

# HST 201: History of United States F17 (Escobar Meta 20887 23004)

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Puritanism & Islam



## Forum 1

### Puritanism & Islam

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#### Puritanism & Islam

by Joe Escobar - Friday, October 6, 2017, 11:08 AM

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

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#### Re: Puritanism & Islam

by Coty Ferguson - Sunday, October 8, 2017, 3:59 PM

Coty Ferguson

HST 201/ Puritanism and Islam Forum

10-8-17

Personally, I find the fact that Islamic students relate more to Puritanism than current U.S students do to be understandable. Over the last few centuries as the United States has become more established as its own country, the ideals that have become the cornerstones of

the country has changed drastically. In the beginning, the main European groups coming to the U.S were people who were prosecuted in their homelands. One of the first and most well known groups to establish a community were the Puritans of New England. The Puritans had a more strict and harsh set of standards in religion, similar to other religions like Islam, which is itself more strict in its rules and standards. Just like Islamic countries, the settlements of the early U.S were influenced by religion, and the Puritans had similar rules of modesty and hard work as is important in the Islamic religion. It is quite reasonable to see that Islamic students relate more to the Puritans than the U.S students do. I can understand the reasons the Puritans came here. They wanted the freedom to practice their religion, which they felt was correct and the only way they would be able to achieve salvation. To see liberty and freedom is something that everyone wants, just to varying degrees. Many are willing to sacrifice much of their freedom in return for safety and security. The Puritans were willing to give up the safety they would have had had they changed faiths and remained in Europe, but they would have given up the freedom they yearned for to worship what they felt was the correct path (which itself had restrictions and rules that limited true, unadulterated freedom, which is admittedly pure anarchy). That is something that we in the U.S don't have to worry about as much nowadays due to the more accepting nature of people and the government when it comes to religious freedom and protection from religious persecution. Islamic countries don't prosecute other people who worship something else, but they are much less varied in worship than in the U.S, which is itself quite heavily Protestant and Catholic in belief. The Puritans helped put a foothold in the northern area of what would become the United States for European settlers, and specifically the English. They also tried to coexist with the Indian people, which is more than can be said for some other settlements. They weren't the most accepting of Indians (that goes to the Spanish and French), but they weren't immediately hostile like some other groups. They tried to assimilate the Indians and convert them (with mixed results) and tried to live out their lives peacefully worshipping their iteration of God.

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### **Influence of Religion on us all**

by Lorenzo Arreola - Monday, October 9, 2017, 5:44 PM

Within the basic founding culture of the US we can see the ever present influence of the Puritan religion and how their views would forever shape our country. In modern society most people here the term puritan and think the scarlet letter or some other form of pilgrim-esque media of these prudish individuals that were strict in their lives and lived boring and uninteresting lives. Although some of these beliefs can be seen as true and understood to be truly applicable, we can see that this religion's importance on us is still shaping modern american society whether it be in our everyday lives or the way the government decides what it does.

First off we need to understand the basics of the religious views. Puritanism is a sect of the Protestant church that emphasized the simplification of worship and the increased restrictions on the religious discipline, these included concepts such as harsh punishment for indecent behavior and the belief of being predestined to be with god and the inevitable divine punishment for the inherent sinner within all of us when we lived outside of his godliness. These thoughts bring forth the main ideas that will be carried over into the American society as the puritan religion is the base of our moralities.

Through these beliefs we can see the influence of Puritanism on society simply with the way our culture taboos sexuality to an extreme level where until relatively recently in history the american people have learned to accept certain levels of sexuality. This can be seen in Modern society with the taboo nature of our views on gay rights and the evolution of being ignored and suppressed to now having a larger acceptance but still seeing in half the country this deep seated rejection of your lifestyle due to standards set by a group of people three hundred years in the past.

It is important to acknowledge these differences and to use them going forward to fully be able to see how we as a people are always influenced by the people who came before us even if we are hundreds of years apart.

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### **Re: Puritanism & Islam**

by Peyton Hobie - Monday, October 9, 2017, 11:51 PM

I'm not particularly concerned about the finding the professor had because I feel like the outcome of the findings is due to each students personal path and religious affiliation. Learning the affect Puritans had on the new world might not be as important as other eventful material, that is strictly based on the teachers opinion though on what is important to inform students. It might be a hotter topic in Europe and North African countries due to those being area's where Puritans and Islam originated. Part of it also could be the way Christianity has developed and evolved within our country and Islam has a large amount of the same attributes that it had hundreds of years ago that are still present today in Islamic culture and religion. So comparing Islam to Christianity/Puritanism, Islamic culture may be more strict and lead to a better understanding of spirituality and historical foundation, while Christianity is a very loosely taught religion which many people end up being brought up in a household and are only taught what's currently important within their religious group.

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### **Re: Puritanism & Islam**

by Tuan Tran - Friday, October 13, 2017, 7:25 PM

Puritanism has their biggest impaction to the modern American people. As the result, many American students are used to know their religions and they perhaps do not want to research about the Puritans and their ancestor's histories. However, Muslim students just like other international students never get a chance to participate in the Puritan's simulation living styles so they love to find the information relating to Puritanism to know more about this exciting religion and their effects on American people. I know that Muslim students have great knowledge about the Puritan cultures but compare to their American counterparts, they are outsiders to observe the Puritanism, not the ones who directly experienced this religion.

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## Puritanism exists in the 20th American community

by Tuan Tran - Tuesday, October 10, 2017, 1:25 AM

Christianity has contributed a lot of achievements for American society. It has the top religions with the huge amount of disciplines " With more than 50% of the population, Christian Protestants – both mainline Protestants and faith-based, “born again”, evangelical Christians – make up the biggest religious group in the United States, and hence also the most influential" (*Internation- Religion in the USA*, 5). Moreover, it has the solidarity link to its original with the name " Puritanism". Our government decisions have been examined by the Supreme Court including the members of Christianity from the past until now, as "*Teach Our History*" website mentions " The founding fathers did not include the First Amendment in the Constitution to prevent Christianity from influencing state-established institutions; on the contrary, America's founding fathers expected our nation to be, on the whole, Christian, and that our government should reflect a Christian heritage. This understanding of the First Amendment becomes quite apparent when one considers the actual words and actions of America's settlers, founder, and leaders. The men who founded our country and established our government clearly based it on Christian principles to which they adhered. This is obviously confirmed by the fact that many of the State Constitutions included the requirement that a man must be a Christian in order to hold public office. One of the Supreme Court's most blatant violations of the Constitution has come about through their reinterpretation of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. Prior to this constitutional violation, the Bill of Rights applied only to the Federal government, and not the States. The First Amendment actually begins with the phrase "Congress shall make no law..." As one of many efforts that the founders used to limit the power of the Federal government, the Constitution left authority over religious matters to the States. The Supreme Court consistently adhered to this constitutional principle until well into the twentieth century." ( 9,10,11).

American people also share some similarities of Puritanism's daily life method " For the Puritan, everyday life was exciting because human beings were engaged in the conflict between God and the Devil, Heaven, and Hell, a struggle sometimes called the Puritan drama of the soul. Every moment, every action, every occurrence had meaning, significant meaning. In an effort to read its moral and spiritual significance, Puritans commonly kept journals in which they recorded occurrences in their lives and communities." ( *Introduction: The Puritans*, 35). It is not true when Professor Patrick Q. Mason said: " Muslim students understand more about the English Puritans better than the American students do" because American students are already living in the same " Puritism " culture with more advantages in the modern knowledge with open-minded solutions than the first Puritan generations. Nevertheless, Muslim students are serious and hard-working on finding the useful sources about the English Puritans but they do not have chances to live in the specific " Puritism" cultures to notify the real spiritual atmosphere even Purism and Muslim have the common in praising the mighty God.

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## Re: Puritanism & Islam

by Coty Ferguson - Tuesday, October 10, 2017, 11:22 PM

As others have stated, Puritans are well known for a few major traits; they are prudish about sexuality, they focus on being simple and avoiding luxury, and avoiding vanity. They are also well known as being very devout and they have the setup where all people are predestined for either Hell or Heaven no matter what they do in life. But they have other traits that are major

factors of their culture. One of these was that they would strive to not let any criminal go free without punishment. They believed that if someone escaped without punishment, God would punish everyone. They were not tolerant of others, either. Which was a bit hypocritical, considering that was the entire reason they emigrated to the U.S in the first place was to escape persecution. Due to their more strict traditions, they were the most well prepared of all the colonists who came to the U.S. They and other Protestants have always been the main source of emigrants in the U.S and this is still seen to this day, since Protestants and Catholics are the main religious groups nowadays, and they are still the main members of seats of power in the government, and the history of Catholic persecution is simultaneously shown by this fact, since they have practically no history of holding governmental seats of power. This also helps to somewhat explain the results recorded in the class poll. Protestantism and Catholicism are the most common religions in the class as well. This shows that the standard set back then still shapes religion in the U.S to this day.

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### **Re: Puritanism & Islam**

by Coty Ferguson - Thursday, October 12, 2017, 12:51 PM

It is interesting that Indians didn't separate their secular and religious lives, at least it would be nowadays, when such practices are much less common, but back then and in such a time of upheaval and change, such beliefs and practices would have been a comfort and a source of strength for people, both Indian and colonist. Religion has always been a source of strength for people and it will continue to do so, and I must say that even if it should be separated from government, it will likely never do so. Many most likely don't even do it on purpose, but the beliefs and values we are taught to when young will always be some of the most powerful deciding factors in decision making, and one of the major sources of values to live by come from religion, either directly or from our families. I feel that religion is a possible benefit to government, at least to a limited degree. Many religions emphasis good values like respect and honor the lives of others, which is important. Or to be fair and honest with others and try to be generous. All good values to have. But, religion can gain connotations that just don't work in today's society, especially thanks to the increased level of technology. At the end of the day, the values that should be reinforced from religion are universal ones. Values that all people share. The other mindsets that come from personal interpretation of religion need to be avoided and suppressed when making decisions for the safety and well being of everyone. Laws that limit the choice of individuals on personal matters should remain the decision of the individual and should not be controlled by people completely uninvolved with the situation. Religion is a sensitive topic that can easily be combined with other sensitive topics and cause major problems. The best course of action is to realize bias in yourself and strive to overcome it, or find others who can give you another viewpoint and help balance out your perspective.

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## Similarities Between Muslim Students and Puritans; Essential Elements for Understanding Puritans

by Carley Kramer - Friday, October 13, 2017, 10:07 AM

I find this quote from Patrick Mason's essay the most helpful in explaining the connection between the Puritans and the Middle Eastern Muslim students: "The way that Puritanism offered a totalizing undifferentiated worldview in which the sacred presses upon every aspect of life resonates in many, though not all, corners of contemporary Islam in a way that most expressions of American Christianity no longer do." (3:30) The passage goes on to address the less defined separation of church and state in much of the Middle East, which aided Muslim students in understanding the lifestyles and motivations of the Puritans and their political and cultural systems. Both the Puritans and the Muslim students mentioned in the interview lived in religious communities where it could be assumed that everyone had aligning beliefs, which enabled religion to become a greater part of their everyday lives and communities. The same cannot be said for most of 21st century America, or even for many Christian communities within America. Another aspect of Islam that I thought may give Muslims a unique perspective on Puritans was the idea of Hajj, or Pilgrimage to Mecca, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. This pilgrimage means that at least once in their life, every able Muslim should journey to the holy city of Mecca. While the pilgrimage to Mecca is not a permanent migration like the pilgrimage of the Puritans, it may give Muslims a better understanding of the concept of traveling long distances, sometimes at great cost, for the sake of their religion.

What I found most interesting while learning about Puritanism that I felt well-educated students should know had to do with the specifics of their communal Covenant with God and the idea that any crime that went unpunished could endanger the lives - or even afterlives - of the entire community by inciting God's wrath. As we read in chapter 2, "As a people, New Englanders agreed to obey the law, and God promised to prosper them. If magistrates enforced God's law and the people supported these efforts, God would not punish the whole community for the misdeeds of individuals. But if sinners escaped public account, God's anger would be terrible to his chosen people of New England." (pg. 61) Understanding these beliefs greatly helped me understand the motives behind some of their more extreme actions that I had trouble relating to, because even for the smallest of sins in the community, the stakes could not be higher for the Puritans.

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## Natives, Puritans, and Secular and Religious Life

by Carley Kramer - Friday, October 13, 2017, 1:44 PM

I find the claim made by Dr. Nash in *Red, White, and Black* that Native Americans did not separate their religious and secular lives interesting because it is one of the few things they had in common with the Puritans. The Puritans involved God and religion in every part of their lives, including their choice to migrate to the colonies and the types of lives they would lead there. The Native Americans and the Puritans both intertwined the secular and religious aspects of their lives, but their beliefs were so different that they had troubles understanding the religion of the other.

Though some Natives did convert to Christianity, the two systems of faith were often at odds with one another. While some missionaries would seek to incorporate Christianity into the Native culture and religion, others hoped to fully assimilate the Natives into their Christian

cultures. As we read in chapter two in the subsection Puritan Indian Missions, both strategies could be effective, resulting in the New England praying towns. Despite this, the two groups still struggled to coexist. As the passage explains: “Yet, only a few natives would achieve the kind of conversion experience that Puritans required for full membership in a church. Few Indians shared the Puritan sense of sin. They could not grasp why their best deeds should stink in the nostrils of the Lord. The praying towns provided the beleaguered Indians some means to cope with the consequences of colonialism--disease, death, land loss, alcoholism--but they also caused fear and resentment, further deepening the chasm between the natives and the newcomers.” (p. 66) To the Puritans, the ideas of original sin, the standards by which their God judged their actions (or how Christianity defined sin), and the consequences of sin in their lives were all keystones of not only their religion, but the structure of their communities. To the Natives, they were foreign concepts that defied their core beliefs. Combining their secular and religious lives was one of the few things that the Puritans and Natives shared, yet having this in common only damaged Native and Puritan relations further.

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

by Kyle Shrope - Friday, October 13, 2017, 5:47 PM

In the world today bias is shown everywhere. People's own personal beliefs affect their decisions and views everyday. Religion in government can play a huge role. It can make a person sway one way on a certain topic because of their religion and their beliefs. In class we learned that the New England settlers, who were Puritans, were not very accepting people. This means that their bias would be shown in government issues. In the 1600s the Massachusetts Bay Colony government banished Anne Hutchinson for heresy, because she didn't fully believe in the practices of the Puritan church. In this case religion had a huge influence on the government. I believe that religious bias needs to be removed from government decisions in today's world. In today's America there are many different people practicing many different religions and faiths. Our government needs to make decisions on what's best for the people not what's best for their own religion and their own people.

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**Re: Today, can religion really be “removed” from its influence on governmental decisions, especially when the government is comprised of people? Should it be?**

by Tuan Tran - Friday, October 13, 2017, 7:18 PM

All religions all teach people how to live peacefully and share the trustworthy and our sympathetic with everyone. The Puritans just practiced their own beliefs, we could not blame them for not accepting people or doing executions to the women known as witches even they were the regular human. Moreover, we did not understand obviously about their living accommodation and the unique slogans, only their grandchildren. As Anne Hutchinson case, the Puritans just prevented the potential riots or argument for the settlers so they expelled Anna to other places where she could announce the God's words to other non-Christian people as the responsibility and mission of God's prophet. The Puritan

leaders wanted to maintain the social security and ensure people's safety. Actually, the government always put their own people in the priority position and even our President Donald Trump who is Protestant said to American people in his public speech: " *I will make America great again*". As you can see from this sentence, nothing relates to " Protestants will be the first ones to be rewarded" even Protestants have the highest percentages in American's religion: 70.6%( Pew Reseach Center- religion statistics).

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**Puritanism is good, but should not exist.**

by Joseph Hassman - Friday, October 13, 2017, 8:30 PM

Puritanism is a form of Christianity, therefore I approve. I think the church should have stayed in one piece, though, as the basis of Christianity is unity. Catholicism should have taken into account the new translations of the Bible and moved to attain agreement with those who read them.

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