

# HST 201: ONLINE History of U.S. F18 (Escobar Meta 20748 22964)

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## Forum 1 Puritanism & Islam



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### Puritanism & Islam

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, October 6, 2018, 5:30 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Puritanism & Islam topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Puritanism & Islam

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### Non-Religious Relation

by [Daniel Urias](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 3:39 PM

I am not a religious person, although I was raised among the culture so I am fairly familiar, so I always found it difficult to associate with a people whose supposed narrative is one of escaping religious persecution. However, after learning that the Puritans fought in a Civil War and overthrew a king (Miller & Johnson pg2) prior to relocating to the New World I gained a much deeper understanding of them and their actions. It is easier to sympathize

with a people who fought for a chance to improve their lives, and resorted to leaving only after they lost a civil war and Charles II was crowned (Miller & Johnson pg2), than it is to sympathize with a people who left their homeland because the majority disagreed with their ideals. I once again find myself relearning the real history of America and the people the story entails. Although I can't personally relate to the prospect of experiencing strange wild lands with different rules for survival, or the necessity of designing, from the ground up, a system of government built for influencing people and sustaining resources, but I believe I'm beginning to understand the truth behind the struggle the Puritans, the harsh trials they endured and the real reasons behind it all.

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2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam: Are you concerned?**by [Tehya Curley](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 7:01 PM

Religion had a severe amount of influence on founding our country. In the book Liberty, Equality, Power by Murrin it goes into detail about this subject. "Puritans fleeing to America hoped to escape the divine wrath that threatened England and to create in America the kind of churches that god demanded" (pg 61) by the puritans fleeing to America they were able to explore more land and expand the colonies regions. Without the puritans fleeing I doubt we would have discovered as much area such as the Connecticut river. However, not everyone acknowledges this idea that puritans or other religions were the founders of America.

In the Islam and puritans podcast professor Casper acknowledges the idea that we tend to ignore or do not pay attention to this subject. Instead he insists that our "eyes glaze over" (5:14). More importantly another speaker in the podcast explained a story where students in Egypt can relate more to our ancestors' religion than we do. Which I wouldn't be surprised about, but more concerned for.

This concerns me because our country was built on religions such as puritanism. The fact that the people of the 21st century do not acknowledge the importance of religion on America is mind blowing. This may be the blame of not being taught the importance of religion for America or maybe it goes in one ear and out the other. However, you cannot ignore the fact that the quest for religion has founded our country.

Is religion the reason why we were able to conquer so much land? And is it concerning that others are able to relate more with our ancestors' religions such as puritanism than we can?

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3

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam: Are you concerned?**by [Asa Tellschow](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 9:55 PM

I understood the potential concern differently. In the podcast, Professor Casper speaks about major constitutional debates, including the one about Mormon polygamy (about 1:50). The fact that the Muslim students were surprised suggests that they understand the American founding principle of separating church and state, particularly because many Muslim cultures have less separation between religion and government.

Of course, it's problematic for Americans to be unaware of our own national history (Remember that these are not necessarily our ancestors), but I understand the concern to be more about the Puritans' more personal spin on religion. To a Puritan, God's grace was simply granted or not, and they would worry about whether they were one of the saved. "A 'saint' at last found reason to believe that God had saved him or her. The whole process involved a painful balance between assurance and doubt." (Murrin p 64) To me, this is significant because it's a more individual process, which was not dependent on the church. No clergy granted salvation, it simply was or wasn't, according to God's will. Roger Williams extended this idea to form "eloquent arguments for religious liberty and the complete separation of church and state." (Murrin p. 65)

I don't think you're correct that "the quest for religion founded our country." There were many influences, and many of the early settlers were religious, but we haven't actually gotten to the part where the country is formed yet. Let's watch for how religion factors in as we move forward chronologically. I thought it was more about religious tolerance and respect for each other's differences.

To respond to your question: Yes, I think religion actually is a big reason why "we" were able to conquer so much land. Except that it wasn't just land that we conquered, it was also people, and it was often cruel and genocidal. To be fair, I'm not religious myself, but it seems that religion often gave people an excuse to do horrible things to "non-believers." For example, on page 28, Murrin says that "some theologians... [argued] that Indians were animals, without souls, not human beings at all."

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3



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### Re: Puritanism & Islam: Are you concerned?

by [Carla Kinner](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:34 PM

Unfortunately, religion has a good and a bad side to it. I agree completely that it can be cruel and genocidal.

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0



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### Seeking another's perspective to gain a better understanding

by [Ruth Hyde](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 9:00 PM

I have been considering the views presented by Scott Casper in the podcast Puritanism and Islam, and the idea that students from Arabic countries could better decipher and conceptualize the Puritan lifestyle. This is not all that surprising to me, however it is an

interesting point to think more about. The cultural perspectives of students who live in the presence of strict communities of faith, which shape their daily pursuits are completely relevant to understanding the austere and patriarchal communities of historic Massachusetts Bay.

Our text discusses the family life, conversion and conflict that arose in Puritan communities (Murrin, 2015 pg. 64) and this same cultural setting is a modern reality in some parts of the world. I personally was raised in a modestly Irish Catholic family and was keenly aware of the older generations feelings towards what they perceived as a lessening of their tightly held beliefs. As my family modernized and moved away from the areas where my grandparents and great grandparents had farmed, in order to gain jobs in education and business, the more the discord grew between generations within my family. Although I didn't live within a stoic and strict Catholic household, I feel that I understand what it would have been like, and therefore understand what Scott Casper is observing in Islamic faith communities as they study American Puritans. Scott Casper's description of the "sacred pressing on every element of life" was incredibly poignant to me, both in reflecting on what life would have been like for Puritan peoples, but also in how many still live to this day. Perhaps in better understanding our own history, the better prepared we are for interacting with other cultures around the world – learning from their perspectives.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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**Re: Seeking another's perspective to gain a better understanding**

by [Tehya Curley](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 1:57 PM

I agree with you, communities who have a stricter religious faith are more relatable with the Puritans religious ideas. This is probably due to the similar lifestyles in a sense that their life is more focused on following a certain religion. "Even though the covenant of works can no longer bring eternal life, it remains in force and establishes the strict moral standards that every Christian must strive to follow, before and after conversion" (Liberty, Equality, Power pg 61) I would think puritans would attempt to keep the law in which making religion an important part of their life. However, I can see how this would be a problem for Americans. We're allowed to believe in any religion we choose to. Whether its catholic, Jewish, or even atheist; we have a vast range of religion that occurs today in America. This is probably the main reason on why we don't relate to the puritans even though they are our ancestors. While again puritans were able to focus on one religion in the Americas. This is due to many reasons such as not being as open to strangers when they came to Massachusetts "once the settlers had formed a typical farming town, they grew reluctant to admit "strangers" to their midst" (Liberty, Equality, Power pg 63).

While other communities who have a stricter religion may relate more with the puritans. I have a little knowledge of other religions besides for exposure to a catholic church. However, if other religions in different communities are as strict, I

can see why they could relate more with the puritans.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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### The Puritans' Ideological Momentum

by [Asa Tellschow](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 12:11 AM

It's been a little while since I've formally studied US History, and I'm noticing different things this time around. In particular, the significance of religion is really standing out. For instance,

"Moslems believed it sinful to enslave a fellow believer. Western Europeans, although they were quite capable of waging destructive wars against one another, strongly believed that enslaving fellow Christians was immoral. Enslaving pagan or Moslem Africans was another matter. Some Europeans even persuaded themselves that they were doing Africans a favor bu buying them and making their souls eligible for salvation." (Murrin p. 11)

As someone who identifies as an atheist (yet still with an element of spirituality in my life), it is tempting to dismiss the significance of religion in the formation of the US. Especially as a child, Christianity was a foreign reality for me, and the distinct groups within it seemed hopelessly complex (Catholic, Protestant, Baptist... Yes, my eyes glazed over). I don't think it's possible to ignore religion though, if you want to deeply understand history, because it loomed large in the lives of those historical people.

I am a bit troubled by the fact that American students seem less able to understand the Puritans than their Muslim counterparts. From our modern perspective, it's easy to forget that the Puritans were moving away from the control that Catholicism had on people's lives. They were actually radicals. "The Puritans were... revolutionaries who fought a Civil War from 1642-49, executed Charles I and the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1649, and established a Commonwealth..." (Miller & Johnson, Introduction: The Puritans 2nd paragraph of p. 2) Maybe their movement away from Catholicism had some momentum to it. Looking back, we have moved even further from the church, so that Puritans look like religious extremists to us.

I think it's natural that Muslim students would better understand the Puritans, since the reality of religious control over their lives is more real to them than to American students. In this sense, it's almost a measure of success, because Americans are less familiar with the *possibility* of religion exercising such control (We take separation of church and state for granted). However, it troubles me that Americans seem less aware of just what it means for Church and State to be separate. I think that represents a problematic vulnerability to the American people, who might start mixing religious thought into government without really recognizing the significance.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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### Re: The Puritans' Ideological Momentum



by [Ruth Hyde](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 9:23 PM

Characterized by normative beliefs, I see the Puritan experience as far more fundamental than simple religious mechanisms in their daily lives. As we may process a justification of our faith or values based on pros and cons, I consider a faithful Puritan may have simply followed their principles in a more dogmatic, unquestioning way.

Our text discusses the Puritan theology and their goals for new life in the New World. We read that "Puritans fleeing to America hoped to escape the divine wrath that threatened England and to create in America the kind of churches that God demanded." (Murrin, pg. 61) Although we ourselves may not be related to these settlers, nor find ourselves living within a religious doctrine, we are still impacted by the norms and values established in early government of the original colonies. Although I wish we could have a more objective discussion in political venues, and completely separate Church and State, I appreciate understanding the history from which our government derives and doubt we will ever have completely separate institutions.

Thank you for your considerations, Asa. You provided me with inspiration and a unique angle.

-Ruth

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3



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### **Why Puritanism was beneficial for the US**

by [Evan Brewer](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 7:51 PM

After listening to the podcast and reading the book, I feel that well-educated American students should understand Puritanism because the puritans were credited with the idea of family. Family is very important in today's society and most likely wouldn't be as common if Puritans didn't come to America and colonize. Puritans also believed in education and thought that everyone should know how to read. Since you learned how to read in school, reading the bible was important in Puritan communities and saw it as reading for oneself. Unlike in the US now, Puritans believed in church and state and had some unjustified laws that would be totally illegal now like taxes from the church, that everyone had to pay even if they weren't members of that specific church. Now I understand why people have biases towards the puritans and whatnot because I am biased myself. Since I was raised in a family with no real religious beliefs, learning about the Puritans can be surprising at times. As said in the Introduction: The Puritans, "The Puritans wanted to re-establish the original simplicity of the church by eliminating practices and church hierarchy which were not mentioned in the bible"(1). Saying this, I see Puritans has the goody two shoes of the world. They are going against their own church of England and saying that they are doing things wrong. I found it surprising that people would actually do this in the 17th century.

Speaking in terms of today's standards, I believe that religious views will never be removed from governmental decisions because it is the moral or central belief of that specific person. This makes things difficult when deciding on new laws and such because many different people have separate views of the topic. I don't see anything wrong with religious beliefs in the government because many people are religious and have a say, but there comes a point where religion in the government is too extreme like saying people have to read the bible(puritans). This would also go against separation of church and state in the US.

What do you think? Do you think religious beliefs in our government are skewing decisions?

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2



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### Re: Why Puritanism was beneficial for the US

by [Asa Telschow](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 12:40 PM

You aren't saying that the Puritans invented the idea of families are you? I can't imagine that families would be less common without the historical influence of Puritans. (Families are an important part of every culture, probably even back before we'd evolved into humans.)

I think an important part of Puritans' success was that they immigrated as family units, which added stability to their colony. "Because Puritans and Quakers migrated as families into healthy regions, their population expanded at a rate far beyond anything known in Europe." (Murrin p. 51) This was lacking in Jamestown, and that (along with a feeling of entitlement and aversion to labor) contributed to the severe challenges there. (p 53)

It might be impossible to have a government that is truly separate from religious influence, so long as it's still operated by religious people, who naturally tend to be biased. However, I think the question is whether government should be allowed to use religious reasoning to support their decisions. In this case, I think the answer must be "no," if the US is to remain a welcoming place for people of all faiths (Assuming this has ever been more than an ideal).

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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### Re: Why Puritanism was beneficial for the US

by [Tehya Curley](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 1:06 PM

Families have been seen way before puritanism such as in the time of B.C.E. For example, when the Clovis tip appeared "Clovis tip, appeared in the area of present-day New Mexico and Texas around 13,000 B.C.E" (Liberty, Equality, Power pg 5) this isn't apparent to the proof of families, but the Clovis tip was used for big game hunting. Which families spread

out to find “as human families fanned out across the hemisphere, however, the big game began to disappear. I believe without puritans that families would still be common today due to proof of families existing before the puritans came to the Americas.

Although the puritans may have wanted to re-establish the simplicity of church; I can see why you view they as goody two shoes. “New England magistrates whipped more freemen than any other English colonies, but gradually this discipline became self-sustaining” (Liberty, Equality, Power pg 61) this doesn’t state specifically that the puritans participated in this, but this was around the time when the English puritans got a hold of a charter. If puritans were able to participate in violent actions like this than the puritans would most likely follow or do anything for their religion.

I do agree that religion will always be involved in the government. Religion is a major part of peoples’ life even if you don’t believe in anything. However, I don’t think religion should be in the government because religion may skew their choices and that there is a various amount of religions.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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### **What are the essential elements of Puritanism that a well-educated American student should know?**

by [Zoe Brunson](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 10:14 PM

In 1620 a group of English men came to America, for religious freedom. The Puritan was a group of radical Protestants who wanted to purify the church of England. The boat had two types of Puritans on board. “Non-Separatists who insisted they were loyal to the true church of England and resisted any relaxation of Calvinist rigor. Separation denied that the church of England was a true church and began to set up independent Congress of their own.” ( Textbook Liberty, Equality, Power. John M. Murrin Page 48 Chapter 2.) Both Groups felt like they needed to leave England. Once Puritans settled they began to build churches and schools. The Puritans believed God made an agreement with them to “Live according to scriptures to reform the Anglican church” ( Study.com Puritans in America: Beliefs, Religion & History 2:03) Puritans deprived themselves of sex, entertainment, and celebrations. They mainly focused on self-holiness and spiritual understanding of the script. The Puritan faith glued the town together. Land that belonged to Indians was given to town building groups for free. They had to build the towns around a church and had to agree to live in harmony. All the people of the town had to pay taxes for the church even if they did not attend.

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2



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### **Puritanism & Islam Reflected in Today's Society**

by [Carla Kinner](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 11:04 PM

I am concerned that Americans do not have a great understanding of early American history as other societies do. This is our country and we all should be aware of the history. I think that in America, church and state are so separated that we do not understand the influence of church on politics that Puritans faced and many countries today face as well. For example, in Middle Eastern countries, many laws are based off of religious and societal opinions, such as women not having equal rights. Because many Americans do not experience this lifestyle, they do not understand it the way that a Middle Eastern person would.

I think that religious ideas, such as anti-abortion, are still influenced by church. This idea is influenced by many verses in the bible and other religious text, therefore Politian's and the public use that to justify their political beliefs. This is combining church and state. I hope that this is removed, but I do not think it will be. Religion would have to be completely removed from society in order to not influence politics.

Hopefully this is what you wanted for this assignment. I was a little bit confused on the requirements.

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#### Re: Puritanism & Islam

by [Nargis Safi](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 10:50 PM

The Puritans were godly people who came from England to escape religious persecution. When they arrived in the New World they realized that the Church was in control of the Government so The Puritans were in control. Puritans have some similarity with Muslims because they both believe that sin is a terrible thing and people who commit sin should be hardly punished.

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#### Re: Puritanism & Islam

by [Nargis Safi](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 2:22 AM

Today, can religion really be "removed" from its influence on governmental decisions, especially when the government is comprised of many different people? Should it be?

I personally believe that religion should not be part of government decisions because of different people living in this country. People should be able to enjoy and celebrate their freedom of religion, if religion become part of government decisions that will force them to follow a religion that they don't believe in.

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#### What are the similarities and differences between these two groups of students? Are you concerned with this finding?

by [Daniel Urias](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 8:48 PM

I would wager that the main difference causing the relating or lack thereof between Muslim middle eastern students and American students is that religion is simply not as intensely embedded in American Culture as it used to be. Not simply due to reasons such as a decline in church attendance, but because of the very way in which Americans live their lives is significantly less associated with the spiritual. Black Friday dwarfs any midnight mass and we spend more time sharing holiday activities on social media than we do huddled together by the hearth for warmth on stormy winter nights. We sit comfortably at home, work, and even while traveling (we're essentially sitting down while we're driving) so by the end of our day we don't reflect on the things we have or offer thanks to a higher being for blessing us with those things. Muslims may no longer endure these hardships as we no longer do, but their religion demands much more discipline from them than traditional American religions (christian, catholic, baptist, etc). For starters they must pray several times a day and face towards Mecca when they do, not to mention the rules and traditions many follow to this day like Ramadan. Participation, or lack thereof, is what drives a deeper connection with a person and their religion and traditions. Without participation, the practices in our cultures are doomed. Bottom line is that in modern times religion plays a much bigger role in some lives and cultures than in others. In this case, religion plays a much more active role in the lives of those Muslim students than in the lives of your average American student.

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3

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