill with an egg over easy (or over medium, depends on how cooked you like the egg). Put some chipotle mayo and ketchup on that sandwich. Or possibly soy sauce. Or Sriracha (Sriracha makes everything better). Now, enjoy your messy sandwich and the jealous glances of your friends.

OK, freshies. Final advice. Enjoy your time at Harvard. Whenever things get rough, remember how you felt getting that acceptance. The time will go by a lot faster than you expect, and college really is an awesome experience.”

- Fatima Mubarak, Class of 2015
Places to Know On Campus:

Lowell Lecture Hall is located on 17 Kirkland St and is the location of our Friday prayers, which typically start at 1:10 or 1:15 and end around 2 pm depending on the time of year. Changes to prayer times will be announced over email lists and posted in the Musallah.

Located in the basement of Canaday E, the Musallah is not only a place for prayer but a gathering place for the HIS community. It is essentially the hub of Muslim life activity.

Halal Dinner Tables

Harvard caters specifically to the HIS appetite twice a week with halal dinner tables in Mather House on Monday and Adams House on Thursday. These semi-weekly social events provide a great way to feast on delectable, halal food, catch up with fellow Slims, goof off, and just have some fun amidst the hustle and bustle of college life.

Mondays 6-7:30 p.m at Mather House:

1. Pretend you are going to Adams (see adjacent box). Keep walking down Plympton St. and cross the road. Quincy House will be on your left. Go through the gates of Quincy so that you are in the courtyard.
2. Keep walking until you’ve left the courtyard and cross the street, then cross again and go through the black gates in front of you. You are in Leverett territory now. Cut through the courtyard like you did for Quincy.
3. When you leave the courtyard, Dunster House is in front of you. Walk to your left until you see the concrete architecture of Mather. You’re there!

Thursdays 6-7:30 p.m at Adams House:

1. Head towards Widener Library, and leave the yard through Widener Gate, behind the Library (the big gate).
2. Walk to your left until you see the Harvard Book Store across the street. Cross the street and start walking down Plympton St.
3. Keep walking until you reach Adams! It will be on your left, and there is a sign and a gate to walk through. If you’ve crossed another street, you’ve gone too far.
What We Do

Both the HIS board and general members plan events and are involved in the semester’s programming. Several events are recurring, many weekly or biweekly, with special events such as the Fall and Spring dinners occurring annually. Many of our other events reflect the interests and needs of the community specific to the time. All of our programming is student initiated and run, and there are ample opportunities to be involved in planning and executing our programs. Below you will find a typical week of HIS programs, as well as a small sample of some of the special events we’ve held this year. There have been many more, and more in the future in sha’ Allah!

Sample Calendar

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Remember X:
The Life and Legacy of a Civil Rights Legend
Keynote speaker: Iyasin Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X.
Friday, March 6th
7:30 PM
Ames Courthouse, Austin Hall, Harvard Law School
Suggested $5 donation at the door

Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X.

You are cordially invited to
The Harvard Islamic Society Mixer
Friday, February 27th
7:30 PM
Harvard Law School, Wasserstein Hall, Hark, 2nd Floor
Kindly RSVP on the link provided

S’mores and Skating in the Plaza

Mixer with students in the area and HLS
Again, Welcome to Harvard!

We hope this guide provides you with a little insight into all that Harvard has to offer regarding Muslim life on campus. Of course, feel free to email us or talk to any of us during your time here with any questions or comments you might have. You can also keep up to date with us by visiting our website at http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/his/ and finding us on Facebook. We are so excited to have you here, and can’t wait for the great times ahead!

Best,

The Harvard Islamic Society

Contact Us At:

harvardislamicsociety@gmail.com

and subscribe to our mailing list at http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/his/about/mailing-lists/ to stay up to date!