

HST 201: US History F19 (Escobar)

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Puritanism & Islam

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, October 12, 2019, 12:50 PM

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

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The Egyptian students perspective

by [Eric Runes](#) - Sunday, October 13, 2019, 11:09 PM

One of the points brought up in the podcast is how Egyptian students could relate to Puritanism because it offered an "undifferentiated world view, in which the sacred presses upon every aspect of life"(podcast around 3:45). It goes on to describe how this view is in many ways more similar to the way contemporary Islam is practiced then most modern expressions of Christianity (podcast 4:00). In class on Thursday when we were going over the Pew religious landscape study one of the things we focused on was how there were so many different forms, and categories of Christianity currently practiced in the united states vs. other religions, which for the most part fell into one single classification. I believe this makes a lot of sense when

determining why Egyptian students would have such an easier time relating to the Puritans than American students. In many areas of the modern Arab world the lines between religion, and state are blurry (podcast 4:05). In the modern U.S. we attempt to have a distinct separation between church and state however, that was not the case in Puritan America. The religion poll pointed out how all across the country there are different religions being practiced, and no one religion has overwhelming political power. However, in 17th century New England the Puritan religion, was significantly dominant, and had a stranglehold over government. As a student in 2019 I have a hard time imagining a single religion's belief system dictating laws, and American procedures, but that is not the case for Egyptian students. One of the things that made the most sense to me was when the podcast points out how a teacher might never have experienced this perspective if they hadn't left the U.S. to teach abroad (podcast 5:00). I believe in modern day America we are so accustomed to having a secular democratic government, that it is a foreign concept to imagine anything else. However, as the teacher referenced in the podcast points out when someone has the opportunity to leave the U.S. and experience a functioning alternative, often times it shines a fascinating light not just on cultural differences, but also similarities.

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Connecting Modern Christianity, Early Puritanism, and Islam

by [Logan Yetts](#) - Monday, October 14, 2019, 9:03 PM

In listening to the interview with Professor Scott Casper, I found his "wonderful insight" that he stated very interesting. Casper noted that in a study performed with Islamic students from Cairo, they found that the Islamic students had a better understanding of the ideals of and had more in common with the English Puritans than most modern Americans do. This reminded me of a recent argument I had read somewhere that sought to explain why people in America who are more devout Christians tend to be more concerned and fearful of Islamic extremism than more liberal, secular counterparts. The claim was that the fundamental, devout Christians in America understand the foundation for extremism more closely, because they truly believe in their doctrine the same way Islamic extremists do and can see where that might lead, something that less-religious people might have a harder time grasping.

I can really relate to this difficulty in understanding the point of view of the Puritans, as well as any extremely religious group. Growing up, I was raised in a Christian home. We went to church every Sunday for most of my childhood, but I never really felt that connected to it and kind of drifted away from it. It never really felt like an important part of my decision making process day-to-day. This would be very different from the life of a Puritan or that of fundamental Muslims, where nearly every decision would likely be thought through the lens of their religious beliefs above all else.

Having a better understanding of the beliefs and teachings of the Puritans would give a much better understanding of the decisions and the influence the Puritans have in the New World. For instance, how the Puritan belief in no hierarchies in the religious institution leads to their desire for limited government. Although the Puritans themselves are no longer a direct influence, many of their ideals have carried on through history and still persist in areas of our government today, so having a better understanding of the beliefs of the early Puritans can help show the influence they are still having on our institutions today.

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Concerns With the Finding & Essential Elements of Puritanism

by [Sara Montiel](#) - Monday, October 14, 2019, 10:21 PM

The findings by Professor Mason, sadly, did not concern me as much as I am sure it should have, but I can certainly understand why this would concern someone who is interested in history or someone who is in the field. The reason it did not concern me is simply because I have never been very interested in history and it really does not surprise me that another country is being better educated than those in the United States. I have heard this matter way too many times and I completely believe that the education system is not that great in the U.S. Being a student who had no interest in history, due to the poor education system, I was one of those American students that Professor Mason mentioned, "When American students hear the word "puritanism" their eyes usually just "glaze over." (Puritan & Islam Audio File) No longer being one of those students, and with the help of our textbook and other sources of information, I feel that some essential elements of puritanism that a well educated American student should know is the who, what, and why. For example, "Who are the Puritans?" This is essential because it's where the practice of Puritanism is from. The Puritans were a religious group of people who wanted to "purify" other churches and change their beliefs. They focused more on others rather than in their own religious "growth" or "progress." "...their neighbors turned from analyzing the legitimacy of their own conversions to assessing the validity of someone else's." (pg 64 Class Textbook) Now that we know, not in depth, who they are, now we come to what puritanism is. It is simply what the Puritans practiced and their system of beliefs. More in depth, "Puritanism was the quest for conversion." (pg 64 Class Textbook) Puritans believed in a system called "covenant theology" and "according to this system, God had made two biblical covenants with humans: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace." (pg 61, Class Textbook) They went around spreading puritanism to other religions and groups spreading that "anyone who found no inner trace of saving grace was damned..." (pg 64 Class Textbook) and believed that "a Christian's inability to keep the law usually triggered the conversion experience by demonstrating that only faith, not works, could save. (pg 64 Class Textbook). And then you would cover the "why" portion of the Puritans, and so forth. I think knowing who they are, what they believed in, and why they believed and did the things they did are essential elements of puritanism that a well educated American student should know.

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puritanism and american students

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Monday, October 14, 2019, 10:32 PM

I have a big concern by Professor Patrick Q. Mason's experience from Notre Dame (Indiana) and Professor Scott Casper's interview by the Journal of American History talking about, but I am not surprised by it. When Professor Mason said, "My Egypt student could grapple the intricate relationship of church and state in puritan New England in a far more informed way than my American students" (podcast 6 min. 4:13-22). When I heard this I thought that we as a country are becoming more and more uncaring and less informed people. We slowly become a country of sheep or a country of adults spoiling children. I mean look at Congress when Trump was elected as president in the 2016 election and comes president in 2017 he gave Congress 6 months to get some of those executive orders by President Obama into law and they did nothing but complained about him the whole time. I talked about this with my dad how people these days are getting so thin-skinned about what other people say about them. I see it in the now and then. When reading a newspaper or on a news station. I even hear about when my dad was working at a hospital as the janitor or at my mom's works about some parents or coworker and she is a bus driver. Then there are people who go with what they hear without checking the facts first (like the news or certain people with certain credibility talk). Which makes us in my opinion as a country dumb. Though this fault lies with our society. This how (for the most part) to be. I know because I am one of the people who don't care about or whose eyes glaze over it until it affects me. And that

is not a good either and I am trying to change that. In fact, I knew very little about puritanism that didn't write about them until this part of my form. I mean my basic knowledge of them is that they were Christians. I didn't know that they were "people who radical protestants who wanted to purify the church.. of its catholic practices"(web video puritans 0.19 sec) or that they were two types of puritans. One that "remained within the church of England while others called separatists who made their own church" away from the others (web video 0.36 sec). Most of the pilgrims were separatists getting away from England (web video). I feel like I am losing out not know this information. That it was stolen because of how our society thinks makes us think without us know consciously. I also feel disappointed that other country students know more about our history then our students.

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Re: Religion an government

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Friday, October 18, 2019, 10:30 PM

No government can work properly without some kind of belief system in it. And belief comes from religion. Without it, there would be no government or country for that matter. Every person in the world has some kind of belief. That belief helps make what a person believes in what is right or wrong just like religion does. Even if the person is an atheist. Because they might not believe in a religion, but they agree with what that a religion said for the most part. Besides every society has a religion that most people believe. And people teach their child to follow even if they don't believe in. And It is the people that make up a country up and their government. America is an example of that. Our laws (that everyone follows) follows the 10 commandments is some way. So right there religion is in our life because we agree with it. Follow it because we agree with it, but some of us might not believe in it. In the podcast, He talked about one of the supreme court decisions to the Egyptian students and they were surprised about the court ruling. Did they forget the biggest religion here and the influence it has on our government? I mean we have dollars that say "In God we trust" literally on it. We might not force them to change religions but this is the religion that our founding father of this country believed in. In fact, their religious values are what most of us are taught about from birth even in a non-Christian family. The top 3 Christian values in the USA that are taught is to not to lie, steal or murder. Which two of the 3 are laws.

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Re: Muslim and american students

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Saturday, October 19, 2019, 7:30 PM

There are both similar and different between American and Muslim student. The way we grow up affects our decision and how we think and what we believe. if Two people grew up in two different families with similar moral value then Those are mostly to think in the same way. While if two people in two different families with different values will think different ways. I mean in the podcast talks about "differences between different cultural perspectives"(podcast 2:59). Some culture is close to the American culture which makes our view similar. I mean The Notre Dame students agree with what the Supreme court did on the polygamy case while students in Kyro didn't agree with what the supreme court did. Then there is the society in which we grew up in. Here in America, I feel like it has taught us to just to the basic work and not to go over that and not to talk about religion in public. I mean if is not that then We would already know the first pilgrim were puritans specifical Separatist (web video puritans) before we got in this class

because we would already know about the puritan. And we could understand them better in this class like the Egyptian student who was able to "grapple with the intricate relationship of church and state in Puritans New England in a far more informed way than most American students, who, even if they are religious, casually dismiss religious establishments as unenlightened and even barbaric antiquities" (podcast 4:13-43). their society probably didn't have the same banned on religious in school. An encourage students to do more than the basic work to get good grades.

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Re: Puritans and well-educated American student

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Saturday, October 19, 2019, 8:30 PM

A well-educated American should know that are two type puritans those that "remain within the England church and others called Separatist formed their own churches so not to be corrupted by the established church" (web video Puritans 0:35-0:43). The Bible was a big part of their life and religion. They follow what the bible said to the tee even though it will seem weird or that some will consider illegal in today's daying age. For instance, hanging seven men for consent sex (web video puritans 4:28). They fled England "to create in America the kind of churches that God wanted" (textbook p.61) and that they follow "strict moral standards that every Christian does". They taught kids to read the bible (web video puritans 3:58). This religion was their everyday life and they were stricter in their morals than like some of today's Christian which are Christians only when it suits them or only on Sundays they are following the bible. So in some ways, they were not "tolerant people" (web video Puritans 4:20) just like Christian who follow the Bible.

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Re: Results and Analysis

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Saturday, October 19, 2019, 11:52 PM

I wasn't in class when Joe Escobar has shown the [Pew Religious Landscape Study](#) in class. But I did click the link in the form and did a little adventure on it. But overall it didn't have any influence on me and how I analysis each source and how I answer the questions. Being a Christian myself, I look at the reason why puritans did what they did and look at the Bible to see if they were following it. Because I was inclined to believe that the Puritans were basically protestant people or an early version of some of today's Christian. Both the web video Puritan and the textbook basically saying they were god fear people who didn't believe in the catholic part of the church back in England. I said God-fearing people because in the textbook it said They fled "America [in hope] to escape the **divine wrath** that threatened England and to create in America **the kind of churches that God wanted**" (textbook p.61) Those words that are bolded made me believe in them to be Christian but not catholic. Then the Web video Puritans strength that Idea when the spokesperson said: " Puritans were radical protestants who wanted to purify the church of England or Anglican church, from it remaining catholic practice" (web video 0:17-22). So from then, I used the bible and what I knew about Christian practice to see what add up with the other information getting. I look at what was the same and different from each other and the Bible to see if it was true. I mean they

can't really be protestants if they don't follow the Bible. For example, "several men who had consenting sex [hung]"(web video puritans 4:26) got me questioning so I look around the bible for the reason why they hung those men and found Leviticus 20:10 talking about adultery and death. So if men who hung were married or if the women were then there is the reason why they were hung consenting or not. But the video wasn't clear on that. Anyways I used facts from the other source to analysis them not the study at all but it was interesting (but not surprising) to see that Christian was the number one religion in each section of the country.

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Religion and it's influence in our lives

by [Natalie Haffner](#) - Monday, October 14, 2019, 10:58 PM

The finding that many Muslim students understand the Puritan better than those who came form the Puritan line does concern me. It mostly makes me sad that other countries know and/or study our history more in depth than the ones living here. I think that most of the divide comes from our lack of religion in this country. I know many people have some form of religious background knowledge, but as a whole our country doesn't make that front and center. our countries hidden world of religion is understandable due to our freedom regarding religions, but in Egypt they don't hav the same freedoms and their church and state situation is more involved.

I think that many teachers need to include the topic of religion when teaching about the Puritans. Whether the students have knowledge of religion or not I think learning about the past religions may help to better understand the history of our country. Personally I feel I have an okay grip on the effects of the Puritans, but I also had a high school teacher, though only for one year, who talked about the religion of the early people in America. He was the only history teacher I have had, yet, to truly explain and discuss the Puritans and their religious practices. The results of the *Pew Religious Landscape Study* that more than half of our country has some form of religion they identify with. I think that including more of the religious side of the Puritans story could solve some of this problem.

even in our country today we try to separate church and state, but no matter how hard we try they can't fully be disconnected. The one teacher I had in high school was the only teach to bring up the presidents religion. Besides this class I was never taught about the religions of our leader today. I think Joe mad a great point in his lecture on Thursday, "yes people liked JFK and many people voted for him, but he BARLEY won, on the grounds of him being Catholic." After this lecture I truly started thinking about how our churches and states can never be separate. Religion is a part of our history and will be forever.

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Re: Religion and it's influence in our lives

by [Eric Runes](#) - Tuesday, October 15, 2019, 3:55 PM

I think the big aspect of the whole discussion boils down to the separation of church and state. As professor Escobar has pointed out a few times now specifically in class on Tuesday is contrary to popular belief there is nowhere in our constitution that states specifically we are to have a separation of church

and state (although it is in the charter of Rhode island). This was so specific to the puritan lifestyle which incorporated religion into every aspect of their lives and government. I think the podcast makes it clear that in Egypt the way contemporary Islam is practiced is very similar to puritan Christianity (3:45 podcast). In the world of secular America I think your point of history teachers needing to stress the topic of religion when teaching about puritans is incredibly valid. Often times in America in an attempt to be as diverse and open to all peoples and belief systems as possible, religious beliefs and practices are purposefully left out of discussions even when it is a vital aspect to understanding the full scope of an issue.

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Religion and Politics

by [Nathan Mattox](#) - Tuesday, October 15, 2019, 10:47 PM

As to the question of true separation of religion and politics in the world today, and particularly in the U.S., where a theoretical separation of church and state has only ever extended as far as lack of official recognition, but whose politicians have, throughout its history, used their political power to engraft christianity into American society and its legal systems. In some ways, this is to be expected, as those politicians whose morality and self-identity come from their religious convictions are bound to make decisions based on those convictions, thus causing their legislative portfolio to resemble the values of their religion. In the U.S., those in power have been almost entirely christians, and so America has tended toward christian values. In theory, the idea of religious people working within a secular government is problematic, but certainly possible. In practice, religion's influence over politics, even in the age of democracy, has been massive. The christian church is so ingrained in the history of America and American politics that any study of the United States must be, at least partially, a study of its relation to faith and religion, and that study begins with the Puritan societies of New England and their zealous piety which encompassed and comprised their entire lives.

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Re: Religion and Politics

by [Eric Runes](#) - Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 2:34 PM

You bring up some good points when it comes to how Christian values are subtly ingrained into American policies despite an attempt at separating church and state. As you point out there are many reasons for this, from politicians personal beliefs, to the deep rooted history the Christian church has with the founding of the United states as far back as the puritans. However, I feel from an American students perspective especially a non religious one, the ability to ignore the sometimes subtle ways our country makes political decisions based on religion could be understood. When compared to an Egyptian student who as the podcast points out live in a secular republic within the Arab world where the lines between religion and state are always "blurry" (podcast 4:05). Whereas in America there are always dissenting groups attempting to point out and maintain the separation, and different view points from different ideologies are considered in policy making. In Egypt even the most non religious student understands that all political and policy decisions will be made through the prism of Islam, its teachings, and nothing

else. While I agree with your points that in many ways Christianity influences and in some cases dictates American government, it is far more subtle, and not the ultimate deciding factor. The podcast points out "Puritanism offered a totalizing undifferentiated world view" (3:45) I believe this is still the case in Egypt in relation to Islam, but not true of America in regards to Christianity in 2019.

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Re: Puritanism & Islam

by [Natalie Haffner](#) - Friday, October 18, 2019, 12:44 AM

I agree with you statement about the involvement of the Christian church in everything we do. This is why I feel it is important to teach the Puritans and their religious beliefs. Many of the things that effected or things would hate they put into motion still affect us to this day. I don't think it should matter whether or not students have a religious background, they should be taught the repercussions of our past.

I like that you noted that no matter if we separate church and state we are still influenced by our politicians. Yes, this country was founded in religion and many aspects of that are still present today so there will never be a full split, but that being said not everyone will agree and that's what's beautiful about this idea/country. Everyone comes from different walks of lives, but for the most part, we can come together when needed.

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Religious Influence

by [Sara Montiel](#) - Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 5:09 PM

Being a Christian myself, I do believe that because of my belief in God, it does bias my study of the Puritans. I love and believe in God but I am not religious and that is where the Puritans and I clash. I have many practices and beliefs that do not agree or match with those of the Puritans. "Couples who had babies less than nine months after their marriage were publicly punished. Several men who had consenting sex were hanged and people were tried in court for card playing, for drunkenness and idleness" (Web Video: The Puritans). I don't agree with these practices and quite frankly I believe that it all came down to having power over one another; who is better than who. In my opinion, It almost seemed like they used God as an excuse to judge others but in themselves, they pushed God aside and focused more on trying to "better themselves" & not necessarily "for God." I believe that you have your own freedom to do as you please (there is always consequences to consider though) and whatever you do is between you and God. There is no need for others to witness your punishment through public shame and I know that because of religious people and their rules set on everyone, so many see God negatively. If I ever did a study & wrote a book or paper on the Puritans I am one hundred percent sure it would be biased and not as credible as that of Professor Edmund Morgan who was an atheist. I most certainly believe that your religion cannot be removed from its influence on governmental decisions. What you believe in makes you who you are and many times the reason for why you make certain decisions and why you do certain things. Speaking for myself, my belief in God and everything I have practiced has, throughout my life, guided me to make the decisions that I have. But before I ever even began following God I already, to some extent, practiced certain religious beliefs from the 10 commandments like "thou shall not murder..." I mean, even Professor Joe mentioned in class about the 10

commandments and how people follow certain commandments whether religious or not. If religion already makes a great impact on the lives of so many americans, it most definitely affects political matters and decisions, making the separation of church and state very unlikely.

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Re: Religious Influence

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Friday, October 18, 2019, 12:30 AM

You're correct about religious influence on government. I also agree with you about what the puritans did to the people that sin. But you're thinking about it at this time of age mindset, not their time. They believed in a different version of our God. You also have to remember They believe in their belief so seriously that they taught every kid in their community to read. So the kids could read the bible (web video puritans 3:58) If they did that would it be that much of a surprise to you that they would go to the extreme lengths with their punishment. You have to remember that they came here because they were "fleeing to America [in hope] to escape the divine wrath that threatened England and to create in America the kind of churches that God wanted"(textbook p.61). They have to follow that "strict moral standards that every Christian does"(p.61) like you but stricter then what it is today. That is because the strength of the religious influences of Christian was stronger back then than today. There were also two types of Puritans one that "remains in the church of England and one name Separatist that form their own churches **so not to be corrupted** by the established church" (web video Puritans 0:40-0:43). So, of course, they will take every sin seriously because of their belief. But that is not all to their belief. They believe in predestination(textbook p.66) That means they believe that God had already chosen the people he is going to save. And they believed that they were those people. Does that mean I agree with what they did? No, but can I see why they did it? Yes, If I was born back then I will properly be one of them too. Because of the strength of that religious, I would most likely see it their way, not your or my way.

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Re: Religious Influence

by [Sara Montiel](#) - Friday, October 18, 2019, 4:28 PM

I completely understand where you're coming from and thank you for helping me see it from a different point of view. I guess what I was trying to explain, based on my beliefs, is that because of what I believe in, it would definitely make my opinion about them biased. I simply have a very strong feeling against religion and in responding the Professor Escobar's question, " If you feel so inclined to share, does your religion (or lack thereof) bias your study of these people?" I was sharing how and why it would be biased. But I completely agree with you that the time in which they lived and the time we live in now is very different, but I think as much as i tried to be fair about it and not put my beliefs and feelings into the topic, there will always be some biased opinion in what I say. In the same way of the government putting aside their religious beliefs when making decisions, It's something that is apart of us and It's difficult to put it aside especially on a topic like this. There were definitely other practices and beliefs of the Puritans that I did not cover, but it certainly would have been too long to have covered every single thing about them. So I chose a small bit to simply get my point across.

"They believe in their belief so seriously that they taught every kid in their community to read. So the kids could read the bible (web video puritans 3:58) If they did that would it be that much of a surprise to you that they would go to the extreme lengths with their punishment." When you commented this, (not saying your wrong, just my point of view) I do have to point out that I don't fully see how teaching your children to read in order to read the bible would be as extreme as "several men who had consenting sex were hanged..."(Web Video: The Puritans). I do understand that at that time being able to read was a big deal because not everyone could, like a lot of women. But I am surprised and it is difficult for me to see how murder was even something they did. Maybe I need to do more research and **if you know the answer to this please let me know**, but if they followed the 10 commandments which clearly states "thou shall not murder" why was this an exception? If God was a strict God of punishment why did they punish others for Him? There are things in their beliefs that are contradicting which is why it is difficult for me to be understanding, with certain beliefs, as to why they did them.

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Re: Religious Influence

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Friday, October 18, 2019, 9:00 PM

what I mean when I comment They believe in their belief so seriously that they taught every kid in their community to read. So the kids could read the Bible (web video puritans 3:58) If they did that would it be that much of a surprise to you that they would go to the extreme lengths with their punishment. Is that they believe in the bible enough to teach the children to read they could read it themselves. The Bible is a big part of their life and culture and they took the word seriously. To answer your question "how murder was even something they did" is that they didn't see it that way. In the Bible in Leviticus 20:10 "If a man commits adultery with a married woman--if he commits adultery with his neighbor's wife--both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death." In their mind, that means even is it is contested people that have done adultery have sinned and must be put to death as it has been said in the bible. The web video Puritan wasn't clear that if the men that where hang was married or not. Or if the women were married or not. It could be that in their mind, any sex (that has or hasn't been consented) would be a sin if it was done before they were married because they took the Bible so seriously. Or those men could have been married or the women were. so they could have been adulterers. But we don't know one way or another. What we do know is that they thought they were following what God said to do by doing that. Remember Jews did this in the past too. The Jews are God's chosen people. And they did what the puritans did to people that did adultery but with stones and those people were tight to the ground unable to protect themselves from the stones they threw. And they were before the Puritans. With this information do you still think it was wrong of the Puritans to kill the men? Do you think it was wrong for the Jews to kill their people that did adultery for basically the same reason why the puritans did? Both of them were following the word.

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American Puritanism



by [Max Birch](#) - Thursday, October 17, 2019, 11:40 AM

I would not say that I am concerned with this finding, but more that I am surprised. I would expect American history students to understand the effect of Puritanism pretty well. Before taking this class I was unaware of the influence of the Puritans in the New World, but now I believe that I have a better understanding. The essential elements of Puritanism that well-educated American students should know, is how prevalent Protestantism is in our country today, and how Protestants have basically controlled the government. Along with JFK being the only none Protestant president. As well as the reason it started in England, which was because King Henry VIII wanted to get a divorce from his wife because she wouldn't give him a son, and in Catholicism that isn't aloud. So King Henry created the Church of England, which was Protestant, just so he could divorce his wife.

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Re: American Puritanism

by [Eric Runes](#) - Friday, October 18, 2019, 4:30 PM

The point you make about Henry the VIII is poignant when it comes to leaders claiming to be devout. The idea that a person in power would or could modify an entire religion because certain tennents of the faith were inconvenient and did not suit their personal desires has enormous ramifications. I think one of the things the podcast was getting at was that when all decisions are based off the doctrine of a religion, there is expected and consistent approach to how laws are enforced. Using your example of Henry VIII, by throwing out pre-established rules and procedure and creating new ones to suit his own needs, and using religion to justify this, is undeniably going to cause conflict and dissent. In this case it was the formation of splinter groups which ultimately led to the Puritans.

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What American Students Should Know About Puritans

by [Gabe Waisanen](#) - Saturday, October 19, 2019, 9:37 PM

A concerning issue, that isn't only increasing every day, but is becoming a better understood issue in today's world, Professor Patrick Q. Mason from Notre Dame explains that Egyptian students had a superior understanding of the English Puritans, when comparing to American students. When listening to a interview of Mason, I got a greater understanding that Egyptian students have more of a tie to religious practices than American students, who think of religion as something not as big of important, and is stated in Mason's interview when he says, "...So my Egyptian students could grapple with the relationship of church and state in Puritan, New England in a far more informed way than most American students...who casually dismiss religious establishments as unenlightened, even barbaric..." (Mason Interview, 4:12-4:30). After listening to his interview, I recognized that English students in every day classroom are told more religious views on history are not as important, or are scarcely brought up, due to Americans not being interested, and/or disciplined enough to learn it. In my opinion, even if you aren't a religious person, or even care about any religion, I believe that learning the Religious aspects of English Puritans will provide a greater understanding of the effects they had in American History.

I thank you for reading my response, and hope you provide me with some feedback/questions.

Thanks!

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Religion and Morality

by [Nathan Mattox](#) - Saturday, October 19, 2019, 10:55 PM

I can't help but disagree with the notion that religion and government are inseparable, or that humans are inherently predisposed to be religious. The history of secularism is nearly as old as society itself, and can be seen in ancient Greece and India, where philosophers of the Epicurean and Charvaka movements rejected belief in deistic powers, and believed that religion ought not have any influence over governance. I also take issue with the idea that human morality is dependent on religion. Some of the earliest religions, like that of the Sumerians, made no mention whatsoever of ethics or morality, no divine imperative to do good. Laws came from the necessities of governing a functional society, as is evidenced by Hammurabi's Code, which is relatively light on religious content, and has almost entirely to do with administrative regulations, such as matters of contract, civil responsibilities, marriage, inheritance, and criminal law. The Ten Commandments of judeo-christian belief is but one of many ancient law codes, all with varying levels of basis in religion. In my opinion, the most important commonality among the great majority of these legal systems is their inclusion of what the creator(s) saw as the most serious group of crimes, most of which included murder, theft, and other common sense laws that are necessary to enforce when humans gather and settle in groups, and especially at this time when city populations were expanding rapidly. This, to me, speaks much more to the common human sentiment of virtue across all cultures than to a particular basis in or connection with religion.

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