



## ***Salaam Dunk***

### **Film Study Guide**

**Director: David Fine**

**2001 | Documentary | 83 Minutes | US, Iraq | English, Kurdish, Arabic | Unrated**

<https://www.arabfilm.com/item/562/>

**Synopsis:** When violent images of Iraq are all the Western world is accustomed to, it's easy to forget that life continues in the war-torn nation. At the American University of Iraq-Sulaimani, life does just that, as is extraordinarily personified by the university's women's basketball team. In a sports movie for the ages, *Salaam Dunk* follows the team's season, chronicling their triumphs and tragedies both on and off the court.

### **Post-Screening Discussion Questions**

1. *Salaam Dunk* begins by showing Iraqis on the street voice their opinions about girls playing sports. What are their opinions and how do they mirror/differ from opinions in the US?
2. How are stereotypes regarding female athletes amplified in Iraq? What barriers do the players on AUIS have to overcome and what stereotypes do they have to break?



3. Why do you think women are typically not encouraged to play sports in Iraq?
4. Coach Ryan talks about the girls having basketball as “their own thing.” What does he mean when he says this? What do you have in your own life that is your “own thing”?
5. Coach Ryan is a great role model and a positive voice in the players lives. What are the personality traits he possesses that make him such a strong leader? Who in your life is similar to Coach Ryan and why is this person important to you?
6. As manager of the team, Safa talks about treating members of the team equally, regardless of their background or religion. Members of the team are Kurdish, Iraqi, Christian, etc. What historical and political differences does she put aside in order to treat everyone equally?
7. What impact does Coach Ryan have by being at AUIS, and what impact does his departure have? Are there positive aspects of his leaving?
8. How does basketball change the girls? Besides physical changes (strength, ability to play) how does it change them as people?
9. Safa enjoys debate and says that debating is very different than fighting. What does she mean?
10. Explore the political, religious and economic struggles of Iraq. When the girls talk about the “situation” being very bad in Baghdad, what are they referring to?