

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.

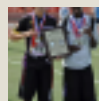
After studying the required materials, address the various questions. For purposes of encouraging discussion, you may decide to separate your responses into SEPARATE posts. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within 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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Re:

by Benjamin Kelly - Sunday, October 12, 2014, 4:12 PM

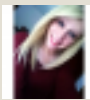
Before taking this class I didn't know much about the Puritans or their religious practice, but am now starting to understand how big of a part of their culture it was. Their religion was what held their society together, but could also be argued as what tore them apart. What really surprised me was the fact that whether you were a member of the church or not, you were required to pay taxes to the church. It also seemed funny to me that the Puritans left England because of problems with the church and then had many of their own problems when they created their own society that was built on the

foundation of the church. The point that was made by Professor Patrick Q. Mason about Muslim students better relating to what the Puritans were going through than American students, in my eyes is very accurate. We live in a society where people are free to worship and believe what they want. The religion poll is a good example of that. In the Muslim culture the separation of church and state or lack of, is very similar to the Puritans culture. I can personally say that my eyes have "glazed over" the issue because its not something I've ever really thought about or learned about.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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American History Taught too Early in American Schools?

by Kendra Helgeson - Sunday, October 12, 2014, 9:14 PM

I am a little concerned with this finding because it doesn't make sense for Muslim students in Egypt being able to understand/relate to the Puritans more than American students. You would assume that it would be the other way around. American students start learning about that era in elementary school, and I think because we learn about it continuously through middle school and high school as well it just gets boring. Students get bored and think, "Oh I already know about all of this what's the point of learning about it over and over again?" but once we keep going through the next level of education, teacher's will usually dig deeper into what they went through and everything instead of just the basics. I'm guilty of thinking that, but I have realized that I learn something new every time I get the chance to study it. If the Muslim students decide to take a class on it, they will automatically be taught the material in depth. Maybe American students shouldn't be taught about the time period until we get to middle school?

Personally, I've been raised in a Lutheran family. Both of my parents have grandparents or great-grandparents that came to the US from Norway and it's been carried on for the generations since. I went to church and Sunday school pretty often when I was younger but I hardly ever do anymore because I have a few conflicting beliefs with the religion. Some of what the Puritans can be looked at as wrong, and other parts could be looked at like they were some of the most wonderful people in that time. Because I don't know exactly everything Lutherans practice and believe it's hard for me to side

with just one of them, but I would say having that knowledge does make my study of the Puritans differ than someone who practices a different religion or doesn't affiliate with a religion in general.

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Worlds Apart



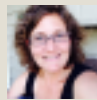
by Zachary Ehrhardt - Monday, October 13, 2014, 1:00 PM

Honestly, when I study the Puritans, all I can see is how far we have come. In the video, Professor Casper talks about how religious matters were a part of every aspect of puritan life, and how the lines between church and state were blurred. I cannot relate to this matter at all. I personally do not have a strong faith, and I don't have that spiritual aspect in much of my life. I also have a strong belief that in order for our country to be the fairest, church and state have to be completely separate. We are a melting pot of many cultures, and we can not have one group of people presiding over it all if they are going to be exclusive to how they believe.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Worlds Apart



by Candice Oster - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 7:12 PM

I agree that we have made advances from where the Puritans were. We do not elect our officials as to what position they hold in the church, however even with the diversity in our culture, and different groups of people presiding over it, decisions still tend to be made by just 2-3 groups. I think of what Joe told us about the religious background of the members of the Supreme Court, there are just 2 different religions being represented right now with a total of 9 members.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Lost Understanding Via Changing Culture



by Brennen Mock - Monday, October 13, 2014, 10:06 PM

I am not concerned or surprised by this finding. I have noticed for a while that cultural backgrounds can easily influence a perception on historical culture or ideals. As for myself I think my eyes tend to glaze over. I am numb to the motivations that spurred the Puritans. Modern American culture's long separation of Church and State has also influenced my understandings of how the initial governments were set up. I have been told throughout my educational experience, whether directly or indirectly, that government is purely political and church is purely religious. But many early colonial governments had regulations that restricted who could hold offices based on religious affinity. In their culture this would be normal; Ours not so much. I think the results of the religion poll do have an influence on my analysis. The larger population of Protestant/Christians than other religions gives a sense that we are still a predominately protestant culture. This leads to the idea that since we started predominately Protestant and we are still here today, our culture hasn't changed since then. Our current Protestant culture is the exact same as back then. Which we have learned is likely not the case. The internet and widespread communication of today has opened the door for a broader spectrum of cultures to influence ours; this was just not feasible back then.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Reynolds v United States ruling is unjustified.

S

by Cody Faurie - Monday, October 13, 2014, 10:19 PM

I honestly have never given much thought to the fact that Mormons are unable to pursue polygamy because I am a Puritan (a Baptist to be exact), and polygamy is not something I believe in. Even with that said, I cannot believe that the Supreme Court would not allow Mormons their religious rights to polygamy. I thought that the rulings should be separated from their own personal beliefs and only look at what the Constitution states. The ruling of Reynolds v. United States is obviously heavily biased in Puritan and Catholic beliefs as Professor Scott Casper pointed out. Many might think by all rights I should side with the Supreme Court's ruling but honestly I don't, it may not be my belief but I have no right to restrict others from practicing their Constitutional rights of freedom of religion.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

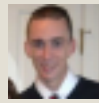
by Darren Rolewicz - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 12:28 AM

I must begin by stating my lack of religion and my attitude towards it makes me somewhat biased when learning about topics like this. This finding did not concern me at all and I actually felt a bit of relief. I could not be happier that the average student in America could not relate to the Puritans or how they lived, and I can completely understand why a Muslim culture would. The moment the web video about the Puritans began explaining how they would religiously police their colonies, I immediately thought, 'this sounds like an Islamic state enforcing Sharia law. It's difficult for me to relate to the Puritans but I understand how influential they were in forming the New World. I feel all the things they accomplished and stood for to try and distance themselves from the behavior of the colonists in Virginia could have all been done without a religious influence or label. However this is a modern viewpoint of the situation. I guess in a less scientific time religion was needed in a way. And while these Puritan colonies began doing this well before constitution, the amount of religious influence that penetrated colonies, cities and states afterwards are hypocritical to the constitution and no one seems to bat an eye. For instance the early topic on this podcast of polygamy. Personally I don't agree with polygamy, but if you're going to claim to be a country with religious freedom it must truly have it. Freedom is not something you can amend or put statutes on and this hypocrisy has puzzled me for years. So I understand the influential role Puritans played, but I have trouble seeing what their religion had to do with it. While learning about these settlers the text and videos seem to emphasize their religion as an instrument for their prosperity and I just fail to see the connection. And also once they became prosperous, they fell into the cultural attitude of selfishness and individuality that they tried to avoid when starting these colonies. So in the end their religion was not strong enough to keep them from succumbing to vanity, yet I feel like Puritanism is still being put on a pedestal in all these readings and videos.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Living Conditions vrs Religious Impact

by Daniel Leman - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 1:11 AM

This audio file raises both a lot of concerns, and questions. Not only to the fact that Muslim students can more easily relate to Puritan settlers then we do, but in what ways are they able to do this? With recent talks about ISIS, I have spent some time attempting to more closely understand Muslim culture. A video I watched recently ("The Islamic State" : Vice News) talks about the vast cultural differences current day Muslims endure. From strict regulations on how business must be done, to basic cultural expectations, such as men being required to grow a full beard. To the "blurry lines between religion and state" (Audio file: Professor Scott Casper: 4:05). These things are not often something we think of, when we think of "The Land of the Free", but it was much more the case during the time of the Puritan settlers. Perhaps these differences allow Muslims further insight into how life would have been at the time.

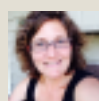
Personally the closest I am able to relate to early settlers is from some of the camping trips I have been on. Knowing what it is like to try and survive off of your surroundings, and sleep under less then optimal conditions. But to have this be daily life? I cannot even pretend to understand what that would be like. Let alone trying to picture life with a 5 to 1 ratio of men to women (Liberty, Equality, Power: Pg 62), and the huge impact that would have on life! And though this weeks poll shows similar religious diversity to what may have been expected for early settlers, I question if this actually has any impact on our ability to comprehend these conditions. As I would imagine it is the actual living conditions of students in Egypt, over their Muslim religion actually having an impact on their opinion of early settlers.

In conclusion I wonder if our very basic cultural differences are what provides us this limitation to our own understanding. And if so, how we could ever hope to achieve the same level of understanding the Muslims have about our own ancestors?

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Religious Influence

by Candice Oster - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 5:08 AM

The importance of the religious influence in the founding of the English colonies that was discussed last week do take a different feeling when it is realized that so much of today's population may not really be able to see the connection. In looking at the results of the Religion Poll from the class, the majority of the population is not identifying with the Catholic or Protestant/Christian faiths. When listening to the podcast and hearing the experience of Professor Mason, it is not surprising that his students in Egypt had an easier time relating to the religious freedom that the colonists set up in New England in the 17th century. What Professor Mason found was that the students in Cairo were able to relate more closely with how the Puritans set up the colonies, as he stated, "in which the sacred presses upon every aspect of life". That seemed to make a connection more with them than it does with today's youth. He talked about their worldview being sacred in a way that American Christianity is not. There seems to be a more unified belief system that the Puritans had when founding the New World, but that has been blurred for US students by the cultural differences and diversities that became the United States. Many of the cultural differences were here from the beginning as the settlers experienced the Native Americans and their belief system. Our history books have proven to leave out the real reason the settlers wanted to come, to have the focus on their beliefs, yet now there seems to be such diversity that the lines are blurred, as we often see, unity is not the base of our belief system anymore.

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Religious poll statistic information?



by Cody Faurie - Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 6:48 AM

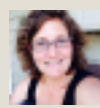
I agree with your statement Candice , except the results of the classes religious poll was 30/56 (8 didn't participate) are protestant or Catholic that is more than 50% of the class.

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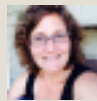
Re: Religious poll statistic information?



by Candice Oster - Wednesday, October 15, 2014, 12:57 PM

Cody, I apologize for my adding mistake. I also did not take into account the percentage that did not even take the poll. With that, it also changes my thoughts on the topic. It is more about the religious freedoms that brought the Puritans to the new world that make it look like our country should have a stronger consideration for those freedoms.

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Re: Religious Influence

by Candice Oster - Saturday, October 18, 2014, 5:39 AM

The more I think about the puritan's for what they brought to the New World , it all sounds good on paper. Our web video this week used the quote from John Winthrop, "We must be knit together as one man and in brotherly love." It is easy to think that this would be a strong foundation for the new settlement, but as they elevated those with more financial means, the harder it was to be knit together. The puritan's saw worldly success as a sign of salvation, so wouldn't it be easy to have zero toleration for those that had less financially? How much is our church/state still carrying those same thoughts in today's world?

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Similarites Between Muslims and Puritans

by Kendra Helgeson - Friday, October 17, 2014, 1:23 PM

<http://www.123helpme.com/puritans-and-muslims-what-they-have-in-common-view.asp?id=157554>

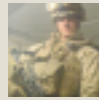
I just found this essay, (no idea who it was written by), but I feel like the person does a really good job on describing what the Puritans and Muslims have in common. While reading this, I was thinking how it seems like they did everything they were supposedly doing to "please their God" out of fear, and the author ends up

saying that at the end of this. It gave me an even better understanding of all the things the religions have in common, which was very helpful.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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U.S. history in American public schools

by Jonathan Blake - Friday, October 17, 2014, 1:28 PM

Since 2010, results from the National Assessment of Educational progress tells us only 13% of high school students show proficiency in their knowledge of American history. As history becomes less of a priority it shouldn't surprise anyone that some foreign student understand it better than american students. The steady decline in public schools deprives students the right to learn about their american heritage. No wonder their "eyes glazed over." <http://townhall.com/columnists/danieldoherty/2011/1>

With that being said, religion today has become a touchy subject. Muslim culture and christian culture are vastly different, however both religions split off into different religious groups that take their religious text and decipher it into different meanings. Some cultures in the middle east find polygamy acceptable whereas polygamy in the U.S. was not a very popular belief in 1879. To claim land in the name of religious freedom and then ban certain beliefs of a religion as unconstitutional makes you wonder why their freedom of speech trumps your freedom of religion. in my opinion, muslim culture can relate to new england puritanism better than modern day christianity, and i think thats why these muslim students in Cairo understood and could relate so well.

Most of the kids in the United States today live in a bubble. They're cut off from the outside world by their obsession with first world problems. They lack the knowledge of what goes on in the world and they are cut short when it comes to their study of American history.

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