

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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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Puritanism & Islam

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Introduction and Answers

by [James Carr](#) - Sunday, October 7, 2018, 2:11 PM

Puritanism is new to me and honestly rather confusing. I don't think I am the only one since the Puritans themselves were divided; to have a hierarchy, no not have a hierarchy, etc... I guess I'll tackle some questions...

Are you concerned with this finding?

I don't think "concerned" is the right word. I am not at all surprised given the religiousness of middle-eastern countries. Islam plays such a huge role in their culture and government. As the narrator says: *"Egyptian students can "grapple with the intricate relationship of church and state..."* Also [stats](#).

Can you relate to and/or understand the Puritans and their experience and influence in the New World, or do your "eyes glaze over"?

As an atheist, my "eyes gaze over" at any religious concepts; however, I can totally understand the Puritans motives for reforming a corrupt Church and I can appreciate the "treasonous" separatists that wanted to form their own community/church per their interpretation of the bible... like any sect of any religion. The bigger picture, based on my understanding, is that Puritans wanted a simplified and less corrupt but still a government controlled church service, without the tyranny. It was assumed that church/faith was a necessary part of life and service was mandatory. That belief is still supported by some theists but for the most part, the American government and citizens are pretty far separated from religion compared to the rest of the world (some exceptions of course). The real debate in my eyes is whether organized religion is even necessary- but that's an entirely different discussion.

What are the similarities and differences between these two groups of students?

They are born into religion and indoctrinated at an early age. See [State Religion](#). Whereas we have more freedom here in America, despite petty things like the word "God" in our pledge and on our money.

What are the essential elements of Puritanism that a well-educated American student should know?

I absolutely think it's worth knowing everything about the Puritans, their sects, and their motives for the sake of accurate historical knowledge. I don't think it's worth considering any Puritan beliefs/logic today in America- or any religion for that matter.

How do the results of the Religion Poll in Moodle influence your analysis?

It doesn't. The results were exactly what I expected and align (somewhat) with other polls I have seen.

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

I certainly have a bias as to my feelings on religion overall and I tend to clump various sects together since I consider it all to be BS. However, don't get me wrong, I will always study with an open mind and still greatly enjoy learning about these different cultures throughout history.

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

I think it can and should be completely removed- but not instantly. We can't do anything quickly in government, it would be disastrous. Over the course of a century I think it could be accomplished. I think it should happen BECAUSE our government is comprised of different people. A completely unbiased and secular government based on logic and reason would be amazing.

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2



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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by [Austin Anderson](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 1:15 PM

Since this class began, something that I'm beginning to understand is that the history of the United States has a way bigger impact on how modern society behaves than I had thought. Something that was talked about during the audio file at around the 2:30 mark was that the majority of students saying that "Polygamy is unconstitutional". That alone made me realize that there are beliefs that existed in the 1800's that people still hold up to this day. It makes me wonder how much of my own worldview and moral compass was forged independently by myself and how much was passed down from previous generations of my own family. If the country can still view laws similarly to people centuries ago, then it wouldn't be unrealistic to assume that the individual's views are passed down in a similar fashion.

Something else talked about at the 3:20 mark was about "cultural perspectives". The Cairo students resonated with the Puritans more than the US students. The Egyptian students believed "the Sacred presses upon every aspect of life". It really shows how much the United States culture has changed through the centuries with how civilians view the world. The descendants of these very people went from very heavily influenced by their religious beliefs to a lot of them tend to "dismiss religious establishments...". What this says to me is that, similarly to how North American settlers in the 1800's and before dismissed the native tribes as "unenlightened and even sometimes barbaric", so do many of the teacher's North American Students when it came to religious establishments. It makes me wonder: Did the country of the United States really change in how it thinks, or did it just change who the target is?

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3



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**Re: Puritanism & Islam; What are the similarities and differences between these two groups of students?**

by [Karsten Brevik](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 6:23 PM

Karsten Brevik

Escobar

October 6th, 2018

First Forum Post:

Puritanism & Islam; What are the similarities and differences between these two groups of students? (American/Egyptian)

This six minute interview is a conversation regarding the experiences of history Professor Patrick Q. Mason of Notre Dame. While teaching at the American University in Cairo he conducted an experiment of his Egyptian students, he asked them to act as member of the Supreme Court in the Reynolds vs. US case regarding Mormons rights to practice polygamy under united states law. The students overwhelmingly voted in favor of the Mormons right to polygamy as they have a right to freedom of religion. The most interesting part of this experiment in my opinion is the variable that Professor Mason did not tell the students that in 1879 the Supreme Court voted exactly the opposite, when he revealed this they were shocked. Professor Mason goes on in his essay to make the insight that his students in Cairo have more in common with early American Puritans than American students today.

Having never made the association myself after short consideration it seems to make a great deal of sense. The Egyptian constitution specifies Islam as the state religion and the principles of sharia as the primary source of legislation. (Egypt 2017 International Religious Freedom Report, Page 4). The idea everyone should be subject and punished through divine law is very puritan indeed. Also, polygamy has been permitted in the Muslim faith since its inception, originally put it to practice so all women could marry if they desired. Men in that time and place died at a must faster rate, leaving women who would then never be able to marry. Given this information a student raised in Egypt where religion is a facet of everyday life, would obviously vote in favor of religious freedom in this context. American students from Notre Dame however voted exactly as the Supreme court did, stating that it was unconstitutional. In 1879 the Supreme Court deemed the religious practice of polygamy unconstitutional, citing that although all Americans have the right to believe what they want, the government can still put limits on the actions of a person, even if those actions are done for a religious purpose. I am not sure if this is the exact reasoning Professor Mason's American students used, but nonetheless they reached the same conclusion. In the United States church and state have always been separate, and because of that religion is much less a required part of everyday American life. Also, researchers have said that young adults (millennials in particular) in America are becoming

increasingly less religious, many citing parental “baby boomers” impressing on their children the importance of thinking for themselves as being a primary cause (Pew Research).

Even though both groups of these students are in the same age group and both are trying to come to a verdict for this case that reflects the constitution of the United States, after analysis we can see that environmental differences in their upbringing can easily lead them to different conclusion. Do you agree?

Citations:

“EGYPT 2017 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT”

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/281224.pdf>

“Reynolds v. United States - 1879”

<https://billofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/lessons-plans/landmark-supreme-court-cases-elessons/reynolds-v-united-states-1878/>

“Islam and Polygamy”

(<https://www.al-islam.org/introduction-rights-and-duties-women-islam-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/islam-and-polygamy>)

“Pew Research Q&A: Why Millenials are less religious?” (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/08/qa-why-millennials-are-less-religious-than-older-americans/>)

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

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

I agree that it is troubling how Egyptian students can understand English Puritans than American students. For most of my formative years, I went to a Catholic school. They failed to mention how gruesome the history of Catholicism was, glancing over it. My point

is that people have a hard time accepting their misdeeds. This can be shown by the fact that history is often written by the victor.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by [Aaron Richards](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 12:30 PM

To continue, can religion really be removed from politics? I don't believe it can. Religion is an ideology, often being the basis of the morals that people govern themselves by. This influences all aspects of their lives, from their personal demeanor to political views. This was why it was such a big deal when in the 1990's that protestants no longer held the majority in the supreme court. The fear behind not separating religion from politics is that religious beliefs would be forced on to those who don't share them. This traces back to the times of "Bloody Mary" and Queen Elizabeth persecuting people of a different faith. Now with the the question "should it be separated?", yes. However, should it be vs will it be gives us a very different picture. As I previously stated, religion is so ingrained into a persons life that it is highly improbable they would be able to set aside their beliefs in favor of someone else's. Does my belief give me somewhat of a bias? Absolutely. I'd be very shocked if someones beliefs didn't make them biased about other religions. You're taught a certain worldview and beliefs, while that other's are wrong. You can of course respect them, but respect and agreement aren't the same thing.

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New England without religion

by [Gavin Sherrill](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 11:17 PM

New England is said to have been built and held together by communal faith. Without this Faith would New England have survived? Also, the faith of Puritans created tension between themselves and the Native tribes, so without religion would the natives have helped New England prosper? I'm interested to know how New England would have panned out differently with more help from Native tribes.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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The Similarities and Differance between the two students.

by [Selina Scott](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 11:36 PM

Each group of students had there own cultural perspective, that's why there views were so different. When Patrick Mason author of "what so bad about polygamy" set a unique teaching experiment, where his students studied different constitutional debates (2:10) including *Reynold v US* in 1879 and I think what makes this exercise fascinating is that the students from Cicero went against the supreme court coming to the conclusion that

Mormons should be able to practice polygamy mainly because it is in our constitution that we have religious freedom, and to their surprise that was not the verdict that the supreme court came to.

Now on the other hand his students from Notre-Dame voted the same as the supreme court that polygamy was unconstitutional. Digging deeper I found as of 1993 polygamy is illegal in France whereas in Egypt polygamy is legal, after seeing this I can see why the students decided the way they did.

Mason also compared his students to Puritans relating ones from the middle east closer to them rather than his 21st century American students. I believe the reason being in the middle east the practices of religion are more welcomed in school and state unlike in America where it is shielded away from to talk about religion in class. But knowing we're in our constitution does it say we must have separation of church and state (Escobar).

Sum of ratings: 2 (1)

2



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Re: The Similarities and Difference between the two students.

by [Austin Anderson](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 12:02 PM

Interesting find on where polygamy was outlawed in the world. There might be a correlation between the United States' view on polygamy and France's outlawing of it, considering that France was one of the countries that was involved in the trade route in the 1600's that was talked about in class. France's worldview might have had some help in shaping North America's cultural views at that time. I do think that the main reason that Cairo students related to the Puritans was a lot of how the Puritans, while they might not agree on everything the Puritans did or believed, had their religion intertwined into every part of their daily lives, much like how most students at Cairo did. In North America, it's been more separate. One thing that I do believe that supports United States people's views on Polygamy might be the link from the Protestant-centric early America that still holds to this day. The reason I say so is because the majority of people are still Protestant and Polygamy is not a Protestant-based branch of Christianity. This kind of view even goes into people that don't practice a faith, due to the culture they're brought up in. A surprising amount of views can be traced into the culture that they're a part of. What do you think of this? Do you agree with my points or are there parts you disagree with? I'd like to hear what your take on my findings are.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

1



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Re: The Similarities and Difference between the two students.

by [Selina Scott](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 9:08 PM

Thank you for your feedback, and agree with you I think for religions in the middle east, and for their example Cicero the religion in that society consumes their lives and not in a bad way, but like you said they didn't believe in the same things as

puritans but the way they believed and the dedication they put into there religion is similar.

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0



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My personal view on Puritanism

by [Logan Habib](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 8:54 PM

Personally, when considering the influence and experience the Puritans had on the New World, I would say that my “eyes glaze over.” Puritans were protestants who disliked the Reformation of the Church of England under Elizabeth. They sought to purify the church and regulate forms of worship. Puritans were heavily anti-Catholic and rejected any Catholic beliefs and even, at times, prohibited Catholic priests from entering any Puritan territory(shown in textbook). Puritanism grew to become a major political and religious force in England over time. However, despite the impact it had on the New World, I cannot relate to the experiences the Puritans endured and went through. I do understand the historical importance of Puritanism and how it shaped the US. I am also curious to learn more about modern day Puritan ideals.

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1



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