

HST 201: History of United States F18 (Escobar Meta 20749 22611)

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Puritanism & Islam

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, October 5, 2018, 10:35 AM

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

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The Importance of Puritanism

by [Nathan Edwards](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 12:16 PM

After listening to the podcast and reading the Puritan article, I am quite concerned about our country's knowledge on Puritans. As the article stated "Without some understanding of Puritanism, it may safely be said, there is no understanding of America." (1). Personally, I can't say that I know much about the Puritans. When I see Puritans come up, my eyes usually just glaze over and I don't get anything from it. I believe we need to know the basics about Puritanism

such as: Where did they originate from? What is their main beliefs? Why did they decide to break away from the church? It is important to know that the Puritans wanted to purify the church and go back to the roots of the Bible. They also believed God created government so the Bible should influence the government's decisions. I am biased towards Christianity though because I am a Baptist. So, I agree with most of their decisions but I disagree with Calvinism. I don't believe God has already predetermined who will be saved and who will not. I believe God gives all of us a choice to either follow him or reject him. To sum it up, the fate of your eternal destination is in your hands. But nonetheless, Puritans still had a major impact on our history and its very important to know about them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**The Transition Between Puritanism and Secularism**by [Zane Hiam](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 1:42 PM

I thought it was interesting to consider the idea of Egyptian Muslim students having more in common with 17th century New England Puritans than modern Americans. It's definitely true that the United States has become more secular throughout the centuries, and that even the most devout modern Protestants would likely consider early American Puritans to be fanatical or regressive. It's also true that many other places in the world don't share secularism as a value, and religion still plays a big role in the daily lives of billions of people throughout the world.

However, I think that our nation's Puritan roots still play a major role in the values of our society. Take the Supreme Court case mentioned in the podcast. It's likely that the judges at the time ruled against it because they didn't see it as an issue of religious freedom. They simply saw polygamy as immoral, and wanted to do their best to keep people from practicing it. I would argue that modern American students likely thought the same thing when they voted the same way as the Supreme court in their simulation, even though they may not be Puritans or even religious themselves. It seems to me that Puritan morals still have a real effect on our culture, whether we realize it or not. The Egyptian students, in contrast, were not raised in a society that places a moral value on polygamy. They therefore had no reason not to side with the Mormons in their simulated Supreme Court case.

It is true that we've become a more secular country, but I think it's still important to keep in mind how the values of our forebears affects us culturally to this day.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Transition Between Puritanism and Secularism**by [Nathan Edwards](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 12:19 PM

I agree that Puritan morals still have an effect on our culture and that the Supreme Court never saw the issue of religious freedom but I have to disagree that we have become a more secular country. "In 2016, a poll by the Public Religion Research Institute estimated that 69% of the Americans are Christians, with 45% professing [attendance](#) at a variety of churches that could

be considered Protestant, and 20% professing Catholic beliefs." (Religion in the United States-Wikipedia). So looking at the statistics and even the chart that was shown in class on religion, we can see that the majority of the US profess that they are Christian in whatever way, shape, or form. This means that they believe that there is some higher power beyond humans. Many people just think the country has gone totally secular and while it has not, seculars do have a major impact on our society. It doesn't surprise me that the Supreme Court then would reject an idea such as polygamy. Polygamy would be an immoral concept in the eyes of many people in our society. The Puritans legacy has made us what we are to this day and it is very important to be taught about their history.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: The Transition Between Puritanism and Secularism**by [Zane Hiam](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 12:41 PM

Thanks for the data. Just to clarify, I wasn't saying that the United States is a 100% secular nation. I was simply saying that we've become more secular over the years. It's true that the majority of Americans are Christians, but nowadays our government works to protect religious freedom and keep religion from influencing government decisions (or they're supposed to, at least). I'm glad we agree on what probably motivated the Supreme Court's decision. And even though I'm an atheist myself and completely pro-secularism, I agree that it's very important that U.S. students learn about Puritanism, as it definitely had a big impact on our nation's history.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Puritanism, Islam, and Polygamy**by [Kristal Tardiff](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 8:07 PM

To a point I am concerned with the findings, but I am not surprised with them. I feel the findings show how much we as "Americans" are lacking as an accepting society. Honestly, I feel that Americans are to set in their ways. Americans for a majority have let recent historical events shape the way that they feel about different religions and cultures. For example: One might view Muslims as terrorists because of the events that happened on September 11th, 2001. So because of a few bad apples we as a society have become accustomed to linking a whole culture or religion as that of ones actions.

My eyes glaze over at the thought of Puritans because, in elementary school I was taught that Puritans were just Pilgrims or that they were these wonderful people who did great things.

From listening to the podcast several times, I feel that the Muslim students in Cairo were more open and accepting to the idea of Polygamy than the American students were. We are taught that marriage should be between one man and one woman. At least that is what modern society says that we should have. My feeling towards the idea of Polygamy is who

are we to judge? As long as no children are involved and have the option to choose freely what they want. If grown adults think that is what is right for them so be it. In no way does it affect me that a man has multiple wives.

The essentials of Puritanism that well educated Americans should know are:

Puritans are not Pilgrims as you may have been previously taught in school.

Puritans are in fact English Protestants.

During the 16th and 17th centuries Puritans sought to purify the Church of England of their Catholic ways and were only partially successful.

<https://www.britannica.com>

I myself tend to lean towards Christianity or Evangelical practices but, I prefer to not be categorized. I believe there is a higher power but I don't actively pray everyday or go to church every Sunday. I try to treat others how I would want to be treated because, in no way does their gender, religion, race, or sexual practices affect my life. I believe that everyone should be allowed to freely practice whatever they want as a religion. I also know that some of the most judgmental people go to church and claim to be some sort of specific religion but want to look down on others as they are not worthy. I enjoy learning about others and learning about practices outside my own.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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Re: Puritanism, Islam, and Polygamy

by [Canaan Staley](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 9:05 PM

After reading this, I find that your opinion is interesting, and I even agree with you on some points, but I do disagree with some other points. I do agree that Americans are pretty set in their ways and that has effected what we think about other religions and cultures. However, I do feel that saying "a few bad apples" and that we should not judge a whole culture or religion based on a "few" bad people is only half true. Let's take a look at the elephant in the room which everybody thinks of when anyone mentions this: Muslims. Obviously, not all Muslims are terrorists, but Americans, and many others in different countries, are wary of them because of the history of the religion and the current events unfolding in the Middle East. Note that these "bad apples" killed thousands of people in numerous terror attacks and are continually doing so to this day in the name of Islam. Of course, this sheds a negative view on Islam. Now, I'm going to treat Muslims like I treat anyone else because of my research into the subject and my own religion. Other people may not agree with me. I also believe Polygamy is wrong for many reasons. First off, I'm just going to say it, my religion prohibits it. Of course there are many different cultures and religions who support polygamy, but does that make it morally right? How does split attention favor between

the wives? How does it effect the children? It's going to effect the children eventually because men and women make babies after marriage eventually 99% of the time. Regardless, there's going to be children involved at some point.

Just touching on the last paragraph. It's not just about going to church, or just about claiming a certain religion, in Christianity, some people like to treat it that way. They don't follow the correct teachings (or doctrines) in The Bible if they "look down on others as they are not worthy" or disrespect others. I agree that everyone should practice whatever they want, even though I believe it's wrong, I can't force the person into accepting my beliefs.

PS: I'd be glad to share what Biblical Christianity actually is outside of the forums with anybody if they have questions.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3



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Islam and State in the Middle East

by [Daniel Oas](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 9:45 PM

What fascinated me most about students in Cairo Egypt studying Puritanism in the early American colonies is the relationship between Islam and the modern Egyptian government. Professor Scott Casper describes the intricate relationship these students have with the Islamic faith and it's influence over the government and why it gives them more insight into Puritan life in early colonial America. When students were revealed that the supreme court overwhelmingly voted to ban polygmany, they were shocked. We know that the Islamic faith holds heavy influence over decisions made by the various governments in the Middle East, and seeing the students reaction to American history really shows how it affects their lives as well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1



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Re: Islam and State in the Middle East

by [Nathan Edwards](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 8:43 PM

I don't see why being Islam would give you anymore insight into the Puritans than modern Americans today. The information of the Puritans is easily accessible by both Americans and the Muslims in Egypt. The difference is the motivation of teaching it in the United States. I would agree that it's easier for the Muslims to relate to the Puritans because of their cultural similarities. Muslims may be more excited to learn about the Puritans but I think the fascination about it lies more with the person. Americans might be more fascinated with the Puritans if they could relate to them nowadays. It just takes a bigger understanding.

Sum of ratings:0 (1)

0



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Re: Islam and State in the Middle East

by [Elias Brouse](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 2:34 PM

I agree, the students in Egypt do not gain more insight into Puritanism than American students, since the information is there for everyone to understand. The Egyptian students might be able to relate more, since "the Islamic faith holds heavy influence over decisions made by the various governments in the Middle East," as Daniel stated above, similar to the Puritan way of life. Their reaction to the results of the polygamy court case were a result of them not realizing that our government is not influenced by a single belief or religion (for us, the Puritans, or for them, Islam) but by many different beliefs, which continue to change over time. While this means that American students might not be able to relate, they can learn. As Nathan stated above "It just takes a bigger understanding," and that is true.

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My Unbiased Opinion of Relating to and Studying the Puritans

by [Canaan Staley](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 10:30 PM

Being a Baptist, I understand the Puritans and can relate to them and their beliefs. However, I don't need to be a Baptist to recognize the importance of them, and their influence, in the "New World". The Puritans should not be just be "glazed over" by the eyes of students, eager to learn about the history of America, like someone browsing through the shopping magazine at the dentist's office. The growing gap between religion and state doesn't help this, and the growing gap between people and religion doesn't either. Even Muslims have more in common with, and are eager to learn about New England Puritans than Americans, owing a chunk of the foundation of the country to them. For example, in a podcast called "Journal of American History", it was said by the speaker, "many of my middle-eastern Muslim students had far more in common with 17th century New England Puritans than did most of my 21st century American students." Sure, Muslims and Puritans want church and state to be like "two arms on the same body", but still, Americans should learn more about the Puritans. Even Joe Escobar said in the first week of class that people need to understand what the people, who came to this country to colonize it, believed. Their beliefs are what held Plymouth together during the times of fierce winters and harsh terrain. It's what drove them, it's what guided them, it's what changed them, and it's what held them "knit together". Might I have a biased view of studying Puritans? Probably. But they still deserve to be studied, as they helped set the stage for one of the best countries in world. We can learn from them and not just about them. Of course, this is all just in my "unbiased" opinion.

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Concerned with findings? Do you relate/understand Puritan experience?

by [Tyler Weiss](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 11:06 AM

I'll admit I was more surprised than concerned with these findings at first, but after listening to the whole audio a clip and thinking about it more, I must say it does make some sense. Even though we are a 70% Christian nation, the majority of Americans tend to stand firmly behind the separation of church and state (PEW, [Religious Landscape](#)

[Study](#)). In Patrick Mason's article, he talks about how his American students at Notre Dame experienced this exact phenomenon. When given the project to restage the popular Reynolds versus U.S. of 1879, which dealt with Mormon polygamy, most of the American students voted as the Supreme Court did, saying that polygamy was unconstitutional, and disregarded the constitutional protection of religious freedom (Audio Clip, 2:35). I found this particularly interesting given that Notre Dame is a Catholic University. In making their decision, I wonder if their Catholic viewpoints on polygamy had more bias than anything that the constitution has to say about polygamy.

As a spiritual, but not necessarily religious person, I do find that being able to fully understand and relate to some cultures that are deeply connected to an organized religion requires some considerable effort on my part. I don't agree with Mason when he says that most Americans' eyes glaze over when they learn about Puritans. For myself it's a learning process, in which I am constantly gaining a deeper understanding for a culture that I don't have any personal first-hand experience with, as opposed to Mason's Muslim students in Egypt who share many more similarities with the 17th century Puritans than I do.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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Re: Concerned with findings? Do you relate/understand Puritan experience?

by [Elias Brouse](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 6:36 PM

I originally didn't agree with what the audio clip was saying, but after some thought and reading your response, I can definitely agree with some of the points you made. Today, most people would agree that a separation of church and state is a necessary part of our countries structure, even with 70% of our population identifying with the same religion. This separation keeps religious freedom in America.

I would not have thought that another influence might have affected the study on the polygamy case, since the professor in the audio clip seemed to think it was clearly because the students were trying to separate church in state in the context of the case. According to their website, the class of 2022 at Notre Dame is 80% catholic, proving that those results could be biased ("Class of 2022" Notre Dame University News). While obviously Catholics are against polygamy, I would imagine a majority of the US population would be as well, maybe because of our Puritan roots.

Understanding how the Puritan religion is woven into america's past is a process, since our country has changed so much since our beginnings. Most American students can only relate to as much of the Puritan religion as they can understand, and it is important to learn about and gain a better understanding. Even as a more religious person, I can still agree that it takes some effort to begin this learning process.

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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**Our eyes SHOULD NOT glaze over**by [Elias Brouse](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 11:57 AM

After hearing Professor Casper explain the findings of the teacher in Cairo, Egypt, I was not initially shocked by Muslim students being able to relate to Puritanism and a church-based state, but I do not agree that American students can not understand how Puritanism was significant toward the beginnings of our nation. The Islamic culture has a cultural perspective based on religion in most aspects of their life (audio at 3:50). This does give them many comparison points to the Puritans, who had a combined church and state. Eventually, when the American Constitution was written, all religions were accepted (the freedom of religion, first amendment). Although American students recognize these religious beginnings in America, but might also recognize the separation of church and state in our society today. Although this may mean they see religion in government as unenlightened (audio at 4:25), but I do believe students understand the effect that religion, including and especially puritanism, has had on our country.

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2

[Permalink](#) | [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Can/Should religion be removed from its influence on Gov't**by [Tyler Weiss](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 8:31 PM

Today, in our society, most Americans stand firmly behind the ideal of separation of church and state. But are the two really that separate? I believe the line between church and state is a very blurry one surrounded by a lot of grey area on both sides. When looking up more details on the Reynolds v. U.S. case, I came across a statement made by the Supreme Court saying, "Marriage, while from its very nature a sacred obligation, is nevertheless, in most civilized nations, a civil contract, and usually regulated by law (Bill of Rights Institute, [Reynolds v. U.S.](#))." However, they were referencing a law that was written by a protestant government with the christian idea of marriage in mind. So even in this Supreme Court case dealing with religious freedom, the outcome was one religions ideals having more protection than the other.

Religion has a very strong influence over the moral decision making of an individual, and for many who are religious, this moral guide can't easily be ignored. Those in power make their decisions with their own personal moral guide as an influence. For the most part this work in our democratic society, because most of the positions of power have a term limit and when their time is up we get to vote a new person into office to either do things differently or continue in the same direction (except the Supreme Court of course, which is a lifetime appointment, which I personally don't agree with 100%, but that's a totally different topic). Overall, I don't believe religion is necessarily separate from state, and I don't think it is possible to separate them. As long as those in positions of power are guided by their moral values, we will find religious influences in our legal system.

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