

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

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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.

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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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Puritanism and its Influence on Religion and Culture

by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 6:10 PM

In the audio interview of professor Scott Casper by the "Journal of American History", professor Casper discusses an experience in which he found that Muslim students in Egypt could relate to and understand Puritanism better than American student can. While this may be an educational issue, it may also be a cultural issue. American culture is very different than that of Muslim culture, and therefore students

from a culture that is predominately religious may have more be more receptive to religious influence in their day to day lives. The culture may have a more lenient approach to separation of church and state (just as the Puritans had established) in which although there was a separation, religion still had an impact in government. Therefore, if the Muslim students are accustomed to this culture of acceptance of religion in government, the students can relate to the Puritan way of life better than an American student, who lives in a culture that takes separation of church and state very seriously.

The Puritans were extremely religious people. They believed in a strong and personal relationship with God, a complete dependence on human grace and salvation and the importance of personal religious experience. The Puritans "embraced Covenant Theology" (Murrin, p.61). In fact, the Puritans left England primarily because they could not convince the Church of England to purify itself and abide by the Puritan's belief system. This is further supported in Liberty, Equality and Power, A History of American People Seventh Edition in which the authors discuss the Puritan's struggle with the government in England. The "Puritans were unable to convince the government to purify its practices and relationship with the Church." (Murrin, p.62). This is probably because the belief system of the Puritans was so extreme. The Puritans believed that "anyone who found no inner trace of saving grace was damned." (Murrin, p. 62).

While both American and Muslim students are exposed to religion in society, Muslim students would have more exposure to the acceptance of religion and its relationship with their government because the students live in a country that is based on a very religious system, and where religion is widely practiced and accepted as a whole. In comparison, American culture takes a very strong stance on the separation of church and state. So, although we are exposed to religion as well, we do not incorporate it in the same way. In America, we basically took the Puritan idea of separation of church and state and held it to an extreme standard in which religion is to have no influence in our public policy whatsoever. This is interesting because our nation was based on the acceptance of all religion, but now we have made every attempt to keep religion out.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) 2

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Re: Puritanism and its Influence on Religion and Culture

by [Jared Moore](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 8:43 PM

Something that you said that I that was very interesting and true is that, "...our nation was based on the acceptance of all religion, but now we have made every attempt to keep religion out." This really does explain why most of America's students today aren't receptive to the history of religion. While the Puritans by some standards may have been extreme in their beliefs the whole topic of religion having any impact on the government is rejected today. Many religions have different beliefs from one another, not only the Puritans, so we just decide to avoid all religions together having any influence. While I do believe we can never fully separate religion from government, nor should we, the country really has done it's best to make that separation and enforce it.

This as you mentioned is different then the experiences of the Muslim people. The Muslim people are far more accepting of religion having an effect on the country/government. You could almost say they are welcoming to this. Since this is so drastically different then here in America it would make more sense that the Muslim students had a closer connection to the Puritan people. You did a good job explaining this and showing the big difference. It isn't just that the Puritan people were so extreme with their beliefs as to why society chooses not to learn about them. It is the fact that they were religious at all that society chooses is the reason they don't relate or understand or even want to learn about them. There is clearly a major separation between church and state today that was not always there.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Jessica Bene](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 1:01 AM

I personally am a Christian and sadly that inhibits the way that I am taught about other religions. I am personally interested in a lot of other peoples and religions or ways of life, and while I am not ashamed of my religion and am a proud Christian I know that it comes with pre-ingrained ideas of how these people are. It has taken a long time for me to argue against my brain and come to an understanding that people are people no matter the religion. The difference between Christian and Muslim is as much difference between a meat eater and a vegan. They are still people, just different life choices. Neither choice makes them inherently wrong or imperfect, damned for all eternity. It simply means we have chosen different paths in understanding the crazy world we've been thrown into.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 10:56 AM

I appreciate your comments on how people are the same with different life choices. I agree with you that a difference in religious choices should be judged by another.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:53 AM

Interesting way of thinking. I'm gonna respectfully disagree that just because you are Christian means you have pre-conceived notions about other religious groups. I don't think these ideas come from a religion, but are more so cultural. We get these ideas from hoe we are raised and maybe where we grow up than we do from our religion. Possibly the only idea we could get about these other religions is that they are wrong, but I don't see it going much further than that.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 12:17 PM

I wanted to tackle this question:

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 really don't think it can be. I think when all is said and done, it would be far better for the church to be completely separate from the state, given that there are so many different religions. However, that's not really an obtainable goal.

Often times we see this in a lot of the big debates that we have today, namely about abortion, and whether that should be legal. Many folks who consider themselves very religious DEFINITELY do not agree with abortion, regardless of the circumstance. I think, though, that we need to make decisions based upon the health and safety of the citizens, regardless of religious beliefs.

Another example of this church and state mixing lightly is the debate on homosexuality. There have been many instances in the past few years of, for example, homosexuals being denied service or entry into places. Someone who may consider themselves religious may think this is perfectly ok, since the Bible (and many other religious texts, if I'm remembering correctly) says homosexuality is a sin or frowned upon. Others believe (usually for completely non-religious reasons) that everyone should be allowed to love who they love, regardless of gender.

I think anything that involves the “human condition” will be inherently flawed in some way. No system that gets put in place will ever please every person. With so many folks who have religious beliefs in power, I think it's almost impossible to separate church and state completely, though I think that would be ideal in a perfect world.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 4:18 PM

I agree that the government's decisions should be based primarily on ethical and moral consideration, not religion, because we must take into consideration the impact these decisions have on people. In an ideal world, this would be true, however it is basically impossible to eliminate religious influence in political decisions.

I read an interesting article by Nicholas DiDonato on the Five Ways that Religion can Influence Political Beliefs (patheos.com) that basically summarizes the ways in which each person's religion influences their politics. He puts it clearly that "if anything, the mix of religion and politics should be loathed not because one corrupts the other, but because the result is so unpredictable." (DiDanto, p.1).

As you mentioned, there are many different types of religions and religious beliefs in our world. However, everyone has their own belief system, so it is almost impossible to strip away an individual's values that may have been instilled in them at a young age. I was raised a Christian and still am a Christian, but the way I view religion now is substantially different than the way I understood it as a child. For example, if asked at 10 if I supported the death penalty I would have said no because the bible says that "though shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13). Now, as an adult, I have a completely different reasoning for my lack of support in the death penalty, although my answer is based primarily on my belief that was initially absorbed from my religion. All in all, your decisions, perspectives and values come from your community and religion at a young age and therefore will influence your decision making as an adult, whether you are a political leader or a citizen voting.

Sum of ratings: 3 (1)

3



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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 12:36 PM

If you feel so inclined to share, does your religion (or lack thereof) bias your study of these people?

I do consider myself a Christian and someone who believes in God, but my view of the Christian in particular religion is very different than most. From my interpretation, in the eyes of God, all sin is created equal. Basically this means that if you murder someone, in the eyes of God this is the same as if you stole a candy bar from the convenience store. The human part of us tells us that these are two VASTLY different crimes, and should be treated as such. This leads me to my big point:

If all sin is created equally, why are things like homosexuality and abortion up for debate in our legislature, but not things like alcohol? Clearly in the bible being under the influence of anything is a sin, be it marijuana, alcohol, or other drugs. So why aren't these things discussed in our courts and legislature more often? I think the problem is that religion is up to interpretation in a lot of ways, and that the human side generally takes over, so we are able to pick and choose what is bad and what is good. This is where the gray areas come into play, because there are so many different people with so many different interpretations of their religion. This allows things to fall through the cracks and others to not.

(I understand this little sub-debate isn't entirely the question, but feel free to let me know if you agree or disagree!)

I think the way I think about religion leads me to be generally unbiased in this study. I don't really find myself thinking particularly biased towards any one group of people, because I think everyone is generally wrong in some sense. I think something as complex as religion is bound to be wrong in one area or another. I feel as though, because of my willingness to listen to pretty much anything and everything people have to say, I am able to remain unbiased.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Colleen Young](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 1:17 PM

I grew up in a Christian household and don't believe in God myself, however, I can see where others are coming from when it comes to religion or learning about a religious group. I agree with you about religion being left up to interpretation, and people picking and choosing what's good or bad. Going back to your other post and your example on the hot topic issue of abortion, what it really comes down to is that the legislature (made up mostly of old, white men who's views are vastly different compared to the younger generations of today) is exercising their power over women, whether it's religious or strictly governmental. In most cases, though politicians may not make the claim that their ideals are based on religion, there is always going to be a little bias, making it hard to completely separate church from state. I agree with you that our government should be focusing on the health and safety of the public, putting their own personal bias or views aside, making a collective decision that'll benefit everyone, or in this case, women.

I think that many of the people currently in power have to realize that times are changing and the world is different, at least in the United States. Women have more control, same sex marriages are legal, people are becoming more outspoken and standing up for what they believe in. Instead of being stuck in their ways, the legislature needs to find a way to compromise and come together, not shut down and ignore anyone who has different views than them (whether religious or otherwise). No, not everyone will be happy and I wish that we could have a perfect society where everyone gets along and church and state line up, but that's not reality.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Islamic/American Students Compare/Contrast**by [Colleen Young](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 3:47 PM

While both American and Islamic students have a grasp on Puritanism, Islamic students understand it better. There are various blurred lines when it comes to religion and state in Arab communities (audio 4:02 minute mark), therefore helping Islamic students understand the overarching depth and complexity of church and state in the Puritan era. On the other hand, American students brush it off and think of Puritanism as "unenlightened and barbaric"(audio 4:21 minute mark), even if they ARE religious. I personally think that with

the differences between cultures and religion, it makes sense for the history and ways of a religious empire or establishment to be understood to varying degrees by students, as not everyone has had the same experiences/exposure and can relate.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Islamic/American Students Compare/Contrast**by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 11:00 AM

I appreciate your comments on how everyone does not have the same experiences or exposure. I think this is reasonable difference and people should not be judged harshly for it.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Islamic/American Students Compare/Contrast**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:58 AM

I think this idea is interesting mostly due to the fact that the lines are obviously pretty blurry in our own country. Sure keeping the church and the state separate is the law, and it's SUPPOSED to be that way, but often times our political stances are effected by how we think from a religious standpoint. I'm of the opinion that if this case on polygamy was Christian and not Mormon, it may still be legal.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Carmen DeLaCruz](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 8:08 PM

Today Muslim students in Egypt can relate to the English Puritans in many ways. These Egyptian students understand the relationship of church and state of Puritan New England. This finding does not concern me. This just proves that the Muslim students have a greater insight on the influence of new cultures. I myself have a hard time relating to this finding personally. A well-educated American student should know that Puritans held their town together by their faith, the church and state worked together, and worldly success ended up representing salvation. My religion does not bias my opinion of this study. I have been taught that there should be a separation of church and state especially in school. As a Christian woman I am a bit torn on the issue. We pledge allegiance as "one Nation under God," our money sates "in god we trust." I understand that our early government was influenced by faith and honestly do not picture it with it being removed. I can also understand that we live in a nation where we are free to practice or not practice any religion we want. Should the government be implementing faith-based practices when there are citizens who do not believe in them? I conclude that there indeed should be a separation of church and state because of the many different beliefs in our nation.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

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**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 8:24 PM

I'm happy I wasn't the only one who was not concerned! The interesting thing between church and state is that while the lines legally are there, it's actually a bit of a gray area. Individuals are free to practice whatever religion they choose, but they're also allowed to run the country and those ideas will inherently run through.

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Essential Elements of Puritanism You Should Know**by [Kayla Elliott](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 8:34 PM

I felt that the six minute clip from the video we watched last week summed up the Puritan life well. In that video, it discusses how the Puritans were "radical protestants who wanted to purify the Church of England." There were two groups of Puritans, one of them remained in the church of England, while the other group started their own churches. However, both of these groups of Puritans were harassed to the point that they felt like they needed to go to the New World.

The first group of Puritans to go to the New World went on the Mayflower in 1620. They lived in tight knit towns where they all watched each other and these towns became the focal point of their government. In these towns, the only people who could vote or hold political office had to be members of the church. Even if you weren't members of the church, you still had to pay taxes to it.

To become a member of the church you had to be "saved." They had to prove they were saved by taking an oral test.

Puritans gave everyone pieces of land to build their homes and start their farms. However, they believed in equity and not equality, so the wealthier families got bigger pieces of land. Nevertheless, everyone did get land to be apart of the tight knit community.

There are many other facts about how the Puritans lived and what they believed in, but these were the main points from the six minute clip.

Sum of ratings: [2 \(1\)](#)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Essential Elements of Puritanism You Should Know**by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 12:47 PM

I find it interesting that there are two different interpretations as to why the Puritans left England. In the video clip Saints and Strangers, they discuss that while some believe that the Puritans left because they were being persecuted, those in England probably felt that the Puritans left because they had "tried and failed to persecute those in England and were now trying to persecute and force their religion on others" (Saints and Strangers 2:27). England had already established the Church in accordance with their beliefs, and they truly believed in what they practiced. They probably questioned

the Puritans and thought “who are they to tell them that they are wrong?” Take for example if you identify with a specific religion, then a group of people tell you that you are wrong, and they attempt to change significant parts of your belief, you would be upset as well. This would cause a strong dislike and disagreement with that group and would eventually lead to one side leaving or branching out and forming a new religious belief system and utilizing the beliefs they have just as the Puritans did. It makes me think about other religions and how they were formed. Maybe each religion was based off a primary and then branched off with specific changes. This could relate back to the many different Christian religions and churches we have here, all a branch off one or the other.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2


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Concerned with American Students

 by [Emily Barber](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 9:16 PM

After listening to Scott, I am concerned with how American students don't know much or anything at all about Puritanism. However, I can relate to the “eyes glazing over” like mentioned in the pod cast, before having a little knowledge about Puritans and their religion. I believe that both sets of students were uneducated about Puritanism. Students that are in different cultures like the middle east and the students in Egypt seem to have a connection to the Puritanism way. Where as the American students mentally check out because either the information that's given is in a way we don't understand or because students think the information about Puritanism doesn't pertain to the Americans. I believe we should all try to understand Puritanism, different religions and try to not be closed minded to understanding it. Having more knowledge about others and others religions could be beneficial to all of us when we have an open mind.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2


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Re: Concerned with American Students

 by [Colleen Young](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 12:34 PM

I agree with you about the "eyes glazing over", and how it can be concerning that American students are virtually clueless when it comes to Puritanism. Though students may not have a connection with Puritanism, having an understanding of it would benefit us in learning about religion, state, and the separation of church and state. I feel like pupils should at LEAST know about the separation of England from the Roman Catholic church and how they split up into religious groups with different values (i.e. Congregationalists, Separatists, Presbyterians) as well as the theology behind it (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gehMYiRzIS-7IAQKhIYNZMSeftj_el3g/view).

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2


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Re: Concerned with American Students

 by [Jessica Bene](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 11:12 PM

I agree with you, I think that American students 'tune out' when it comes to the Puritans or any religious groups history. I believe it pertains to our belief in religious freedom. Other countries, I believe, have a better grip or understanding of the strictness of religion controlling every aspect of their lives. While in America we have the privilege of being able to stay in our hometowns and partake in our communities without having to proclaim that we are apart of the church, or any church for that matter.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1


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**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 7:49 PM

I think it's mostly just important to be mindful of the fact that there is a lot of different ways of thinking that go with different religions. I'm not sure it's a matter of fully educating ourselves (though in a lot of instances I could see where that would be the case).

Sum of ratings: 0 (1)

0


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**Re: Puritanism & Islam**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:53 PM

I'd like to add on to what I said. I think one of the main reasons that this gets overlooked is the fear of discussing topics such as religion. We've essentially eliminated it from our school system which makes it hard to learn about religious groups at all, let alone how these groups impacted us as people.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1


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**Puritans and Modern Americans**by [Jared Moore](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 10:00 PM

The question was asked "is it concerning that Muslim Egyptian students could understand, relate to, and make sense of English Puritans better than American students?" To me I do believe it is concerning since the English Puritans played such a major role in the founding of this country, but it also is not surprising when I thought about it. So, I think it is worrisome and a cause for concern that American students just "glaze over" the Puritans.

Watching the video, *The Puritans* I could really begin to see the similarities between the Puritans and the Muslim people that Professor Mason was eluding to. Whereas the actual beliefs of the two religions are different the basic properties are similar. As the video states the Puritans set up towns in New England where the religious beliefs (faith) and the government were together. The video mentions that the towns were built around a church, and each person in the group had to make a convenient together (3:15-3:23). The church was the center of the town and the basis the town was built on. A simple example of this is that only church members could hold political offices (2:50-3:00), and every family had to

pay taxes to support the church (3:46-4:00). Though my knowledge of the Muslim people is limited I can see that they are built in a similar way. Their beliefs play a major role in the overall way of living of all the people. The interviewer on the podcast/audio clip made a mention that the line between state and religion in Egypt is kind of blurry since they have such influence on each other. Learning more about the Puritans and in just my limited knowledge of the Muslim people I can, in a way, see what Mason was talking about and it makes more sense why the Muslim students could relate to the Puritans more then the American students.

I think the Americans need to know what the Puritans were really like and how they ran their colonies, families and towns so they can understand the history of America better. Along with that know when and how things changed. Teach American how that the Puritans strict way of life led to their prosperity and changed their beliefs. As the began to grow and be more successful they began to care about church left. They did so good that they made their own religious downfall. They gave birth to a very prosperous people and a great economy and “the daughter devoured the mother” *The Puritans* (4:54-4:56). America changed from one specific religion. Whether the people started to not care about religion as much like the Yankees or, the people grew from within and by getting more immigrants and that made way to newer and different religions. This led to a more diverse religious base for the country with some religions and beliefs being similar and some being drastically different. The expanded religious base of America that we have now is in my opinion another reason why some American students don’t relate to the Puritans. The religions of now are some of the religions that the Puritans fled to get away from. So, the wider range of religions and beliefs that we have in America would also explain why the students Mason mentioned would “glaze over.” One of America founding principles was religious freedom and this basis made way for many religious people to flee here. The expanded religious presence of multiple, and on occasion vastly different religions, would be another reason many people of all ages don’t relate to the Puritans that helped build our country.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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Re: Puritans and Modern Americans

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 3:57 PM

I like your comparison between Puritan towns and Islamic societies. Although I have spent some time in Muslim countries, I had not made this connection before reading your post. I do understand why it is easier for Islamic students to relate to the Puritans than it is for modern American students. Islamic students are surrounded by religion all the time, so it makes sense that they would relate better to a group of settlers who used religion to guide all of their decisions. This is evident in modern Islamic societies where one can hear the Islamic call to prayer come over loudspeakers five times a day. The mosque is a very central part of Islamic society, just as the church was to Puritan settlers. It's hard for a lot of modern Americans to relate to this because we spend so much energy trying to keep church and state separate. In a country with so many religious factions and services available, we have opted to act like none of them exist. I think initially this was to ensure that the Church would not have control over the

government, but as it bled out into our school system and society, it seems to have grown out of control. I'm not sure that the original intent of separation of church and state is being realized today.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritans and Modern Americans**by [Jared Moore](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:28 PM

You made some great points that I hadn't thought of writing this such as the call to prayer that everyone can hear throughout towns. The Islamic people accept the influence of religion on their lives and their society. However here in America we try our best to keep religion out of society and keep religion 100% out of state. You made the statement about the original intent of separation of church not being realized today. I agree with this statement. When I read the statement of separation of church and state and I look at the beliefs and the founding fathers and the original settlers I see more of the state staying out of the church rather than a total separation of the two.

The original meaning of separation of church and state was to make sure the government was to stay out of the church and not prefer any church have control. They also made this separation to keep religion free for all to believe what they wanted. Society took this the opposite way and decided that religion should have no influence whatsoever and that religion should act like it is not really a thing. We act like religion has never had an influence on this country and that we don't have religions out there today. We have made such a major block today so it doesn't really surprise me that most of American students don't make any connection to the Puritans or the original settlers of our country.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Similarities and Differences**by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 2:06 PM

After listening to the interview with Professor Scott Casper by the *Journal of American History*, I have to say that I am concerned but not totally surprised. I think that we live in a country today that is more interested in viewing our history through the lenses of slavery and genocide than it is in grappling with the religious influence on the English colonies. I feel like there is more interest in portraying the settlers as invaders who destroyed the lifestyle of an entire continent than there is in understanding the religious differences and difficulties that lead the early settlers across the Atlantic in the first place. Especially in modern society, where the separation of Church and State is viewed as an absolute necessity by most, comparable to the intake of oxygen needed to keep us alive. In most circles, the discussion of religion is considered taboo, so learning about religious beliefs of early settlers is considered unimportant and boring

by a lot of students. These are of course my opinions. The students in Cairo were approaching this issue from a viewpoint of a society that has much less separation of Church and State. I felt like Mason eloquently summarized these differences starting around the 3:42 minute mark of the audio. He contrasts Puritanism with modern American Christianity and contemporary Islam in a way that summarizes the cultural differences that lead to these differing views on separation of Church and State. I think that this information is vital to understanding the different worldviews that these two groups of students approached this exercise with.

The most interesting part of the interview with Scott Casper to me was that the students that Patrick Mason taught in Cairo "...pretty much unanimously argued that the Mormons should be permitted to maintain polygamy because after all, that's part of religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution," (1:54). Interestingly though, when Mason did the same exercise at Notre Dame, the American students "...pretty much unanimously come down exactly where the Supreme Court did," (2:35). I don't think it is too much of a stretch to say that most, if not all the students in the Notre Dame exercise already knew how the Supreme Court had ruled on this issue, and this may have led to some bias in their own "ruling." The Cairo students on the other hand, were not told beforehand how the Supreme Court had ruled, and I speculate that there would be far fewer students in this exercise who would have prior knowledge of the court case, assuming that most of the students were not raised in the United States. I submit that this dynamic would lead to a more thorough and unbiased study of the case of *Reynolds v. U.S.* by the Cairo group. They came at this problem from a perspective that was far different than that of the U.S. students. Students who have grown up in a primarily Muslim culture may see polygamy as a normal part of society, whereas students who have grown up in the United States have had much fewer examples of polygamy in their everyday lives as a result of growing up in a nation where the Supreme Court ruled against polygamy over 100 years ago. The Cairo group, we are told, were "stunned to learn that the Supreme Court in 1879 went absolutely the opposite way," (2:13). I can see why they would have this reaction. Based on the culture that most of them presumably grew up in, coupled with the assumption that polygamy would be considered part of religious freedom guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, it of course would surprise them to learn that the Supreme Court ruled the way that they did. This is a viewpoint that I had not considered before, and I thought that the contrast between the two groups of students was interesting. It is amazing how much our upbringing can affect our opinions and our perceptions.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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Re: Similarities and Differences

by [Jared Moore](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 7:52 PM

I completely agree that the viewpoint and how we look at things plays a big part in what we see when we look back at history. Majority of people, as you said, "look at the settlers as invaders who destroyed the lifestyle of an entire continent..." If you look at them only from this viewpoint I can see why you wouldn't want to learn the history, or even care about the Puritans. When, in reality, they came to the Americas because they didn't have anywhere else to go. They were being persecuted, murdered, hated, and driven out of any place they went because of their beliefs. It is crazy to think about how far we came as a society from the early settlers and starters of the country. Religion used to be such a large part of life. So much so that religious freedom was included in the Bill of Rights/Constitution. "...Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." *The Constitution/Bill of Rights constitutionus.com*. However, now talking about religion is as you said taboo. It's not good to discuss religious beliefs because people might have different beliefs and not agree. So just don't talk about it at all. It's crazy seeing how much we as a people and country have changed. So like you said in the beginning it is concerning but not at all surprising that people don't care about the Puritans and don't want to learn their history.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Religion issues.**by [Jessica Lillis](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 5:38 PM

It is clear that religion plays an important role in our history. I do believe that students should know the role it played, and it is kind of disappointing that we are not taught certain things in our schools. There is such a conflict when it comes to religion and discussing it openly. Everyone has their own beliefs and views. I am not particularly religious, so I am not biased when I learn about other religions out there. I don't believe that religion should be completely removed, but I understand why it is such an issue.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Religion issues.**by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:35 PM

This is a GREAT point. Religion is obviously a touchy subject in schools since everyone has different beliefs and no one wants to offend anyone. However, lots of history is rooted in this religion. I think that's where the big disconnect comes for a lot of American kids. Most of them don't do a TON of learning outside what is taught in school, and since our history classes (at least in public schools, I can't speak for private) are severely censored, we don't get all of the pieces to the puzzle. That's very interesting!

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Puritanism & Islam**



by [Jessica Bene](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 11:06 PM

- 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?

While it would be ideal for religion to be removed from its influence on governmental decisions it is just not something that is achievable. It's not achievable for the simple fact that to govern a people you have to make decisions that are ethical and moral and good, the problem with that though is every religion has a different view of what things are ethical, what makes your morals and what determines who or what is good. To separate those aspects from religion would be to make a set of standards that are based on an impossible feat, a people not touched by a belief system.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2



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Can religion really be removed from its influence on governmental decisions, etc..?

by [Stephanie Riley](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 11:11 PM

- ***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?***

Now I'm not religious but I think that religion can't be fully “removed” from its influence on governmental decisions. I think this because religion and government were apart of each other for so long that it doesn't make much sense for them to be completely, separate. Most of our laws/rights were built on morals from the bible. Even with the amount of diversity in the government I think that religion shouldn't be fully removed from the government or government based decisions because in some cases it helps maintain morality.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1



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Re: Can religion really be removed from its influence on governmental decisions, etc..?

by [Garrhett Nelson](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:41 PM

It's unfortunate that we live in a society where we have to look to religion to determine our morals 🙄 . I agree that they will never be separated, but I disagree as to why they will never be separated. Just because something was rooted or founded in something doesn't mean that needs to continue. Slavery used to be a prominent industry in our country and now slavery is very illegal. Sometimes, yes, it happens but most everyone is against it. In this case I think the reason it can't be separated is because of personal religious beliefs. Everyone has a personal religious belief, whether it's Christian, Muslim, or Atheist. These thoughts and beliefs generally drive people's way of thinking. These

same people also are in charge of making laws and ruling on Supreme Court cases and dealing with international affairs. In order to separate church and state, we'd have to remove humans from state.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) 1

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The Puritans and the New World

by [Kathleen Gilbert](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 12:14 PM

The Puritans had a significant and extraordinary impact in the New World. The importance of the Puritans cannot be understated. In *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings*, by Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, they discuss the Puritans and their legendary way of life. Many people may assume that the Puritans knew exactly what needed to be changed to purify and reform the Church and how to achieve that change. However, many of the Puritans did not agree with one another. In fact, this disagreement is what led to a complete separation of the Puritans into what is now known as the Presbyterians, Separatists and Congregationalists. The Puritans did not agree among themselves on how to go with the reformation of the Church and what needed to be changed. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists insisted that they were members of the Church of England; the Separatists broke away, to the distress of the other Puritans (Miller, p.1). After the Great Migration, Puritans established a sustaining community with values that we still utilize today. In New England, the Puritans were very successful; the first printing press was established, Harvard was founded, and they encouraged free education in both public and private schools (Miller, p.2). Further, as the years went by the death rates decreased in this community (Murrin p.62). This was due to a healthier living condition due to a decrease disease affiliated death (Murrin p.62). With this healthier community, new sustainability within the community formed and families grew quickly. More than one-fifth of the men who founded Andover lived past age 80, and infant mortality fell, and women were beginning to survive child-birthing. (Murrin, p.63). The Puritans left England to establish a community of pure, religious individuals, or "saints". Each member was required to strictly follow the bible, which led to what is known as "the Puritan drama" where each member would face personal struggles against the devil every day. (Miller, p.2). The Puritans intended to keep this community private and were not interested in outsiders or the use of the slaves (Murrin, p.64). According to Miller, the Puritans influence and experience in the New World was so great that "without some understanding of Puritanism, it may safely be said, there is no understanding of America", (Miller, p.5).

Sum of ratings: 3 (1) 3

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