

HST 201: History of the United States (Escobar Meta 21035 21036)

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Puritanism & Islam

by Joe Escobar - Friday, October 10, 2014, 11:37 AM

This forum thread is for Puritanism & Islam posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. For purposes of encouraging discussion, you may decide to separate your responses into SEPARATE posts. 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. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Puritanism & Islam

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More questions than answers.

by Amy Trask - Monday, October 13, 2014, 4:15 PM

I have been completely captivated by the subject of religion and it's importance in the founding of our country. I was taught that the pilgrims came to America to escape religious persecution, and that is why we are able to enjoy the freedoms of living in America today. In hindsight, it is baffling that the conversation stopped there. I have heard these religious names tossed about throughout my lifetime, but have had no understanding of what they stood for, or how they came to be. My grandfather grew up on a reservation before marrying my Irish grandmother and moving to this side of the

country. I have never been to church in my life, but consider myself very spiritual, carrying on the beliefs and values taught by my grandfather. I do find it alarming that the "American Descendants" of our puritan forefathers understand less than students in other countries, Egypt, or any other. I firmly believe knowing where you come from is important in the evolution of humanity. So it's perplexing that I myself have never taken into consideration the religious affiliation of anyone in public office, especially the Supreme Court. I do find it interesting that Catholics hold the majority, and wonder how much weight that really holds. As was mentioned in class, are these judges able to leave their religion at the door like a hat or coat? Is there really a separation of church and state, or are we just pretending? Would our country run more smoothly, our understanding of our backgrounds be clear, or America be truly free if we took on a "totalizing, undifferentiating world view," like our Muslim friends? I look forward to reading your opinions.

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Re: More questions than answers.



by Colin Roach - Friday, October 17, 2014, 8:37 PM

I personally think that a true separation of church and state is not feasible to accomplish on the scale of a national government such as ours. What I think would serve us better than to attempt to deny it, is to accept that our religious views will always affect the way we view the world around us, and the values we maintain. Knowing that we're biased, so to speak, we can try to accept when a situation conflicts with those beliefs, and either step down from the situation where our impartiality is compromised, or attempt to understand the values of other parties involved and try to reach a compromise.

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Re: More questions than answers.



by Dalyn Stram - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 12:52 AM

"Separation of church and state" has been a

myth in America since the beginning. America was founded on religious ideas (mainly Christian; Deism to a large extent in regards to the Founding Fathers) and beliefs and values formed from the Bible shaped many our own laws and values. Our nation was not uniquely formed from atheist ideals, or agnostic ideals, or Buddhist or Islamic ideals. America was shaped uniquely by Judeo/Christian ideals to a large extent and by people who believed in these ideals. I tend to think that revisionist history is partly at play when you hear people lash out against such an idea that Christian was and frankly is still, a Christian nation. People can follow or choose not to follow whatever religion they want, but I think we have to at least acknowledge and pay respects to our history and why we are blessed with the freedoms we have.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Blurred Lines



by Dalyn Stram - Monday, October 13, 2014, 5:31 PM

There are a few things I took away from Professor Scott Casper's findings. I think first of all, his findings aren't necessarily negative. Over the course of American history, we have become a nation of cultures and religions from every corner of the Earth, so naturally we won't feel as much of a connection to our founding roots as we would have 100 years ago. The religion poll our class participated in shows that while the majority of students do associate with Christianity (protestant or Catholicism), there are a wide variety of religions represented.

I am no necessarily concerned with this finding, although I am concerned with the fact that our country seems to be continually trying to downplay our Christian roots or abandon them completely. I do think students in America (regardless of religion) should be taught our country's roots. I think we've gotten so politically correct that sometimes it seems inappropriate to tell someone who isn't of Christian association that we're a Christian nation.

I think it's hard for not only myself, but most Americans,

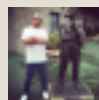
to relate to the Puritans and their experience in early America. The Puritans had a society in which their religion and government were intertwined. This is why the students in Egypt related to them; their country has blurred lines between religion and state as well. In America today, we believe in separation of church and state, so it's hard for the average person to really understand the Puritan experience. Throw into that the fact that some of them were escaping religious persecution (another experience few Americans know while much of the outside world deals with daily) and it's understandable that Egyptian students will relate better to the Puritans than their counterparts in America. So again, I'm not really concerned with these findings, because most people would agree that our separation of church and state is a good thing, but I am concerned with the fact that in my opinion, we are not adequately educating our students on our religious history and how it shapes, and continues to shape, our nation's history.

I do have a certain religious "bias", as everyone does, but I don't think it has impacted my study of people like the Puritans. When I attended a Christian university in California, we studied the Puritans and other early religious colonies/groups in America, and some of them were flat out crazy. I think some of that early history helped lead to our idea of church/state separation. So I really don't think my bias comes through too much. I want to see facts for what they are.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Puritanism

by Brian Burt - Monday, October 13, 2014, 8:51 PM

To my knowledge about the video and what i know is that the puritans believed in a society that religion was the way of life. Puritans where very educated and built the mayflower. The video says that the puritans lived in tightly nit towns in Boston and they became kind of like the government. religion in the puritans view was the way to live and anyone who didnt believe that was the way or did it the way they wanted was going to go too hell. Faith and god was what glued everyone together. i truly believe in what they all did and when people started not believing in what they where saying the town would fall apart and that makes sense. Puritans lived in harmony or they tried to be but thats not so much the case when someone didn't they where punished. All

families that lived had to pay taxes for the church.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Puritanism & Islam



by Renee Boykin - Monday, October 13, 2014, 10:52 PM

I found the podcast about the Egyptian students relating to the puritans more then most Americans very interesting, but logical. We have moved so far away from secular views, and pride ourselves on individuality, and freedom of religion, while most eastern countries have not. Religion and all that it entails encompasses their daily lives. My eyes don't glaze over when I hear about the puritans because it's interesting, and I seek to understand, but I didn't grow up religious. I got introduced to a secular viewpoint in the form of Catholicism from my soon to be ex husband.

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The bias of Puritanism and its role in the depiction of Islam



by Colin Roach - Monday, October 13, 2014, 11:34 PM

Prior to taking this class, I'd heard relatively little negative information regarding Puritans other than the Salem Witch Trials. I wonder how much of a role the religious bias of our predecessors has had in painting Muslims as terrorist extremists, even though that's a relatively small portion of Islam, and not representative of the religion as a whole.

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Re: The bias of Puritanism and its role in the depiction of Islam



by Dalyn Stram - Friday, October 17, 2014, 6:45 PM

Christianity/Islam has certainly had a long and tumultuous history, but I don't think much "bias" is necessary to paint certain people as terrorists when they do things like fly planes into buildings or kill thousands of innocent people. Not that that extends to all people of a religion or culture, just the ones who deserve the label.

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Re: The bias of Puritanism and its role in the depiction of Islam

by Colin Roach - Friday, October 17, 2014, 8:25 PM

Certainly, the acts of terrorists are wrong, I'm not attempting to contest that. What I'm saying is that it has felt to me at times that people here in the States have tended to treat the terrorist sects as representative of Islam as a whole. What I meant is that I wondered what role this country's religious past has played in biases such as that.

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Re: The bias of Puritanism and its role in the depiction of Islam

by Ronald Howard - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 10:11 PM

"people here in the States have tended to treat the terrorist sects as representative of Islam as a whole"

I agree that it is wrong to pin it on Islam as a whole, but I think you can argue that the United States religious past being vastly different than the Middle East had made it harder for us to get along. I think each countries religious bias influences how they treat each other in one way or another.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by Michael Leopold - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 8:43 AM

I think Joe hit the nail on the head when he alluded that educators have done a poor job of conveying the significance of the Puritans during the infancy of what

would become this nation. I have often, over the years, expressed my disdain for the education system in this country and have many times referred to history curriculum as particularly poor. There have been MORE than a handful of times when I've found out the truth of a time, an event or a person in history that had been totally diluted, side-stepped or downright falsely taught in my younger years, and it really is angersome that we are essentially lying to our kids. But, that is for another post so I digress.

I think we find ourselves not being able to relate to the Puritans in our generation for a multitude of reasons.

First, as stated in the web video, church & state in the early Puritan settlements acted closely together, making faith a main focal point of society. This is something that has a certain stigma in today's society. "The separation of church & state" has almost become a slogan in today's American society. Anything short of that, as we have often seen in the media, will create an uproar. Is this necessarily a bad thing? It could be. We have to realize that in the early Puritan settlements, it's safe to assume that everyone, or most everyone, was a puritan.

They all had similar ideals about the Anglican church and thus could live harmoniously under this type of governance. Now, to contrast that with today: We are NOT all Puritans anymore. We, and I feel it safe to assume to a certain degree, we all take a small bit of pride in our countries diversity. Diversity in race, culture, life, and most importantly to this forum, religion. I think that our little religion poll didn't quite show this diversity in the way that it was intended but, even with such a small sample set we can still see that people from all walks of belief reside in this country. So the elements that held the early Puritan settlements together simply will not work in today's society. The video stated, "Faith was the glue that held the towns together." This worked for them. But we are not a nation of a few thousand anymore. We are a nation of millions, from all walks of life. And because of this, in efforts to keep this country a place where one can feel confident in his own methods of faith, the government HAS to remain secular, or as secular as it can be. We have to remember that politicians are also people, have their OWN religious backgrounds and beliefs, and by default have their own biases toward their own faith in the policies that they back and their own ideas about the future of the country.

There is nothing wrong with this. We are all people, and we all think that our way is the right way, or we wouldn't support it. We just have to keep in mind that OUR way, isn't always the only way. And other people

of other faiths aren't necessarily WRONG just because they're different.

So, do I find it surprising that Muslim students in Egypt find Puritanism easier to relate to than we do here in this country. Not at all. This only shows that their religious beliefs of today hold similarities to the Puritans of back then. America has evolved to a point where religion plays a larger role to the individual, to the home, or maybe even to the small community, and less of a role in the governance of an entire nation. There are simply too many people with too many different religious ideals to lump us all into one doctrine of religious absolutism. We have to continue to strive to make this great country that we were ALL lucky enough to be born into, a place where everyone feels safe to believe what they want to, worship the god, or gods, or blade of grass, that they want to. Because that is what makes America, America. Were the Puritans and their success in colonial America an important part of our history? Absolutely. But comparing their success to our society today is apples and oranges.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by Amy Trask - Friday, October 17, 2014, 1:03 PM

I really enjoyed this post. It was well written and thought provoking. I agree that the education system in this county is lacking in many ways. History is an area that I find especially ambiguous. They say there are four sides to every story, so I would imagine that sifting through the layers and sources' looking for concrete historical evidence is exhausting. For this reason I am not surprised that the American People are confused about what has really happened, or why. It might be the saving grace in our society.

Like was mentioned in Michaels post, America is extremely diverse. Had our Historians and religious leaders driven their ideas, rules, and past down our throat, there would be more problems in this country than there already is. The Puritans would have created the exact environment they had left England to escape. Joe pointed out in class that our textbook authors brought up some negative aspects of diversity in chapter 3, and how rare it is

for someone to take that viewpoint. It's true, and if you think about it, diversity is what unites us as a country today, like religion united the small Puritan colonies. As Michael mentioned in his post, we are a country of millions. Diversity is what works for us today. It makes me think that we have more in common with our Puritan ancestors than I previously thought. Our version has evolved to celebrate, and accommodate our differences, rather than our similarities.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by Dalyn Stram - Friday, October 17, 2014, 7:05 PM

I think when you say something like "Diversity unites us as a country today", or "Diversity is what works for us today", you have to be careful. I think everyone would agree that diversity is good in general, and a diversity that actually works is something we all have to strive for. However, I think it's inaccurate to think diversity is all great and works well all the time today. Just take a look at the news and events happening around us every day in this country. How many times have you seen stories that otherwise wouldn't be newsworthy suddenly become newsworthy simply because there was diversity involved? White man kills a white man, no news. Black man kills a black man, no news. But if a white man kills a black man? Suddenly that becomes news that tears our country apart. And why? Diversity. The two parties involved had different skin colors, so of course some racism or racial tension must have been involved. They become stories that even our elected politicians feel a need to speak out on. Affirmative action is another great example. It served a good and much needed purpose in the past, but today it seems little more than forced diversity. Businesses get pressured to hire people based on skin color and a striving

for more "diversity", rather than who's is most qualified for the job.

I won't fool myself into thinking all people want diversity today, but I think most of us want it. However, we also have to realize that there are issues that arise out of diversity and there probably always will be. Taking people from all sorts of different races, religions, cultures, etc is inevitably going to cause some friction, and that's simply human nature. We tend to feel more comfortable with what we're accustomed to and feel more nervous around anything different. Is there any chance this is why it always seems America has more issues than other countries? At least that's how the media sometimes portrays it. Could it be that because we have historically welcomed all peoples that that diversity and incredible mix of cultures/races/religions simply causes more friction? Maybe that friction is actually indicative of our success, not our shortcomings. Other countries might not deal with some of the issues we do, but maybe it's because they just don't have the mixing pot of people we do. Just words for thought.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam
by Michael Leopold - Friday, October 17, 2014, 8:15 PM

Media portrayal is a HUGE reason why we seem to have many more problems than other Western countries. Media is not only paid, but competes with other media outlet for the juiciest story.

They're fighting for viewers, and only put out the stories that are going to keep us on their channel for five more minutes. It should be said that I am ALL for the freedom of the press and I want to be informed of what is going on in my country, but I strongly feel that the mainstream media has a certain power to cause harm as well as the good that it does. They know that most of us don't have time to fact check, read all the

papers, & watch every channel to get the most informed viewpoint. Most stories, even the "important" ones only get about 3-4 minutes of air time and then it is on to the next thing. It is impossible to explore every angle. And many times, maybe a little too much time is spent on an issue. Morgan Freeman, the actor, was once asked during an interview how he suggests we get rid of racism in this country and he replied, "Stop talking about it!" (Link to the video: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/fre-on-black-history/>). I feel that the diversity in this country would be a lot less tumultuous if we'd just leave it alone, stop putting labels on everything, and stop making it a larger issue when a "white man kills a black man" or vice-versa. Murder is murder. It only becomes a race issue when we MAKE it a race issue. I agree with you that affirmative action has become increasingly obsolete and I've spoken to many african folks whom agree. Now, all of these same ideas can be applied to religion in this country. We've come to be a country in which we are free to pray to whichever god we desire, and I think that most of us would agree that this is the correct standard to have in a free society. Will there be disagreements? Yes. Will this diverse society of ours always see eye to eye on every issue for all of time? No way. There are simply too many people with too many different opinions on too many different topics for that to even be fathomable. But this country affords us that right. We have a right to disagree, and I think that is the true beauty of it. It was said in class that as soon as the Puritan colonies started to have other religions and peoples enter their little enclave of Puritan land, this is when tide started to turn toward their imminent downfall. I think that that is narrow sighted. Yes, religious diversity was an issue of that time, but the population rise, I feel, was the main cause. It is simply inevitable when you

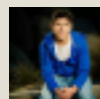
have a larger and larger group of people, that disagreements are going to surface.

It's easy for us to look at the small Puritan colony of folks whom had the same beliefs about how things should be and say, "See, they had it right, until they let others in." If we were to go to, hypothetically here, a small commune in northern California where a couple hundred people worked and lived on an organic farm, all similar minded people, they would have a seemingly utopian little "village" as well. But if you allow that to expand for long enough, people are surely going to begin to disagree about things, have different ideas on how to fix problems, etc. The beauty of being a human is our ability to form our own ideas and opinions about things. And naturally, we are not always going to agree. But we can still get along if we all can remember that point and also remember that in most cases, our way is not the only way. We still have a lot of work to do in this country in the effort to live harmoniously with eachother, but I dont think that our diverse cultures, races, religions, or otherwise are our real problem. They only continue to be because we allow them to.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam



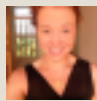
by Cristian Martinez - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 9:21 PM

I like your thoughts and ideas used in your post. Really gets me thinking about how things could've been different had certain factors changed in the way society runs today.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by Hannah Morton - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 9:26 AM

I would think that anyone would be concerned about a finding like this. Generally as a nation, when we hear that another Country has more knowledge about our place than us, we get concerned. But is there really reason to be concerned? Probably not. I am happy to know that people in other countries are becoming familiar with the ways that we as a nation choose to do things. Unfortunatly there is a lack of knowledge to our future generations on ways that our constitution would follow and do things, and I feel that this is so because of the different regulations and "socially correct" ways of things being taught now a days are changing on the daily.

You asked if we have been influenced or understand the ways of the American Puritans in the New World, and this is easy for me to answer. I would say yes. I grew up in a home where self reliance and self awareness were a strong feature in my bringing up. Therefore many of the Puritan views such as when they formed their own church, after Martin Luther's people. As well as the puritans are always looking to do something better for themselves as an individual, and I would say all of us as students (or most) are taking on that belief.

The Religion poll that we took in class did not have any affect on my view of the American Puritan culture, but I am sure that it will have an effect on many of the other students. I was shocked to see the amount of students who were Agonist, or Atheist. As well as a lack for Muslim, Buddhist, Mormon, or Jewish. It shows me that the culture of our nation has changed significantly

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Glazed and confused

by Adam Graves - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 10:43 PM

Eyes glazed over on this one. Pretty sure mainly cause of my view on religion and it's importance of shaping what we call Merica today. I don't subscribe with any particular faith and have personally attend services at a christian church and a catholic church. I do believe that hopefully there is some sort of higher being mainly so that if I do pass and there is a "God" or Higher authority I

can say I knew you existed. I also might use this stance because of a up bringing that consisted of not even attending service on those particular holidays that people attend several times a year to maintain their religion because they went to service 3 times a year. So short is not concerned with findings. I do love architecture and if you ever find your self in Barcelona go to this basilica it's absolutely breath taking link below.

<http://www.sagradafamilia.cat/sf-eng/>

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The Effects of The Puritans Still Linger

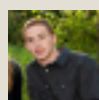


by Ashley Lazorchak - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 1:51 AM

Listening to Patrick Mason's essay, he explains that the aspects to Puritanism "resonate in many, though not all, corners of contemporary Islam in a way that most expressions of American Christianity no longer do." To me, this was a slightly absurd statement. To say that Puritanism no longer affects American religion is illogical. Puritanism (pg. 43, 65-70/Puritan video) had a vast effect on religion and how people view religion today. For Puritans, religion was their way of life. Today, most people who would be considered very religious most often base their actions and decisions on what would appeal to their religion, just as the Puritans did. Knowing the Puritans were Protestant and looking at the religion poll for not only our class, but a US religion poll (<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>) as well, Protestant/Christianity is the highest percentage for both. In regards to Scott Casper stating that when "American students hear the word 'Puritanism' their eyes usually glaze over," it surprised me as well. Learning about the Puritans was one of the most interesting topics for me so far in this class. It gave me a deeper insight to religion today.

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Puritan values still remain



by Ronald Howard - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 6:40 PM

If you observe the values of contemporary American society, you will find traces of puritan values that have passed down from generation to generation regardless

of the current generations religious orientation. The core of puritan values such as good works, predestination, and grace, are all values that are still instilled into American society today. The idea of grace; that success was a direct result of Gods love, and failure was a result of the lack thereof, are ideals that Americans still have engrained in their psyche. Americans honor and respect success, and we look up to those who do successful things. Puritans had the same reaction to success, only they believed it was strictly due to Gods love. So as religious orientation has changed in America throughout history, the values that our ancestors lived with are still ones most Americans recognize and respect to this day.

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Puritans and Muslims can relate



by Cristian Martinez - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 8:08 PM

In a way, it is quite shocking to me to have read that for the first time. Then again, knowing a few things about Muslim religion, it becomes a little less eye-opening for me. Comparing Puritanism and Muslim religion, you can see that both cultures are very similar in the sense that they are/were very strict with enforcing strict religious adherence upon their followers in order to keep in unity and peace. For this reason, I'm not too surprised by this finding. Also, I too can relate to the Puritans and Muslims, as my childhood consisted of hours of religious practice. Every Sunday, I would be forced out of bed early to help with our community church as an 'altar server', even if I didn't want to. My parents would always tell me that by being faithful to god and helping out the church, God would love me more and I would surely go to heaven when the time came. This definitely influenced how I thought and the actions I took.

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Another view from Turkey



by Sullivan Paulson - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 9:28 PM

I found this interview interesting. One thing that struck me was that the comparison, at least in the context of the interview, was pointed specifically at the religion of the students and how it affected their point of view. It may be true that in most Islamic dominated countries

you could find similar reactions to Puritanism as the ones the Egyptian students had. One country that was not mentioned specifically was Turkey. Their secular state makes what we are used to in this country, (the principle of separation of church written in the first amendment) look like a concrete wall next to a pane of glass. Keep in mind that Turkey is about 99.8% Muslim, mostly Sunni, the other 0.2% are mostly Christian and Jewish (source World Factbook). The dominant religion, Islam, is regulated by the government and all Islamic teaching from Imams is approved and made uniform by this department. At the same time all government officials are not allowed to display religious symbols, use religion as a talking point or even to discuss whether they think religion should have a roll in government policy. Population wise, they have a split in who finds this form of government appealing, mainly rural versus urban inhabitants. In the last couple of years this divide has been lessened somewhat, but even with recent policy changes the country remains very secular, at least when it comes to their official government policies. Ethnically and culturally the population is very different to most other Muslim countries. Turkey is often thought of and talked about in the US as a Middle Eastern country, but I know from personal experience that they do not identify as such. Turkey is a geographical and cultural crossroads between Europe and Asia. I would be interested to know if students in Turkey would have a comparable or different reaction to the same class exercise. On the whole, I do think that the religion of a group of people can and will have an impact on how they see and interact with the world. It is however important to remember that, as with the study of History, there are generally more factors to be considered.

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