

# Religion in U.S. History

## Theme: Culture and Society

- Explain how religious groups and ideas have affected American society and political life.

## Period 1: 1491-1607

### Required Information

1. European expansion into the Western Hemisphere generated intense social, religious, political, and economic competition and changes within European societies.
2. In their interactions, Europeans and Native Americans asserted divergent worldviews regarding issues such as religion, gender roles, family, land use, and power.
  - As European encroachments on Native Americans' lands and demands on their labor increased, native peoples sought to defend and maintain their political sovereignty, economic prosperity, religious beliefs, and concepts of gender relations through diplomatic negotiations and military resistance.
  - Extended contact with Native Americans and Africans fostered a debate among European religious and political leaders about how non-Europeans should be treated, as well as evolving religious, cultural, and racial justifications for the subjugation of Africans and Native Americans.

### Optional Information

3. Spanish Mission System
4. African American Colonial Religion

## Period 2: 1607-1754

### Required Information

5. Spanish, French, Dutch, and British colonizers had different economic and imperial goals involving land and labor that shaped the social and political development of their colonies as well as their relationships with native populations.
  - English colonization efforts attracted a comparatively large number of male and female British migrants, as well as other European migrants, all of whom sought social mobility, economic prosperity, religious freedom, and improved living conditions. These colonists focused on agriculture and settled on land taken from Native Americans, from whom they lived separately.
6. In the 17th century, early British colonies developed along the Atlantic coast, with regional differences that reflected various environmental, economic, cultural, and demographic factors.
  - The middle colonies supported a flourishing export economy based on cereal crops and attracted a broad range of European migrants, leading to societies with greater cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and tolerance.
  - The colonies of the southernmost Atlantic coast and the British West Indies used long growing seasons to develop plantation economies based on exporting staple crops. They depended on the labor of enslaved Africans, who often constituted the majority of the

population in these areas and developed their own forms of cultural and religious autonomy.

7. Transatlantic commercial, religious, philosophical, and political exchanges led residents of the British colonies to evolve in their political and cultural attitudes as they became increasingly tied to Britain and one another.
  - The presence of different European religious and ethnic groups contributed to a significant degree of pluralism and intellectual exchange, which were later enhanced by the first Great Awakening and the spread of European Enlightenment ideas.
  - Colonists' resistance to imperial control drew on local experiences of self-government, evolving ideas of liberty, the political thought of the Enlightenment, greater religious independence and diversity, and an ideology critical of perceived corruption in the imperial system.
8. Like other European empires in the Americas that participated in the Atlantic slave trade, the English colonies developed a system of slavery that reflected the specific economic, demographic, and geographic characteristics of those colonies.
  - Africans developed both overt and covert means to resist the dehumanizing aspects of slavery and maintain their family and gender systems, culture, and religion.

### **Optional Information**

9. Puritans
  - Calvinism
  - Great Migration
  - City upon a Hill
  - Community of Saints
  - Congregationalists
  - Halfway Covenant
  - John Winthrop
  - Harvard, 1639
  - Salem Witch Trials, 1692
10. Roger Williams and Providence, Rhode Island
11. Quakers
  - Inner Light
  - Society of Friends
  - William Penn
  - Pennsylvania, 1681
  - Holy Experiment
12. Anglicans
  - established church
13. Catholics
  - Maryland Toleration Act, 1649
14. Great Awakening, 1730s-1760s
  - George Whitefield

- Jonathan Edwards
- Old Lights / New Lights

## **Period 3: 1754-1800**

### **Required Information**

15. The ideals that inspired the revolutionary cause reflected new beliefs about politics, religion, and society that had been developing over the course of the 18th century.
- Enlightenment ideas and philosophy inspired many American political thinkers to emphasize individual talent over hereditary privilege, while religion strengthened Americans' view of themselves as a people blessed with liberty.

### **Optional Information**

16. The Enlightenment

17. Deism

## **Period 4: 1800-1848**

### **Required Information**

18. While Americans embraced a new national culture, various groups developed distinctive cultures of their own.
- The rise of democratic and individualistic beliefs, a response to rationalism, and changes to society caused by the market revolution, along with greater social and geographical mobility, contributed to a Second Great Awakening among Protestants that influenced moral and social reforms and inspired utopian and other religious movements.
19. Increasing numbers of Americans, many inspired by new religious and intellectual movements, worked primarily outside of government institutions to advance their ideals.

### **Optional Information**

20. Second Great Awakening, early 1800s

21. Charles Finney

22. Reform Movements (stemming from the Second Great Awakening)

- public education (Horace Mann)
- prison reform (Dorthea Dix)
- Utopian Socialism (Brooke Farm, Onieda Community, New Harmony)
- women's rights
- temperance
- abolition of slavery

## Period 5: 1844-1877

### Required Information

23. Popular enthusiasm for U.S. expansion, bolstered by economic and security interests, resulted in the acquisition of new territories, substantial migration westward, and new overseas initiatives.
- The desire for access to natural and mineral resources and the hope of many settlers for economic opportunities or religious refuge led to an increased migration to and settlement in the West.

### Optional Information

24. Mormons
- Joseph Smith
  - Brigham Young
  - Utah Territory, 1850
25. Anti-Catholic Nativism
26. American Party (Know Nothings)

## Period 6: 1865-1898

### Required Information

27. International and internal migration increased urban populations and fostered the growth of a new urban culture.
- As cities became areas of economic growth featuring new factories and businesses, they attracted immigrants from Asia and from southern and eastern Europe, as well as African American migrants within and out of the South. Many migrants moved to escape poverty, religious persecution, and limited opportunities for social mobility in their home countries or regions.

### Optional Information

28. Social Gospel
29. Salvation Army
30. Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, 1885
31. Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps*, 1897

## Period 7: 1890-1945

### Required Information

32. Popular culture grew in influence in U.S. society, even as debates increased over the effects of culture on public values, morals, and American national identity.
- In the 1920s, cultural and political controversies emerged as Americans debated gender roles, modernism, science, religion, and issues related to race and immigration.

### Optional Information

33. Fundamentalism vs. Modernism

34. Scopes trial, 1925

35. Charles Coughlin (radio priest)

## **Periods 8 and 9: 1945 to the Present**

### **Required Information**

36. New demographic and social developments, along with anxieties over the Cold War, changed U.S. culture and led to significant political and moral debates that sharply divided the nation. Popular culture grew in influence in U.S. society, even as debates increased over the effects of culture on public values, morals, and American national identity.

- The rapid and substantial growth of evangelical Christian churches and organizations was accompanied by greater political and social activism on the part of religious conservatives.

### **Optional Information**

37. Nation of Islam

- Elijah Muhammad
- Malcolm X

38. The New Right

- Right-to-Life Movement
- Phyllis Schlafly

39. Rise of the Religious Right

- Moral Majority
- Focus on the Family